

THE PEDAGOGICAL MASTERY OF THE FUTURE TEACHER OF THE HISTORY OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract. This article substantiates a subject-specific conception of the pedagogical mastery of the future teacher of the History of Uzbekistan. The study proceeds from the premise that mastery is not subject-neutral: what constitutes it is determined by the nature of the material taught, and the material of national history is simultaneously narrative, evidential and value-laden. The author advances a model of three demands that the history lesson must satisfy at once — it must hold attention, it must remain faithful to evidence, and it must be tactful towards the identities and memories it touches — and shows that each pair of demands stands in tension, so that the abandonment of any one produces a recognisable deformation of teaching. Mastery is accordingly defined as the capacity to hold all three simultaneously. A six-component structure of mastery and three levels of its development are elaborated, and the unanticipated pupil question is substantiated as the situation in which mastery becomes diagnostically visible. The polemic between J. Hattie and G. Biesta concerning the measurability of good teaching is subjected to critical examination.

Keywords: pedagogical mastery, History of Uzbekistan, future teachers, pedagogical tact, narrative competence, historical evidence, contested interpretations, unanticipated question, pedagogical content knowledge, professional judgement, teacher preparation.

INTRODUCTION

The category of pedagogical mastery occupies a settled place in the national pedagogical tradition, denoting the highest level of professional activity, attained when knowledge of the subject, command of method, pedagogical technique and personal qualities combine into a capacity to act well in circumstances that cannot be fully anticipated. Mastery is not the sum of its components: a teacher may possess extensive knowledge, a repertoire of methods and an agreeable manner and still conduct lessons that are merely correct. What distinguishes mastery is how these resources are brought to bear upon a particular class at a particular moment, and this is what makes it difficult to describe and harder still to form deliberately.

The study proceeds from a premise usually left implicit: pedagogical mastery is not subject-neutral. The demands upon a teacher of mathematics differ in kind from those upon a teacher of literature, and a conception general enough to cover both omits what is decisive in each. For the teacher of the History of Uzbekistan the determining circumstance is the material itself, which is at once narrative, evidential and value-laden, and which therefore imposes three demands that must be satisfied simultaneously.

The first demand is that the lesson hold attention. History is transmitted through narrative, and a narrative that does not engage has failed whatever its accuracy; the educative effect of the subject depends upon the pupil coming to care about people no longer present, and this cannot be produced by the accumulation of dates. The principal instrument is the teacher's speech: the capacity to build a

Multidisciplinary research and Innovation (SICMRI 2026)

narrative line, to vary tempo, to use pause, to select the concrete detail that makes a distant circumstance imaginable. Speech technique is here not an ornament of mastery but one of its constituents.

The second demand is fidelity to evidence. Narrative effect exerts a constant pressure in the opposite direction: the vivid anecdote of uncertain provenance improves the story, the simplified causal chain is easier to follow than the contested one, and the projection of present categories upon past actors makes their conduct intelligible at the cost of accuracy. The pupil's trust gives such concessions a durability they would not otherwise possess, since what is learned from a trusted teacher is often retained unexamined for decades.

The third demand is tact. National history is not neutral material: it touches the identity of those who study it, intersects with family memory and includes episodes whose recollection is painful. Pupils arrive with narratives acquired at home or online, some contradicting the textbook, and they ask about them. The teacher who meets such a question with suppression damages the pupil's trust and his willingness to think; the teacher who abandons scholarly standards to please damages the subject. Tact here is not politeness but professional judgement exercised under pressure.

These demands do not combine easily, and the central claim of this study is that each pair stands in tension. Interest pursued at the expense of evidence produces the engaging but unreliable lesson, remembered vividly and inaccurately. Evidential scrupulousness at the expense of interest produces the accurate but lifeless lesson. Caution at the expense of both produces the evasive lesson, in which difficult questions are deflected and the pupil concludes that history is a field in which one is not permitted to think. Mastery consists in holding the three together rather than resolving the tension by sacrifice.

Mastery, moreover, is not reliably visible in the planned portion of a lesson, since a well-prepared teacher of ordinary competence and a master may deliver the same explanation with comparable success. The difference emerges when the plan is interrupted: when a pupil asks an unanticipated question, advances a claim heard elsewhere or raises an episode the teacher had not intended to address. All components are then called upon at once, and the response reveals what preparation conceals.

In Uzbekistan these questions arise within a system undergoing substantial change: the teaching of national history has received sustained attention, textbooks have been revised, the requirement of objective coverage has been affirmed, and pupils encounter claims about the national past in an information environment no curriculum controls. The scholarly problem arises from the absence of a subject-specific conception of mastery for this discipline, which is taught in general pedagogical terms while the demands national history places upon the teacher are left to be discovered in practice.

The aim of the article is to substantiate a subject-specific conception of the pedagogical mastery of the future teacher of the History of Uzbekistan. The tasks were to establish the demands the subject places upon the teacher and the tensions among them; to determine the component structure of mastery and the levels of its development; to substantiate the situation in which it becomes observable; and to identify the conditions of its formation. The novelty consists in the model of three competing demands with the deformations produced by their imbalance, in the six-component structure derived from it, and in the substantiation of the unanticipated question as both diagnostic situation and instrument of formation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within Uzbek pedagogical scholarship the foundation of the present study is supplied above all by the work of N.N. Azizxo'jayeva on pedagogical technologies and pedagogical mastery. Her principal

Multidisciplinary research and Innovation (SICMRI 2026)

contribution lies in the demonstration that mastery is not an ineffable endowment but a structured professional capacity admitting of description, purposeful formation and assessment, and in the treatment of pedagogical technique — speech, voice, gesture, self-regulation and the organisation of communication — as a constituent of that capacity rather than a matter of temperament. This permits the narrative and communicative demands of the history lesson to be treated as objects of deliberate preparation rather than as gifts some teachers happen to possess.

The second pillar of the theoretical framework is provided by the research of D.A. Alimova in the field of methodology and historiography. Distinguishing history as an objective process from history as scientific knowledge of it, the author demonstrates that historical knowledge is a construction resting upon sources and conditioned by the methodological assumptions of the investigator, and insists upon the critical re-examination of inherited interpretations. This supplies the ground of the demand for evidential fidelity: a teacher who does not himself distinguish what is established from what is debated will transmit contested interpretations as settled fact. The value and institutional dimensions of the question are illuminated by contemporary research on education and worldview: S. Ergashbaev shows that stable orientations are formed through sustained processes of continuous education and, in a further study, singles out independent critical reflection as a central outcome, while M.M. Mirzaolimjon og'li and E. Shohbozbek disclose the institutional context of the reform of pedagogical education.

Within international scholarship several traditions bear upon the problem. L.S. Shulman introduced the category of pedagogical content knowledge, that form of professional knowledge which belongs neither to the subject nor to general pedagogy but to their intersection, comprising the representations, analogies and explanations by which a particular content is made teachable and the understanding of what makes it difficult. M. van Manen elaborated the conception of pedagogical tact as a form of thoughtful, situational action exercised in the instant, when deliberation is impossible and the teacher must nevertheless respond well. K. Barton and L. Levstik examined the purposes history education serves in society, while J. Hattie and G. Biesta have debated from opposed positions whether the quality of teaching is amenable to measurement. Uzbek scholarship has thus elaborated the structure of mastery and the methodology of historical knowledge, international scholarship the analysis of professional knowledge and tact; the gap addressed here is the absence of a conception of mastery specific to the teaching of national history.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological foundation of the study is constituted by the systemic approach, which made it possible to treat pedagogical mastery not as an aggregate of separate qualities but as an integral formation whose components are mutually conditioning, so that the weakness of any one alters the functioning of the rest; within this framework the activity approach performed the leading function, since mastery is manifested and formed only in professional action, and the personality-oriented approach permitted account to be taken of the individual manner in which the same demands are met by different teachers. The theoretical analysis of pedagogical, historical and methodological literature served to reconstruct the conceptions of mastery, pedagogical tact and professional knowledge and to delimit them from adjacent notions. The historical-genetic method traced the development of the category of pedagogical mastery in the national tradition, while source analysis of the school course identified the topics generating the greatest tension among the three demands. Content analysis of curricula, textbooks and methodological guidance established how far the subject-specific demands upon the teacher are

Multidisciplinary research and Innovation (SICMRI 2026)

reflected in the preparation prescribed. Pedagogical observation of history lessons, with particular attention to episodes in which the planned course of the lesson was interrupted, was used to collect the situations upon which the diagnostic model rests. Questioning and interviewing of teachers, students and methodologists established the difficulties encountered in responding to unanticipated and sensitive questions, and the case method was applied in constructing and analysing such situations. Pedagogical modelling yielded the model of three demands, the six-component structure of mastery and the scale of levels, and the method of expert assessment was applied in verifying them. Elements of the pedagogical experiment, organised in ascertaining, formative and control stages, served to verify the proposed conditions of formation, and methods of mathematical statistics were used in establishing the significance of observed differences. General scientific procedures of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, abstraction, generalisation and modelling were applied at every stage and secured the coherence of the conclusions.

RESULTS

The study established a subject-specific definition of pedagogical mastery as the capacity to satisfy simultaneously the three demands imposed by the nature of national history — that the lesson hold attention, remain faithful to evidence and be tactful towards the identities and memories it touches — under conditions that cannot be fully anticipated. Their imbalance produces three recognisable deformations: the engaging but unreliable lesson, in which narrative effect is purchased by unverified detail; the accurate but lifeless lesson, in which scrupulousness is purchased by the loss of the pupil's involvement; and the evasive lesson, in which caution is purchased by the deflection of difficult questions, so that pupils conclude that thinking is not expected of them. On this basis a six-component structure of mastery was substantiated. The professional-value component comprises interest in the subject, civic responsibility and the norm of intellectual honesty that forbids both the suppression of inconvenient evidence and its tendentious presentation. The subject-scientific component comprises command of the content together with awareness of historiography — which interpretations are established, which contested and on what grounds. The narrative-communicative component comprises speech technique: the narrative line, the control of tempo and pause, the concrete detail, the use of the voice. The didactic-methodological component comprises lesson design, questioning and assessment; the tactful component, the capacity to respond well in the instant to the unanticipated; and the reflexive component, self-analysis and continuing study, without which the others ossify. A further result substantiates the unanticipated pupil question as the diagnostic situation of mastery, since it calls upon all six components at once; for it a four-step response procedure was elaborated: acknowledging the question as legitimate, separating its factual from its evaluative content, stating explicitly what is established, what is contested and what remains unknown, and returning the question to the evidence by which it might be settled. Three levels were distinguished: the reproductive-narrative, at which the teacher retells the textbook competently and avoids departures from it; the methodical-adaptive, at which methods are adjusted to the class; and the masterly-situational, at which the teacher responds productively to the unforeseen while holding all three demands. Finally, the conditions of formation were determined: training in narrative and speech technique; historiographical preparation making the boundary between established and contested knowledge explicit; a bank of difficult questions drawn from real lessons; simulation of such situations with analysis of recorded responses; mentored practice; and assessment criteria addressed to the response to the unplanned rather than to the execution of the plan.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained require to be situated within the principal contemporary controversy concerning the nature of good teaching, namely the opposition between the position associated with J. Hattie and the critique advanced by G. Biesta. In the synthesis of meta-analyses that gave rise to the programme of visible learning, J. Hattie proceeds from the premise that the effects of teaching upon achievement can be measured, compared and ranked, so that the practices producing the largest effects can be identified and disseminated. The practical injunction is that the teacher should know his impact: establish by evidence rather than impression whether what he does advances learning, and prefer the practices the accumulated evidence supports. Mastery, on this account, is neither mysterious nor incommunicable, consisting in the reliable use of demonstrably effective practices and the habit of checking their effect.

G. Biesta objects that this misconstrues the activity it seeks to improve. Education, he argues, is not a technological process in which defined inputs produce defined outputs but a relation between persons in which the learner's response is never guaranteed, and the attempt to secure outcomes by validated interventions eliminates the openness in which education consists. He objects further that the question of what works cannot be answered without first answering what it should work for, and that measuring effects upon achievement silently settles that prior question in favour of whatever happens to be measurable. Teaching therefore requires judgement about purposes and not merely technique directed at effects, and a conception of mastery that omits judgement omits what matters most.

The substance of the disagreement concerns whether the quality of teaching is in principle measurable, and hence whether mastery can be specified as a set of practices. Two further positions clarify its application here. L.S. Shulman's category of pedagogical content knowledge indicates that much of what distinguishes a good lesson is specific to the content taught and escapes generic descriptions of effective practice. M. van Manen's analysis of pedagogical tact identifies the component least amenable to measurement: action in the instant, before deliberation is possible, in which the teacher must respond well to a situation that has not arisen before.

The model advanced in this article suggests that the controversy is resolved by distinguishing among the three demands rather than by adopting one position wholesale. The demand that the lesson hold attention is substantially measurable: engagement, participation and retention are observable, and here Hattie's insistence upon knowing one's impact applies without qualification. Evidential fidelity is assessable by scholarly rather than statistical means, by examining what the teacher asserts against what the sources support. Tact, however, is assessable only by judgement, since its exercise consists in responding to the singular, and any attempt to specify it as a procedure destroys the responsiveness that defines it. Mastery in this subject is therefore partly measurable and partly not, and preparation must employ both instruments: systematic evidence where the object admits of it, and the cultivation of judgement through cases, mentoring and reflection where it does not.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the pedagogical mastery of the teacher of the History of Uzbekistan cannot be adequately described in subject-neutral terms, since the material of national history imposes three demands that must be met at once: the lesson must hold attention, remain faithful to evidence and be tactful towards the identities and memories it touches.

Multidisciplinary research and Innovation (SICMRI 2026)

First, each pair of these demands stands in tension, and the abandonment of any one produces a recognisable deformation — the engaging but unreliable lesson, the accurate but lifeless lesson and the evasive lesson — so that mastery consists in holding the three together. Second, a six-component structure was substantiated: the professional-value, subject-scientific, narrative-communicative, didactic-methodological, tactful and reflexive components.

Third, the unanticipated pupil question was substantiated as the diagnostic situation in which mastery becomes visible, and a four-step response procedure was elaborated for it; three levels of mastery were distinguished accordingly: the reproductive-narrative, the methodical-adaptive and the masterly-situational.

Fourth, the conditions of formation were identified as training in narrative and speech technique, historiographical preparation making explicit the boundary between established and contested knowledge, a bank of difficult questions, the simulation of such situations, mentored practice and assessment criteria addressed to the response to the unplanned. These conclusions may be drawn upon in courses on pedagogical mastery and the methodology of teaching history. Further research might address instruments for assessing the quality of responses to unanticipated questions.

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