Teacher Education in Uzbekistan: The Pedagogical Institute between the School and the University

Educating the Teacher Whom the Reform Requires

Ibodullayeva Zubayda Sherzodovna

Ibodullayeva Zubayda Sherzodovna, Independent researcher, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Every reform of a school system depends on the teachers who will deliver it, and the institutions that educate those teachers are the least examined part of the reform of higher education in Uzbekistan. This article examines the pedagogical institute: its double mandate to teach a discipline and a method, the curriculum that divides the two, the practicum that is arranged after the timetable rather than within it, the schoolteacher who supervises but is not paid to, the induction of the first year, the in-service training that is a course rather than a career, the status of the profession and the salary that encodes it, the rural school that recruits and cannot retain, the digital competence that the pandemic exposed, and the assessment of a teacher who is judged by the results of her pupils. It argues that the reform of the school will be delivered by the teachers whom the pedagogical institutes are producing now, and that the curriculum of those institutes is therefore the most consequential document in the system.

Contents **Page**

1. The Double Mandate and the Divided Curriculum **275**
2. The Practicum and the Mentor in the School **275**
3. The Induction, the Training and the Status **276**
4. The Rural School and the Digital Competence **277**
5. The Assessment of the Teacher and the Institute as a University **278**
6. The Candidates, the Gender and the Curriculum of the School **278**
7. The Cost of a Teacher and the Reform That Is Not Announced **279**
8. Reading, Assessment Literacy and the Director **280**
9. The Region, the Evidence and the Primary Teacher **281**
10. The Association, the Writing and the Lesson Study **282**
11. The Parents, the Library and the Minority Language **283**
12. The Network of Schools **284**
13. The Lesson and Its Preparation **284**
14. The Evidence That a Ministry Can Use **286**
15. Conclusions **287**

1. The Double Mandate and the Divided Curriculum

A pedagogical institute is asked to produce a teacher who knows a discipline and a method, and the two demands are made by two different faculties of the same institution. The faculty of the discipline teaches the mathematics, the physics or the literature at the level of a university, and it judges the student by the standard of the discipline. The faculty of pedagogy teaches the psychology, the didactics and the assessment, and it judges the student by the standard of the classroom. The two faculties rarely meet, and the student is the place where the two curricula are supposed to combine. The combination is not automatic and it is not produced by the timetable. It is produced by a task in which the student teaches the discipline to a class and is then taught how to teach it, and the institution that organises that loop has a teacher education and the institution that does not has two degrees taught in parallel. The curriculum of a pedagogical institute divides the hours between the discipline, the pedagogy and the general courses, and the division has been stable for a long time.

A student of mathematics spends the majority of the hours in the mathematics, a minority in the pedagogy, and the practicum in the weeks that remain. The proportion is defensible: a teacher who does not know her subject cannot teach it. The difficulty is that the minority of hours is where the professional competence is formed, and a minority of a crowded timetable is a marginal activity. The instrument is an integration rather than a reallocation: a course on the teaching of the discipline, taught jointly by a mathematician and a pedagogue, in which the student prepares a lesson, teaches it, and analyses the recording with the two of them. A course of that kind uses the existing hours and changes what they produce.

2. The Practicum and the Mentor in the School

The practicum is the element of teacher education that the students value most and the institution schedules least carefully. A practicum placed in the final year, in a block of six weeks, in a school that has been assigned rather than chosen, supervised by a teacher who has been asked rather than appointed: the arrangement produces an experience and it does not produce a competence. The student observes, teaches a few lessons, writes a report and returns. The instrument is a practicum distributed across the programme, beginning in the second year, in a school with which the institute has an agreement, supervised by a mentor who is trained for the role and paid for it, and assessed

against a portfolio of lessons. A practicum of that structure is the element that converts a student of a discipline into a teacher of it. The mentor in the school is the teacher on whom the practicum depends, and the system has not decided whether she is a colleague or a volunteer. A teacher with a full timetable who receives a student receives also the work of supervision: the planning, the observation, the feedback, the report. She is not paid for it, she is not trained for it, and her own appraisal does not record it. The consequence is a supervision that is generous when the teacher is generous and absent when she is tired. The instrument is a mentor status: a training, a payment, a reduction of the timetable and a recognition in the career. A status of that kind costs the system a small sum and it produces the supervision on which the practicum depends.

3. The Induction, the Training and the Status

The first year of teaching is the year in which a teacher decides whether to remain, and the system has left it to the school. A graduate arrives in a school in September, receives a timetable of twenty hours, a class of thirty-five, a register and a curriculum, and is expected to perform the work for which she has been prepared in theory. The colleagues are helpful and they are also busy. The consequence is a first year that is survived rather than learned, and a proportion of the cohort that leaves within three years. The instrument is an induction year: a reduced timetable, a mentor in the school, a monthly seminar with the other beginners of the district, and an assessment at the end that is formative rather than punitive. An induction year is the cheapest retention instrument that a system possesses. The in-service training of teachers is organised as a course that a teacher attends every few years, and the course is not the instrument that changes a practice.

A course of forty hours in a regional institute, attended in the holiday, assessed by a test, certified by a document: the teacher returns to the school with a certificate and a timetable that gives her no occasion to use what she has heard. The consequence is a training that satisfies the requirement of the system and does not alter the classroom. The instrument is a training that happens in the school: a lesson studied by a group of colleagues, a plan revised together, a recording analysed, a practice tried in a class and reviewed in a week. A training of that structure is slower, cheaper and the only one that changes what a teacher does on Monday. The status of the teacher is the variable that decides the quality of the cohort that enters teacher education, and the status is set by the salary and by the regard. A profession that pays less than the average of the graduates of its own universities will recruit from the candidates who have no alternative, and the statement is not a criticism of those candidates: it is a description of the market. The

consequence is a cohort that is weaker than the cohort of the discipline, and a school that teaches the discipline with a teacher who has not mastered it. The instrument is a salary that rises with the qualification and the performance, and a career with stages that a teacher can enter and a public that can see. A career of that structure is the only instrument that changes the composition of the cohort that the pedagogical institutes recruit.

4. The Rural School and the Digital Competence

The rural school is where the shortage is felt, and the shortage is produced by the distribution rather than by the number. The system trains enough teachers for the aggregate and not enough for the villages, because a graduate prefers the city where the school has a laboratory, the classes are smaller and the spouse can find work. The consequence is a rural school in which one teacher teaches three subjects, the physics is taught by a mathematician, and the pupils who intend a university are taught by the least prepared staff. The instrument is a package for the rural placement: a house, a supplement, a priority in the training and a route back to the city after five years. A package of that structure is what every system that has solved the problem has used, and the five years are the period in which a teacher becomes a teacher. The pandemic exposed a competence that the pedagogical institutes had not taught, and the exposure has been addressed with equipment rather than with a curriculum. A teacher who has a laptop and a projector and has never been taught to design a task for a screen uses the laptop as a blackboard. The consequence is an investment in hardware that reproduces the lecture and does not use the medium. The instrument is a course in the design of a digital task, taught in the pedagogical institute and repeated in the in-service training, with an assessment that requires the student to build a sequence of tasks and to teach it. A course of that kind is what converts the equipment into a pedagogy.

The practicum is supervised by a mentor who is chosen by the school and not by the institute, and the choice decides the quality of the experience more than the curriculum does. A mentor who is a good teacher and has no time will let the student observe, and a mentor who has the time and no method will let the student teach as she was taught. The two failures are common and the institute has no instrument to distinguish them.

The instrument is an accreditation of the mentor: a training of forty hours, a portfolio of the lessons supervised and a status that the institute renews every three years. An accreditation of that structure is the

instrument through which the supervision becomes a competence rather than a goodwill, and it is the one that the practicum requires before any other reform of it.

5. The Assessment of the Teacher and the Institute as a University

The teacher is assessed by the results of her pupils, and the instrument has an effect that the system did not intend. A teacher whose appraisal depends on the scores of her class will teach to the test, and a school whose appraisal depends on the scores of its classes will select its pupils. The consequence is a competition that rewards the exclusion of the difficult pupil and the drilling of the test. The instrument is a portfolio: a lesson taught and analysed, a pupil followed through a year, a project designed, a colleague mentored, and the scores of the class reported beside the composition of the class. A portfolio of that structure measures the teaching and not only the outcome. The pedagogical institute is a university in its own right and it has been treated as a supplier of teachers rather than as a centre of the profession. An institute that does not research does not produce the knowledge of teaching that its own curriculum requires, and it teaches a method that it has received rather than developed. The consequence is a profession whose knowledge is imported from abroad and applied without the local evidence that would tell it whether the application works. The instrument is a research mandate with a modest budget: two studies a year, conducted in the schools of the region, published and taught in the institute. A mandate of that kind is the difference between an institute that transmits a method and one that owns it.

6. The Candidates, the Gender and the Curriculum of the School

The candidates for teacher education are selected by the same admission test as the candidates for every other programme, and the test does not measure the aptitude that the profession requires. A candidate with a high score in mathematics may be a teacher who cannot explain, and a candidate with a lower score may be the one whom a class follows. The test measures the knowledge of the discipline and the profession requires the capacity to communicate it, which the test does not attempt to measure. The instrument is an additional assessment for the applicants to teacher education: a short teaching task, observed and assessed, and an interview about the reasons for the choice. An assessment of that kind is used in the systems with the strongest teacher

education and it is inexpensive. The teaching profession in Uzbekistan is composed largely of women, and the composition has consequences for the curriculum and for the career. A profession that is composed of women and paid as a women's profession is paid less, and a salary that is low because the profession is female is a salary that the system has chosen.

The consequence is a circle: the low salary discourages the men, the absence of the men confirms the description of the profession, and the description justifies the salary. The instrument is a salary policy that is set against the qualifications and not against the composition, and a recruitment that is addressed to both. The two are the only instruments that break a circle which is not about teaching at all. The pedagogical institute teaches a teacher to deliver a curriculum that the ministry writes, and the teacher is therefore a deliverer rather than a designer. A teacher who has never designed a curriculum will not recognise the moment at which the curriculum does not fit the class, and she will deliver the lesson as it is written to the pupils who are not in it. The consequence is a fidelity that produces a failure that the curriculum cannot see. The instrument is a course in which the student adapts a section of the national curriculum to a class, justifies the adaptation and assesses its effect. A course of that kind produces a teacher who can be faithful to the standard and responsive to the class.

7. The Cost of a Teacher and the Reform That Is Not Announced

The cost of training a teacher is small relative to the cost of the class that the teacher will teach for thirty years, and the ratio is the argument for the investment. A pedagogical institute that produces a cohort of five hundred teachers a year produces the staff of a thousand schools and the education of a generation. The marginal cost of the practicum, the mentor and the induction is a fraction of the cost of the building that houses the institute. The instrument is therefore a reallocation within the budget of the institute: from the building to the practicum, from the lecture to the seminar, from the certificate to the induction. A reallocation is a decision and it does not require a new programme. The reform of the school is announced each year and the reform that decides it is the quiet one in the pedagogical institute. A curriculum revised in an institute in 2025 produces a teacher in 2029 and a class in 2030, and the interval is the reason that the reform of the school is judged before it has been delivered. The consequence is a policy that changes its mind in the interval and a cohort that is trained for a reform that has been abandoned. The instrument is a stability of ten years in the curriculum of the pedagogical institute and an evalu-

ation at the end. A stability of that kind is a commitment that a ministry makes to a profession, and it is the condition under which the profession can be built.

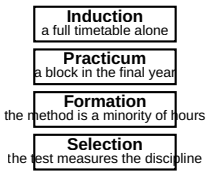

Figure 1 The formation of a teacher and where the chain breaks

8. Reading, Assessment Literacy and the Director

A teacher who cannot teach a child to read cannot teach anything else, and the teaching of reading is the competence that the pedagogical institute assumes the primary school has produced. The pupil who decodes a text and does not understand it will fail every subject in the curriculum, and the failure will be attributed to the subject. The consequence is a secondary school that teaches the disciplines to pupils who cannot read them and a teacher who explains the failure by the family. The instrument is a course in the teaching of reading, with the assessment of a pupil's comprehension, the diagnosis of the difficulty and the sequence of the intervention. A course of that kind is the element that the pedagogical institute shares with the faculty of psychology and it is the one that the primary programme most needs. A teacher spends a third of her professional time assessing, and the institute teaches her to assess in a course of one semester on the theory of measurement.

The teacher who understands the difference between a mark and a criterion, between a test of the recall and a task of the application, can design the assessment that tells her whether the class has learned. The teacher who does not will reproduce the test of the textbook and will

call the result a standard. The instrument is an assessment literacy taught through the practice: the design of a task, the marking of the scripts of a real class, the analysis of the distribution and the revision of the teaching on the evidence. A teaching of that structure is the one that changes the classroom rather than the transcript. The director of the school is the person on whom the quality of the teaching in that school depends, and the system appoints the director for administrative reliability. A director who manages the timetable, the budget and the parents will keep the school open, and a director who observes the lessons, develops the teachers and reads the results will improve it. The two are different competences and the appointment rewards the first. The instrument is a qualification for school leadership, taught jointly by the pedagogical institute and the academy of administration, with a period of practice beside an experienced director and an appraisal on the improvement of the teaching. A qualification of that kind is the instrument through which the school becomes the unit of the reform.

9. The Region, the Evidence and the Primary Teacher

The pedagogical institute is a regional institution and its curriculum is national, and the difference is the reason that a graduate is prepared for a school that does not exist in her district. A region with a minority language, a dispersed population and a shortage of the teachers of mathematics requires a curriculum that addresses the three. A national curriculum produces the teacher for the average school and leaves the region to adapt the average to its reality without a training for the adaptation. The instrument is a regional component of the programme, designed with the schools of the region and taught in them: the language, the multigrade class, the distance. A component of that kind makes the institute an institution of its region and it is the one that the rural school most needs. The reform of the school is argued from the evidence of the international assessments and it is implemented without the evidence of the classroom. A figure of the national average tells a ministry that the system is behind and tells a teacher nothing about the lesson she will teach on Monday.

The consequence is a policy that sets a target at the level of the system and leaves the classroom to the individual. The instrument is a study of the classroom: the lesson observed, the work of the pupils collected, the teacher interviewed, in a sample of the schools of each region. A study of that structure is the evidence that a pedagogical institute can produce and it is the one that a reform can use. The primary teacher teaches every subject to one class and is educated in a programme

that treats the subjects as the secondary school treats them. A programme composed of the mathematics, the language, the science and the method, taught in parallel, produces a teacher who knows a little of each and has not learned to connect them. The consequence is a primary school in which the reading is taught in the reading lesson and not in the science lesson. The instrument is an integrated primary programme: the subjects taught through a theme, the reading taught in every lesson, and a tutor who follows the same class for four years. A programme of that structure is the practice of the systems with the strongest primary education and it requires a faculty that can teach across the disciplines.

The institute is judged by the employment of its graduates and the employment is measured by the number who teach, which is a figure that conceals the difference between the graduate who teaches in a school of the capital and the one who teaches in a village school of three teachers. The second is the one the system needs and the one the institute does not count, and the omission is the reason that the rural school remains the place where the beginning teacher is sent rather than the place where she is prepared.

The instrument is a report of the placement of each cohort by the district and by the type of the school, with the retention after three years. A report of that structure allows the institute to see whether its curriculum prepares the teacher for the school that employs her, and it allows the ministry to fund the preparation that the rural school requires.

10. The Association, the Writing and the Lesson Study

The teacher of a subject in the region is alone in her school and connected to the teachers of the subject in the district only by an annual meeting, and the isolation is the reason that a practice does not spread. A subject association with a journal, a conference and a repository of the lessons that work is the instrument through which a method travels between the schools without the mediation of the ministry. The consequence of its absence is a reform that reaches the school as a circular and leaves it as a circular. The instrument is a professional association recognised in the career of the teacher, funded with a small grant and connected to the pedagogical institute. An association of that structure is the cheapest instrument of professional development that a system can have. A teacher who writes about her practice thinks about it, and the pedagogical institute is the place where the writing can be taught. A lesson described, a difficulty analysed, a solution tried and

reported: the four are the elements of a small study, and the study is the form in which a profession accumulates its knowledge.

A teacher who has never written one will receive the knowledge of the reform as an instruction. The instrument is a course in the writing of a case, with the publication of the best cases in a journal of the institute and a prize for the school that submits them. A course of that structure produces an evidence of the classroom that the ministry does not have. The lesson study is a method in which a group of teachers designs a lesson together, teaches it in a class, observes it and revises it, and the method requires time rather than money. An hour a week of a group of four teachers, one lesson taught by each in turn, an observation with a protocol and a revision written down: the cycle produces a lesson that works and a group that has learned to work. The consequence of its absence is a teacher who closes the door and repeats what she was taught. The instrument is a timetable with an hour of the week protected for the group, a protocol of the observation and a mentor who leads the first cycle. The three are the whole cost of the most effective form of professional development that the research describes.

11. The Parents, the Library and the Minority Language

The reform of the school requires the household to value what the school does, and the household values what it can see: the mark, the certificate and the admission. A school that teaches the competences that the admission test does not measure will be judged by the parents on the test, and the parents will be right within the system that exists. The consequence is a pressure that returns the school to the preparation. The instrument is a communication of the learning: a portfolio that the parents read twice a year, a demonstration of the work of the pupils, and an explanation of what the competence is for. A communication of that structure is the instrument through which the demand for the reform is created rather than assumed. The library of the pedagogical institute is composed of the textbooks of the disciplines and the classics of the pedagogy, and it does not hold the research that the method requires. A teacher who is asked to use an evidence-based practice and has no access to the evidence will use the practice that the trainer described, and the description is a summary of a study that the teacher cannot read.

The consequence is a profession that applies the conclusions and cannot evaluate them. The instrument is a subscription to the journals of the education sciences in the national language and in English, with a librarian who teaches the search and a seminar that reads one study a

month. A subscription of that structure is the instrument through which a profession becomes a reader of its own literature. The teacher of a minority language teaches in a school where the curriculum, the textbooks and the examination are in the state language, and her subject is the bridge that the pupil crosses twice a day. A programme that prepares her as a teacher of a language and not as a teacher of the curriculum in that language produces a lesson about the language rather than a schooling in it. The consequence is a pupil who studies the mother tongue as a subject and learns the disciplines in a language that the household does not speak. The instrument is a programme of the bilingual teaching: the discipline taught in two languages, the materials developed with the institute, and a practicum in a school of the minority. A programme of that structure is the one that the regions with a minority population require.

12. The Network of Schools

The pedagogical institute and the schools of its region are two institutions with one task, and the relation between them is a protocol rather than a partnership. A network of thirty schools, each with a mentor, a group of beginner teachers and a group of pupils whom the institute follows, is the laboratory in which the teacher education is conducted and the field in which the research is done. The consequence of its absence is an institute that theorises about the school and a school that receives the theory as a circular. The instrument is a network agreement: the schools that host the practicum, the mentors who are trained and paid, the pupils whose progress is followed, and the studies that the institute publishes each year. An agreement of that structure is the institutional form of the relation that the reform assumes.

13. The Lesson and Its Preparation

The lesson is the unit of the teacher's work and the unit that the pedagogical institute spends the least time on. A student who has attended four years of lectures on the didactics of mathematics and has planned twenty lessons, taught twelve of them and analysed four, has a knowledge of the theory and an experience of the practice that is too thin for the class she will meet in September, where she will teach twenty-two hours a week and plan every one of them.

The planning is the competence that separates a teacher who survives from one who does not. A lesson planned in an hour, with the objectives, the sequence, the questions and the assessment of the under-

standing, is a lesson that can be taught to a class of thirty-five and adjusted when it fails. A lesson planned from the textbook page, without the questions, is a lesson that is read aloud, and the reading is what the pupils who are bored remember.

The instrument is a course of the lesson design, taught in the institute and practised in the school, in which the student plans a sequence of five lessons, teaches them, records the class and analyses the recording with a mentor. A course of that structure is the element of the teacher education that the graduates most often say they lacked, and it requires the school and the institute to work on the same task rather than on two.

The class of thirty-five is the standard of the system and the number that the curriculum of the institute does not address. A teacher trained in a seminar of twelve students, discussing a text with a group that has read it, enters a class in which a third of the pupils have not read the text, a third have read it and not understood it, and a third are ahead of the lesson. The method that she has learned presumes a uniformity that the class does not have.

The differentiation of the teaching is the competence that the class requires, and it is the one that the institute teaches as a principle rather than as a practice. A teacher who prepares three versions of the same task, who groups the pupils for a part of the lesson and who assesses the understanding at three levels, teaches the class she has. A teacher who does not will teach the middle third and will describe the other two as a problem of discipline.

The instrument is a course in the differentiated teaching with a practicum in a class of the real size, and a mentor who observes the lesson and counts the pupils who are working rather than the pupils who are quiet. A course of that structure is the one that prepares the graduate for the class that exists, and its absence is the reason that the beginning teacher describes the first year as a survival.

The school is the workplace of the graduate and the institute presents it as a place of the vocation, with a moral language that the graduate will not find in her contract. A teacher enters a school in which the salary is below the average of the graduates of her own university, the building is heated in part, the parents expect the results that the school cannot produce, and the administration requires the paperwork of a reform that has not reached the classroom.

The consequence is a shock that the institute could have prepared and did not, and a departure of a proportion of each cohort within five years. The teachers who remain develop a set of practices for survival that the institute does not teach: the lesson that can be delivered with a

photocopy, the assessment that can be marked in an evening, the relation with the parents that prevents a complaint. The practices are not the ones the reform recommends and they are the ones that make the school function.

The instrument is a course on the school as an organisation: the contract, the rights, the appraisal, the relation with the parents and the administration, taught with a director and a union representative in the room. A course of that structure does not resolve the material conditions of the profession and it gives the graduate the understanding of the institution she enters, which is the difference between a first year survived and a first year lost.

The reform of the teacher education is discussed in the language of the standards and it is delivered by the school that receives the student, and the school has no interest in the reform that does not reduce its timetable. A director who receives four students in the year of the practicum receives also the work of the supervision, the coordination and the reporting, and the work is not in her appraisal and not in her budget.

The instrument is a contract between the institute and the school, with the number of the students, the mentors, the payment and the reduction of the timetable, signed by the director and the rector. A contract of that structure is the ordinary arrangement in the systems with a strong teacher education and it is the one that converts the practicum from a favour into a provision.

14. The Evidence That a Ministry Can Use

The ministry evaluates the reform of the school with the results of the national examination and the international assessments, and neither instrument measures the classroom. A rise in the average score tells the ministry that something has changed in the system and nothing about what, and the schools that rose are frequently the ones that selected their pupils rather than the ones that taught them better.

The pedagogical institute is the institution that can produce the other evidence, because it has the students in the schools and the faculty to analyse what they see. A study of twenty lessons in ten schools, with the planning documents, the recordings and the work of the pupils, produces a description of the teaching that a ministry can act on: the share of the lesson in which the pupils speak, the kinds of the questions asked, the time spent on the assessment of the understanding.

The instrument is a research programme of the institute, funded by the ministry and published annually, with the same protocol in each region so that the results can be compared. A programme of that structure costs less than a single international assessment and it produces the evidence about the classroom that the reform requires, and it makes the institute the institution that tells the system what its teaching looks like.

15. Conclusions

The reform of the school will be delivered by the teachers whom the pedagogical institutes are producing now, and the curriculum of those institutes is therefore the most consequential document in the system. Three conclusions follow. The practicum must be distributed across the programme and supervised by a paid mentor with a status, because a competence is formed in the school and not in the lecture hall. The induction year must be a protected year with a reduced timetable and a mentor, because it is the year in which the cohort is retained or lost. And the pedagogical institute must be a university with a research mandate, because a profession that does not produce its own knowledge will import a method that does not fit its schools. A system that has done the three will have the teachers for the reform it has announced. A system that has done none of them will announce a reform each year and will wonder, each year, why the classroom has not changed.

Stage	Present arrangement	Instrument
Selection	The general admission test	A teaching task and an interview
Formation	Discipline and method in parallel	Joint course with a taught lesson
Practicum	Six weeks in the final year	Distributed, with a paid mentor
Induction	A full timetable from September	A protected year with a mentor

Table 1 Four stages of a teacher's formation and the instrument required at each

References

[1] Ibodullayeva, Z. (2023). The practicum in Uzbek teacher education. Tashkent: O'qituvchi.

[2] OECD (2020). Teachers and school leaders in Central Asia. Paris.

[3] Shaykulov, H. (2024). Engineering and technical staff in the Uzbek economy. Samarkand.

[4] UNESCO (2021). Teacher policy in Uzbekistan. Tashkent.

[5] Mahmudova, B. (2024). Rural schools and the transition to higher education. Tashkent.

Biography:

Ibodullayeva Zubayda Sherzodovna is an independent researcher in Tashkent working on teacher education, the practicum and the professional development of schoolteachers.