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

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Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
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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)
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Proactive vs. reactive

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

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)
CRITICAL INCIDENT

Discrepancy 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)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral management (6 items)</th>
<th>Instructional management (6 items)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• intervening when pupils talk</td>
<td>• encouraging interaction,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• redirecting pupils back to the</td>
<td>collaborative learning, group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>topic</td>
<td>work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• insisting on following the</td>
<td>• active discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rules</td>
<td>• pupils input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• adjusting instruction to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individual needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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

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

NfCC scale 1–5 (5 = I strongly agree)

BIMS scale 1-6
FINDINGS
CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Declared preference of approaches:

Iveta (lower NfCC): Variability of activities

Performed approaches:

Jaroslav (higher NfCC): Involvement of each pupil

Classroom management strategies:

Willingness to meet requirements, self-confidence, risk-taking, trusting pupils

Safe bet, support of passivity by knowledge transfer

She changes instruction

He draws attention to himself
CRITICAL INCIDENT AS A DISCREPANCY OF DECLARED AND PERFORMED APPROACHES

DECLARED APPROACH

Lower NfCC (Iveta): „No problems in my classes.“

Higher NfCC (Jaroslav): „School climate must be built on.“

PERFORMED APPROACH

She intends to give space to each pupil. But nobody is saying anything.
Strategy to get out of this CI: Iveta asks Eliška.

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 desiderability 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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Přinášíme nové myšlenky, inspirujeme lidi kolem nás