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Critical Incidents in Classes: How Do Teachers Deal with Them in Relation to Their Need for Cognitive Closure?
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Research question
How do teachers deal with critical incidents according to their need for cognitive closure?

Methodology, Methods, Research Instruments or Sources Used
The research is based on an integrated mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The main, qualitative part is designed as field research based on an ethnographic research design. It includes an analysis of video recordings of lessons in relation to critical incidents (e.g. classroom problem behaviour, non-communication, academic cheating) and analysis of interviews via open coding (perception of critical incidents and their importance for professional growth).

The quantitative part is based on statistical analyses of survey data regarding teacher’s need for cognitive closure by the adapted Need for (Cognitive) Closure Scale – NfCS (Roets & Van Hiel, 2011; Czech version Širůček, 2014). NfCS consists of 15 items with six-point Likert type ratings measuring five sub-scales: desire for predictability, preference of order and structure, discomfort with ambiguity, decisiveness, and close-mindedness.

The sample consists of six experienced teachers in six lower secondary comprehensive classes in six different schools (ISCED 2A) in the Czech Republic. From each teacher we videotaped (teacher camera, student camera) six lessons taught in subjects of Czech Language, Civics or History, conducted an interview, and administered the NfCS questionnaire.

Conclusions, Expected Outcomes or Findings
Need for cognitive closure (NfC) affects teachers' behaviour in critical incidents and perception of critical incidents in their professional growth. We describe three types of teachers: with low, middle, and high NfC and show their behaviour in critical incidents and their perception of critical incidents. The findings can be beneficial in further teacher education in European countries, because teachers are exposed to similar situations within this context. The paper emphasises importance of critical incidents in professional development and explains how they are perceived according to the NfC.

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References


