

# **CRITICAL INCIDENTS IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT: HOW DO TEACHERS DEAL WITH THEM IN RELATION TO THEIR NEED FOR COGNITIVE CLOSURE?**



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## KEY CONSTRUCTS

- Critical incident
- Reflective improvement
- Classroom management
- Need for cognitive closure



## NEED FOR COGNITIVE CLOSURE

- One of the relatively stable dispositions that might affect perceptions, interpretation and decision making.
- Need to reach a quick conclusion in decision-making and an aversion to ambiguity and confusion (Djikic et al., 2013).
- Can be observed as preference and use of classroom management strategies.

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

System of strategies employed by a teacher to influence the social space of the classroom to foster an environment where *learning* can occur.

(Christofferson, Sullivan, & Bradley, 2015)



## Instructional vs. behavioural

- **IM:** aimed at well planned lessons and includes aspects of classroom life
  - such as establishing teaching goals, using educational methods, and monitoring students' independent work
- **BM:** preventing misbehaviour by setting rules as well as reaction to misbehaviour

(Martin & Sass, 2010)

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### Proactive vs. reactive

- **PS:** instructional interactions, teachers' scaffolding of students' self-regulation
- **RS:** disciplining of students

## CRITICAL INCIDENT

Discrepance between teacher's declared  
and performed teaching approach.



## CRITICAL INCIDENTS

- CI does not exist independently of the observer and wait to be discovered;
- Rather, CIs are created. CI is an **interpretation of the significance** of an event.

(Tripp, 1993, s. 8)

- It is a **surprising or problematic situation**.
- that **stimulates reflection** or a need to deal with the situation.

(Angelides, 2001)

# REFLECTIVE IMPROVEMENT

Švec et al.(2016) claim that observation, or even **reflection** lead to the formation of knowledge about these processes (e.g. teaching) and their possible improvement.

Therefore, there is strong presence of reflective practice in the **teachers' training**.

(Dieker & Monda-Amaya, 1997; Henry, 1999; Parkay, 2000; Yost & Sentner, 2000; Korthagen, 2001)



# STUDY



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do teachers deal with critical incidents according to their need for cognitive closure?
- How do teachers reflect critical incidents according to their need for cognitive closure?

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS

- Video-recording of lesson
- Interview
- *Behavioural and Instructional Management Scale*
- *Need for (Cognitive) Closure Scale*

# BEHAVIORAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT SCALE

BIMS (Martin & Sass, 2010)

- Likert type 6 point-scale
- 12 items (short version)
- Cronbach's alpha  
BM = 0,77, IM = 0,77

Czech version Vlckova, Jezek,  
Mares, Lojdova (2018)

- Cronbach's alpha (mentor  
teachers): BM = 0,79, IM =  
0,72

## **Behavioral management (6 items)**

- intervening when pupils talk
- redirecting pupils back to the topic
- insisting on following the rules

## **Instructional management (6 items)**

- encouraging interaction,  
collaborative learning, group work
- active discussion
- pupils input
- adjusting instruction to individual  
needs

## NEED FOR (COGNITIVE) CLOSURE SCALE

- NfCCS: Roets & Van Hiel (2011)
  - 15 items, 5 subscales
  - **Scale 1 – 5** (I strongly agree)
- Czech adaptation by Širůček (2014):  
Cronbach's alpha: 0,84

Order	<i>I think that having clear rules and order at work is essential for success.</i>
Predictability	<i>I enjoy the uncertainty of going into a new situation without knowing what might happen.</i>
Decisiveness	<i>I would describe myself as indecisive.</i>
Ambiguity	<i>I don't like situations that are uncertain.</i>
Closed mindedness	<i>I dislike questions which could be answered in many different ways.</i>



## SAMPLE

- 6 experienced teachers
- in 6 lower secondary comprehensive classes (ISCED 2A)
- in 6 schools in the Czech Republic
- from each teacher we videotaped 6 lessons
  - in Czech or History
  - teacher and pupils camera (36 video-recordings)

## NfCC, BM AND IM OF OUR PARTICIPANTS

Teacher	School	Subject	Grade	NfCC	IM	BM
<b>Jaroslav</b>	e	History	7	<b>4,13</b>	3,67	5,00
Jitka	b	History	8	3,40	4,50	5,33
Mirka	d	Czech	6	3,33	4,83	4,33
Jindřiška	f	History	9	2,93	5,83	4,67
Karin	a	History	8	2,73	5,50	4,50
<b>Iveta</b>	c	Czech	8	<b>2,73</b>	4,50	4,67
Reference sample				3,02	4,42	4,77

NfCC scale 1–5 (5 = I strongly agree)

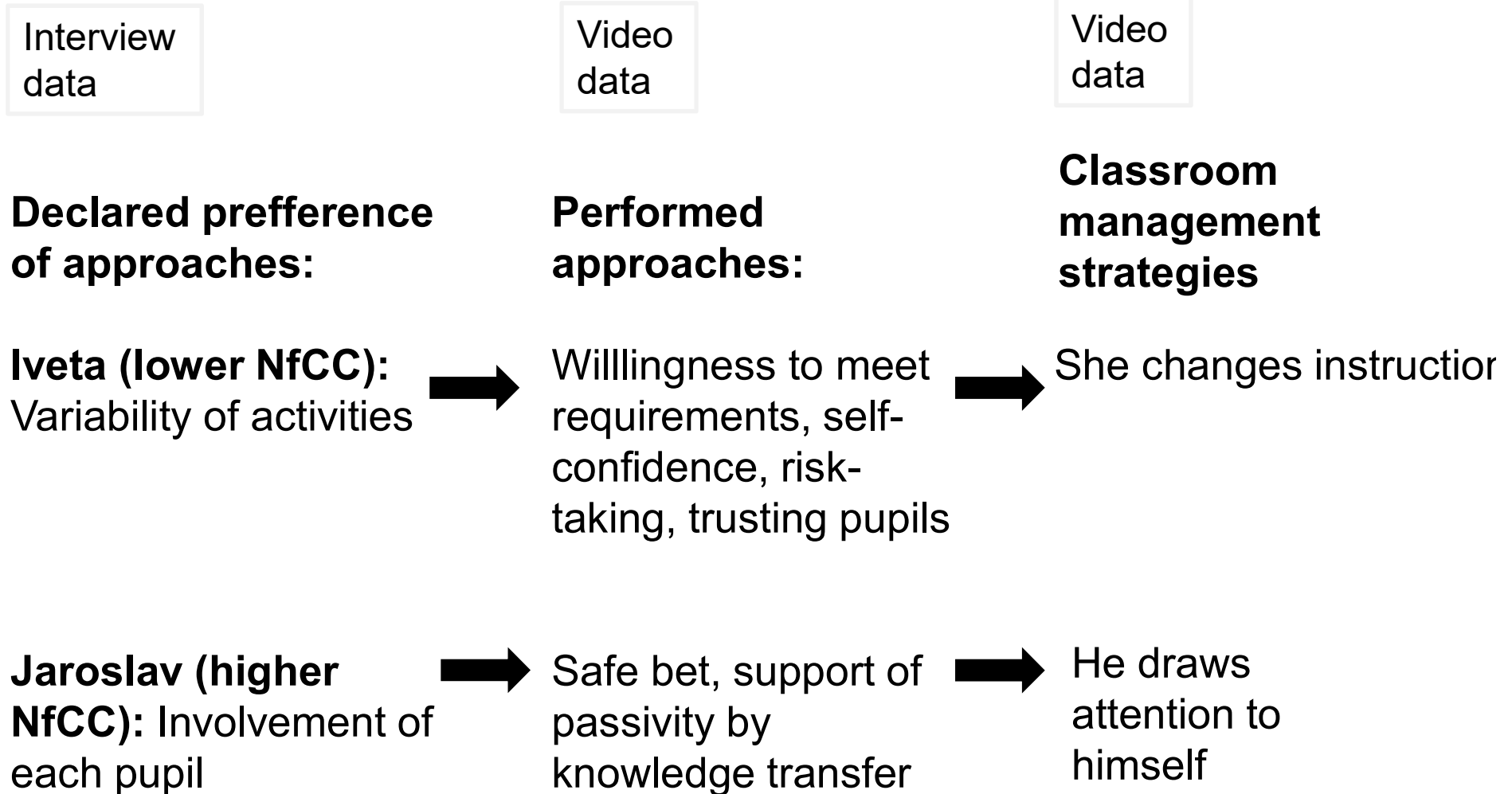
BIMS scale 1-6

# FINDINGS





# CRITICAL INCIDENTS



## CRITICAL INCIDENT AS A DISCREPANCY OF DECLARED AND PERFORMED APPROACHES

Interview  
data

Interview  
data

### DECLARED APPROACH



### PERFORMED APPROACH

#### Lower NfCC (Iveta):

„No problems in my classes.“



She intends to give space to each pupil. But nobody is saying anything.

Strategy to get out of this CI: Iveta asks Eliška.

#### Higher NfCC (Jaroslav):

„School climate must be built on.“



He wants to change activities, wants pupils' engagement. Vs. he supports pupils' passivity (they're writing, observing), he supports passivity while drawing attention to himself

# SUMMARY: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN CM ACCORDING TO NfCC

## Similarities

- Structured lessons
- Norms behind
- Evaluative approach
- Preference of frontal teaching
- IM unused chance

## Differences

Lower NfCC (Iveta):

- Openness to change
- Giving space to children without problematising whether they can manage it
- Solving when it is the case

Higher NfCC (Jaroslav):

- Underestimates pupils, not giving space for pupils' experimenting
  - excusing to external conditions, although knowing it is desirable to change the methods.

## SUMMARY: AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Lower NfCC (Iveta):

- Preference of transmissive approach and rituals
  - A need to support reflection of critical incidents in teachers' professional learning

Higher NfCC (Jaroslav):

- He lacks feedback
- Does not know he does not support environment for various learning styles
- He reproduces models
- He lacks an impulse for a change

## Discussion: Critical incidents and professional learning

- When there is discrepancy between past human experience and current situation, we are surprised, there is discrepancy in cognitive, emotional, and practical area (Jarvis, 2010). Where harmony occurs, there is no situation leading to learning (Jarvis, 2004).
- Teachers did not reflect/report the discrepancy between declared and performed approach.
- For teacher critical incidents (CI) are no topic, they don't talk about them (hidden CI).
- Missing reported reflection of CI (it is not CI for them)
- Conscious learning did not occur – chance in professional learning was not used.

## Limits of the study

- Case study: only two teachers in the QL part of the research (other personal variables can influence findings)
- Comparison of lower/middle and higher NfCC, not extremes
- NfCC is measured as declared approaches (effect of social desirability among teachers)
- NfCC is only one of the factors affecting CM
  - e.g. professional developmental phase

## Implications for Practice

Occasion for professional development of teachers:

- Working with discrepancy between declared and performed approach
- Video-feedback
- Lesson study
- Evidence-based approach

# Thank you for your attention!



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