

Designing dynamic conflict cases to develop adaptive professional decision making in prospective primary school teachers

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Abstract: This article proposes design principles for dynamic conflict cases in the professional preparation of prospective primary school teachers. The central design problem is how to introduce new information that changes the grounds for a decision without turning the case into a guessing exercise. A focused conceptual synthesis connects pedagogical conflict analysis, situation-specific competence, practice-oriented teacher education, and simulation-based learning. The resulting design framework specifies an initial conflict, a provisional decision, consequential and non-consequential updates, a justified response, and a structured debriefing. Two illustrative case sequences address classroom participation and teacher-parent disagreement. Particular attention is given to evidence quality, the feasibility of alternatives, and the distinction between professional flexibility and compliance with external pressure. The framework can be implemented through paper materials, role play, or simple digital tools. It is presented as a methodological proposal requiring local review and empirical validation, rather than as an intervention with established effectiveness. Its intended contribution is to make the construction of changing pedagogical situations explicit and reproducible in teacher education.

Keywords: dynamic conflict cases, primary teacher education, adaptive professional decision making, case design, pedagogical conflict, staged disclosure, professional judgment

Introduction. A pedagogical conflict is rarely experienced as a complete account with all relevant facts available at the same moment. A teacher may hear a complaint, observe an interruption, or receive a message from a parent before understanding the circumstances behind it. Professional preparation should therefore give students opportunities to make provisional decisions and reconsider the evidence on which those decisions depend. The educational task is to develop reasoned responsiveness while maintaining consistent professional responsibilities.

Mirzabdullaeva discusses conflict competence as part of teacher preparation and emphasizes attention to participants' perspectives, avoidance of premature

conclusions, and respectful interaction [1]. These recommendations establish continuity with the present work. The proposed extension concerns the construction of learning tasks: the case deliberately changes after a student's initial response, enabling the instructor to examine how that response is reconsidered. The earlier publication does not establish the effectiveness of this particular design.

The article addresses the following question: which properties should a dynamic conflict case possess if it is intended to elicit adaptive professional decision making? The focus is the design of the task itself, rather than a new diagnostic scale. The intended users are teacher educators preparing students for primary school practice, including programs in Uzbekistan. No claim is made that sequential case presentation is a previously unknown instructional method.

Discussion. The method is a focused conceptual synthesis of four publications selected for their relevance to conflict competence, situation-specific performance, professional rehearsal, and simulation. The synthesis links their broad constructs to design requirements. It is not a systematic review and does not estimate the prevalence of particular teaching practices or the comparative effectiveness of available methods. The illustrative cases are author-developed teaching materials, not empirical observations.

The competence-continuum perspective locates perception, interpretation, and decision making between underlying dispositions and observable performance [2]. Applied to case design, this suggests that a task should elicit more than a final recommendation. It should reveal which information the student noticed and how the information was interpreted. An initial response alone cannot show whether the student would remain responsive when an assumption becomes untenable.

Practice-oriented teacher education provides a rationale for rehearsing professional actions in manageable forms [3]. A conflict case can narrow the task to an opening conversational move, an immediate classroom response, or a decision about what information to obtain. The learner can then explain the choice before encountering a complication. This bounded approach is intended to reduce the demand to solve every institutional and interpersonal issue at once.

Research on simulation-based learning supports the broader educational value of practice and instructional support in simulated professional situations [4]. It does not determine the ideal number of updates in a primary school conflict case. The two-update sequence proposed below is a practical starting point for piloting, and its complexity should be adjusted using evidence about student understanding and task demands.

Results and Analysis. The proposed design framework has six elements: a professional objective, an initial situation, a recorded provisional response, a planned information update, a reasoned continuation, and a debriefing. Each element serves a

distinct function. The professional objective defines what is to be practiced. The initial situation supplies enough evidence for a defensible action. Recording the response preserves the assumptions that can later be examined. Updates create a controlled change, while continuation and debriefing make the student's reasoning available for discussion.

The first design principle is consequentiality. An update should have a specified relationship to the earlier decision. It may change the explanation of behavior, reveal a practical constraint, or introduce a participant's previously unknown perspective. Case authors should state in advance which assumption the update is expected to challenge. Adding dramatic detail without a decision-relevant function can distract students and make scoring inconsistent.

The second principle is uncertainty with sufficient information. The initial stage should not conceal an essential fact solely to make the student appear wrong. Instead, it should allow a reasonable provisional response and invite the student to identify what remains unknown. A student who proposes a respectful conversation while withholding judgment should not be penalized because later information confirms the need for that caution.

The third principle is variation in relevance. Not every update should demand a new decision. Some details can leave the central action appropriate, although they may require clarification. Including these details prevents an implicit rule that the latest statement must always override an earlier one. A strong continuation explains either why a revision is warranted or why retention remains defensible.

The fourth principle is feasible plurality. More than one response can be professionally acceptable. The case guide should identify defensible alternatives and unacceptable reasoning, rather than prescribe a single sentence that all students must reproduce. Feasibility includes available classroom time, access to relevant colleagues, and the teacher's actual role. A solution dependent on resources absent from the scenario should be identified as conditional.

The first illustrative sequence concerns unequal participation in a group assignment. Initially, a parent complains that a child was excluded from presenting the group's work. Students decide how to respond and identify information needed before attributing responsibility. A defensible provisional action is to acknowledge the concern and examine how participation was organized, without promising a particular conclusion.

The first update reveals that the child declined an oral presentation because the instructions were not understood. The student should reconsider an interpretation based only on peer exclusion and propose clarification of instructions and accessible participation. The update does not prove that peers behaved appropriately; the response should distinguish what has become known from what remains uncertain.

The second update states that the parent wants the other children publicly criticized. Students must now decide how to address the complaint while preserving respectful communication and avoiding unnecessary public exposure.

A second illustrative sequence concerns a repeated interruption during independent work. Initially, the teacher is considering moving a pupil to a different seat. The first update indicates that the pupil could not read the task instructions from the current position. The action may therefore be retained while its justification changes: relocation can support access rather than function as punishment. This sequence is useful because adaptive reasoning is expressed through a revised explanation, even when the visible action remains similar.

The next update adds that a classmate made a dismissive remark. This information calls for attention to classroom interaction, but does not automatically eliminate the access problem. Students should consider combined actions and avoid replacing one oversimplified explanation with another. The debriefing can compare responses that address only the latest detail with responses that integrate the available evidence.

For each case, the instructor prepares a compact design record. It identifies the learning objective, information available at each stage, assumptions potentially challenged, feasible alternatives, and prompts for debriefing. A useful prompt asks which earlier assumption has changed and what consequence follows for action. Another asks what evidence would justify maintaining the initial response. These prompts make the case reproducible across teaching groups.

The delivery medium should follow the educational purpose. Paper envelopes allow sequential disclosure with minimal preparation. Role play adds conversational demands but requires consistent instructions for the person playing a parent or child. A digital form can preserve responses and release later sections. None of these formats requires generative artificial intelligence, and greater technical complexity should not be assumed to produce better learning.

Local adaptation should involve practicing primary teachers and teacher educators. Reviewers can examine the plausibility of classroom details, the accessibility of language, and the appropriateness of proposed actions. In Uzbekistan, cases may be written in Uzbek and reviewed in the other languages used in the program. A local setting should be represented through recognizable educational conditions rather than broad assumptions about how all families behave.

Quality assurance should precede effectiveness testing. Expert review can establish whether each update challenges the intended assumption. Student interviews can reveal whether the language supplies accidental clues or creates avoidable confusion. A pilot can examine completion time and the range of defensible answers. Subsequent evaluation should compare the design with a suitable alternative,

controlling case content and learning time where feasible. Written-case performance should eventually be examined alongside supervised practice; the two forms of evidence are not interchangeable.

Conclusion. Dynamic conflict cases can be designed around a transparent relationship between changing evidence and professional action. Their defining feature is not the number of complications but the opportunity to explain why a response should change or remain defensible. Consequential updates, preserved initial reasoning, feasible alternatives, and structured debriefing constitute the proposed design framework.

The framework extends attention to conflict competence into a concrete method for constructing learning tasks. Its contribution is a set of operational design choices and illustrative sequences. Their educational effectiveness, cultural suitability, and appropriate complexity require empirical investigation. A next step is to develop a reviewed case bank and pilot it with prospective primary school teachers before drawing conclusions about learning gains.

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