

PEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN THE SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF THE UZBEK SSR (1946–1990)

Ruzikulov Sherzodbek Maribjonovich

PhD in History Senior lecturer at the History Department

Andijan State Pedagogical Institute

sherzodbekruziqulov@gmail.com

Abstract

This article analyzes the development of the school education system and pedagogical methods in the Uzbek SSR between 1946 and 1990 from a historical and pedagogical perspective. It also reveals the evolution of lessons, conversations, demonstrations, practical exercises, collective upbringing, production-related education, and control-evaluation methods in the Soviet school. The article substantiates, based on historical sources, the dual nature of the Soviet educational experience - on the one hand, ensuring mass literacy and schooling, and on the other hand, placing education under strong centralization and ideological control.

Keywords: Uzbek SSR, Soviet school, pedagogical methods, polytechnic education, ideological education, general secondary education, teaching methods, vocational education, Russification, school reforms.

Introduction

The period of 1946–1990 in the history of the Uzbek SSR was one of the most complex and, at the same time, the most important stages in terms of content and method in the school education system. In the difficult economic conditions following World War II, restoring the education system, strengthening universal literacy, and educating the new generation in accordance with the requirements of Soviet society became a priority of state policy. The school was viewed not only as an educational institution but also as a social institution shaping the "new Soviet man." Therefore, the content of education, lesson organization, teaching methods, and educational work simultaneously performed both didactic and ideological tasks.

When studying the school of the Soviet era, it is important not merely to repeat the All-Union model, but to analyze how it functioned under the conditions of the Uzbek SSR. This is because factors such as demographic growth in the republic, a significant share of the rural population, the national language problem, the involvement of women and girls in education, and the shortage of school buildings and teaching staff have uniquely shaped the local practice of all-Union decisions. In some periods, central decisions partially corresponded to the socio-cultural needs of the republic, while in other cases, they became a factor limiting specific local characteristics.

In order to illuminate the pedagogical methods used in school education in the Uzbek SSR from 1946 to 1990 and the dynamics of their development based on historical sources, answers are sought to certain questions: first, how the restoration of the school network and educational process took place in the post-war period; second, how the polytechnic direction after 1958 influenced the methodological system; third, along with the signs of internal crisis and renewal that the Soviet school exhibited by the

end of the 1980s, this study is primarily focused on systematically demonstrating the evolution of Soviet pedagogy using the example of the Uzbek SSR.

Literature review and methodology

The study of the history of the Soviet school is based on several types of sources. The first group includes normative legal acts—union and republic-level laws, resolutions, school regulations, curricula, and programs. The second group consists of statistical collections, reports from the Ministry of Public Education, and data on the number of students and teachers. The third group consists of Soviet educators, including A. S. Makarenko, V. A. Sukhomlinsky, N. K. Krupskaya, M. N. Skatkin, Yu. The works of scholars such as K. Babansky. The fourth group consists of historical and historiographical studies written during the period of independence, which allow for a critical review of the positive and negative aspects of the Soviet education system.

Historical, systematic, and comparative analysis methods are used in the study of the topic. The historical approach allows for the evaluation of pedagogical methods in connection with the political, economic, and social conditions of one's time. The systematic approach requires viewing the school not as a collection of separate lessons, but as a unified system closely linked to curricula, textbooks, personnel training, extracurricular education, and pioneer and Komsomol organizations. Comparative analysis, by comparing the situation in the Uzbek SSR with all-Union trends, helps to identify the peculiarities of the republic.

Another methodologically important issue is the clarification of the very concept of the "pedagogical method." In this article, this concept is not limited only to teaching methods. It also includes organizational forms of teaching, control and evaluation mechanisms, methods of educational work, vocational training, and forms of extracurricular activities. The reason is that in the Soviet school, lessons and upbringing were not artificially separated; on the contrary, they were viewed as a single process of "teaching and upbringing."

Result and Discussion

After the end of the Second World War, the public education system of the Uzbek SSR faced serious problems. During the war years, the network of schools was reduced, the material and technical base was weakened, and a significant portion of teachers went to the front or transferred to other fields. Problems such as the decline in the quality of education, the shortage of textbooks and teaching aids, and the deterioration of school buildings in rural areas were acutely felt in the first post-war years. According to some data, in the 1945–1946 academic year, the number of students in the republic was much lower than expected, and the rate of school dropout remained high.

During the post-war recovery period, the primary task of the state was to restore the school network and ensure full enrollment of school-age children. It is noted that by 1950, there were more than 5,000 general education schools in Uzbekistan, where more than 1.3 million students were educated [1.266]. These indicators indicate that the post-war recovery process proceeded rapidly. However, quantitative growth did not automatically solve the problem of quality. The shortage of teachers, especially in rural areas, remained acute throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s. Due to the shortage of qualified

teachers, short-term courses, evening and correspondence forms of pedagogical education were widely used.

It was during this period that the methodological vision of the lessons was quite conservative. Teaching relied mainly on the classroom-lesson system, the leading role of the teacher, explanatory narration, and repetition. The main structure of the lesson consisted of a sequence of explaining the new topic, reinforcing it, asking students, and giving homework. Control was carried out primarily through oral questioning, written work, and examinations. These methods were considered relatively effective in the post-war environment, as they were a convenient and manageable form for restoring the public school network in a short period of time.

However, under the conditions of the Uzbek SSR, an important specific problem remained: the issue of enrolling girls in school. It was difficult for girls to receive a continuous education, especially in rural areas, due to family traditions, early marriage, the remoteness of schools, and financial difficulties. For this reason, methods of influence through propaganda, conversations with parents, the mahalla, and the public were also widely used in the educational process [2]. Consequently, in 1946–1955, pedagogical methods encompassed not only didactic methods within the classroom but also socio-pedagogical tools that served to attract and retain the student at school.

During this period, the content of education was formed in the spirit of Soviet patriotism, war heroism, and loyalty to communist ideas. Although ideological interpretation was strong in history, literature, and social sciences classes, literacy, arithmetic, and elementary science knowledge were also consistently taught in primary and secondary levels. In this sense, the post-war recovery stage laid the foundation for a well-structured, relatively stable school system for decades to come.

In the second half of the 1950s, the idea of "connecting education with life," i.e., bringing the school closer to production and practical labor, intensified throughout the USSR. This process reached a new level with the 1958 Law "On Strengthening the Connection of Schools with Life and the Further Development of the Public Education System" [3.3]. This reform also had a direct impact on the schools of the Uzbek SSR. At its core was the idea of polytechnic education: it was believed that a student must not only receive theoretical knowledge but also acquire labor skills and familiarize themselves with the fundamentals of technology and production.

The polytechnic approach introduced several changes to the methodological system. First, more space was allocated in curricula and programs for subjects such as labor education, drafting, technical labor, and the fundamentals of agriculture. Secondly, visual and practical methods such as laboratory, practical training, workshop work, experiments, and excursions have expanded. The third aspect is that in the upper grades, production practice or the school's cooperation with collective farms, state farms, plants, and factories intensified. Due to the agrarian orientation of the Uzbek SSR, practical training related to agricultural labor became a priority in many rural schools.

However, the local practice of this reform was not uniform. In schools located near large industrial enterprises in cities, establishing ties with production was relatively easy, while in rural areas, it relied more on labor related to farming, horticulture, and cotton growing. As a result, "polytechnic education" was sometimes limited not to the development of general technical thinking, but to the repetition of a specific economic practice. In some cases, students' seasonal agricultural work has become a factor that reduces the quality of lessons.

The polytechnic turn also had a significant impact on teaching methods. Alongside the classical explanatory-explanatory method, methods such as visual-practical, exercise, experiment, observation, modeling of production situations, and the use of technical means have expanded. The requirement to activate student activity began to be mentioned more frequently in methodological literature. Nevertheless, in practice, the lesson remained at the teacher's center, while the student's initiative was carried out within the framework of a strict plan and control. Thus, although the 1958 reform introduced new practical elements into the educational process, it served more to adapt education to economic needs than to democratize it.

The 1960s–1970s were a period of relative stabilization in the school education of the Uzbek SSR. Following the post-war recovery and the initial effects of the 1958 reform, the school network expanded, teaching staff improved, and pedagogical institutes and colleges began to train more specialists. By this time, curricula, subject programs, and textbooks had become more standardized. This led to the systematization of teaching methods.

At this stage, the classification of teaching methods in didactic literature was actively developed. A distinction was made between verbal methods (story, explanation, conversation, lecture), visual methods (demonstration, illustration, observation), and practical methods (exercise, laboratory work, independent work). The schools of the Uzbek SSR also relied on this All-Union methodological classification. While expressive reading, visual aids, repetition, and written exercises were priorities in primary grades, forms such as lecture elements, laboratory work, independent notes, and writing abstracts were more frequently used in senior grades.

In the 1960s–1970s, one of the important directions of pedagogical methods was focused on the issue of "consolidating knowledge." The effectiveness of the lesson began to be evaluated not by how well the topic was explained, but by how well it was reinforced and monitored. Therefore, a system of question-and-answer, written control, dictation, arithmetic, short test assignments, and quarterly and annual exams has been widely developed. Since high academic performance was also considered important in the schools of the Uzbek SSR, teachers often relied on reproductive methods.

The Soviet government, in order to strengthen the so-called proletarian internationalism in practice, emphasized the continuation of broader teaching of the Russian language and literature in schools during this period as well. As a result, in the 1960s, the volume of lessons in the history of Uzbekistan, Uzbek language and literature, foreign languages, music and singing was sharply reduced, and they were reduced by 16.5 hours per week compared to the curriculum. He filled the hours in their place with the subject of Russian language and literature. For example, teachers were forced to demonstrate the "progressive" significance of Russian culture during lessons on topics such as "Uzbek Literary Environment of the Second Half of the 19th and Early 20th Centuries" and "National Cultural Processes." As a result, while 52 hours were allocated for the study of the history of the ancient Uzbek people, 1,600 hours were allocated for the subject of Russian language and literature in primary schools [4.572]. Indeed, during this period, the Soviet government implemented a number of practical measures to develop school education to train personnel who served its interests and ideology. Another methodological issue in the national schools of the Uzbek SSR was the improvement of textbooks and methodological manuals in the Uzbek language. Terminological inaccuracies were encountered due to the use of translated textbooks for many subjects. This was especially evident in teaching subjects such

as physics, chemistry, algebra, and geometry. Teachers sometimes resorted to the method of bilingual lesson interpretation. Thus, although the methodological system is formally standard, in practice there has always been a need to adapt it to the language and cultural environment of the republic.

During these years, pedagogical supervision became stronger: school principals, district education departments, and inspectors checked lessons, reviewed teacher notes, and organized the activities of methodological associations. This situation, on the one hand, helped maintain the quality of the lesson at a certain standard, and on the other hand, limited pedagogical creativity. The teacher was evaluated as a "specialist who correctly fulfills the norm" rather than an "initiative creator." Nevertheless, it was the expansion of the school network and the strengthening of the methodological base in the 1960s and 1970s that served as the foundation for the education system of the following period.

It would be wrong to imagine a Soviet school as an institution that only teaches subjects. It was, above all, a powerful educational institution. Between 1946 and 1990, extracurricular and extracurricular activities in the schools of the Uzbek SSR were regarded as an important means of forming a communist worldview. In this system, the majority of pedagogical methods are manifested specifically in connection with extracurricular activities.

Through pioneer and Komsomol organizations, it was intended to foster qualities such as collectivism, discipline, loyalty to the collective, diligence, and "Soviet patriotism" in students. Schools regularly held rallies, solemn swearing-in ceremonies, thematic evenings, political information, wall newspapers, meetings, labor hashars, assistance to the elderly, and dialogues with war and labor veterans. From a methodological perspective, these works relied on classical educational methods such as "persuasion," "setting an example," "influencing through collective opinion," and "giving a social assignment" [5].

In the conditions of the Uzbek SSR, extracurricular work in some cases also reflected a certain balance between the local cultural element and Soviet official ideology. Schools introduced national holidays not fully, but partially in the form of folklore, artistic performances, folk songs, and literary evenings. Through this, national culture was manifested in a "reinterpreted" form within the Soviet framework. However, in this process, the opportunity to freely study independent national history and religious-cultural heritage has become limited.

In educational methods, Makarenko's traditions—the unity of the collective, discipline, useful labor, demands, and respect—have always been felt. Forms such as class activism, duty, distribution of duties, and reporting to the team were widely used. In pedagogical literature, these methods are substantiated as "educating the individual within and through the collective" [6]. There were some positive results: students learned teamwork, social activity, and a certain degree of responsibility. However, there was a downside: collective opinion sometimes became a means of suppressing individual interests and independent positions.

Another important area of extracurricular work was vocational guidance. Students were introduced to enterprises, farms, scientific institutions, and cultural centers; technical clubs, clubs for young naturalists, young physicists, and young historians were established. Fields related to agriculture were particularly widespread in the schools of the Uzbek SSR. Thus, extracurricular activities combined the school's functions of socialization, ideological education, and professional orientation.

The goal of the Soviet government in teaching the idea of "national and socialist in content" culture in schools was to poison the consciousness of local nationalities. Because "form" was simply used, while

the main goal and idea were wrapped in content, it served the goals of Russification under the guise of "socialism," destroying national values. To this end, the number of hours allocated for the Russian language in the curriculum of Uzbek schools has been steadily increasing since 1938. While in the 1935-1936 academic year the Russian language was taught in grades 3-10 and 528 hours were allocated for it, in the 1942-1943 academic year the Russian language was taught from the 2nd grade and the time allocated for the study of the Russian language in all grades was increased to 1402 hours. In the 1956-1957 academic year, the time allocated for studying the Russian language in Uzbek schools increased to 1,716 hours, accounting for 17% of all schoolchildren's academic hours [7.88].

CONCLUSION

At the end of the period under study, it was recommended to use laboratory equipment, stands, maps, tables, projectors, film clips, tape recordings, and sometimes television programs in teaching exact and natural sciences. In Soviet didactics, visualization was evaluated as a means of linking abstract knowledge to concrete representation, activating perception, and making the lesson more engaging. In schools, especially in rural areas, the natural environment itself—fields, gardens, water bodies, and production facilities—served as an educational field for practical observation and excursions.

However, the use of technical means was not uniform throughout the republic. There was a significant difference in the level of equipment between model schools in large cities and schools in remote villages. Therefore, while methodological recommendations often depicted an ideal model, in practice, many teachers relied on traditional whiteboards, chalk, tables, and handmade visual materials. Nevertheless, it was during this period that ideas such as activating the lesson, increasing the student's independent work, asking problematic questions, and teaching comparison and generalization intensified in methodological thought.

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