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### Classroom Management Strategies of Student Teachers on Their Practice

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*Classroom management* (CM) can be viewed as a system of strategies employed by a teacher to influence the physical and social space of the classroom to foster an environment where *learning* can occur (Christofferson, Sullivan, & Bradley, 2015). *Classroom management skills* are crucial for teachers to create classroom settings where students can learn as effective CM leads to student high *achievement* (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011) and contributes to teacher remaining in the profession. The first years of teaching are usually reported to be the most challenging. Numbers of beginning teachers leave the profession during the first three years (Taylor & Dale, 1971; Veenman, 1984, Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). One of the biggest challenges faced by both *student teachers* and beginning teachers is struggling with CM and discipline (Bromfield, 2006; Dickson et al., 2014). The main reason is found to be the disconnection between what student teachers know about teaching from their teacher education and what they experience in their classrooms (Stoughton et al., 2007).

Research on CM is an established part of European and international educational sciences. A number of models of CM have been introduced in the last 40 years. One of the oldest but still developing theories is *ecological theory* (Brophy, 2006). According to it teachers establish rules in classrooms, routinize procedures, intervene to stop misbehaviour, and organise the physical conditions. *Process-outcome theories* emphasise CM as a series of processes undertaken by a teacher to promote *student engagement* (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006). The *behavioural approach* (as the predominant approach in the history) is grounded in *operant conditioning* and conceptualizes CM as *antecedent control*, *reinforcement strategies* and *behaviour plans* to shape student behaviour (Landrum & Kauffman, 2006) and *behaviour alteration techniques* (Paulsel, 2004).

Nowadays there is growing emphasis on the use of *positive behaviour supports* rather than exclusionary discipline strategies to promote a positive classroom environment (Mitchell, Bradshaw, & Knoff, 2013). Theory of CM works with a distinction between *reactive strategies* (connected with disciplining of students) and *proactive strategies* (enacted through instructional interactions, teachers' scaffolding of *students' self-regulation*) (Wallace, Sung, & Williams, 2014).

Although the importance of effective CM is repeatedly emphasised, there is only little research on CM *strategies* of student teachers or beginning teachers. Contemporary research shows that teachers use reactive strategies more often than proactive ones at the beginning of their careers (Reupert & Woodcock, 2010), and that student teachers also apply strategies of giving punishment for misbehaviour and giving rewards to positive behaviour more often than experienced teachers (Sueb, 2013). Experienced teachers exert less control over classroom activities and student behaviour than beginning teachers (Ritter & Hancock, 2007).

The state of the art needs to be enriched by *evidence-based theories* which should enrich curricula of teacher education, contribute to better understanding of classroom setting, and prevent novice teachers from leaving their profession. International research determined that *CM training* can impact teachers' attitudes toward CM (Martin, Yin, & Baldwin, 1998). Nevertheless, training in CM is not sufficient in student teacher education in most of the developed countries, not only in Europe. Many beginning teachers report lack of CM in their training (Jackson et al., 2013). Teacher education is often focused on isolated elements of CM such as establishing classroom rules, their application, pacing and eye contact whereas teachers may fail to develop general principles for their application (Schmidt, 2006). In many European countries an ongoing process of development of *Teacher's Profession Quality Standards* taking place, where CM represents an important part of teacher professionalism. In this era of educational policy development we would like to contribute to the concept of CMS by an evidence-based theory coming from our research.

#### Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used

##### Objectives

The aim of the research is to describe in detail classroom management strategies (CMS) of student teachers (pre-service teachers) on their long term teaching practice in lower secondary classes.

##### Research questions

- (1) Which CMS do student teachers use in lower secondary classes? How do their students react to these CMS?
- (2) Are student teachers able to verbalise CMS they use and why do they use them? How do they perceive and evaluate their effects?
- (3) What conceptions of CMS do they have? What CMS do they reflect on as effective? How are their conceptions mirrored in the CMS they use?
- (4) How do individual characteristics (e.g. cognitive closure) influence the conceptualisation and use of CMS?

##### Methods

The research is based on an integrated mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The main, qualitative part of the research is designed as field research based on ethnographic research design. Its aim is to describe conceptions (via interviews and reflective teaching diaries) and use (via observation with video recordings and its transcription) of CMS of student teachers. The quantitative part of the research includes (a) examination of quantitative parameters gathered via video recordings of lessons such as the types of CMS, behaviour alteration messages and techniques, discipline mechanisms, instructional techniques, student negotiation techniques and (b) statistical analyses of survey data regarding CMS and individual characteristics of student teachers such as the need for (cognitive) closure. CMS were measured by adapted Behavior and Instructional Management Scale – BIMS (Martin & Sasse, 2010) and need for cognitive closure by adapted Need for (Cognitive) Closure Scale – NFCS (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011). NFCS consists of 15 items with 6-point Likert type ratings measuring 5 sub-scales: desire for predictability, preference of order and structure, discomfort with ambiguity, decisiveness, and close-mindedness.

##### Sample

Sample consists of eight student teachers from M.A. university programme for teachers on their long term practice in eight lower secondary comprehensive classes from seven schools (ISCED 2A) in the Czech Republic. From each student teacher we videotaped (teacher camera, students' camera) six lessons taught in Czech language, History or Civics in one class and conducted an interview and questionnaire and reflective diaries data collection.

#### Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings

We are currently analysing data. Videorecordings and in-depth interviews were transcribed, and together with teaching diaries analysed in Atlas.ti – coded via thematic and open coding. Analytical procedures of constant comparison and analytical induction are applied on event sampling. Quantitative data from the two scales are analysed and connected with the qualitative data.

The preliminary findings show that CMS of student teachers are naturally set in the instructional framework of mentor teachers who support them on their long term teaching practice where student teachers overtake the mentor teacher's classes and partly their teaching styles as well. As the student teachers don't know the class as well as the regular teacher, it is more difficult for them to regulate the class learning processes and behaviour. Student teachers struggle with use of new CMS which sometimes results in chaotic situations in the class. We describe these unexpected situations and reaction of students to these situations in terms of reactive CMS.

In terms of proactive classroom management strategies, we focus on typology of student teachers. According to criteria of power of student teacher in the classroom, we distinguish centralised and decentralised power settings. According to criteria of instructional focus of student teacher, we distinguish focus on learning content and focus on students. The combination of these criteria brings together four CMS of student teachers: centralised power focused on student, centralised power focused on learning content, decentralised power focused on student, decentralised power focused on learning content. We discuss these CMS in the context of their effects. This theory could be beneficial in student teacher education in European countries, because novice teachers share resembling situation within this context.

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