Assessing adaptive professional decision making in dynamic conflict situations among prospective primary school teachers

Dilkhumor Mirzabdullaeva
ORCID: 0000-0003-0505-8378
d.mirzabdullayeva@kiut.uz
Kimyo International University in Tashkent

Abstract: This article develops a conceptual framework for assessing adaptive professional decision making among prospective primary school teachers in dynamic conflict situations. Its focus is the quality of the transition from an initial decision to a subsequent response when relevant information changes. A focused conceptual analysis connects research on situation-specific competence, professional noticing, simulation-based learning, feedback, and transfer with the design of staged pedagogical cases. The proposed assessment framework distinguishes evidence recognition, reinterpretation, alternative evaluation, justified decision revision or retention, and independent transfer. An illustrative teacher-parent conflict demonstrates how successive information updates can make the reasoning process visible. The article proposes an analytic rubric, a decision-record format, and a prospective validation strategy. These are methodological proposals rather than validated instruments or empirical findings. The central argument is that adaptability should be assessed through the appropriateness and justification of a response to changing evidence, rather than through the frequency of changing an answer. The framework is intended to inform teacher education and subsequent empirical investigation in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: adaptive decision making, prospective primary school teachers, dynamic conflict situations, pedagogical assessment, professional reflection, decision revision, transfer of learning

Introduction. Primary school teachers make professional decisions in situations where the available account of an event may be incomplete. A disagreement initially presented as a problem of classroom discipline can subsequently involve peer exclusion, an inaccessible task, a misunderstanding with a parent, or inconsistent communication between adults. Preparing prospective teachers for such situations requires opportunities to explain how a decision depends on evidence and when its assumptions should be reconsidered.

A single written response to a complete case offers limited evidence about this process. It may reveal whether a student can formulate an acceptable recommendation, but it does not necessarily show how that recommendation changes when the situation develops. Conversely, repeated answer changes can reflect uncertainty or compliance with a tutor rather than professional adaptability. Assessment therefore needs to capture both continuity of professional principles and responsiveness to relevant new information.

The competence-continuum perspective connects underlying dispositions with situation-specific perception, interpretation, and decision making and with observable performance [1]. This provides a conceptual basis for examining intermediate reasoning rather than relying exclusively on knowledge tests. The present article asks how justified revision or retention of a pedagogical decision can be made observable and assessed in staged conflict cases.

The article proposes a framework for prospective primary school teachers, with an intended application in Uzbekistan. It does not establish the prevalence of any particular deficit among Uzbek students, claim that existing case methods are ineffective, or report a completed intervention.

Its contribution is a specific assessment design that can be examined through expert review, piloting, and subsequent controlled evaluation.

Discussion. The conceptual analysis draws selectively on six established publications addressing competence, noticing, practice-oriented teacher education, simulations, feedback, and transfer. They were selected for their relevance to successive steps in the proposed assessment process. This is a focused theoretical synthesis, not a systematic review: no exhaustive search, formal screening protocol, or pooled estimate was undertaken. The analytical procedure was to identify constructs relevant to changing situations, translate them into observable student actions, and connect those actions with assessment tasks.

Research on professional noticing offers a useful distinction between observing an event and interpreting its educational significance [2]. For the present framework, noticing is operationalized as identifying which new details challenge an earlier assumption. A student who repeats the latest information without explaining its relevance has demonstrated recall, but not yet the reasoning required for an adaptive response. This operationalization is an author-proposed application of noticing to conflict assessment.

Practice-oriented teacher education provides a rationale for making professional actions available for rehearsal and discussion [3]. In the proposed design, students rehearse bounded decisions such as opening a conversation with a parent, checking an interpretation of a child's behavior, or selecting an immediate classroom response. Each action is linked to the evidence available at that moment. This makes the task manageable while preserving the relationship between interpretation and action.

Simulation-based learning research supports using simulated situations to practice complex skills in higher education [4]. However, this broader evidence cannot by itself demonstrate the effectiveness of the specific rubric proposed here or its suitability for Uzbek primary teacher education. A staged written case is therefore treated as a feasible assessment format whose properties still need to be investigated, rather than as an established superior method.

Feedback is relevant because students need information about the relationship between their reasoning and the task requirements. Hattie and Timperley distinguish feedback directed at the task, process, self-regulation, and person [5]. Applied here, feedback should address an overlooked assumption or an unsupported inference instead of merely describing the student as flexible or inflexible. Such feedback is appropriate during learning; it must be withheld during an independent assessment if the aim is to observe unaided performance.

Transfer is a separate assessment problem. Barnett and Ceci show why claims about transfer require attention to changes in content and context [6]. Success on a case already discussed with a tutor cannot establish independent application to a new conflict. The proposed design therefore includes an unfamiliar case and specifies which contextual features differ from training. Performance on that case would support a bounded claim about transfer across those features, not an unrestricted claim about professional behavior in schools.

Results and Analysis. The result of this conceptual work is an assessment architecture, not a set of measured learning gains. Adaptive professional decision making is defined here as the ability to maintain or revise a professional response in proportion to relevant changes in evidence while preserving pedagogical justification and concern for the child. Its object is the decision trajectory: what the student initially assumed, what new information became available, and how the resulting response was justified.

The proposed assessment sequence begins with an initial case containing sufficient information for a provisional response but leaving realistic uncertainty. The student records a

decision, reasons, assumptions, and information that should be checked. A second stage introduces a consequential update. The student then identifies which assumptions remain defensible, compares alternatives, and decides whether to revise or retain the earlier response. A final unfamiliar case tests independent application after learning support has been removed.

Information updates should vary in relevance. If every new detail requires a different answer, students may learn to change their response automatically. Some updates should alter the appropriate action; others should warrant clarification while leaving the main response defensible. Scoring must therefore reward sensitivity to evidence rather than movement toward a preselected final answer. More than one professionally defensible response may receive a high rating if its justification fits the evidence.

An illustrative case concerns a parent who complains that a teacher unfairly criticized a child for interrupting a lesson. At the first stage, a prospective teacher may propose a private conversation, an account of what occurred, and clarification of classroom expectations. This can be reasonable as a provisional plan, provided that the student does not assume the complaint or the teacher's interpretation is necessarily complete.

At the second stage, the case states that several classmates had repeatedly mocked the child before the interruption. A stronger response now examines peer behavior and the child's experience, considers immediate protective support, and reconsiders any sanction based on the earlier account. Merely adding a friendly phrase to the original response would not address the changed interpretation. Nevertheless, the student can reasonably retain the decision to meet privately with the parent while revising the purpose and content of that meeting.

At a third stage, the parent asks the teacher to publish the other children's names in a class messaging group. A defensible response should address the concern through appropriate school communication and procedures while avoiding unnecessary disclosure about children. This stage tests whether the student can adapt the proposed action while maintaining a consistent professional boundary. The case is an instructional illustration; it is not a report of a real family or a statement of jurisdiction-specific legal requirements.

A compact decision record can contain six prompts: What is my current decision? What evidence supports it? What am I assuming? What changed? What alternative did I consider? Why should I retain or revise the action? Students complete the first three prompts before an update and the remaining prompts afterward. Keeping the earlier response visible prevents retrospective rewriting and makes the relationship between stages assessable.

The proposed analytic rubric includes five dimensions. Evidence recognition concerns distinguishing consequential information from incidental detail. Reinterpretation concerns explaining how a new detail affects the causal account or an assumption. Alternative evaluation concerns comparing feasible responses and their likely consequences. Decision justification concerns the proportionality and coherence of revision or retention. Professional responsibility concerns attention to the child's interests, respectful communication, and the limits of the teacher's role.

Each dimension can provisionally be rated from 0 to 3. A score of 0 indicates absent or contradictory evidence; 1 indicates recognition without a sufficiently connected explanation; 2 indicates a substantially appropriate explanation with a material omission; and 3 indicates an explicit, coherent response linked to the case evidence. These generic anchors require dimension-specific examples before use. For instance, high evidence recognition means identifying the update that matters and explaining its relevance, whereas high alternative evaluation means comparing feasible actions rather than simply listing them.

The five ratings produce a provisional profile from 0 to 15 for an assessed decision episode. The total is a convenient summary, not an established scale. No diagnostic cutoffs or claims of low, medium, or high competence are justified without validation. Scores from successive stages should be retained separately so that a strong final response does not erase unsupported reasoning earlier in the case. Independent transfer should also be reported separately rather than concealed within the training score.

Implementation does not require artificial intelligence. Sequential paper envelopes, role-play cards, or a basic digital form can present updates and preserve decisions. A digital format may simplify recording but does not establish assessment validity. During instruction, a tutor can ask students to identify the evidence behind their choices and then gradually reduce prompts. During assessment, students should receive the same instructions and information schedule, with no individualized hints.

For an Uzbek teacher education setting, case development should begin with consultation involving teacher educators and practicing primary teachers. Review should examine whether the language is accessible, whether the situation is recognizable, and whether a response can be implemented within the teacher's role. Uzbek-language cases may be developed first and then reviewed in other languages used by the participating program. Cultural relevance should be examined through local feedback rather than assumed from broad claims about national character.

Validation should proceed before strong interpretation of scores. Expert review can examine alignment between the construct, tasks, and rubric. Cognitive interviews can explore how students understand the updates and scoring prompts. A small pilot can identify floor or ceiling effects, excessive writing demands, and ambiguous anchors. Independent raters should then score the same responses, discuss disagreements during training, and report reliability on a separate set of scripts. An intraclass correlation can be considered for defensible composite scores, while an appropriate weighted agreement statistic can be considered for ordinal dimension ratings.

A subsequent intervention study should compare the proposed method with an equally demanding case-based condition using comparable contact time. A stronger comparison would hold the case content and amount of feedback as constant as feasible while varying staged disclosure and explicit reflection on revision. Baseline, immediate post-intervention, and delayed unfamiliar-case assessments would help distinguish initial learning from retention and bounded transfer. Where intact classes are used, allocation and analysis should account for clustering and baseline differences. Sample size should be justified prospectively, and scorers should be unaware of group membership where feasible.

Several limitations remain. Written explanations depend partly on language and writing skill; recording length should therefore be controlled and oral responses considered when appropriate. Hypothetical performance does not establish effective action under real interpersonal pressure. A rubric can also reward polished terminology unless anchors require explicit connections to evidence. Finally, professional decision quality cannot always be reduced to a single preferred answer. These limitations require cautious score interpretation and later comparison with supervised practice observations.

Conclusion. Assessment of adaptive professional decision making should examine how prospective primary school teachers respond to consequential changes in a conflict situation. The proposed framework makes that process visible through staged disclosure, preserved decision records, analytic ratings, and an unfamiliar transfer task. Its defining distinction is between justified adaptation and answer changing without adequate reasons.

The framework offers a concrete basis for developing and testing assessment tasks in teacher education in Uzbekistan. Its rubric, scoring anchors, and implementation sequence remain proposals requiring local review and empirical validation. If subsequent evidence supports their reliability and validity, they may help teacher educators identify which aspect of reasoning needs support: recognizing evidence, reconsidering an interpretation, evaluating alternatives, or justifying a professional response.

References

1. Blömeke, S., Gustafsson, J.-E., & Shavelson, R. J. (2015). Beyond dichotomies: Competence viewed as a continuum. Zeitschrift für Psychologie, 223(1), 3–13. https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000194

2. van Es, E. A., & Sherin, M. G. (2002). Learning to notice: Scaffolding new teachers' interpretations of classroom interactions. Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 10(4), 571–596. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ666536

3. Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. Teachers and Teaching, 15(2), 273–289. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340

4. Chernikova, O., Heitzmann, N., Stadler, M., Holzberger, D., Seidel, T., & Fischer, F. (2020). Simulation-based learning in higher education: A meta-analysis. Review of Educational Research, 90(4), 499–541. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320933544

5. Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. Review of Educational Research, 77(1), 81–112. https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

6. Barnett, S. M., & Ceci, S. J. (2002). When and where do we apply what we learn? A taxonomy for far transfer. Psychological Bulletin, 128(4), 612–637. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.128.4.612

7. Mirzabdullaeva, D. E. (2020). Ways and methods of resolving pedagogical conflicts betweenteachers and students in a modern school. European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences, 8(12), 242–244.

8. Мирзабдуллаева, Д. Э. (2016). Конфликты в подростковом возрасте и пути их разрешения. NovaInfo.Ru, 2(45), 305–310.

9. Mirzabdullaeva, D. E. (2019). Socio-perceptual regulators and reflexive context are localized in adolescents. Вестник магистратуры, № 4-4, с. 91.

10. Мирзабдуллаева, Д., Лутфетдинова, Р. (2014). Способы эффективного взаимодействия учителя при конфликтных ситуациях. В Институты и механизмы инновационного развития: мировой опыт и российская практика (с. 269–271).

11. Мирзабдуллаева, Д. "Личностные факторы как детерминанты возникновения конфликтов и методы их диагностики." Актуальные вопросы развития современного общества. 2014.

12. Мирзабдуллаева, Дилхумор Эркиновна. "Здоровая психологическая среда в ученическом коллективе как фактор воспитания здорового поколения." Состояние здоровья: медицинские, социальные и психолого-педагогические аспекты. 2017.