

PEDAGOGICAL THEORIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE: REDEFINING THE TEACHER'S ROLE

Samandarova Gulsara Ismatilloevna

Teacher of Languages Department

Tashkent State Agrarian University

Abstract. *The 21st-century educational landscape is experiencing a paradigm shift driven by technological advancements. Pedagogical theories such as constructivism, connectivism, and blended learning have evolved to accommodate new forms of digital interaction, requiring a redefinition of the teacher's role. This article explores the intersection of traditional educational theory and digital innovation, analyzing how educators transition from content deliverers to facilitators, designers, and co-learners in technology-mediated environments.*

Keywords: *Digital pedagogy, teacher role, constructivism, connectivism, blended learning, educational technology, e-learning, 21st-century skills.*

Introduction. Rapid developments in digital technology are transforming education in ways unimaginable just a few decades ago. The proliferation of online platforms, virtual classrooms, and artificial intelligence tools has prompted a re-evaluation of traditional pedagogical frameworks. While the teacher was once the central authority figure and knowledge source, today's digital age necessitates a more dynamic, collaborative, and learner-centered approach.

Classical pedagogical theories such as behaviorism and cognitivism emphasized structured content delivery, repetition, and measurable outcomes. However, with the increasing integration of technology, more constructivist and humanistic approaches have gained traction. In particular, three key theoretical models have gained prominence in digital pedagogy:

Constructivism emphasizes active, experiential learning where students build knowledge through engagement and reflection. Digital tools like simulations and virtual labs align with this model by allowing learners to experiment and visualize complex concepts.

Connectivism, proposed by George Siemens, posits that learning occurs through networks of information and people. This theory is especially relevant in

the digital age, where knowledge is distributed across platforms, and social learning plays a central role (Siemens, 2005).

- **Blended Learning** combines online and face-to-face instruction. It supports differentiated learning and fosters flexibility in teaching and assessment methods, requiring teachers to manage both physical and virtual learning environments effectively.

In traditional pedagogy, teachers primarily served as instructors and evaluators. Today, their roles are multifaceted and fluid:

1. **Facilitator of Learning:** Teachers now guide rather than dictate learning. They support students in navigating digital resources and encourage critical inquiry.

2. **Instructional Designer:** Educators must curate content, design digital learning experiences, and align them with curriculum standards.

3. **Technological Mentor:** Teachers help students develop digital literacy, manage online safety, and use educational tools effectively.

4. **Co-Learner and Reflective Practitioner:** Given the rapid pace of technological change, educators are continuously learning alongside their students, modeling adaptability and lifelong learning.

5. **Data Analyst:** With learning management systems (LMS) and analytics tools, teachers now monitor engagement, assess real-time progress, and personalize instruction based on data. With recent reforms, Uzbekistan is integrating digital technologies into classrooms and teacher education, but infrastructure and capacity development remain key concerns (Ministry of Preschool and School Education, 2023).

Conclusion. As the digital age redefines every facet of modern life, education too must evolve. Pedagogical theories that once emphasized content delivery now prioritize interaction, adaptability, and learner agency. Teachers are no longer transmitters of knowledge but facilitators, designers, and mentors in a complex digital ecosystem. Embracing this new role requires systemic change in teacher education, curriculum development, and institutional support. With thoughtful integration, digital pedagogy can enhance learning, foster creativity, and prepare students for an interconnected global society.

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