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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>PREPARING UZBEK STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL
COMPETITIONS: LEADERSHIP, ASSESSMENT, AND CURRICULUM DESIGN**Nargiza Yaxshibayeva**

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: Leadership, Assessment, Curriculum Design, 21st-century Skills, Project-based Learning, Uzbekistan, Gifted Education.**Received:** 10.06.25**Accepted:** 12.06.25**Published:** 14.06.25**Abstract:** This article explores how leadership, assessment practices, and curriculum design at the Presidential School in Jizzakh are preparing gifted Uzbek students to compete globally. Drawing on the school's mission to enhance educational opportunities and develop future leaders, the paper highlights student-centred methodologies, project-based learning, and the implementation of 21st-century skills frameworks. Specific initiatives such as HOPE (Humanity, Opportunity, Perspectives, Empowerment) and Jizzakh Model United

Nations (JMUN) are examined as case studies of effective leadership in action. The article concludes by emphasising the importance of holistic education models that nurture both academic excellence and character development, positioning Uzbekistan's next generation for success on the international stage.

Introduction

The vision of Uzbekistan's Presidential Schools is to create a network of institutions highly regarded for producing exceptional student achievement and holistic education (World Economic Forum, 2015). These schools aim to prepare the next generation of leaders who will actively contribute to the country's development. In Jizzakh, the Presidential School embodies this mission by offering gifted students educational opportunities that go beyond traditional learning models. This paper discusses how leadership, assessment, and curriculum design are integrated to prepare students for global academic and leadership competitions.

Leadership in Shaping Future Generations. Effective leadership at the Presidential School in Jizzakh is rooted in empowering students and teachers alike (Fullan, 2014). The school follows a student-centred approach, allowing students to express their ideas and perspectives in both academic and extracurricular contexts. Leadership is demonstrated through fostering environments where students feel safe and motivated to take intellectual risks.

A prime example is the HOPE initiative (Humanity, Opportunity, Perspectives, Empowerment) designed to enhance students' public speaking and leadership skills. Initially, students were reluctant and anxious about speaking in front of their peers. However, through structured practice over two weeks, they gained confidence and now actively participate in delivering speeches during morning sessions. These speeches are broadcast on the school's official YouTube, Instagram, and Telegram platforms, encouraging students to strive for excellence and visibility.

Assessment Practices that Drive Growth. Assessment at the Presidential School is not limited to summative tests but is woven into daily teaching practices to monitor and promote growth (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Teachers employ formative assessments that provide

students with ongoing feedback, guiding them towards mastery. Leadership in assessment is seen in how teachers use data-driven approaches to refine instruction and offer tailored support.

The school emphasises the development of 21st-century skills, namely critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity (the 4Cs) through assessments that require application and reflection (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). For instance, project presentations, peer reviews, and collaborative tasks are regularly used to evaluate students' real-world skills, making assessment an integral part of leadership development.

Curriculum Design for Global Competence. Curriculum design at the school is aligned with international frameworks like Cambridge but is adapted to meet the unique needs of Uzbek students. Lessons are project-based, encouraging collaboration and peer support while building problem-solving skills. The curriculum integrates opportunities for students to engage in interactive activities that prompt them to think outside the box.

One such example is the Jizzakh Model United Nations (JMUN), a collaborative project where students from various regions come together to discuss global issues. By participating in JMUN, students develop diplomatic skills, broaden their perspectives, and practice negotiation and leadership in multicultural settings. This exposure is critical in preparing them to succeed in global academic competitions and leadership roles.

Projects that Build Self-Confidence and Character. Beyond academics, the school runs multiple projects aimed at boosting students' self-esteem and leadership capabilities. These initiatives provide safe spaces for students to take on challenges, make decisions, and reflect on their growth. The success of the HOPE project, in particular, underscores the role of leadership in nurturing self-confidence.

The JMUN project also serves as a platform for leadership, enabling students to take responsibility in organising events, leading committees, and managing logistics. Such experiences are invaluable in building the practical leadership skills that global competitions demand.

The Presidential School in Jizzakh offers a compelling model of how leadership, assessment, and curriculum design can work synergistically to prepare students for success on the world stage. By embedding student-centred practices, formative assessment, and project-

based learning into its educational framework, the school is not only fostering academic excellence but also shaping future leaders equipped with the skills, confidence, and character to contribute meaningfully to Uzbekistan's development.

An important aspect of the Presidential School in Jizzakh is its boarding system, which provides dormitory facilities for students coming from different regions. The dormitory life is carefully organized to support students' academic and personal development. Night matrons and staff are assigned to monitor students' well-being, ensure discipline, and provide guidance after school hours. These matrons play a key role in helping students manage their homework, preparing for the next day's lessons, and making sure they actively participate in extracurricular activities. This structured environment not only fosters independence and responsibility but also reinforces the school's holistic approach to nurturing gifted learners.

Teacher Professional Development and International Collaboration. An essential pillar supporting the success of students at the Presidential School in Jizzakh is the continuous professional development of its teachers. Recognising that effective leadership begins in the classroom, the school invests in workshops, peer observations, and international certification programs to ensure that teachers are equipped with modern pedagogical strategies. For example, educators undergo training in formative assessment methods, project-based learning, and differentiation techniques to meet the diverse needs of gifted learners.

Parental Engagement and Community Involvement. A key factor contributing to the success of the Presidential School in Jizzakh is the active engagement of parents and the wider community in the educational process. The school recognises that leadership development and academic achievement are most effective when reinforced by strong home-school partnerships. Regular parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and open-house events are organised to ensure parents are well-informed and actively involved in their children's learning journeys.

Additionally, the school has established community outreach initiatives that allow students to apply their skills in real-world contexts. For example, through service-learning projects, students collaborate with local organisations to address social issues such as environmental sustainability, health awareness, and cultural preservation. These projects not only build students' leadership and problem-solving skills but also foster a sense of responsibility and civic duty.

By creating meaningful connections between the school, families, and the community, the Presidential School cultivates an environment where students are supported both academically and personally. This holistic approach ensures that students are well-prepared to represent Uzbekistan proudly in global competitions and leadership arenas.

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