

Stages of Concern for Teacher Candidates:

The first stage is Pre-teaching Concern.

At this stage, teacher candidates are still closer to the student role, rather than the teacher role. The real concerns of pupils and teachers are very remote to the teacher candidates. Teacher candidates are often highly critical of the teacher with whom they are working. They may seem unsympathetic or even hostile to the teacher. At this point the teacher candidate has only their idealism to go on (Company in Your Classroom, 2000). There are often concerns about their personal life that interfere and inhibit growth.

The second stage is Concerns about Survival.

As teacher candidates become more involved in the classroom and begin to understand the magnitude of the profession, there is a concern about their own survival as teachers. Idealized, "book-learned" concerns about pupils are replaced by concern about class management and mastery of content. There is also concern about the evaluations by supervisors and cooperating teachers. Being observed causes a great deal of stress at this stage.

The third stage is Teaching Situation Concerns

At this stage the teacher candidates are beginning to feel a mastery of the areas of concern from the second stage. They are, however, feeling the frustrations and limitations of the teaching situation. Concerns about methods and materials, which are the focus of education courses taken before their student teaching experience, are now taken seriously. This is the "Why didn't I pay closer attention?" lament that is so common. The difference between theory and practice is being felt.

The final stage is Concerns about Pupils.

At this point the teacher candidates begin to see the trees in the forest. There is a concern for the individual pupil. Understanding individual learning styles and social-emotional needs of pupils is of concern. There is also an understanding that "he or she can be caring and strong, flexible and consistent, child-centered and in-control" (Company in Your Classroom, 2000, p.69). There is also an awareness of the broader issues in education and a connection to how these issues impact individual students.