MATHEMATICS TEACHING PEDAGOGY: MODERN APPROACHES AND EFFECTIVE METHODS

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ABSTRACT: *This article examines modern approaches to mathematics teaching pedagogy, methods for developing mathematical thinking in students, and principles of differentiated instruction. The effectiveness of problem-based learning, cooperative teaching, discovery-oriented methods, and formative assessment in mathematics education is analyzed. Based on practical research findings, pedagogical recommendations aimed at improving students' mathematical literacy and critical thinking skills have been developed.*

Keywords: *mathematics pedagogy, problem-based learning, differentiated instruction, mathematical thinking, formative assessment, constructivism, cooperative learning.*

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1. INTRODUCTION Mathematics is the universal language of human thought, serving not only as the foundation of the exact sciences but also as the primary instrument for developing logical reasoning, problem-solving abilities, and creative approaches. Yet across the world, many students perceive mathematics as a difficult and intimidating subject. The root of this problem often lies in the methodology of teaching — that is, in the pedagogical approach itself.

According to PISA 2022 findings, the mathematical literacy scores of students in Uzbekistan are significantly below the international average (OECD, 2023). This situation underscores the necessity of renewing

mathematics teaching pedagogy and introducing effective methods. With this goal in mind, this article analyzes advanced pedagogical theories and practical approaches.

Research objective: to systematically analyze modern pedagogical approaches to mathematics teaching and to develop practical recommendations aimed at improving students' academic achievement.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF MATHEMATICS TEACHING PEDAGOGY

Mathematics teaching pedagogy has developed around three main theoretical paradigms:

1. Behaviorism: Grounded in B.F. Skinner's theory, this approach builds mathematical skills through repetition, practice, and reinforcement. Memorizing multiplication tables and mechanically applying formulas are rooted in this paradigm.

2. Constructivism: According to ideas developed by Piaget and Vygotsky, students do not passively receive knowledge but actively construct it themselves. In mathematics, this occurs through linking new concepts to prior knowledge.

3. Social Constructivism: Collaborative learning in groups is considered especially effective in mathematics instruction, since the act of explaining to peers deepens the explainer's own understanding.

3. MODERN PEDAGOGICAL METHODS

3.1. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) In problem-based learning, students are not given a ready-made formula but instead presented with a real-world problem. For example: in how many different shapes can a plot of land with an area of 100 m² be enclosed, and which option is most economically efficient? To solve this, students discover the formulas for perimeter, area, and optimization methods on their own.

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Research shows that in classrooms where PBL is applied, students' long-term retention is 2.5 times higher compared to traditional instruction (Hmelo-Silver, 2004).

3.2. Flipped Classroom Model In this model, theoretical content is studied at home through video lessons, while class time is dedicated to solving problems and discussion. This approach is especially effective in mathematics: students study formulas at home at their own pace, and during class the teacher directs individualized support to those who need it most.

3.3. Differentiated Instruction Mathematical ability varies among students in every class. According to the principles of differentiated instruction, the teacher prepares separate tasks for three levels:

– Basic level: applying standard formulas and solving problems by following a worked example;

– Intermediate level: multi-step, combined problems;

– Advanced level: non-standard, creative, and olympiad-style problems.

3.4. Cooperative Learning When working in pairs and small groups, students are required to explain concepts to one another. According to Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development," a student who completes tasks slightly above their own level with the help of a peer achieves deep, lasting learning. The "Jigsaw" and "Think-Pair-Share" methods are considered the most effective approaches for organizing collaborative work in mathematics lessons.

4. DEVELOPING MATHEMATICAL THINKING

Mathematical thinking is not simply the ability to calculate; it is the capacity to recognize a problem, express it in mathematical language, choose a solution strategy, and verify the result. Polya's four-step problem-solving model (1945) remains as relevant as ever:

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✓ Understanding the problem: what is given, what is asked, what are the conditions?

✓ Devising a plan: what method, formula, or strategy will be used?

✓ Carrying out the plan: executing the calculations step by step;

✓ Looking back: is the answer correct? Can it be verified using a different method?

In every lesson, the teacher should encourage students to answer the questions "Why?" and "How?" Rather than providing a ready answer, guiding students to discover it themselves is the fundamental principle of modern mathematics pedagogy.

5. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

Traditional summative assessment (final exams) reveals what students do not know too late. Formative assessment, in contrast, provides feedback at every stage of the learning process and allows teachers to adjust their methods in real time.

Effective formative assessment techniques in mathematics lessons include:

– Exit tickets: at the end of the lesson, students provide a written response to 1–2 key questions;

– Mini-tests and quizzes: quick checks via Kahoot or Google Forms;

– Thumbs technique: students indicate their understanding at three levels (I know it / I understood it / I did not understand it);

– Portfolio: students maintain a collection of their work throughout the year and monitor their own progress.

In Black and Wiliam's meta-analysis (1998), formative assessment was found to raise learning effectiveness by 0.4–0.7 standard deviations — an outcome equivalent to extending the school year by 6–9 months.

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6. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND RESULTS

A pedagogical experiment conducted over one academic year with 7th-grade students (n=62) compared traditional instruction (control group, n=31) with a combination of modern methods (experimental group, n=31). The experimental group employed PBL, the flipped classroom, and formative assessment in tandem.

Key performance indicators:

– Average grade: in the experimental group, scores rose from 3.5 to 4.3 (a 23% increase); in the control group, from 3.5 to 3.7 (a 5% increase);

– Attitude toward mathematics (survey): positive attitudes in the experimental group rose from 38% to 74%;

– Independent problem solving on a test task: 61% of the experimental group succeeded, compared to 34% in the control group;

– Classroom participation: active question-and-answer engagement in the experimental group increased by a factor of 3.2.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings demonstrate that combining modern pedagogical methods produces significant positive outcomes in mathematics teaching. Problem-based learning fosters mathematical thinking and independent reasoning in students, while differentiated instruction enables each student to learn at an appropriate level. Formative assessment, in turn, equips teachers with the information they need to continuously improve their practice in real time.

Practical recommendations:

1. Introduce each new mathematical topic through a problem connected to real life;

2. Assess students' prior knowledge at the start of each lesson and prepare tasks accordingly;

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3. Incorporate group work systematically and monitor each student's contribution;

4. Use exit tickets consistently to monitor lesson effectiveness on an ongoing basis;

5. Treat students' mistakes not as failures to be penalized, but as learning opportunities — and cultivate this mindset throughout the classroom culture.

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