Contemporary Trends and Challenges in Teaching Practices in Uzbekistan: a Modern Educational Perspective

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Abstract: Uzbekistan is undergoing rapid educational transformation aligned with global trends in pedagogy, digitalization, and competency-based learning. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the current state of teaching practices in Uzbekistan at the general secondary and higher education levels. The study highlights ongoing reforms, the introduction of innovative teaching methods, digital transformation, teacher professional development, inclusive education, and structural challenges. The findings illustrate that, despite substantial progress, the teaching system continues to face difficulties related to technological inequality, teacher workload, limited resources, and the need for systematic methodological modernization. Recommendations for improving teaching effectiveness and strengthening national education policy are proposed.

Key words: Uzbekistan education; teaching practices; digital transformation; competency-based learning; pedagogical reforms; inclusive education; higher education modernization; teacher training; blended learning; EdTech; curriculum development; student-centered approach; educational policy; educational challenges.

1. Introduction

The 21st century has brought significant changes to educational systems worldwide, driven by global integration, technological advancement, and new learning paradigms. Uzbekistan is no exception: since 2017, the country has initiated large-scale educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of teaching, expanding digital literacy, and aligning national education with international standards.

National strategies such as the *"Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan 2022–2026"* and the *"Concept for the Development of the Education System until 2030"* outline ambitious goals, including modernization of curricula, enhancement of teacher competencies, expansion of inclusive education, and integration of digital tools.

This article examines contemporary teaching practices in Uzbekistan through an analytical perspective, identifying key achievements, pedagogical innovations, and systemic challenges that influence educational outcomes.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative–analytical research design combining document analysis, literature review, teacher interviews, and classroom observations conducted between 2021 and 2024.

2.2 Data Sources

Primary sources included:

National legislative documents on education (e.g., Law "On Education", Government Resolutions).

Ministry of Preschool and School Education reports.

Higher education modernization guidelines.

Academic journals and conference proceedings.

Observations from schools and universities in Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Fergana.

2.3 Analytical Approaches

Collected data were analyzed via thematic coding, comparative method evaluation, and synthesis of reform outcomes to identify national strengths and challenges.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Pedagogical Modernization and Instructional Reform

3.1.1 Shift to Student-Centered Learning

Traditional teacher-centered models are being replaced by: active learning strategies, project-based learning (PBL), inquiry-based science education,collaborative learning environments.

These methods promote critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills fundamental to the 21st century.

3.1.2 Curriculum Reforms

The government has introduced updated subject standards focusing on:

competencies rather than memorization,

practical skills and applied knowledge,

interdisciplinary connections in biology, chemistry, mathematics, and languages.

However, teachers note that new curricula often require additional resources that are not uniformly available.

3.2 Digital Transformation in Education

3.2.1 Achievements

Uzbekistan has made considerable progress in digital education:

National digital platform **"my.edu.uz"** and **electronic journals**.

Use of **Moodle**, **Google Classroom**, **Microsoft Teams** for online instruction.

Virtual laboratories in natural sciences.

Interactive smart boards in many secondary schools.

Teachers increasingly integrate multimedia materials, online quizzes, digital simulations, and hybrid learning models.

3.2.2 Remaining Challenges

Despite improvements, several issues persist:

internet connectivity is unstable in rural areas,

availability of computers is uneven,

older teachers require more ICT training,

digital content in Uzbek language remains limited.

Digital inequality continues to shape learning outcomes.

3.3 Teacher Qualification and Professional Development

3.3.1 New Certification System

A competency-based certification system motivates teachers to improve qualifications, offering salary increases tied to expertise.

3.3.2 Continuous Training Programs

Teachers participate in:

annual retraining courses,

international exchange programs (Korea, Japan, EU),

online professional development platforms.

3.3.3 Persistent Barriers

However, teachers report:

heavy administrative workload,

insufficient mentoring for young teachers,

lack of time to prepare modern teaching materials.

This impacts the quality of classroom instruction and innovation adoption.

3.4 Inclusive and Multilingual Education

3.4.1 Inclusive Practices

Uzbekistan has expanded inclusive education through:

differentiated instruction,

psychological support centers,

specialized teacher training programs.

Yet many schools still lack adapted textbooks and inclusive pedagogical materials.

3.4.2 Multilingual Education

The rising importance of English as a global language has led to:

introduction of English from early grades,

expansion of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) programs,

recruitment of native-speaking instructors.

Challenges include uneven teacher competencies and limited language resources.

3.5 Higher Education Modernization

3.5.1 Structural Transformation

Universities have adopted: credit-modular system, Bologna-compatible degree structures, international dual-degree programs, research-based teaching approaches.

3.5.2 Challenges in Higher Education

Key obstacles include: limited laboratory infrastructure, insufficient research funding, need to strengthen university–industry cooperation.

3.6 Structural and Socioeconomic Barriers

Teachers across regions identify common issues: oversized classrooms in cities,

shortage of modern textbooks, high teaching loads, moderate salaries relative to workload, psychological burnout.

Addressing these challenges is essential for sustainable reform.

4. Conclusion

Uzbekistan's education system is experiencing a transformative phase characterized by the adoption of modern pedagogical methods, digital integration, curriculum innovation, and expansion of inclusive learning environments. Despite impressive progress, the system still faces significant challenges related to digital inequality, teacher workload, and infrastructural limitations.

Long-term improvement will depend on: strengthening digital infrastructure nationwide, increasing investment in teacher training and support, enhancing research capacity in universities, aligning education more closely with labor market needs, creating sustainable policies to reduce disparities between urban and rural schools.

The future of teaching in Uzbekistan relies on achieving a balanced, inclusive, and technologically advanced educational ecosystem.

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