



FIRST PERSON Connecting Math to Life

New methods to engage students in study process more effectively



Photo: Sitora Shokamolova

Zikrullo Karimov, above, demonstrating student-focused methodologies to teachers.

“New teaching techniques introduced by USAID are less intimidating for students, which helps to engage them in the learning process more effectively.”

—Zikrullo Karimov

Two plus two gives the same answer all over the globe, but the method in which it is taught to students varies from intimidation to engagement. Zikrullo Karimov, a primary education methodology planner of 25 years, has always been a proponent of the classic teacher-centered style of education. But after working with the USAID Quality Learning Project, he has realized how small changes toward more friendly student-centered methodologies make a difference in students' apprehension of the subject and their overall engagement in the study process.

“Is this all one big joke?” asked Mr. Karimov after his observations of the new teacher-training field testing modules. His reaction was the most negative among his fellow colleagues from the Teacher Training Institute. Mr. Karimov could not understand why it is necessary to open such a detailed, extensive discussion around such a simple topic as how to teach. Yet, after training, he has come to appreciate the new methods.

Mr. Karimov approaches primary education reform in Tajikistan in several ways. In his capacity as a senior teacher at the Republican Teacher Training Institute, Mr. Karimov is transferring the lessons gained from his training to around 800 teachers across the country. In addition, he is actively engaged in the development of the various teacher-training policies, which will be institutionalized within the system.

“To improve a student's ability to understand and engagement with the subject, it is important to approach teaching in a more creative way and bring complex concepts closer to real life experience,” said Mr. Karimov. “That is only possible if a teacher eliminates the concept of fear in class and considers a student as a friend. I shall continue promoting this in my work”.