

## The Effect of a Practicum Program at the Hashemite University on The Concerns of Student Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of the practicum program at the Hashemite University on the concerns of student teachers. These concerns were detected through utilizing a modified form of the Teacher Concerns Checklist developed by Fuller and Borich (1988) after translating it into Arabic. The study sample consisted of 30 science field teachers enrolled in the practicum course during the academic year 2003/2004. The 45-item instrument is a self-report indicating student teachers' personal judgment about the level of their teaching concerns, as related to the three areas: self, task, and impact. The findings showed that the area of concern that appeared to feature more highly, prior and after the practicum course, is the self, and the highest change in concerns occurred in the impact. Moreover, the results revealed that the practicum course had an effect on increasing student teachers' task and impact concerns. In light of the findings, academic supervisors and cooperating teachers should be fully aware of the concerns typically held by student teachers in order to help them deal with the problems that do arise. Conducting additional research to be carried on larger samples of student teachers from various fields of specialty is also recommended.

**KEYWORDS:** Practicum, Concerns, Student Teachers, Hashemite University.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Since 1987, the educational system in Jordan has been undergoing a comprehensive reform. The major objective of the Educational Reform Plan is to improve the quality of educational output, and to enhance student achievement levels through concentrating upon the issues of quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the educational system. Upgrading teacher qualifications and modernizing preservice teacher training educational programs are among the main elements of the reform plan.

Professional development has always been one of the focusing areas of research in teacher education. Different aspects of teacher development have been investigated by a number of researchers (Clark and Peterson, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Kagan, 1992) who have suggested that a training course does shape the reactions and interpretations of teaching

practice for student teachers.

Teachers' concerns were among the many factors that were investigated in order to provide a foundation upon which the development of, or improvements to teachers' professional upgrading programs are met. Discussion of teacher "concerns" dates back to the work of Fuller (1969) who devised the teaching concerns inventory model during her research work at the University of Texas in the 1960s and 1970s. The concerns theory grew out of the analysis of recorded transcripts of interviews with student teachers. These records were used in the identification and classification of problems that student teachers experienced, and the concerns they expressed about these problems. In the model, Fuller theorized that student teachers' concerns can be classified into three distinct areas: personal survival concerns (self); teacher-situation concerns (task); and pupil needs concerns (impact). When grouped into developmental and sequential stages, the concerns theory conceptualizes the learning process for a prospective teacher as a natural flow from concerns for self, to task, to impact. Fuller and Bown (1975) linked clusters of concern to both pre-service and in-service teachers, with teachers moving away from "survival" concerns towards concerns with

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Received on 21/11/2006 and Accepted for Publication on 10/4/2007.

curriculum and teaching, to more sophisticated concerns around student needs and development.

Further theories describing how teachers' concerns change over time were formulated. The concept of developmental stages of teachers' growth has appeared in the professional literature. Katz (1972) identified four developmental stages: survival stage, where teachers realize that what they had expected from their undergraduate work was not what they were finding in the actual classroom; consolidation stage where teachers focus more on teaching the students, rather than the subject material; the renewal stage, where teachers sought to renew their teaching styles and are concerned with the "new materials", techniques, approaches, and ideas; and finally the maturity stage, where the teachers had learned the basics of teaching, and felt secure in their profession. Hall, Wallace and Dossett (1973) developed the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM), which assumes that change is a process that follows a developmental sequence regarding the concerns that teachers have when an innovation is adopted. One of the dimensions of the CBAM is the Stages of Concern (SoC) which expands the three stages of concerns into seven dimensions that can vary in intensity. Self-concerns consist of three stages: Stage 0 – Awareness, Stage 1 – Informational, and Stage 2 – Personal. Task concerns consist of Stage 3 – Management, and Impact concerns consist of Stage 4- Consequence, Stage 5 - Collaboration, and Stage 6 – Refocusing. This model suggests that interventions and professional development should address the specific expressed concerns of teachers. Further research suggests that the concerns and developmental tasks vary as teacher candidates progress through the activities program. In studies based on teacher development at different points of their career, subsequent researchers have similarly contextualized teacher concerns in developmental stage theory. Burden (1990) indicated that as teachers develop in their career, their concerns move from the self, to the teaching situation, and finally to the pupils.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of research studies on student teachers' concerns have been conducted based on Fuller's model. Lederman and Gess-Newsome (1991) carried out a study about the relevancy of microteaching to preservice teacher education. A sample of science student teachers

were asked to complete a questionnaire prior to the beginning of student teaching and following each of the 15 weeks of their field experience. The student teachers were observed, videotaped, and provided with written and verbal feedback in the same manner provided in the microteaching course. In addition, the student teachers attended a special weekly seminar in which the group discussed their videotaped lessons and concerns about teaching skills and techniques. Data analysis yielded a total of 17 categories of perceptions and concerns, under the original two broad categories of concerns for "self" and "students". There was a high level of consistency between the concerns expressed in microteaching and those during student teaching, serving to support the notion that microteaching contributes, in a relevant manner, to the preparation of preservice teachers, which reveals that the preservice teachers' shift in concerns from self to student was not developmental.

O'Connor and Taylor (1992) conducted a concerns study with the students in California State University to ascertain what the concerns of preservice teachers were as they progressed through their professional programs. The study findings suggested that teacher educators need to have a knowledge of preservice and novice teachers' concerns and to address their concerns in order to decrease the rates of attrition of teacher candidates within their program. Marso and Pigge (1994) surveyed approximately 300 pre-service and in-service teachers in various stages of their career. Four career periods were identified: pre-service teachers, teachers with 5-19 years of experience, teachers with 20-29 years of experience, and teachers with 30+ years of teaching. Lower levels of concern about the task of teaching were reported by preservice teachers compared to the in-service teachers, though in-service teacher groups were not significantly different from one another. Pre-service teachers also reported significantly lower levels of concern for impact on pupils than in-service teachers. Late-career teachers did, however, report lower concerns about self-survival than did mid-career teachers, and again the in-service teacher groups were not significantly different from one another.

Mau (1997) carried a study to examine the concerns of student teachers during their initial school-based training. The sample consisted of 48 subjects drawn from first-year student teachers in a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Diploma of Education program in Singapore. The teaching concerns inventory was administered to the

student teachers before and at the end of a ten-weeks course on pedagogy. Major concerns of students focused on classroom management skills, and whether they had the teaching repertoire to meet the needs of various learners, especially those who needed help in terms of unmotivated students and students with different levels of achievement. Chan and Leung (1998) conducted a survey study with 106 preservice student teachers to investigate certain areas of professional development, such as their areas of concerns and confidence to teach, as part of the investigated areas of teacher development in Hong Kong. The obtained results supported Fuller's model of concerns in that "self" concerns were prominent within the sample under study, where class discipline, acceptance by pupils, and teachers' mastery of subject knowledge and teaching skills were perceived by preservice teachers to be highly influential on their survival in the classroom.

In an attempt to explore the concerns of student teachers during their teaching practice at schools, Kyriacou and Stephens (1999) carried out a study on a group of 16 student teachers at the University of York during a period of school placement for teaching practice. During group interviews, the student teachers were asked to comment on how things were going at the teaching practice school. The nine main areas of concern expressed by the student teachers that appeared to feature more highly were: not being regarded as a real teacher, dealing with disruptive behaviour, becoming a disciplinarian, getting the teaching right, getting the planning right, coping with a heavy workload, having too little preparatory teaching practice, and being assessed. Hall and Symanoskie (2003) conducted a study to determine the concerns of preservice, student, and inservice teachers involved in teacher education at the University of Georgia. The survey participants amounted to 156, divided into three groups: preservice teachers (n=70), student teachers (n=35), and inservice teachers (n=52). The Teacher Concerns Questionnaire (TCQ) was applied to measure the participants' concerns about the teaching tasks related to self, task, and impact. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to determine if there were statistically significant differences in concern scores based on the preservice teacher's program level. These tests showed a difference between scores of the preservice and inservice teacher groups in self and task. Preservice teachers had significantly higher self-concerns scores, while the inservice teachers had higher task-concerns scores. There was no significant difference

between the groups for impact concerns scores.

Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, Silins, Bandfield and Russell (2000) conducted a study on 300 teacher education students, enrolled at Flinders University/Australia, in order to identify aspects of the practicum that concern them most. The study instrument included a Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) to examine the areas of stress experienced by the students in their practicum. The students reported that they were most concerned about coping with the teaching load, managing the class, and enforcing discipline. Lotter (2004) developed a picture of how preservice science teachers' instructional concerns changed during a science methods program spanning initial classroom observations through student teaching. The study participants included 13 secondary preservice teachers, who were enrolled at a midwestern university in the U.S. Data collection was carried through employing field notes and open-ended observation questionnaires focusing on the preservice teachers' concerns. The study results revealed that preservice teachers' reflections emphasized self-concerns which focused on instructional delivery, assessment, and classroom management, in addition to student-concerns issues such as student content comprehension and student differences in learning. Another study that focused on student teachers' concerns was carried by Swennen, Jörg, and Korthagen (2004). The study sample included 37 first year student teachers enrolled at a Dutch teacher education institute for primary teaching. The researchers used a card sorting instrument, drawings and interviews to measure student teachers' concerns. The findings of the study showed that the student teachers appeared to be most concerned about the needs of different pupils, especially their motivation and the pedagogical context of education.

### **3. AIM OF THE STUDY**

The practicum course is regularly reported by the student teachers as the most important and valuable part of their teacher preparation. For many student teachers, the practicum is their first major experience in the school as teachers, which can be assumed to be a critical phase in their professional development. The need to be aware of the concerns typically held by the student teachers, prior and after the practicum course, is beneficial to both the teacher educators and the student teachers themselves. Through identifying those concerns, teacher educators can evaluate the adequacy of the practicum program

offered in enhancing the development of student teachers' practice. Besides, student teachers themselves need to be aware of their common concerns so they can develop a favorable professional image essential to good teaching, and any change in their concerns arising after the completion of the practicum program can offer them more confidence and optimism towards their teaching practice. On the contrary, lack of adequate knowledge of those concerns by the academic supervisors and student teachers, during the teaching training experience, can result in a failure on the part of the student teachers to develop themselves and to have an impact on their students.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the concerns that student teachers at the Hashemite University have, before and after the practicum course, and to examine the effect of the practicum course on their concerns, as related to the three areas: self, task, and impact through answering the following questions:

1. What is the effect of the practicum course on the Hashemite University students' self concerns?
2. What is the effect of the practicum course on the Hashemite University students' task concerns?
3. What is the effect of the practicum course on the Hashemite University students impact concerns?

#### **Operational Definitions**

**Teachers' Concerns:** Sources of student teachers' stress during their teaching. In this study, it is the mean scores of the items in each of the three areas: self, task and impact.

**Practicum:** It is a part of the program in which the student teachers practice teaching at schools. In this study, it is a course that includes two days of training at schools each week for a whole semester, and provides students with field practice under the supervision of educational specialists. The practice includes three stages: guided observation in small groups, teaching for short intervals, and finally teaching for whole periods. This course offers students the opportunity to participate in diverse school activities.

#### **4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The results of this study are limited to:

1. The Hashemite University students, and those students who have similar characteristics.
2. The period of time at which the study was conducted.

3. The extent to which the instrument used is valid and reliable for measuring the student teachers' concerns.

### **5. METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The subjects of this study consisted of 30 science field teachers enrolled in the practicum courses (I and II) during the first and second semester of the academic year 2003/2004 at the College of Educational Sciences/Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the Hashemite University, Jordan. The students comprising the sample were classified as seniors. This sample constitutes the whole population of the study. The Practicum course provides students with field practice under the supervision of educational specialists to enhance students' preparation for classroom teaching. The practice includes three stages: guided observation in small groups, teaching for short intervals and finally teaching for whole periods. This course offers students the opportunity to participate in diverse school activities.

#### ***The Instrument***

The Teacher Concerns Checklist Instrument, developed by Fuller and Borich (1988), was utilized as a self-report instrument, indicating the student teacher' personal judgment about the level of his/her teaching concerns. The instrument includes a set of 45 statements; 15 for each of the three areas of concerns: personal survival concerns (self), teacher-situation concerns (task), and pupil needs concern (impact). The 45 statements are arranged so that every third item, starting with a concern for self, represents an entry from one of the three areas of concern. The instrument includes a series of concern statements in the form of a five-point rating scale, where each student could select one number that best corresponds to his level of concern: 5 for extremely concerned, 4 for very concerned, 3 for moderately concerned, 2 for a little concerned, and 1 for not concerned. The instrument was translated and adapted to the Jordanian environment. The quality and appropriateness of the translation and the cultural adaptation of the instrument was determined through performing the following steps:

- 1- Translating the instrument from English into Arabic by each of the authors, separately, and comparing the two translations .
- 2- Presenting the translation to a number of Arabic

Language specialists to check whether the language words in the target language conveyed the same or similar meaning, and to ensure that the instrument is free of spelling and grammatical errors.

- 3- Translating the Arabic version to English by the authors, and matching the original source instrument with the back-translation source, to ensure that the instrument has been translated accurately and the translated version was comparable to the original.
- 4- Applying the instrument on a number of students, not included in the sample, in order to determine the items' clarity and amount of the time required for answering the questions.
- 5- Introducing the changes in some items as suggested, in light of the instrument application feedback, setting up the instrument's final version.
- 6- Grading and computing the grades related to the three areas: self, task, and impact, through summing the responses to items 1,4,7 etc., 2,5,8, etc., and 3,6,9, etc., and dividing by the number of items completed, an average rating for each of the three areas was determined .
- 7- Establishing the reliability of the instrument through applying Cronbach's Alpha for each of the three areas of instrument. It was found to be 0.81; 0.82; and 0.93 for the first, second and third areas respectively. These values indicate high degrees of reliability that are suitable for the purpose of this study.

It can be said that the above steps have established the reliability of the translation of the instrument. As for the validity of the instrument itself, the researchers depended on its original validity that has already been established by Fuller and Borich (1988).

#### **Data Collection**

The Teacher Concerns Checklist instrument was administered to the student teachers at the beginning and again at the end of the student teaching practicum. The student teachers in the study reflected on their own teaching concerns by individually marking the level of concern for each of the fifteen items designated in each of the three areas of concern: self, task, and impact. Student teachers' responses on the concerns instrument were recorded, and the mean scores for the items in each of the three areas were computed and compared, noting any changes within the three areas of concern before and after the practicum course.

## **6. RESULTS**

The Teacher Concerns Checklist was utilized to indicate student teachers' personal judgment about the level of their teaching concerns, as related to the three areas: personal survival concerns (self); teacher-situation concerns (task); and pupil needs concerns (impact). The results revealed that the practicum course had an effect on the three areas of concern: self, task, and impact. The area of concern that appeared to feature more highly in this sample of student teachers, prior and after the practicum course, is the self. The concerns expressed by the student teachers in this study are in line with the studies carried by Chan and Leung (1998) and Lotter (2004) which pointed out that the “self” concerns were prominent concerns of preservice teachers. However, the highest mean score for change, prior and after the practicum, was related to the impact concerns, which reveals that student teachers’ concerns shifted towards pupils’ needs, increasing pupils’ feeling of accomplishment, and challenging unmotivated pupils (See Table 1).

**Table 1.**

**The mean scores of the pre-post practicum responses and change scores for the three areas of concern**

Area of Concern	Pre	Post	Change
Self	3.6756	3.9000	0.2244
Task	3.1400	3.4022	0.2622
Impact	3.2978	3.7533	0.4555
Total	3.3711	3.6852	0.3140

**Table 2.**

**t-test results for the differences in means between student teachers' pre- and posttests responses, as related to each of the self, task, and impact elements**

Variable	Pre-Mean	Post-Mean	t ratio	P
Self	3.67	3.90	-1.591	0.122
Task	3.14	3.40	-2.110	0.044
Impact	3.29	3.75	-3.598	0.001

To determine whether there is a significant difference between student teachers' personal survival concerns (self concerns), before and after the practicum course, data analysis was carried by performing a t-test for paired-samples. No significant difference at the ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level was detected, which indicates that no change in student teachers' self concerns occurred due to the practicum course. As for the teacher-situation concerns (task

concerns), further statistical analysis was carried through applying the t-test for paired samples, which revealed a statistically significant difference at the ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) level. The results of the analysis support contention that the practicum course impacted student teachers' task concerns. With regard to the pupil needs concerns

(impact concerns), another t-test analysis for paired samples was carried on. The results obtained showed a statistically significant difference at the ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level, which suggests that the practicum course had affected student teachers' impact responses. (See Table 2).

**Table 3.**  
**The mean scores of the pre-post practicum responses and change scores for the set of items on self concerns**

<b>Self Concerns Items</b>	<b>pre</b>	<b>post</b>	<b>change</b>
* Whether students respect me	3.9333	4.1333	0.2000
* Obtaining a favorable evaluation of my teaching	4.2667	4.5000	0.2333
* Getting students to behave	4.1667	4.4333	0.2666
* Appearing competent to parents	3.6000	3.7667	0.1667
* My ability to maintain the appropriate degree of class control	4.0667	4.3333	0.2666
* Teaching effectively when another teacher is Present	3.2667	3.2000	0.0667
* My ability to prepare adequate lesson plans	3.5000	3.8333	0.3333
* Managing my time efficiently	3.6667	4.0333	0.3666
* Having an embarrassing incident occur in my classroom for which I might be judged responsible	3.2333	3.5000	0.2667
* Having my inadequacies become known to other Teachers	2.7000	2.8667	0.1667
* Losing the respect of my students	4.0667	4.2667	0.2000
* That my peers think I'm not doing an adequate job	4.0667	4.2667	0.2000
* Doing well when I'm observed	3.4333	3.7333	0.3000
* Losing the respect of my peers	4.0333	4.0333	0.0000
* What the principal may think if there is too much noise in my classroom.	3.1333	3.4667	0.3334

**Table 4.**  
**The mean scores of the pre-post practicum responses and change scores for the set of items on task concerns**

<b>Task Concerns Items</b>	<b>pre</b>	<b>post</b>	<b>change</b>
* Too many standards and regulations	2.9000	3.3000	0.4000
* Insufficient time for rest and class preparation	3.1333	3.7000	0.5667
* Having too many students in class	3.3000	3.5000	0.2000
* Too many extra duties and responsibilities	3.2000	3.5000	0.3000
* Not having enough time to think and plan	3.2667	3.4333	0.1666
* Insufficient clerical help for teachers	2.7667	2.7333	0.0334
* Working with too many students each day	2.9333	3.0333	0.1000
* Inadequate assistance from specialized teachers	3.2333	3.3000	0.0667
* Not being able to cope with trouble makers	3.3667	3.8333	0.4666
* The inflexibility of the curriculum	3.1000	3.5333	0.4333
* The rigid instructional routine	3.3000	3.6000	0.3000
* My ability to work with disruptive students	3.6667	3.6667	0.0000
* The large number of administrative Interruptions	2.7333	3.0000	0.2667
* Lack of public support for schools	2.8667	3.4333	0.5666
* Not enough time for grading and testing	3.3333	3.4667	0.1334

A closer examination of the data demonstrates many significant insights into the changes in preservice teachers' concerns responses before and after the practicum course. As for the set of items on "self concerns", noticeable changes were detected between the

pre-post responses that were perceived by the preservice teachers to be highly influential on their survival in the classrooms. The results revealed that the student teachers became even more concerned about their ability to prepare adequate lesson plans, managing their time

efficiently, doing well when being observed, and what the principal might think if there is too much noise in their classroom. The findings of this analysis revealed a number of trends that are consistent with the study carried by Mau (1997) which revealed that the concerns of student teachers, after their first practicum, were about doing well and receiving favorable evaluation from their supervisors. The results are also in line with the research carried by Chan and Leung (1998) which pointed out that the prominent concerns of preservice teachers included class discipline, and being accepted by their pupils. The "self concerns" appeared to feature more

highly in the study carried by Kyriacou and Stephens (1999) which showed that the student teachers carried the notion of being able to act as "real teachers", and to be treated as a "real teachers" by the teachers and pupils in the school. However, the slight changes detected in most of the "self concerns" items indicate that those concerns were still maintained by the student teachers, even after the practicum courses. The low impact of the practicum program on student teachers' "self concerns" reveals the fact that the school administrators and the teachers continue to emphasize, to a certain extent, the concerns related to this area. (See Table 3).

**Table 5.**  
**The mean scores of the pre-post practicum responses and change scores**  
**for the set of items on impact concerns**

<b>Impact Concerns Items</b>	<b>pre</b>	<b>post</b>	<b>change</b>
* Whether each student is reaching his or her maximum potential	3.6333	3.9333	0.3000
* Understanding why certain students make slow progress	3.3333	3.8000	0.4667
* Meeting the needs of different kinds of students	3.2000	3.7333	0.5333
* Understanding what factors motivate students to study	3.4000	3.7333	0.3333
* Increasing students' feelings of accomplishment	3.6333	4.0333	0.4000
* Challenging unmotivated students	2.8000	3.4000	0.6000
* Recognizing the social and emotional needs of students	3.2667	3.8000	0.5333
* Understanding ways in which student health and nutrition problems might affect learning	2.8333	3.3000	0.4667
* Guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth	3.5333	3.7000	0.1667
* Understanding the psychological and cultural differences that underlie the diverse backgrounds of students in my class	3.1000	3.4333	0.3333
* Diagnosing students learning problems	3.1667	3.6333	0.4666
* Whether students can apply what they learn	3.5667	4.0333	0.4666
* Adapting myself to the needs of different students	3.2000	3.7667	0.5667
* Helping students to value learning	3.3667	3.9000	0.5333
* Seeking alternative ways to ensure students learn subject matter.	3.4333	4.1000	0.6667

With regard to the set of items on task concerns, student teachers' pre-post changes in response revealed that the student teachers are bothered most about the insufficient time for rest and class preparation, in addition to the too many duties and responsibilities. This might be due to the extra obligations assigned to the student teachers, which exceed the duties expected from the regular teachers; add to that, quite a number of student teachers were still taking courses at the university. Another noted concern has to deal with the student teachers' ability to cope with the trouble making pupils. The student teachers became more concerned about the matters related to the school discipline, the rigid curriculum and instructional routine, even the lack of public support for schools. This was revealed in the increased change in their concerns as detected in the items: "Too many standards and regulations", "The

inflexibility of the curriculum", "The rigid instructional routine" and "Lack of public support for schools". Conversely, the large number of students in the classroom, and the assistance expected from the specialized teachers did not seem to bother the student teachers any more. This points out to the fact that the training program that the teachers have experienced, and the support they acquired during the practicum course enhanced their confidence in their capabilities and rendered them more skillful in dealing with those matters more efficiently. Table (4) provides an organization for this discussion.

Remarkably, the changes that appeared to feature more highly, in this sample of students due to the practicum courses, were detected in most of the set of items on impact concerns. The changes can be attributable to the shift in concern towards the pupils. In

other words, the practicum courses period increased student teachers' concerns in the needs of the pupils, considering their individual differences, increasing their motivation toward learning, in addition to applying a variety of instructional methods. The results are in line with the research carried by Mau (1997) which revealed that student teachers' highest concerns after their first practicum course were meeting the needs of different kinds of students, challenging unmotivated students, whether each student is getting what he or she needs, and diagnosing student learning problems. The results reveal the fact that the practicum teacher training course was effective enough in shifting student teachers' concerns towards their pupils' needs. (See Table 5)

## 7. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study provides insights into the concerns encountered by student teachers during their practicum course. The findings revealed by this study indicate that the practicum course at the Hashemite University which operates, in cooperation with a number of schools in the vicinity of the city of Zarqa, had a noticeable effect on the concerns of student teachers. These findings can be realized through reflecting on what is taking place during the teaching practice program, where the main concern of the student teachers, as they begin teaching at schools, is to acquire the respect of the school administration, the teachers, and students. Normally, prospective teachers are regarded as students, who have not yet reached a progressive stage in their teaching practice. Even the pupils perceive them as less knowledgeable who lack the teaching skills possessed by their regular teachers. Moreover, the dissimilarity between the strict school discipline, where there is no forgiveness for negligence or absence etc., and the unbound environment at the University, where those restrictions are observed on a limited scale, might create a change in the quality of the student teacher's behavior, possibly, to a self centered person, trying to retain his balance and train himself for adjusting to a new environment, where his stamina can be justified.

Nevertheless, the student teachers are compelled to start off the teaching process, with the anticipation that their success could strengthen their self concept, and the hope that consequently the school conditions might emphasize their self concerns. Even though the student teachers' concerns were relatively not as much at the

beginning of their teaching practice, given that the image of what will come up was not evident prior to the teaching process. However, being involved in the teaching process exposed the student teachers to the particulars of instruction, the requirements sought, and the means of implementing them. Consequently, this in turn improved student teachers' awareness of those issues and eventually enhanced their self concerns

On the other hand, what applies to the task concerns pertain to both the impact and task concerns. Several student teachers perceive their role in teaching, merely in explaining the lesson to their students, without a feeling of commitment or responsibility. Initially, the student teachers were unsure of their ability to maintain control in the classroom, and considered that the pupils exhibit passive roles rather than being active participants in the learning process. When the student teacher is asked whether his pupils have benefited from the lecture, his answer would be that he has done what he has been asked to do, by explaining the lesson honestly, and what is left is the pupils' responsibility. Therefore, student teachers might have set those ideas prior to their training process through what they have seen and heard from their colleagues who have already taken the practical training courses before. Eventually, they became more concerned with the individual differences among the pupils and the means of motivating them. This might have been through developing a real awareness, during their training period, of the existence of individual differences among the pupils, and the need to put more effort towards drawing their attention and motivating them. Thus, the physical, mental, and emotional state of the student teacher plays an important role in the shift of focus from self to task to impact.

An examination of those concerns during the school practicum is also beneficial to the student teachers themselves. Research carried by Norris (1993) supports the concept of addressing the concerns of teachers when planning professional development activities. Student teachers need to be aware of their common concerns so they can develop a favorable professional image essential to good teaching. Furthermore, any change in concerns arising after the completion of the practicum program can offer the student teachers themselves more confidence and optimism towards teaching practice. Fostering and enhancing student teachers' optimism and confidence will assist them in addressing their concerns as they gain classroom experience. Moreover, the results can also be

used as a feedback to teacher educators and teacher education institutes to evaluate the function and adequacy of their practicum program in enhancing the development of fruitful and successful teaching practice experiences to student teachers.

In light of the results of this study, a number of recommendations could be suggested:

- 1) Academic supervisors and cooperating teachers should become fully aware of the concerns typically held by student teachers, as revealed in this study and the research literature.
- 2) Academic supervisors and cooperating teachers should advise their students how to deal with the concerns that do arise during their teaching practice, and offer them the support they need.

- 3) Since this study was conducted over a relatively short period of time, further studies should be carried on in order to determine the long-term effects of years of teaching on the concerns of student teachers.
- 4) The results of this study must be interpreted in a limited context, because it was conducted on a limited segment of student teachers. Therefore, particular caution should be taken in generalizing the findings of this study.
- 5) Finally, the data collected in this study suggest the need for additional research to be carried on more samples of student teachers from various fields of specialty, to ascertain the concerns that are common.

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