

Exploring physical education teachers' perspectives on modern vs. traditional teaching approaches and practices

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Abstract: Teaching is a multifaceted process that depends on both the methods employed and how effectively teachers implement and deliver them. This study aims to assess the usage of modern techniques and methods consistently applied by Physical Education teachers in Albania. It intends to identify the most frequently utilized approaches in PE classes and determine which methods are the most effective. In order to carry out this study, a combination of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews, discussions) approaches was employed. Modern approaches are utilized in our educational institutions, but educators, particularly those with extensive experience, often remain traditional in their teaching methods. At the same time, newly qualified teachers require additional training, informal conversations, and open workshops within their departments. This study validates the hypothesis that contemporary teaching methods significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of primary education. It is concluded that modern teaching techniques lead to significant transformations in the educational process due to teachers' attempts to adopt learner-centered teaching models, which are crucial for contemporary and high-quality education. These results reinforce the positive relationship between modern teaching practices and the quality of education, confirming the original hypothesis.

Keywords: Albanian schools, Modern vs. Traditional teaching, PE teachers. Primary education, Teaching Methods.

1. Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement and evolving educational demands, the methods employed by teachers play a critical role in shaping effective and engaging learning experiences. The choice and use of teaching methods directly influence how students perceive the learning process. The teacher must make the learning process interesting and dynamic, as using the same methods repeatedly can make the lessons monotonous and students lose interest in acquiring new knowledge. The use of appropriate pedagogical and methodological methods significantly influences effective teaching. When the presented subject content is explained well and successfully, subsequent learning becomes more inspiring because students are willing to be actively engaged. Therefore, effective teaching hinges not only on content but also on the pedagogical methods used to deliver it [1].

Traditional methods and techniques include teaching practices that have been used for decades in education, such as lecturing, textbook-based instruction, and teacher demonstration. On the other hand, contemporary methods and techniques are more innovative and utilize technology, educational games, personalized learning, and many other ways to engage and involve students in learning [2].

Traditional teaching methods have provided structure and consistency in education for decades. In contrast, contemporary teaching methods incorporate innovative tools and strategies such as technology integration, educational games, personalized learning, and project-based approaches designed to increase student engagement [3]. These methods are particularly suited to the needs of lower cycle students, whose learning styles are often active, exploratory, and collaborative [4].

The study of contemporary and traditional methods and techniques in teaching and their role in effective teaching in the lower cycle is an important topic in the field of education. Recent studies have shown that the use of contemporary methods in lower primary education contributes to greater student engagement, improved motivation, and better academic performance [1, 5]. These methods promote a more interactive and participatory learning environment, which helps students build sustainable knowledge. However, traditional methods also offer benefits, particularly in establishing clear instructional structures and laying a foundation for essential knowledge and skills. As such, combining both traditional and contemporary approaches may offer a more balanced and effective teaching strategy [6].

While traditional methods have been used for a long time and have provided structure and consistency in teaching, they may have limitations in increasing student motivation and engagement. Contemporary methods, on the other hand, are more suitable for the needs and preferences of lower cycle students, including changes in their learning styles and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills [7].

During the studies conducted in recent years, it has been observed that the use of contemporary methods in the primary education system, or lower cycle teaching, has positively influenced the improvement of student engagement, motivation, and academic performance. These methods offer a more active and interactive way of learning, encouraging students to be more involved and create sustainable knowledge [8].

However, it is important to emphasize that there are values and benefits of traditional methods in the primary education system, such as establishing a clear instructional structure and transmitting foundational knowledge. For this reason, using a combination of contemporary and traditional methods may be more effective in meeting the diverse needs of students and ensuring rich and engaging teaching [9].

Despite the growing body of literature on innovative teaching practices, there remains a gap in understanding how traditional and contemporary methods are practically applied and perceived within lower cycle classrooms—especially from both teacher and student perspectives. Furthermore, there is limited insight into how these methods impact the development of higher-order thinking, creativity, communication, and problem-solving skills in young learners [4].

To ensure effective teaching in the lower cycle, teachers need to have a flexible approach and use a wide range of methods and techniques that are tailored to the characteristics and needs of their students. This will help improve academic performance and develop students' independent learning skills [2].

Materials gathered provide a wide range of information on teaching methods and the importance of adapting them to the needs and characteristics of students. In this context, the adaptation of teachers and their methods to their audience, namely the students, is seen as a fundamental element for achieving quality and effective teaching [10]. Students have different characteristics, such as their level of ability, learning preferences, interests, learning style, cultural context, and many other factors that influence how they learn best. To maximize learning, it is important for the teacher to have a deep understanding of these student characteristics and to use teaching methods that best suit their needs and preferences. Effective teaching requires continuous adaptation of teaching methods based on feedback and student performance. Teachers need to be open to experimenting with different teaching methods and changing their approach based on student needs [11].

This may include the use of information and communication technology (ICT), game-based methods, project-based learning, personalized learning, and many other innovative teaching methods [7]. If the teacher can adapt well to the needs and preferences of students, they will be more motivated and engaged in learning. This will lead to greater achievement of learning goals and an improvement in students' academic performance. To achieve this goal of adapting the teacher and teaching methods to the needs of students, teacher training and professional development are essential [11]. Teachers need opportunities for ongoing training and support to develop their skills in using different teaching methods and to learn how to identify and address the diverse needs of students effectively. In this way,

they can provide more personalized teaching and positively influence the development and success of students.

Teachers should enrich their teaching work by using various teaching methods, adapting them to the students' needs [12]. Just as the teacher brings personal expression to teaching situations, each student enters the classroom with diverse desires, interests, abilities, and experiences.

Teachers must adapt their instructional approaches to match the diverse needs, abilities, learning preferences, and cultural backgrounds of their students. Effective teaching involves a flexible, student-centered approach and requires ongoing assessment, feedback, and adjustment of methods based on student performance. This includes the integration of tools such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), project-based learning, and game-based instruction [3, 5].

The successful adaptation of teaching methods also depends heavily on continuous professional development and training opportunities for teachers. Educators need support and resources to experiment with diverse instructional strategies and tailor them effectively to their students' needs [4, 6]. In this way, they can foster inclusive, engaging, and high-quality learning experiences.

Teaching methods are a means and form of action in the educational process, involving the delivery and acquisition of knowledge, expressions, and skills [12]. The use of contemporary methods in our schools is a tangible fact or just a theoretical concept.

Importance of the Study: The study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of contemporary methods in achieving effective teaching and learning, as well as to get feedback from teachers on the importance of teaching methods as a crucial issue during the organization of teaching work. Moreover, the study identifies how modern or contemporary methods are integrated into the daily work of teachers, and highlights the most commonly used methods in a teaching class by the sample teachers.

Relevant research on this are identify the impact of contemporary methods on the development of higher-level thinking, communication skills, research, independent thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and initiative [7].

2. Material and Methods

This research seeks to highlight how and to what extent contemporary teaching methods are being implemented in lower cycle classrooms. It focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of these methods in achieving educational goals and explores their influence on student performance and engagement. The study further aims to provide insights that can inform educational policy and teacher training initiatives, ultimately contributing to the improvement of teaching quality and student success in primary education [1, 3].

This study aims to explore the application and effectiveness of traditional and contemporary teaching methods in lower cycle education.

Research Design: For the implementation of this study, both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews, discussions) methods were utilized. A questionnaire was administered for the purposes of this study. Additionally, structured interviews were conducted with school principals, alongside unstructured interviews and discussions with teachers and students from the schools included in the study. The data were collected from 30 teachers through the questionnaire as well as interviews carried out with 3 school principals.

Population and Sample: The participants included in this study are PE teachers at three schools in Tirana: "Emin Duraku," "Skënder Luarasi," and "Edith Durham"(here in the study will be referred to respectively as school A, B and C). 20 lower-cycle teachers were surveyed, of whom 80% are female and 20% are male. Age distribution is as follows: 15% are between 20-30 years old, 40% are between 30-40 years old, and 20% are over 50 years old. Regarding years of teaching experience, 35% have 0-10 years, 30% have 10-20 years, and 35% have over 20 years of experience. Additionally, three interviews were conducted with the principals of these schools. All participants were informed about the study's objectives and provided voluntary consent. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by coding participant identities. Institutional ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection.

Data Collection: The study employed survey techniques. For the specific purpose of the research focus, a questionnaire was developed, which served as the primary instrument for collecting data and opinions from teachers. The questionnaire consisted of structured statements or questions and standardized. In order to carry out the work, two fundamental methods were respected: theoretical analysis and practical consultation.

3. Study Results

This section presents the findings from the data collected through questionnaires and interviews with teachers and principals across three schools. The results focus on the perceived effectiveness and application of contemporary and traditional teaching methods in lower cycle classrooms. Key areas examined include the frequency of method usage, the impact on student engagement and critical thinking, and the incorporation of supplementary teaching tools. The analysis highlights teachers' and students' attitudes toward student-centered approaches and the role these methods play in enhancing the quality of education.

In response to the question, *"Which teaching method do you think is the most effective?"*, all 30 participating teachers (100%) selected contemporary methods as the most effective instructional approach (Figure 1). No teachers indicated a preference for traditional methods or a combined approach.

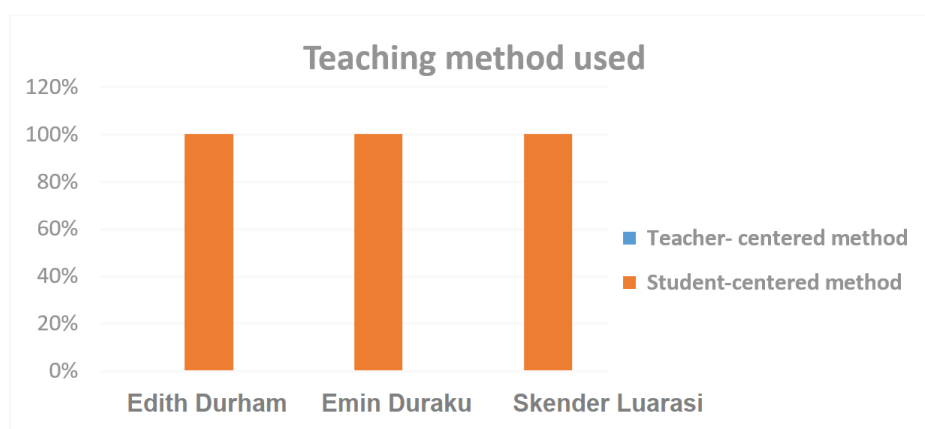


Figure 1.
Teachers' preferences for the most effective teaching method.

This unanimous preference underscores a growing reliance on innovative, student-centered teaching techniques in lower-cycle education. It suggests that educators increasingly value the flexibility, engagement, and adaptability offered by modern methods. These results support findings by Değirmencioğlu [2] and Balliu [8] who similarly reported a positive shift toward contemporary strategies in primary teaching. Teachers across all three schools unanimously indicated that student-centered teaching methods not only enhance learning outcomes but also make students feel more comfortable and engaged during lessons. This reflects a clear shift toward contemporary instructional approaches that prioritize students' emotional and cognitive needs.

When asked about the factors influencing their choice of teaching method, teachers most frequently cited students' learning needs, lesson objectives, available resources, and time constraints. These responses highlight a flexible, responsive approach to teaching, where instructional strategies are adapted based on classroom context and learner characteristics. This aligns with modern pedagogical principles that emphasize differentiation and learner-centered planning.

The same conclusions were also drawn for the question *"Which method do you think makes the student feel better in a lesson?"* Teachers from all three schools responded that they believed that with the student-centered approach, the student feels better. For the question: *"Where do you base yourself*

to choose the most effective method for a teaching hour?" (Teachers were asked to select more than one alternative.)

For the question, *"Which method do you think makes the student feel better in a lesson?"*, all participating teachers across the three schools unanimously selected the student-centered (contemporary) approach. This suggests a strong belief among educators that contemporary methods—emphasizing collaboration, interactivity, and personalization—positively affect students' emotional and cognitive engagement in the learning process. These findings are consistent with those of Lee and Grapin [7] who argue that student-centered instruction fosters motivation, comfort, and a deeper connection to learning content.

Regarding the question, *"Where do you base yourself to choose the most effective method for a teaching hour?"*, teachers were allowed to select multiple options. The most frequently cited criteria, as illustrated in Figure 2.

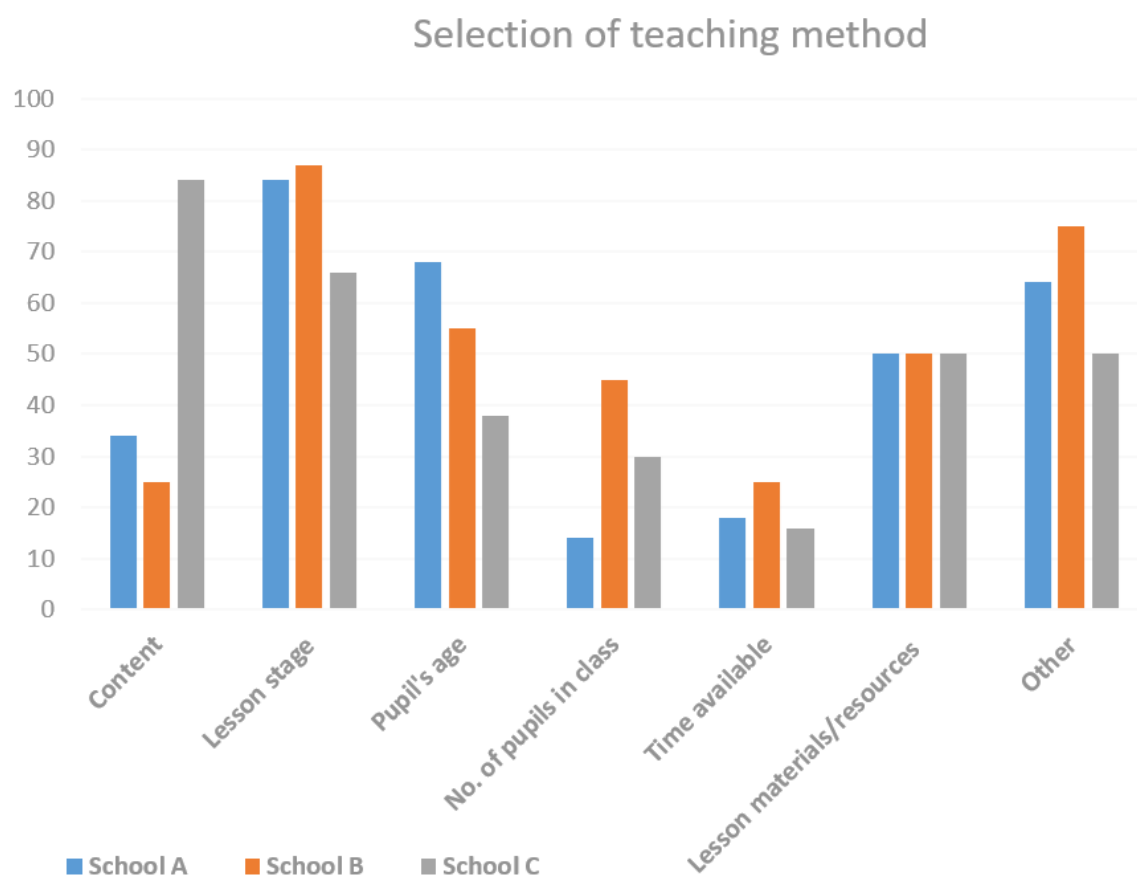


Figure 2.
Factors influencing method selection by teachers

This diversity of criteria indicates that teachers are applying a flexible and responsive approach to instructional design. Their decisions are not solely based on curricular requirements, but also take into account student profiles and contextual teaching conditions. Such adaptability aligns with contemporary pedagogical theory, which emphasizes the importance of differentiated instruction [12] and learner-centered planning [11].

Regarding the question of which is the most effective method in developing the teaching hour, the teachers of the three schools have answered as shown in Figure 3.

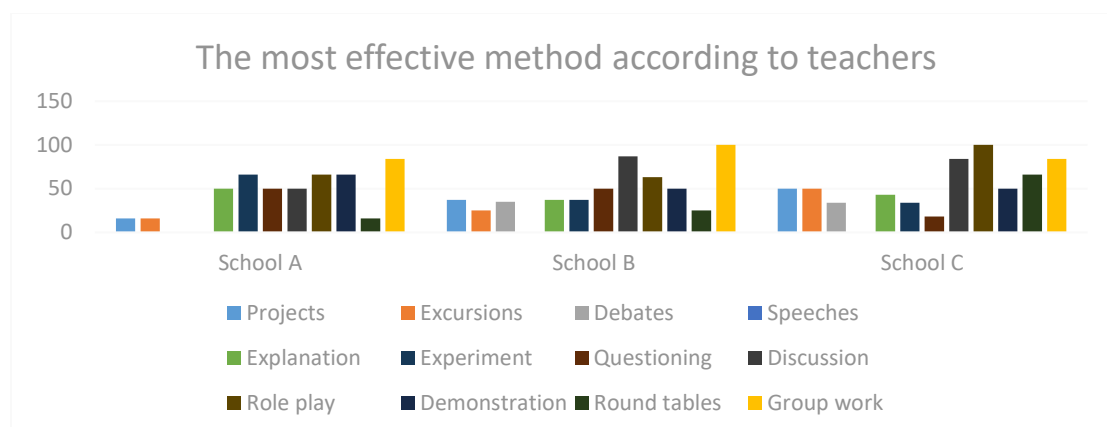


Figure 3.
The most effective teaching method.

Group work emerged as the most valued method, with 100% of teachers at School A and 84% at Schools B and C identifying it as effective. This suggests that teachers widely recognize the importance of peer collaboration in fostering critical thinking, communication skills, and social development among young learners.

Discussion and role play also ranked highly. Discussion was endorsed by 87% of teachers at School A and 84% at School B, though slightly lower (50%) at School C. Role play was particularly favored at School B (100%), with strong support from Schools A (63%) and C (66%). These methods support dynamic classroom interaction and help students connect learning with real-life situations—key components of effective contemporary pedagogy.

Questioning, demonstration, and experimentation received moderate but meaningful recognition. These techniques allow teachers to assess understanding, foster inquiry, and support hands-on learning. School C, in particular, showed stronger preference for experimentation (66%) and demonstration (66%), suggesting either greater resource availability or a stronger emphasis on exploratory learning.

In contrast, lecture-style or passive strategies, such as speeches, were not selected by any teachers, indicating a shared view that such methods do not meet the developmental and engagement needs of lower-cycle learners. Similarly, more niche or logistically complex methods like round tables and excursions received lower preference, possibly due to time constraints or resource limitations.

Lastly, project-based learning showed varying levels of support—ranging from 37% at School A to just 16% at School C—pointing to either differing levels of experience with this method or challenges in implementation.

The data clearly indicate a strong teacher preference for active, student-centered teaching methods across the three schools. Methods such as group work, role play, and discussion dominate, reflecting a shift away from traditional didactic approaches and toward pedagogies that promote critical thinking, student engagement, and collaborative learning. This aligns with modern educational theory and supports the need for continued investment in training, resources, and policy initiatives that enable flexible and innovative classroom practices.

The analysis of Figures 3 and 4 provides strong evidence that teachers in lower cycle education increasingly favor student-centered, interactive teaching methods. The most highly rated methods—group work, discussion, role play, and experimentation—are aligned with constructivist principles, where learners actively build knowledge through engagement and collaboration. These approaches are widely believed by teachers to be more effective than traditional, lecture-based methods in helping students achieve learning objectives, cooperate with peers, and connect with contemporary educational themes.

Specifically, 100% of respondents in all schools identified group work as an effective method, and similar enthusiasm was expressed for discussion and role play. Methods like experimentation and questioning were also valued, particularly at School C. Meanwhile, passive strategies like speeches were universally seen as ineffective, confirming a clear pedagogical shift.

Figure 4 above summarizes different aspects of the applied teaching methods and the opinion of teachers expressed by choosing one of the scales always, sometimes or never. Regarding the first questions, the findings show that majority over 80% of teachers of the three schools think the modern teaching methods always enable students to acquire the main objectives of the new lesson topic. While 20%, 15% and 5% of teachers in the three schools respectively think that only sometimes they help achieve this.

Nearly all confirmed that modern strategies promote contemporary learning—a core aim of today's education systems.

These findings support previous studies emphasizing the benefits of active and personalized learning environments. According to Değirmencioğlu [2] contemporary methods empower students and enhance learning outcomes by promoting autonomy and engagement. Similarly, Lee and Grapin [7] highlight the role of real-world problems and active learning in STEM education, reinforcing the need for strategies like group work and discussion in early schooling. Balliu [8] also observed that Albanian teachers are increasingly shifting from traditional approaches to modern, interactive methods despite facing systemic challenges.

This consistent endorsement of modern pedagogical strategies suggests a strong foundation for curriculum reform, teacher training, and policy shifts that prioritize active learning, cooperation, and student engagement.

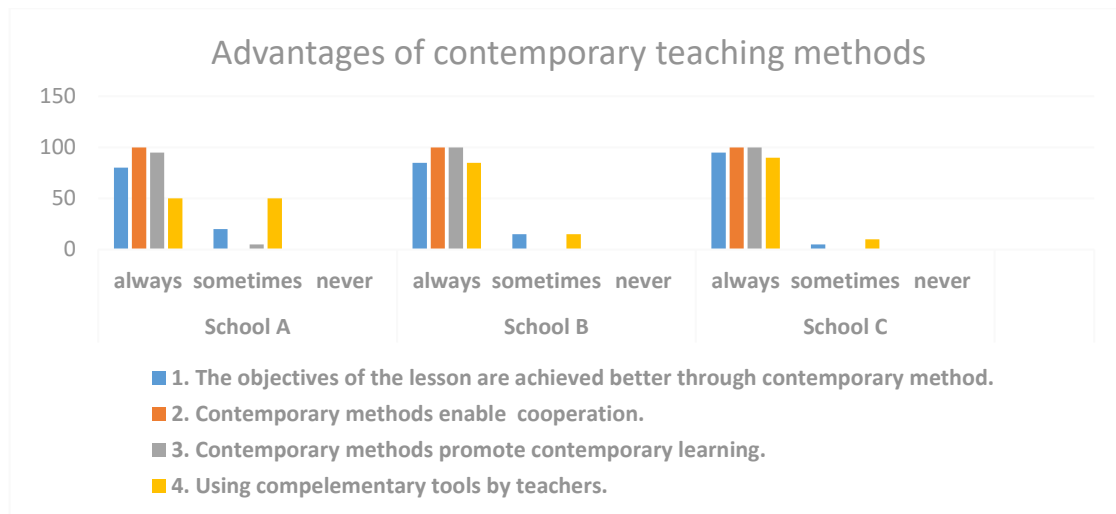


Figure 4.
Advantages of contemporary teaching methods.

Concerning question number 2 in this subgroup, i.e. "Do modern teaching methods create spaces for cooperation?" Teachers at the three schools have chosen the scale 'always' at the rate of 100%. Moreover, even for the third question "Do new teaching methods promote the idea of contemporary learning?" almost 100% of the teachers, except the ones at School B school, expressed that they always promote contemporary learning.

The responses reflected in Figure 4 highlight a clear and consistent endorsement of modern teaching methods by educators across all three schools. Teachers overwhelmingly recognize these approaches as effective in achieving lesson objectives, fostering student collaboration, and aligning with

the principles of contemporary learning. The high level of agreement suggests that modern pedagogical strategies are not only well-understood by teachers but are also being meaningfully integrated into classroom practice. This further reinforces the growing shift from traditional instruction toward more dynamic, student-centered teaching in lower-cycle education.

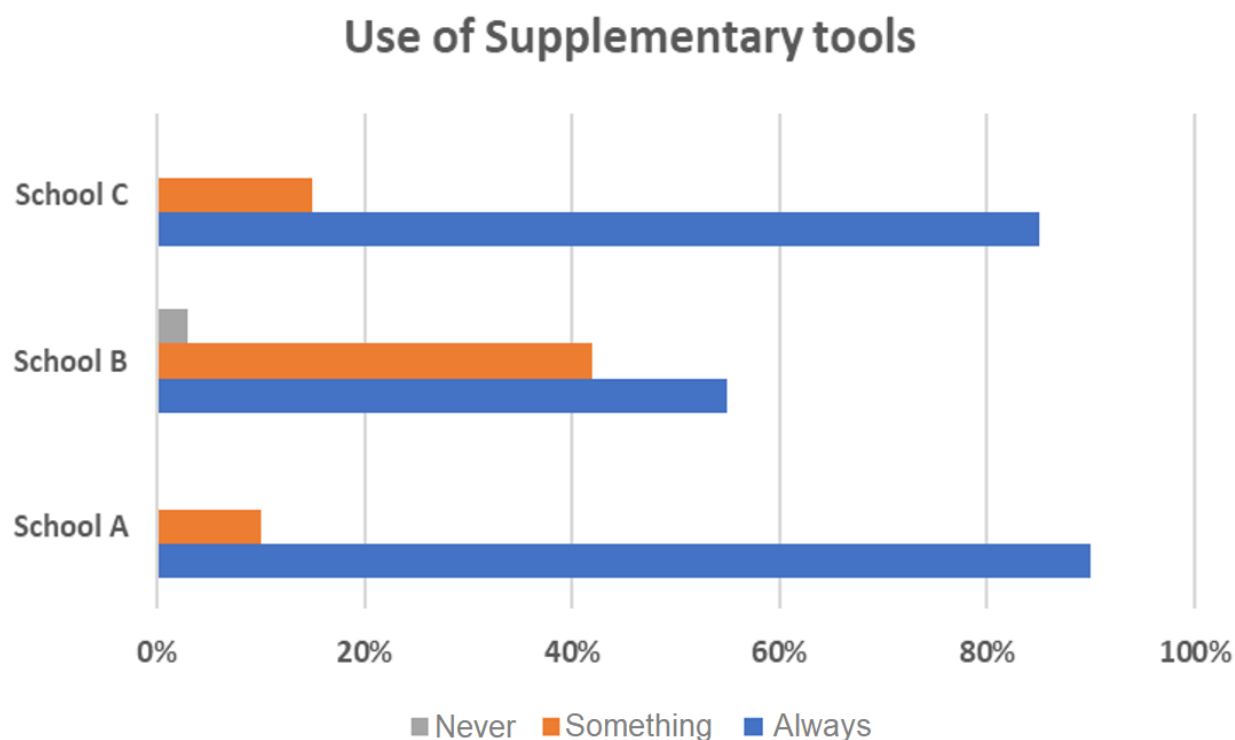


Figure 5.
Use of supplementary tools by teachers.

Regarding question number 4: "Do you use supplementary tools to deliver lessons?". Teachers of School A responded 90% always, 10% sometimes, and 0% never. Teachers of School B responded 55% always, 42% sometimes, and 3% never. Whereas, teachers of School C responded 85% always, 15% sometimes, and 0% never (see Fig.5).

Question 4 asked teachers: "Do you use supplementary tools to deliver lessons?" The responses varied slightly between schools but overall showed a strong positive trend toward the use of supplementary instructional tools (see Figure 5).

These results suggest that while the majority of teachers across all schools are integrating supplementary tools regularly. This may reflect differences in access to resources, teacher training, or institutional support.

The high percentage of teachers using supplementary tools across the three schools reflects a commitment to enhancing the learning experience through additional instructional materials such as visual aids, digital content or educational software. These tools support varied learning styles and make content more accessible and engaging for students. However, the lower "always" response rate at School B may indicate a need for more targeted support or investment in teaching resources.

This finding is consistent with Ordu [12] who highlights the role of teaching aids in improving comprehension and student involvement. It also aligns with Değirmencioğlu [2] who notes that the effective use of modern tools is closely tied to teacher confidence and school infrastructure.

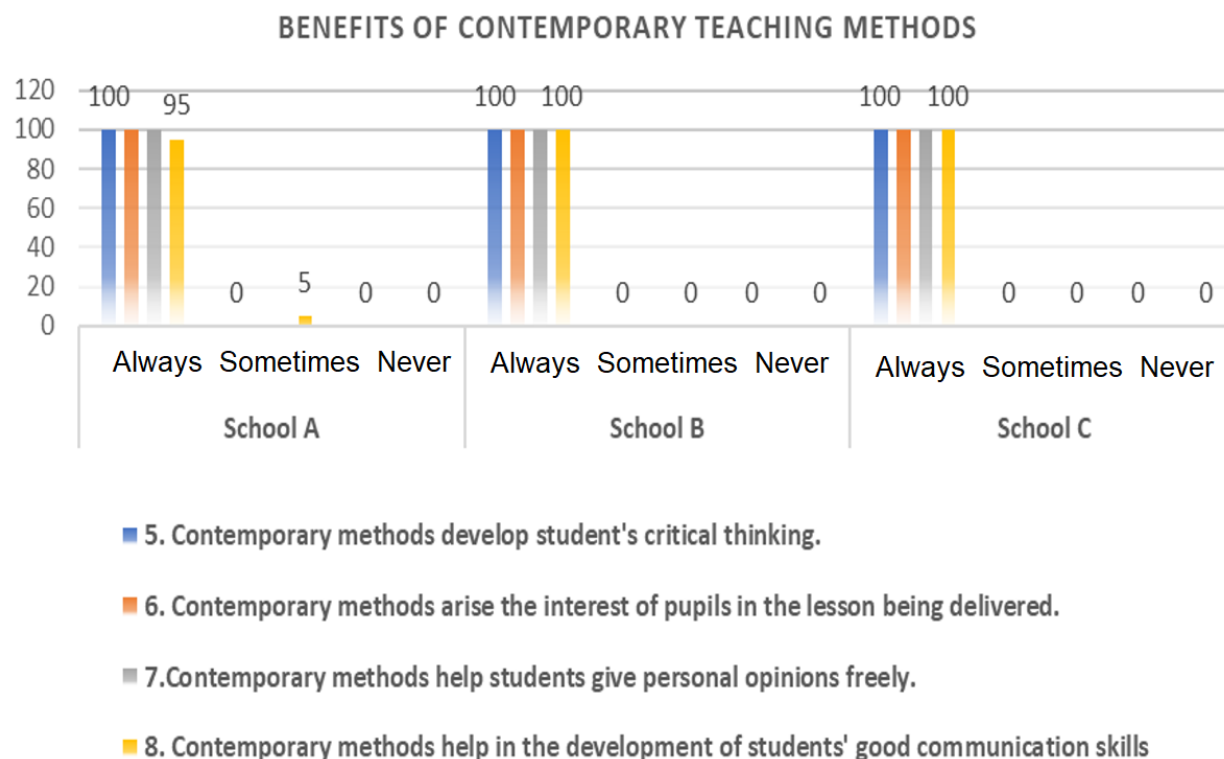


Figure 6.
Results on the insights of benefits of contemporary teaching methods.

In Figure 6 above are shown the findings of four other questions focused on the benefits of contemporary teaching methods. Regarding question no.5: "Do new teaching methods help in the development of critical thinking of students?" Teachers at the three schools namely expressed that contemporary methods always help, at 100% of the time, and develop critical thinking.

Regarding question no.6: "Is the student more interested in the lesson when contemporary methods are used?" Teachers at School A expressed that the new methods always 95% help raise the interest of their pupils, while 5% of them say these help sometimes, and never 0% of the teachers. Whereas, teachers at School B and C have expressed that 100% always help in this regard.

For the question: "Is the student freer in giving personal opinion during the use of contemporary methods?" Teachers at the three schools confirm at 100% that they help pupils express their opinions freely.

For question no.8: "Do contemporary methods help in the development of students' good communication skills?", the teachers at School B school, 95% believe always, 5% believe sometimes, and 0% believe never. The teachers at the other two schools believe at a percentage of 100% that they always help to develop and promote pupils communication skills.

The findings presented in Figure 6 strongly indicate that teachers across all three schools unanimously recognize the significant benefits of contemporary teaching methods in fostering essential student skills. Specifically, 100% of teachers agree that these methods consistently promote the development of critical thinking, a fundamental competency for students' academic and personal growth.

Moreover, contemporary methods are seen as highly effective in engaging students during lessons, with near-universal agreement that they enhance student interest and motivation. The freedom students experience in expressing personal opinions is also fully supported by teachers, underscoring the role of modern pedagogic in creating open and inclusive classroom environments.

Finally, the development of communication skills is widely attributed to the use of contemporary approaches, with the vast majority of teachers affirming that these methods cultivate students' ability to articulate ideas clearly and confidently.

Overall, these results validate the pedagogical shift toward student-centered, interactive teaching strategies that not only improve academic outcomes but also nurture critical lifelong skills. This reinforces the importance of integrating and supporting contemporary teaching practices within primary education to better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century.

4. Discussions

Data analysis clearly demonstrates that the implementation of contemporary teaching methods in lower cycle classrooms is of extraordinary importance and positively impacts both teaching and learning processes. Teachers from all three schools unanimously agree that student-centered approaches are the most effective methods, fostering freedom of expression, collaboration, critical thinking, and active engagement. This aligns with [13] findings, which highlight that contemporary methods contribute to creating a warm and interactive classroom atmosphere conducive to open dialogue.

The study also reveals that teachers feel more satisfied and motivated in classrooms where student-centered methods are practiced, appreciating how these methods facilitate knowledge acquisition, encourage personal expression, and promote cooperative learning environments. Students echo this sentiment, reporting that they feel freer to express their opinions and more valued during lessons conducted with contemporary methods. Such findings support Uka and Uka [14] who emphasize that learner-centered environments enhance students' self-regulated learning and motivation.

Among the schools, group work and discussion emerged as highly valued methods, especially in Schools A and B, where teachers noted that these approaches stimulate student interest and critical inquiry. Role-playing and group work were similarly praised for encouraging creativity and higher-order thinking skills, echoing Balliu [8] observations of a gradual shift towards interactive teaching practices in Albanian schools.

Teachers' selection of teaching methods depends heavily on lesson content, subject matter, and contextual factors such as class size, student age, and resource availability. However, differences in the use of supplementary teaching tools were evident; Schools A and C reported more frequent use of technological and instructional aids compared to School B, where infrastructural limitations constrain such integration.

The results emphasize that contemporary teaching methods promote critical thinking, communication, and a freer expression of ideas, which are essential for developing 21st-century competencies [2, 7]. The positive reception of these methods suggests they enhance students' intellectual growth and motivation, ultimately improving academic performance and engagement.

Challenges remain, particularly regarding adapting lessons to diverse student needs within large class sizes, as reported by teachers [11]. This highlights the ongoing need for professional development and resource investment to support personalized instruction and the effective implementation of contemporary methodologies.

In conclusion, this study validates the hypothesis that contemporary teaching methods significantly enhance the quality and effectiveness of primary education. The combined evidence from teachers and students across the three schools confirms that adopting these methods leads to richer, more engaging learning experiences and better prepares students with essential skills for future academic and life challenges [8, 12]. To sustain this progress, educational policies should prioritize continuous teacher training, infrastructural improvements, and the promotion of innovative pedagogical practices.

5. Conclusions

The organization of teaching work according to contemporary methods, on the one hand, involves the preparation of subjective factors, and on the other hand, it concerns the personal preparation of the teacher and the use of these methods in his/her teaching hour. In this context, considering the situation

in schools and the goals of contemporary methods, as well as the research results, there are some main findings to be highlighted.

The choice and application of contemporary methods are a fundamental prerequisite for changing teaching, the position of the student in the teaching process, and the role of the teacher in this process. Contemporary methods aid in the development of student's critical thinking, effective expressions in communication as well as create open spaces for collaboration between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves.

The application of learner-centered teaching models is essential for contemporary and qualitative teaching as they bring significant changes to the teaching process, as a result of the efforts of teachers to implement them

Moreover, the selection of the method in a teaching hour/class depends on the subject, content, stage of the lesson, student age, number of students in the class, available time, and material base, etc.

Specifically, the data show that contemporary teaching methods play a crucial role in achieving key educational objectives. Over 80% of teachers affirm that these approaches always help students grasp lesson goals, and all respondents agree that such methods create valuable spaces for cooperation and promote contemporary learning paradigms. Furthermore, the use of supplementary teaching tools is widespread, with most teachers reporting regular integration of diverse instructional aids to enrich lesson delivery.

Teachers also highlight the benefits of contemporary methods in cultivating essential 21st-century skills. Critical thinking, communication, student interest, and freedom of expression are all reported to improve significantly when modern pedagogical strategies are employed. This aligns well with prior research suggesting that active learning environments enhance motivation, engagement, and deeper cognitive processing [2, 7].

While some variations between schools exist—particularly in the consistent use of supplementary tools—the overall findings affirm the effectiveness and acceptance of contemporary methods in primary education. These results echo the conclusions of Balliu [8] who noted a gradual but steady transition toward interactive teaching practices in Albanian schools, as well as Ordu [12] who emphasized the positive impact of teaching aids in facilitating understanding and participation.

Importantly, the study reinforces the need for ongoing teacher training and resource allocation to ensure equitable access and application of these methods, especially in contexts where usage is less consistent. As Ninad, et al. [11] highlight, professional development is key to empowering educators to adapt pedagogic to diverse student needs and maximize learning outcomes.

In sum, this research supports the growing consensus that blending contemporary teaching methods with traditional structures can foster richer, more engaging, and effective learning experiences for primary students. Educational policies should thus continue to prioritize the integration of modern pedagogies, encourage teacher development, and promote the use of innovative instructional tools to cultivate the full range of skills students need to thrive in today's world.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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