

	ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER PROFESSIONAL JUDGEMENT FOR SUPPORTING STUDENT WELL-BEING AND LEARNING	Education KEY WORDS: Professional Judgement, Student Well-Being, Student Learning, Student-Centered Decision-Making, Reflective Practice
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ABSTRACT	Professional judgement is an essential component of effective teaching because teachers continuously make decisions in complex classroom situations. The present paper examines the role of professional judgement in supporting student well-being and meaningful learning. The study is theoretical and review-based, developed through an analysis of national and international literature related to professional judgement, reflective practice, teacher decision-making, and student-centered education. The paper is mainly guided by Donald Schon's Reflective Practitioner Theory, which explains that professional judgement develops through reflection, experience, and adaptive practice. The paper focuses on understanding professional judgement, its role in student well-being, meaningful learning, student-centered decision-making, and the factors influencing it in classrooms. The reviewed literature indicates that professional judgement is a reflective, ethical, and context-sensitive process that supports inclusive learning environments, fair assessment, learner engagement, emotional support, and responsive teaching practices. The findings further show that reflective experience, ethical values, institutional climate, diagnostic competence, and professional learning opportunities influence professional judgement. The paper concludes that professional judgement is essential for effective teaching and holistic student development.
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INTRODUCTION In present-day education, teaching is recognized as a complex professional activity that requires continuous decision-making in diverse classroom situations. Teachers face challenges related to student learning differences, emotional needs, classroom behavior, assessment, and institutional expectations. Therefore, effective teaching depends not only on pedagogical knowledge but also on thoughtful, ethical, and context-sensitive decision-making. This ability is known as professional judgement, which helps teachers understand classroom realities, balance educational demands, and support student learning and development (Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Bruniges, 2007). The importance of professional judgement has increased because modern classrooms are becoming more diverse and learner-centered. Standardized approaches often fail to address students' academic, emotional, and social needs. Donald Schon (1991) explained that professional judgement develops through reflective practice and experience-based learning. Professional judgement is closely connected with student well-being and meaningful learning because teachers' decisions influence motivation, confidence, participation, and learning opportunities. Studies by Cordula Artelt (2016) and Dirk Urhahne with Liesbeth Wijnia (2020) showed that teacher judgement affects assessment, feedback, and instructional decisions. The present paper examines professional judgement, student well-being, meaningful learning, student-centered decision-making, and the factors influencing professional judgement in classrooms. Literature Review The present paper is based on a review of national and international studies related to professional judgement, reflective practice, teacher decision-making, student well-being, meaningful learning, and student-centered education. The reviewed literature provided a theoretical foundation for understanding how teachers make reflective, ethical, and context-sensitive decisions in classrooms and how these decisions influence student learning and development. Studies by George Josef Schick (1959), Richard J. Shavelson and Pamela Stern (1981), and Cordula Artelt (2016) explained that professional judgement involves cognitive reasoning, classroom interpretation, diagnostic competence, and instructional decision-making. Donald Schon (1991) emphasized reflective practice and argued that professional	judgement develops through experience and continuous reflection. Research by Margaret Bruniges (2007), Edward S. Dottin (2008), and Anat Becher (2025) highlighted the ethical and student-centered nature of professional judgement. Studies by Dirk Urhahne and Liesbeth Wijnia (2020), R. Shakra (2022), and Claire Wyatt-Smith with colleagues (2024) showed that accurate judgement supports meaningful learning, fair assessment, and responsive instruction, while bias negatively affects educational equity. Indian studies by Gul Mohammad Yazdani (2016), Iram Naaz (2017), and Chaudhary Seema (2023) highlighted the influence of institutional climate, ethics, and professional development on teachers' judgement. The literature supports that professional judgement is essential for student well-being, meaningful learning, and effective educational practice. Objectives - To understand the concept of professional judgement in teaching - To examine the role of professional judgement in supporting student well-being - To explore the contribution of professional judgement to meaningful student learning - To analyze the importance of student-centered decision-making in education - To identify the factors influencing professional judgement in classrooms Objective Analysis To Understand the Concept of Professional Judgement in Teaching Professional judgement in teaching is an important component of effective educational practice because teaching involves continuous decision-making in complex classroom situations. George Josef Schick (1959) showed that teaching effectiveness cannot be measured only through tests or academic achievement. His study explained that classroom judgement depends on context, interaction, and situational understanding. This suggests that teachers must interpret situations carefully and adapt decisions according to classroom realities. Richard J. Shavelson and Pamela Stern (1981) further explained that teachers continuously process information related to student behavior, learning needs, and instructional goals before making decisions. Their work showed that professional judgement involves both reasoning and interpretation in classroom practice.
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Donald Schon (1991) emphasized that professional judgement develops through reflection and experience-based learning. His concepts of knowledge-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action explain how teachers improve their decisions through classroom experiences.

Research by Edward S. Dotti (2008), Margaret Bruniges (2007), Cordula Artelt (2016), and Anat Becher (2025) highlighted that professional judgement involves ethical sensitivity, diagnostic competence, and student-centered decision-making. It is a reflective, ethical, and context-sensitive process that supports meaningful learning and effective educational practice.

To Examine the Role of Professional Judgement in Supporting Student Well-being

Professional judgement plays an important role in supporting student well-being because teachers continuously make decisions that influence students' emotional safety, motivation, confidence, participation, and classroom experiences. Margaret Bruniges (2007) explained that professional judgement helps teachers respond to students' social, emotional, and cultural needs rather than relying only on fixed curriculum guidelines. This shows that professional judgement supports both learning and student welfare.

Donald Schon (1991) emphasized that teachers often face unpredictable classroom situations requiring reflection and adaptation. Through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, teachers modify their teaching responses according to students' emotional and educational needs. This reflective process helps teachers create supportive classroom environments.

Research by Richard J. Shavelson and Pamela Stern (1981) showed that teachers continuously interpret student behavior, participation, and engagement while making instructional decisions. Their studies suggested that biased or oversimplified judgements may negatively affect students' self-esteem and sense of belonging. Edward S. Dotti (2008) highlighted empathy, openness, and ethical sensitivity as essential qualities for professional judgement.

Studies by Cordula Artelt (2016), Dirk Urhahne, Liesbeth Wijnia (2020), and Anat Becher (2025) further explained that fair and reflective judgement encourages confidence, inclusion, and emotional support. It helps create supportive, inclusive, and emotionally secure learning environments.

To Explore the Contribution of Professional Judgement to Meaningful Student Learning

Professional judgement contributes significantly to meaningful student learning because it helps teachers create learning experiences that are responsive, engaging, and suitable to students' needs. Meaningful learning focuses on understanding, participation, critical thinking, and long-term knowledge development. The literature suggests that professional judgement enables teachers to connect curriculum goals with learners' abilities, interests, and classroom realities, thereby improving learning effectiveness.

Donald Schon (1991) explained that teachers continuously reflect during and after teaching to improve instructional practices. Through reflection-in-action, teachers identify whether students understand concepts or struggle with learning tasks and then modify explanations, questioning, pacing, or classroom activities accordingly. Reflection-on-action further helps teachers evaluate teaching effectiveness and improve future instructional decisions.

Research by Richard J. Shavelson and Pamela Stern (1981) showed that teachers constantly make decisions regarding instructional methods, feedback, classroom organization, and

task difficulty. Their work highlighted that meaningful learning depends on informed pedagogical decisions during instruction.

Studies by Cordula Artelt (2016), Dirk Urhahne, and Liesbeth Wijnia (2020) explained that accurate judgement helps teachers identify learning gaps and provide suitable instructional support. Similarly, R. Shakra (2022) emphasized evidence-based instructional decisions, while Claire Wyatt-Smith with colleagues (2024) highlighted assessment for learning improvement. It supports meaningful learning through reflective teaching, adaptive instruction, accurate diagnosis, and evidence-based assessment practices.

To Analyze the Importance of Student-centered Decision-making in Education

Student-centered decision-making is an important aspect of professional judgement because it places learners' needs, abilities, interests, and experiences at the center of educational practice. Unlike teacher-centered approaches, it requires teachers to adapt instruction according to individual learning situations. The literature suggests that professional judgement becomes meaningful when teachers make decisions that support students' participation, understanding, and overall development.

Donald Schon (1991) explained that teachers continuously reflect and adapt their practices according to classroom situations. Through reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, teachers modify instructional methods, learning activities, and classroom interactions according to students' responses and participation. This makes student-centered decision-making a reflective and adaptive process.

Research by Richard J. Shavelson and Pamela Stern (1981) showed that teachers constantly interpret classroom information while selecting teaching strategies and learning activities. Cordula Artelt (2016) emphasized that teachers must carefully interpret student performance to make fair instructional decisions.

Studies by Claudia Kosel, Evelyn Bauer, and Tina Seidel (2024) found that experienced teachers consider both cognitive and motivational aspects of learning while making decisions. R. Shakra (2022) and Claire Wyatt-Smith with colleagues (2024) further highlighted the importance of evidence-based assessment and learning improvement.

Margaret Bruniges (2007) emphasized adapting curriculum according to students' social and cultural backgrounds, while Edward S. Dotti (2008) highlighted empathy and ethical responsibility in teacher decision-making. Student-centered decision-making supports inclusive, responsive, and learner-focused educational practices.

To Identify the Factors Influencing Professional Judgement in Classrooms

Professional judgement in classrooms is influenced by cognitive, ethical, contextual, and institutional factors that shape how teachers interpret situations and make decisions. It does not develop only through subject knowledge, it emerges through experience, reflective practice, professional competence, personal values, and classroom context. These factors together influence the quality and fairness of educational decisions.

One major factor is reflective experience. Donald Schon (1991) explained that teachers develop professional judgement through knowledge-in-action, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. Teachers who reflect on classroom experiences become better able to analyze situations and improve instructional decisions. Claudia Kosel, Evelyn Bauer, and Tina Seidel (2024) found that experienced teachers demonstrate stronger diagnostic reasoning than beginners.

Ethical values and professional dispositions also influence judgement. Edward S. Dotti (2008) emphasized empathy, flexibility, and ethical sensitivity, while Anat Becher (2025) highlighted the influence of personal beliefs and moral reasoning on teachers' decisions.

Institutional context is another important factor. Margaret Bruniges (2007), Gul Mohammad Yazdani (2016), and Iram Naaz (2017) explained that educational policies, institutional climate, and professional culture affect teachers' decision-making practices.

The literature also identifies diagnostic competence as an influential factor. Cordula Artelt (2016) and Dirk Urhahne with Liesbeth Wijnia (2020) showed that teachers with strong assessment and interpretive abilities make more accurate and equitable judgements. Professional judgement is a complex and continuously developing professional capacity shaped by both personal and environmental factors.

Findings of the Study

Professional judgement is an essential component of effective teaching because it helps teachers make reflective, ethical, and context-sensitive decisions in classrooms. It develops through experience, reflection, professional understanding, and continuous interaction with students and classroom situations. The literature shows that teachers use professional judgement to understand learner needs, classroom dynamics, and instructional challenges while making educational decisions. Professional judgement supports student well-being by helping teachers respond sensitively to students' emotional, behavioral, and social needs. Reflective and unbiased judgement contributes to inclusive classrooms, emotional security, student confidence, and positive learning environments. It also strengthens meaningful learning by enabling teachers to adapt instruction, provide effective feedback, and identify learning difficulties according to students' needs. The review further indicates that student-centered professional judgement promotes equitable and responsive educational practices. Factors such as reflective experience, ethical values, institutional climate, diagnostic ability, and professional support influence the quality of professional judgement. Professional judgement emerges as a dynamic professional capacity essential for effective teaching, meaningful learning, and holistic student development.

CONCLUSION

Professional judgement is an essential aspect of effective teaching that enables teachers to make reflective, ethical, and context-sensitive decisions in classrooms. It supports student well-being, meaningful learning, and student-centered educational practices by helping teachers respond to diverse learner needs. Professional judgement strengthens instructional effectiveness through informed pedagogical decisions and adaptive teaching. Influenced by experience, ethics, diagnostic ability, and institutional support, it remains a dynamic professional capacity necessary for quality education and holistic student development.

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