

7 Stages of Concern

The Concerns-Based Adoption Model outlines seven Stages of Concern that offer a way to understand and then address educators' common concerns about change.

Stage 0: Awareness

Aware that an innovation is being introduced but not really interested or concerned with it.

- ☐ "I am not concerned about this innovation."
- ☐ "I don't really know what this innovation involves."

Stage 1: Informational

Interested in some information about the change.

- ☐ "I want to know more about this innovation."
- ☐ "There is a lot I don't know about this but I'm reading and asking questions."

Stage 2: Personal

Wants to know the personal impact of the change.

- ☐ "How is this going to affect me?"
- ☐ "I'm concerned about whether I can do this."
- ☐ "How much control will I have over the way I use this?"

Stage 3: Management

Concerned about how the change will be managed in practice.

- ☐ "I seem to be spending all of my time getting materials ready."
- ☐ "I'm concerned that we'll be spending more time in meetings."
- ☐ "Where will I find the time to plan my lessons or take care of the record keeping required to do this well?"

Stage 4: Consequence

Interested in the impact on students or the school.

- ☐ "How is using this going to affect students?"
- ☐ "I'm concerned about whether I can change this in order to ensure that students will learn better as a result of introducing this idea."

Stage 5: Collaboration

Interested in working with colleagues to make the change effective.

- ☐ "I'm concerned about relating what I'm doing to what other instructors are doing."
- ☐ "I want to see more cooperation among teachers as we work with this innovation."

Stage 6: Refocusing

Begins refining the innovation to improve student learning results.

- ☐ "I have some ideas about something that would work even better than this."

"Everyone

thinks of

changing the

world, but no

one thinks of

changing

himself."

— Leo Tolstoy

Address Individual Concerns

To help bring about change, you first must know an individual's concerns. Then those concerns must be addressed. While there are no set formulas, here are some suggestions for addressing the stages of concern.

Stage 0: Awareness concerns

- ☐ If possible, involve teachers in discussions and decisions about the innovation and its implementation.
- ☐ Share enough information to arouse interest, but not so much it overwhelms.
- ☐ Acknowledge that a lack of awareness is expected and reasonable and that there are no foolish questions.

Stage 1: Informational concerns

- ☐ Provide clear and accurate information about the innovation.
- ☐ Use several ways to share information — verbally, in writing, and through available media. Communicate with large and small groups and individuals.
- ☐ Help teachers see how the innovation relates to their current practices — the similarities and the differences.

Stage 2: Personal concerns

- ☐ Legitimize the existence and expression of personal concerns.
- ☐ Use personal notes and conversations to provide encouragement and reinforce personal adequacy.
- ☐ Connect these teachers with others whose personal concerns have diminished and who will be supportive.

Stage 3: Management concerns

- ☐ Clarify the steps and components of the innovation.
- ☐ Provide answers that address the small specific “how-to” issues.
- ☐ Demonstrate exact and practical solutions to the logistical problems that contribute to these concerns.

Stage 4: Consequence concerns

- ☐ Provide individuals with opportunities to visit other settings where the innovation is in use and to attend conferences on the topic.
- ☐ Make sure these teachers are not overlooked. Give positive feedback and needed support.
- ☐ Find opportunities for these teachers to share their skills with others.

Stage 5: Collaboration concerns

- ☐ Provide opportunities to develop skills for working collaboratively.
- ☐ Bring together, from inside and outside the school, those who are interested in working collaboratively.
- ☐ Use these teachers to assist others.

Stage 6: Refocusing concerns

- ☐ Respect and encourage the interest these individuals have for finding a better way.
- ☐ Help these teachers channel their ideas and energies productively.
- ☐ Help these teachers access the resources they need to refine their ideas and put them into practice.

Source: *Taking Charge of Change*, by Shirley Hord, William Rutherford, Leslie Huling-Austin, and Gene Hall, ASCD, 1987.

“If we don’t
change the
direction we’re
going, we’re
likely to end up
where we are
headed.”

— Chinese proverb