



EDUCATING FOR CHANGE:

New Teacher Skills Benefit Uzbekistan's Classrooms



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Introduction

Educators are the critical link between learning materials and students. Their approach to instruction influences learning and classroom dynamics every day. While the Government of Uzbekistan has made significant investments in regular professional development opportunities for teachers, the trainings reinforced a teacher-centered instruction style. In the classroom, teachers struggled to practically address diverse student needs. While some students excelled in this environment, many fell behind.

In partnership with the Government of Uzbekistan's Avloni Institute and the Republican Education Center, the USAID-funded Uzbekistan Education for Excellence Program piloted a continuous teacher professional development (CTPD) program. In alignment with newly developed teaching and learning materials, the Program worked with teachers to energize classrooms and engage students.

Through the CPTD trainings, teachers are now better able to teach critical thinking, problem solving, and other twenty-first century skills, which will help students succeed in college and in the workforce. More than 8,000 teachers gained skills in high-impact, student-centered approaches such as group work and differentiated learning to meet students' individual needs. "Now, everyone is active in the classroom and doing their best," said Training Coordinator Muhammadyusuf Ibrohimovich Sobirov from Namangan Region, "and the teachers are facilitating that."

One goal of the Program's CTPD approach was to ensure teachers could participate in consistently high-quality training experiences using a cascade training approach. Program subject matter experts trained a tier of 80 Master Trainers who subsequently cascaded the new knowledge and skills to 800 Trainers. The latter group was responsible for reaching thousands of teachers in their respective regions. The Program's aim was to scale the approach such that teachers at the end of the cascade benefit from training of the same quality as those at the beginning. To achieve this, the Program used multiple strategies:

**Short, digestible
trainings on a
regular basis**

**A monitoring
feedback loop
to target training
based on
evidence**

**Teacher
reflections
incorporated into
training**

Achievements and Impact

CPTD strengthened teacher skills and knowledge to improve classroom instruction and student-centered pedagogy. Teachers appreciated this methodology for its practical integration into busy school terms and schedules; indeed, 86% reported the CPTD schedule as their preferred way of receiving training. By the end of the training series, 96% of teachers reported that CPTD was better than other training, and 100% of trained educators said they would recommend CPTD to their colleagues.

In combination with new teaching materials, the trainings helped teachers save time in the classroom, leading to improved classroom management and individual student support. Teachers also expressed that they are now comfortable sharing their challenges openly with each other and they exchange ideas and collaborate. They are better able to manage students with different learning styles and needs and have noticed increased caretaker engagement in homework.

POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE CLASSROOM

Data from classroom observation and teacher interviews show important shifts toward student-centered learning using new skills taught in CTPD.

AMONG TEACHERS:

90%

engage students
in discussion and
learning

90%

engage students in
the problem-solving
process

58-78%

engage quiet
students in the
lesson

75%

ask students to work
independently

65%

give extra help
or assign more
challenging tasks
based on student
needs

80-85%

ask students for
their opinions and
summarize their
responses

AMONG STUDENTS:



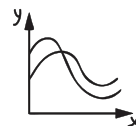
Higher-order thinking
skills (e.g., comparison
and analysis)



Greater ease with
both independent and
group work



Increased confidence
and productive
competition



Progress across
diverse learning styles



More interest in the
learning content



Improved creativity



Increased independent
thinking and debate



Sustainability

NEW AND LASTING SKILLS

As the Ministry of Preschool and School Education updates and improves national teaching and learning materials in the future, the theory and instructional techniques behind Program's CPTD will continue to be relevant and applicable. Teachers with diversified and strengthened capacities will apply a wider range of instructional skills in the classroom for the benefit of students.

TRAINING PACKAGES OWNED BY NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Program ensured that the Ministry of Preschool and School Public Education has access to training materials and detailed facilitator manuals for future replication and scale.

SELF-PACED E-LEARNING COURSES

To build education system capacity, the Program developed digital trainings for English as a Foreign Language, Information and Communications Technology, Uzbek Language Arts, and mathematics courses. The trainings focus on how to use new teaching and learning materials and how to apply student-centered approaches. Many of the techniques are applicable to a wide range of teaching and learning materials. The courses will be available on the Avloni Learning Management System for easy, self-paced access by educators.

TEACHER TRAINING ENGAGEMENT

The Program designed and implemented a Moodle-based learning management system as a resource platform for trainers and teachers to access all training materials, complete satisfaction surveys, and access a Program-supported national digital platform of curriculum materials and standards. In addition, the Program leveraged the learning management system attendance module functionality to electronically account for in-person training attendance, streamlining the process and ensuring attendance data quality.



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“My students became very free... [and] really active. Obviously, there was noise in the classroom because of this. Our school director... thought no one was looking after my class. I invited him to observe what was happening in my grade 2 classroom. He visited during a lesson on [endangered animal species]. He was shocked to see great thinking from a student only 7 or 8 years old. It was really impressive, and then he understood the value of this teaching style.”

**Dilnoza Axmedova,
Namangan Region
Teacher and Master Trainer**



Our fireplace: An example of student-centered learning

In the conventional approach to Uzbek Language Arts, teachers provide definitions of new vocabulary words, and students memorize them. By encouraging student participation throughout lessons, the student-centered Program approach brought to light nuances of meaning for words like “fireplace.” In their homes, some students use fireplaces for warmth, others to cook, and for others they are simply decorative. Teachers were trained to encourage students to share their knowledge as part of the learning process; as a result, students were newly engaged in the diverse experiences of their peers and increased their learning.



Reflections

In the course of introducing new-in-context approaches, the Program generated important learnings that can strengthen future educational reform efforts in Uzbekistan and beyond.

1

Mid-training teacher reflections ensure ongoing relevance and efficacy: By soliciting feedback from teachers after each training, and conducting monthly classroom observations, the Program was able to adapt CPTD to respond to teacher needs and priorities based on their own real-time classroom experiences. This “feed-forward loop” ensured that practical relevance and use was at the forefront of the training experience.

2

Frequent, bite-sized, content-targeted trainings keep new skills sharp: Teachers appreciated the scope and frequency of Program trainings, which served as regular opportunities to practice new skills in a supportive environment. As part of a long-term plan, each targeted training reinforced a prioritized set of teaching techniques aligned to the curricula teachers are responsible for delivering.

3

Differentiated learning and group work are important takeaways for teachers: These strategies were frequently mentioned by trained teachers as effective methods they will continue using in the classroom.

“

I always asked my trainees what the previous [teaching] method gave us versus what the new method is giving us. We saw a clear improvement in what students are learning, and that gave us motivation.

**Dilnoza Axmedova,
Namangan Region
Teacher and Master Trainer**



