

**Professional Development of High School English Language Teachers
Through Non-Formal Education**

by

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**Професійний розвиток вчителів англійської мови старшої
школи засобами неформальної освіти«»**

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Abstract

The study analyses the professional development of high school English teachers through non-formal education in the context of modern challenges, including globalisation and integrating new technologies into the educational process. Non-formal education allows teachers to improve their knowledge and skills, which is critical in a rapidly changing academic environment.

The current challenges faced by the education system require teachers to have knowledge in their subject area and the ability to adapt to new conditions. Globalisation, changing social norms, and the introduction of new technologies place new demands on teachers. In this context, non-formal education is essential for teachers' professional development.

The study was conducted in Konotop Lyceum No. 12 among high school English teachers. The questionnaires, surveys, interviews, focus groups and observations of English lessons in grades 10-11 were conducted among 11 school participants, and a research journal was kept during the study.

The study analysed various approaches to professional development, including innovative methods such as online learning and digital platforms that allow teachers to acquire new knowledge at their convenience.

The study identified important forms of non-formal education:

- **Training:** practical sessions that allow teachers to improve their teaching skills.
- **Online courses:** distance learning programmes that provide access to modern teaching methods.
- **Webinars:** interactive online sessions covering current topics and news in education.
- **Summer/Winter Schools:** intensive programmes offering in-depth training in a short period.
- **Exchange programmes:** opportunities to study abroad, allowing teachers to get acquainted with international practices.

The study also focuses on teachers' professional development needs, attitudes towards non-formal education, and the impact of participation in such programmes on their

teaching. The findings show that teachers often face difficulties in accessing quality programmes and require support from school administrators.

The results show a positive impact of non-formal education on teachers' professional skills, motivation and adaptation to new challenges in the teaching process. This study aims to provide practical recommendations for improving the system of professional development of English teachers, which will contribute to a more effective educational system in Ukraine. The main recommendations include:

- Expanding access to non-formal learning programmes.
- Supporting teachers' initiatives in non-formal education.
- Creating platforms for the exchange of experience between teachers.

These actions can significantly improve the quality of English language teaching in high schools and raise the country's overall education level.

Анотація

У дослідженні проаналізовано професійний розвиток вчителів англійської мови старшої школи через неформальну освіту в контексті сучасних викликів, зокрема глобалізації та інтеграції нових технологій в освітній процес. Неформальна освіта надає вчителям можливість гнучко вдосконалювати свої знання та навички, що є критично важливим у швидкозмінному освітньому середовищі.

Сучасні виклики, що стоять перед системою освіти, вимагають від вчителів не лише знань у своїй предметній галузі, а й здатності адаптуватися до нових умов. Глобалізація, зміна соціальних норм та впровадження нових технологій висувають нові вимоги до вчителів. У цьому контексті неформальна освіта стає важливим інструментом професійного розвитку вчителів.

Дослідження проводилося на базі Конопського ліцею № 12 серед вчителів англійської мови старших класів. Було проведено анкетування, опитування, інтерв'ю, фокус-групи та спостереження за уроками англійської мови в 10-11 класах серед 11 учасників школи, протягом дослідження вівся щоденник дослідження.

У дослідженні проаналізовано різні підходи до професійного розвитку, зокрема інноваційні методи, такі як онлайн-навчання та використання цифрових платформ, які дозволяють вчителям здобувати нові знання у зручний для них час.

Дослідження визначило важливі форми неформальної освіти:

- Тренінги: практичні заняття, які дозволяють вчителям покращити свої навички викладання.*
- Онлайн-курси: програми дистанційного навчання, які надають доступ до сучасних методів викладання.*
- Вебінари: інтерактивні онлайн-сесії, що охоплюють актуальні теми та новини в галузі освіти.*
- Літні/зимові школи: інтенсивні програми, що пропонують поглиблене навчання за короткий період.*
- Програми обміну: можливість навчатися за кордоном, що дозволяє вчителям ознайомитися з міжнародними практиками.*

Дослідження також фокусується на потребах професійного розвитку вчителів, їхньому ставленні до неформальної освіти та впливі участі в таких

програмах на їхню викладацьку діяльність. Результати показують, що вчителі часто стикаються з труднощами у доступі до якісних програм і потребують підтримки з боку шкільної адміністрації.

Результати свідчать про позитивний вплив неформальної освіти на професійні навички, мотивацію та адаптацію вчителів до нових викликів у процесі викладання. Це дослідження має на меті надати практичні рекомендації щодо вдосконалення системи професійного розвитку вчителів англійської мови, що сприятиме підвищенню ефективності освітньої системи в Україні. Основні рекомендації включають

- Розширення доступу до програм неформального навчання.*
- Підтримка ініціатив вчителів у сфері неформальної освіти.*
- Створення платформ для обміну досвідом між вчителями.*

Ці дії можуть суттєво покращити якість викладання англійської мови в середніх школах та підвищити загальний рівень освіти в Україні.

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Introduction

Background and Context

The modern education system is undergoing constant transformation, which requires teachers to be highly trained and continuously developed. Teacher education and professional development are key elements that determine the quality of education in general. Our vision for this topic is a comprehensive approach to teacher education, including academic knowledge, practical skills, and continuous support and development throughout their careers.

Teacher professional development is an ongoing process. The world is changing rapidly, and new technologies, teaching methods and educational standards require teachers to update their knowledge and skills constantly. It is essential to create a system of continuous professional development that includes a variety of forms at both the formal (official) and non-formal levels of education, which will create conditions for the realisation of individual needs of teachers and will be subordinated to the overall objectives of educational institutions. Regular in-service training courses, seminars, conferences, online resources and platforms should become powerful tools for self-study and exchange of experience with colleagues.

This study explores approaches to the professional development of high school English teachers through non-formal education. The main aspects of the study include describing possible non-formal education means for teachers' professional development, establishing teachers' attitudes towards such development, and identifying their specific needs for professional development through non-formal education.

Research Questions:

- How does the professional development of a high school English teacher take place?
- What non-formal education tools do high school English teachers use for their professional development?
- What are the attitudes of high school English teachers towards non-formal education professional development?

Relevance and importance of the research

This study has implications for the broader context of educational development. Understanding the effectiveness of professional development programmes for high school English teachers is important for several reasons:

- Improving the professional competence of teachers directly affects the quality of education received by high school students.

English language proficiency is becoming increasingly important in a globalised world. Therefore, maintaining teachers' English language competence is the key to preparing students for effective communication at the international level.

The reforms taking place in education in Ukraine are aimed at using English as a medium of instruction for certain subjects in English at the high school level and require continuous improvement not only of English teachers but also of subject teachers.

This study aims to develop practical recommendations for improving the professional development of high school English teachers. These recommendations will contribute to a more effective and competitive teaching system in a global, large-scale environment.

Literature Reviews

Definition of professional development

Teacher professional development is a continuous process of improving professional knowledge, skills and competencies throughout a teacher's career. It may include formal education, non-formal education, self-education (in-formal level), participation in professional associations, seminars, workshops and exchange of experience with colleagues. The main goal of professional development is to improve the quality of education, adapt to new challenges in the learning process, and ensure that knowledge is up-to-date following modern requirements [8].

Kuprievych, V. O. (2024), in her article, analyses the content of professional development for teachers in the framework of open postgraduate pedagogical education. She emphasises the importance of continuous learning and adaptation to teachers' new challenges

in the modern educational environment. The author also provides examples of successful programmes that promote professional skills development.

Professional development is defined as teachers' continuous learning and adaptation to improve their skills and effectiveness in the classroom. This may include seminars, online courses, workshops and other forms of learning that promote teachers' personal growth, self-expression and self-development (Kupriyevych, 2024; Kupina, 2023).

Regulatory support for this process (documents)

There are no recognised standards for non-formal education in Ukraine, but the process is regulated by legislation and regulations. For example, Article 8 of the Law of Ukraine, "On Education," defines non-formal education as education received following an educational programme but which does not provide for the award of state-recognised educational qualifications. Article 3 of the draft law "On Adult Education" emphasises the support and stimulation of continuous personal development through lifelong learning. This document defines different forms of educational activities, such as seminars, workshops, pieces of training, webinars, master classes and courses (Fedoruts, 2021; Law of Ukraine "On Education", 2023; Draft Law "On Adult Education", 2022).

Formal and non-formal levels of education

Formal education refers to a structured system of learning that leads to the award of educational qualifications. Fedoruts defines non-formal education as an organised, systematic educational activity outside the formal education system. It is based on the interests and needs of its subjects and can take place systematically and sporadically. It continues after receiving an official document (Fedoruts, 2021; Pavlyk, 2019; Kupina, 2023).

Shapochkina, O. (2012) investigates the peculiarities of non-formal education in the German education industry, focusing on state support and public initiatives. The author also analyses how non-formal education can complement formal education.

Forms, methods, and tools of professional development at the non-formal level of education in the works of domestic and foreign authors

Online courses and webinars: A convenient learning format that allows teachers to learn at their own pace. Popular platforms include Coursera, Udemy, EdX, FutureLearn, TESOL International Association, and British Council (Kuprijevic, 2024; Ashdemir & Karaman, 2022; Lisa Marie Tariq, 2024).

Seminars and trainings: Tezikova S.V., Larina T.V., and Plotnikov E.O. (2017) focus on active forms of teacher training that allow teachers to share professional experience and demonstrate methods and techniques for rationally solving learning problems. The process of professional development is effective when teachers have the opportunity to choose providers, formats, and topics of training.

Practical training, exchange of experience. Teachers can learn about the latest teaching methods and learning tools (Kupriyevych, 2024; Pavlyk, 2019; Androshchuk et al., 2022).

Professional conferences allow teachers worldwide to exchange experiences and participate in workshops. Examples include IATEFL and TESOL (Derakhshan et al., 2020).

Teodora Stankovic (2023) describes the relationship between formal and non-formal education, emphasising the potential for cooperation between different educational institutions. Stankovic also emphasises the need to create platforms for teachers to exchange experiences, which can significantly improve the quality of professional development.

Professional communities: Groups for sharing experiences and support, such as Facebook and LinkedIn groups, TEFL.org, and the ELT Forum (Kostenko, 2021).

Exchange and internship programmes: Opportunities for international professional development. Examples include Fulbright and Erasmus+ (Ashdemir & Karaman, 2022).

Features of professional development of teachers at the non-formal level of education

Non-formal education for teachers' professional development has the following features:

Individual approach: This study focuses on the continuing professional development needs of English language teachers. The authors examine how these needs affect student achievement and provide evidence to support the importance of professional development in improving the quality of learning. Research shows that teachers who have the opportunity to choose the topics and formats of professional development demonstrate higher levels of satisfaction and effectiveness in the classroom. This highlights the need for flexibility in training programmes, which take into consideration the individual needs of teachers (Derakhshan et al., 2020)

Adaptation to new technologies: The use of modern technology in professional development that improves learning outcomes highlights the role of technology in teacher professional development. Technology integration opens up new opportunities for professional development, but there are barriers, such as more time and support from the administration. These challenges require the successful integration of technology into the classroom. Tariq also points out the importance of training teachers in using technology in their professional work, as it can significantly increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Teachers proficient in modern technology can create a more interactive and engaging learning environment (Lisa Marie Tariq, 2024; Ashdemir & Karaman, 2022).

Thus, the professional development of high school English teachers has its specific features due to the age of students, the content of learning and the requirements for preparing for external independent testing. Teachers in this category often face challenges such as motivating students, integrating new technologies into the learning process, and preparing for international exams. The professional development of English teachers should take these aspects into account, providing teachers with opportunities to gain new knowledge, improve teaching methods and adapt to changes in the education system.

Involvement in communities is a powerful tool for professional development. Kostenko M. O. (2021) explores how professional communities can help teachers improve their skills and knowledge. These communities, whether formal or informal, are groups of teachers who share knowledge, experience, and support. By participating in these communities, teachers can find new ideas for teaching, get support from colleagues, and develop professional skills through discussion and collaboration. The value of collective learning in professional development cannot be overstated (Kostenko, 2021).

Overcoming barriers is a crucial part of effective professional development. Challenges such as lack of time, financial constraints, and insufficient support from the

administration are common but can be overcome with determination and strategic planning. Recognizing and addressing these barriers is essential for the successful implementation of professional development initiatives (Ashdemir & Karaman, 2022; Lisa Marie Tariq, 2024).

Thus, professional development of teachers is a multifaceted process that includes formal and non-formal education, active participation in communities, and the use of modern technologies to improve the quality of learning.

Methodology and Procedure

In modern education, it is important to use a variety of research methods to obtain reliable data on teachers' needs and expectations and to evaluate the effectiveness of professional development programmes.

The study was conducted in the following stages:

1. **Preparatory stage:** Formulation of research questions, preparation of questionnaires and interview schedule.
2. **Data collection:** Conducting surveys, interviews and observations.
3. **Data analysis:** Processing and analysis of the collected data and systematising the results.
4. **Conclusions and recommendations:** Formulation of conclusions based on the findings and development of recommendations for improving the professional development of a high school English teachers.

A review of open programmes and courses on platforms (Coursera, FutureLearn, Udemy, etc.), TESOL resources, and the British Council portal was conducted.

Two interviews and a survey were conducted with 11 lyceum teachers to gather information about English teachers' needs, benefits, challenges, and practical application of non-formal education for professional development.

To better understand the peculiarities of the English language educational process, we **observed** teachers' professional activities (attended 16 lessons) and analysed the teaching materials they use.

The study found that teachers more often use online courses, webinars, and participation in professional communities.

To find out the attitudes of English language teachers towards professional development through non-formal education (task 2), we used the following methods: two **questionnaires** with 11 teachers; two **focus groups** with 6 participants; two **interviews**; and **content analysis of teachers' publications**, reviews, and posts on social media and professional communities.

Combining these methods allowed us to identify the key factors influencing their participation in such programmes.

We expanded the research circle to clarify and specify the information obtained during the research procedures at Konotop Lyceum No. 12. We conducted an additional survey of teachers from other schools involving nine respondents.

The participants of the study were:

The leading group: 11 English teachers from Konotop Lyceum No. 12.

Additional group: 9 teachers from other schools.

Focus groups: 6 participants in each of the two groups.

By the research questions and objectives, we used a combination of different methods to obtain reliable data on teachers' needs and expectations, as well as to identify means and methods of professional development:

To collect information on the professional development of high school English teachers:

The survey: The survey was conducted among English language teachers of a municipal educational institution in Konotop, Sumy region. A total of 11 teachers took part in the survey, which included questions about their teaching experience, participation in professional development programmes, and the effectiveness of these programmes.

Terms of the survey:

- Developed an online questionnaire in Google Forms.
- Ensuring the confidentiality of participants' answers.
- Use structured questionnaires to standardise data collection.

- Preliminary informing respondents about the purpose and objectives of the study.

To collect information on non-formal education means used by high school English teachers for professional development:

Interviews: Two interviews were conducted with English teachers to gain a deeper understanding of their professional development methods and tools and to assess their effectiveness.

Conditions of the interview:

- Provide comfortable conditions for the interview so that participants can freely express their opinions.
- Adherence to ethical standards, including voluntary participation and anonymity of respondents.
- Recording answers in writing for further analysis.

Observations: We observed teachers' professional activities, attended 16 lessons, and analysed their teaching materials.

Objective: to analyse the English language teaching process in high school and identify teachers' needs for further professional development

Procedure:

Attendance at lessons (16 lessons).

Analysis of training materials and practical tasks.

The observation results were recorded in the following way:

- A detailed observation log was kept, and all important moments and changes in teachers' teaching activities were recorded.
- Analysing the interaction between teachers and students using new methods and technologies in the classroom.
- Evaluation of the results of implementing new knowledge and skills in the learning process.

To collect information about the attitudes of a high school English teachers towards non-formal education professional development:

Questionnaires: Two surveys were conducted, with 11 teachers participating.

Focus groups: Two focus groups were held with 6 participants.

Results: Qualitative and quantitative data on teachers' preferences, barriers and needs were obtained.

Content analysis: We analysed teachers' publications, reviews, and posts on social media and in professional communities.

Keeping a research journal:

Throughout the study, a journal was kept to record all stages of work and the results of surveys, interviews, and observations. This allowed us to systematise the information collected and ensure its reliability.

Overview of programmes and courses:

Analysis of literature and resources

Objective: To study the theoretical foundations of non-formal education and evaluate the available educational programmes for foreign language teachers

Procedure:

Familiarisation with scientific articles, books, and publications in online libraries.

Analysis of online courses, training, and resources of professional communities.

Study of learning platforms (Coursera, EdX, Udemy, etc.)

Study of scientific research and practical cases. Use of resources such as Coursera, TESOL and British Council.

Result: The study identified effective methods and resources for teacher professional development. The theoretical framework was formed, and the importance of non-formal education for professional development was determined. A review of open programmes and courses on Coursera, FutureLearn, Udemy, TESOL resources, and the British Council portal

was conducted. The most effective and accessible programmes for non-formal education were identified. All popular resources are systematised in Table 1 (Appendix A).

Clarification and specification of information:

To clarify and specify the information obtained during the research procedures at Konotop Lyceum No. 12, an additional survey of teachers from other schools, involving nine respondents, was conducted. This provided a broader understanding of the professional development of English teachers.

The research tools we chose proved to be quite effective, as:

The questionnaire provided a quick and convenient way to collect participant data (Appendix B).

Focus groups allowed us to understand attitudes towards non-formal education better (Appendix C).

Interviews provided detailed individual responses, and observations provided an objective analysis of the practical application of knowledge (Appendix D).

Content analysis helped to identify key topics and ideas in professional communities.

Using a combination of these methods allowed us to obtain reliable and meaningful results that helped to identify the key factors influencing the professional development of high school English teachers.

Results

The study identified the non-formal education tools used by teachers for their professional development, their attitudes towards these tools, and their needs for further training.

For this purpose, a survey was conducted among English language teachers working in a municipal educational institution in Konotop, Sumy region.

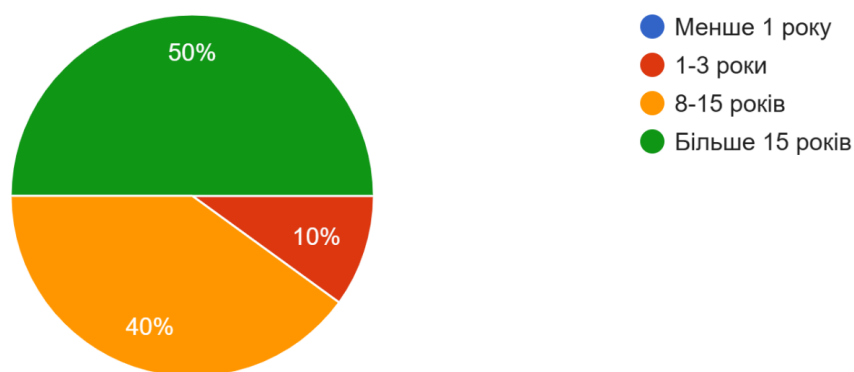
Two surveys were conducted to collect data, including closed and open-ended questions (Appendix B). It covered such aspects as:

- Experience participating in non-formal education programmes, including the number of programmes in which respondents have participated.
- Training formats (online courses, webinars, seminars, workshops, etc.).
- The impact of participation in non-formal programmes on teaching, mainly changes in learning approaches and teaching methods.
- Assessment of the effectiveness of non-formal education, mainly through teacher self-assessment.
- Further professional development needs, including preferred training topics and formats.

The survey results indicate a high interest of teachers in professional development through non-formal education. The majority of respondents, 14 (70 %) out of 20, said that participation in such programmes positively impacted their teaching. They reported improved teaching methods, more effective use of technology, and better communication with students after participating in non-formal education programmes. In addition, teachers noted that non-formal education helped them adapt to new challenges in the teaching process, particularly during the transition to distance learning.

How does the professional development of a high school English teacher take place?

The study found that high school English teachers are actively involved in non-formal education for their professional development. The teaching experience of the respondents shows a significant level of experience: 10 (50%) have more than 15 years of experience, 8 (40%) have 8-15 years of experience, 2 (10%) have 1-3 years of experience, and no respondents have less than 1 year of experience. This indicates that there are no newcomers to the profession. Figure 1 represents the division of the group by work experience.

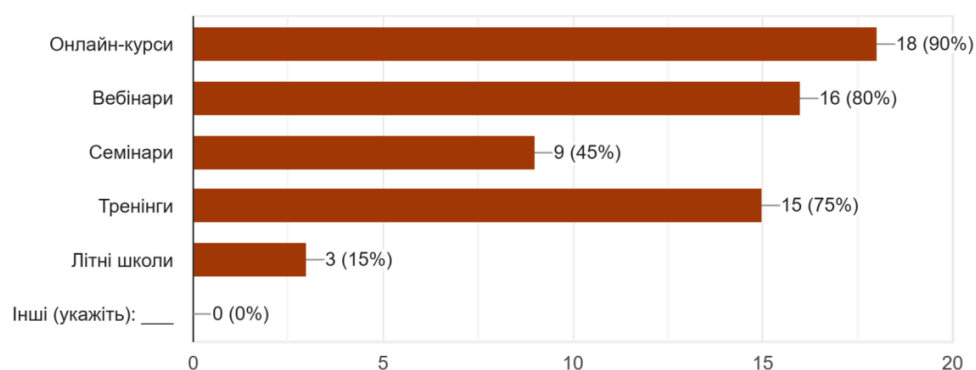
Figure 1. Teaching experience

What non-formal education means do high school English teachers use for professional development?

Teachers use a variety of non-formal education tools, which are represented in Figure 2.

The most popular forms are:

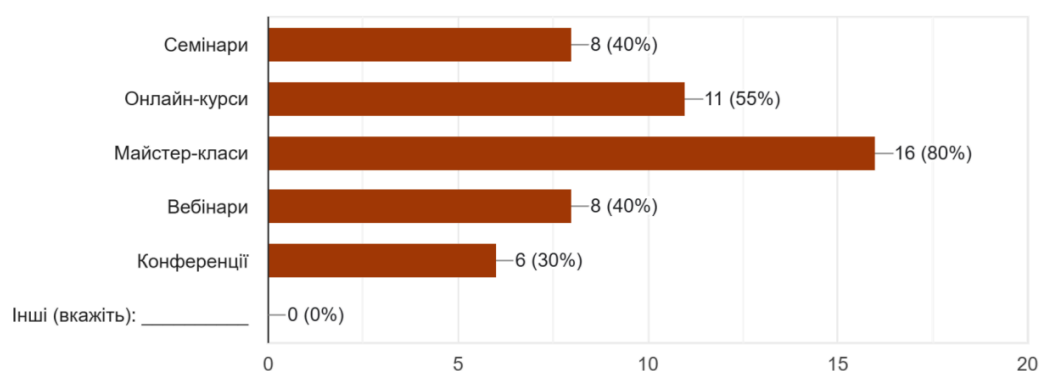
- Online courses 18 (90%) - a convenient format allowing teachers to study anytime.
- Webinars 16 (80%) - allow you to gain knowledge from experts in real time.
- Training 15 (75%) - provide practical training.
- Seminars 9 (45%) - facilitate the exchange of experience between colleagues.
- Summer Schools 3 (15%) - offer intensive learning in an informal environment.

Figure 2. Forms of non-formal education

Respondents consider the following formats to be the most effective (see Figure 3):

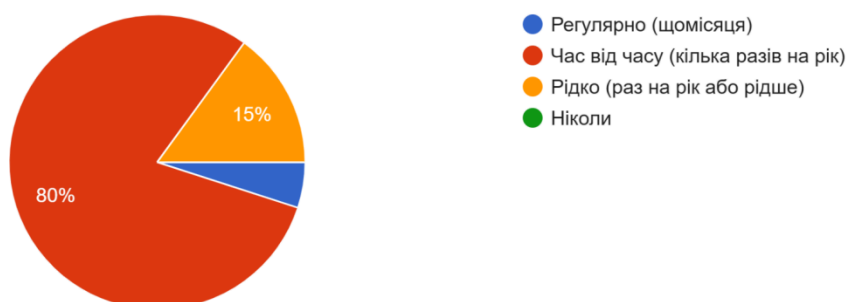
- Masterclasses 16 (80%) - an opportunity to gain new knowledge and share experiences with colleagues.
- Online courses 11 (55%) - flexibility in learning and the ability to pace yourself.
- Webinars and seminars 8 (40% each) - a convenient format for gaining knowledge on the job.

Figure 3. The most effective forms of professional development



The frequency of participation was also high: 16 (80%) of the respondents attend non-formal education events several times a year, while 3 (15%) rarely attend (once a year or less). This may indicate that teachers are keen to improve their skills constantly (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Frequency of participation

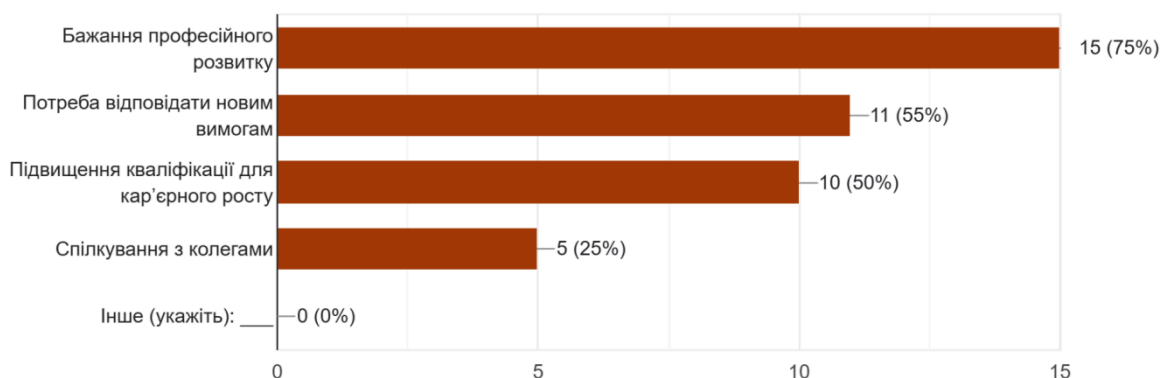


The main motivations for participating in non-formal education activities are as follows (see Figure 5):

- Desire for professional development 15 (75%) - teachers want to improve their skills and knowledge.

- The need to meet new requirements 11 (55%) - adaptation to changes in curricula and technology.

Figure 5. Motivation for participation

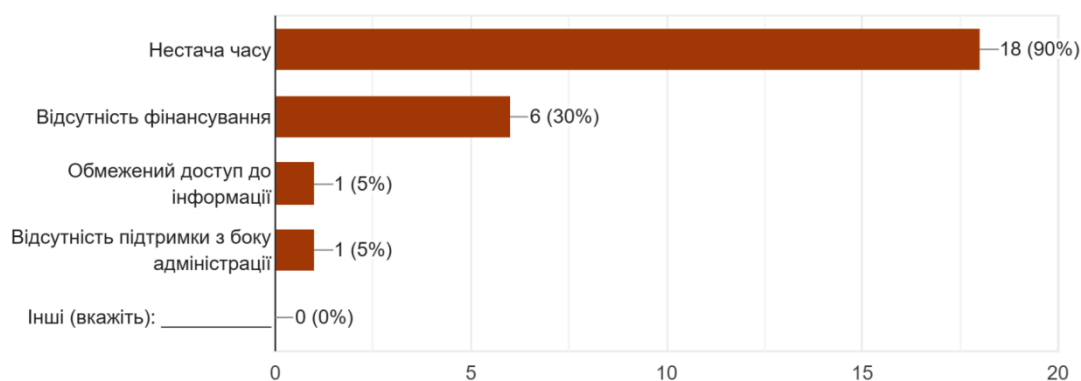


The main obstacles teachers face are as follows (see Figure 6):

- Lack of time 18 (90%) is one of the main problems that prevent teachers from actively participating in the programmes, so we should mention the need to acquire time management skills.

- Lack of funding 6 (30%) - limited resources can deter participation in professional development.

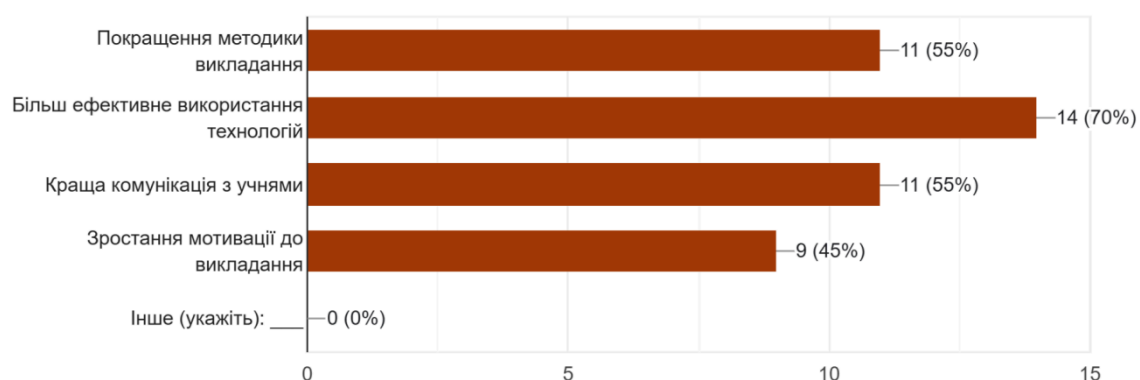
Figure 6. Obstacles



What are the attitudes of senior secondary school English teachers towards non-formal education professional development?

Teachers have a generally positive attitude towards non-formal education (see Figure

7)

Figure 7. Impact on teaching activities

After participating in non-formal education activities, respondents noticed the following positive changes:

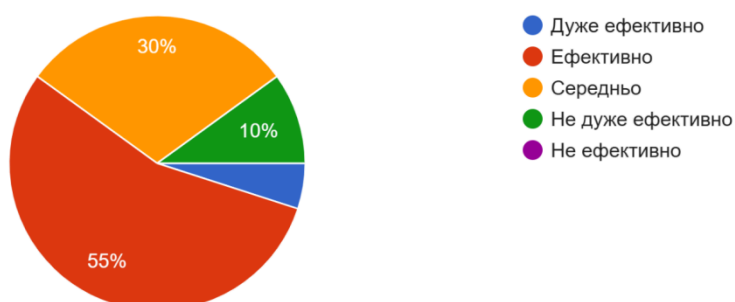
- Improved teaching methods 11 (55%) - teachers could introduce new approaches to the learning process.

- More effective use of technology 14 (70%) - teachers became more confident using digital resources.

- Better communication with students 11 (55%) may indicate improved interaction and understanding of students' needs.

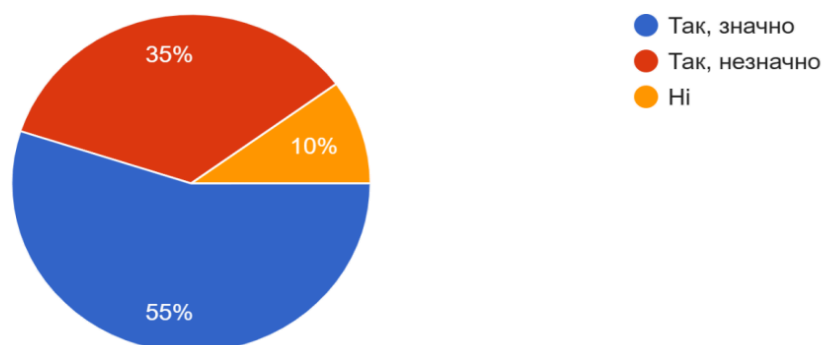
- Increased motivation to teach 9 (45%) - programme participation increased teachers' enthusiasm.

The results of performance evaluation are as follows: 6 (30%) of respondents rated the effectiveness of non-formal education as average, 11 (55%) as effective, and 1 (5%) as very effective. This demonstrates the diversity of experiences and outcomes of participation (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Performance evaluation

Answering the question about influence of non-formal professional education on the level of teachers` motivation 11 (55%) teachers indicated that participation in non-formal education did not affect their motivation to teach, while 7 (35%) indicated a slight impact. This may indicate that teachers are intrinsically motivated, which does not always depend on external factors (see Figure 9).

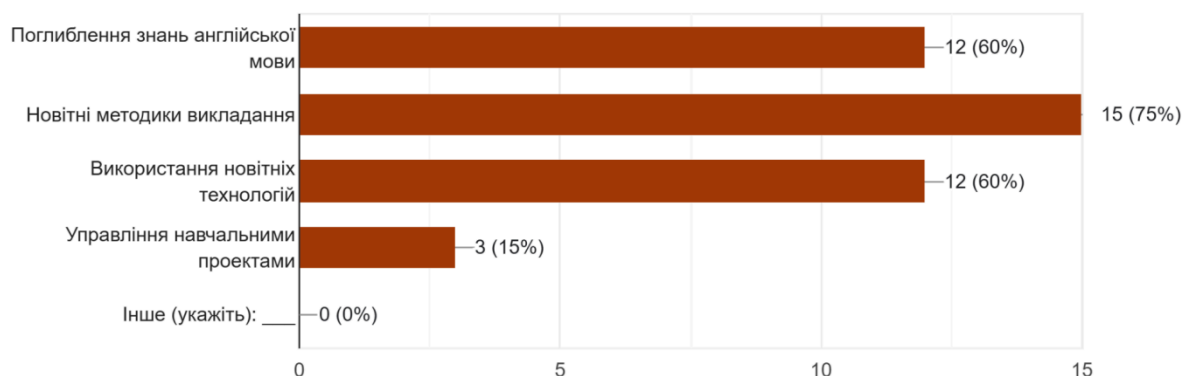
Figure 9. Level of motivation



Key professional development needs include (see Figure 10):

- Latest teaching methods 15 (75%) - teachers strive to introduce innovative approaches to the learning process.
- The use of the latest technologies 12 (60%) - the need to master new tools for learning.
- Improving English 12 (60%) - a desire to improve their language skills.

Figure 10. Skills and knowledge

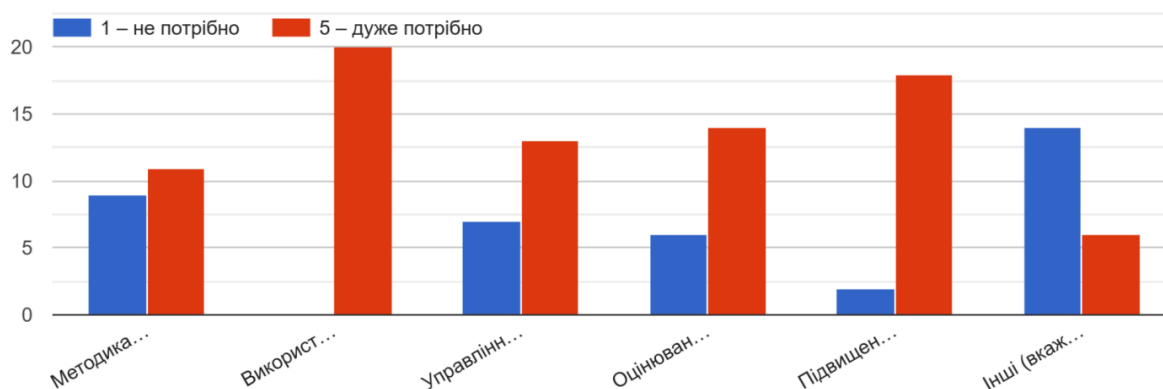


Respondents assessed their need for professional development in the following areas (see Figure 11):

- Methods of teaching English: 11 respondents rated it 5 (very necessary).

- Use of modern technologies: 19 respondents rated it 5.
- Classroom management: 12 respondents scored a 5. This indicates a high level of awareness of the importance of these aspects.

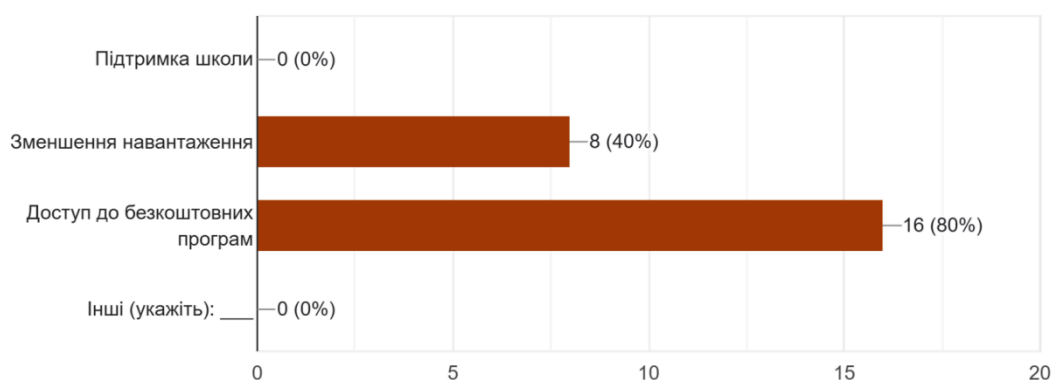
Figure 11. Needs assessment



Respondents made several suggestions to improve participation in non-formal programmes (see Figure 12):

- Reducing the workload by 8 (40%) - the need for administrative support to participate in programmes.
- Access to free programmes 16 (80%) - teachers need opportunities for free training.

Figure 12. Suggestions and recommendations



Overcoming obstacles: 90% of respondents cited lack of time as the main problem, while 30% cited lack of funding.

The teachers who participated in the interviews described their professional paths, highlighting the key stages they have passed. One of the teachers has over 20 years of

experience, starting with a diploma and working at a school. Others also noted the importance of professional development, career growth, and self-education. They noted that planning and organising classroom work, stimulating student activity, and taking an individual approach to each student were important aspects.

Basic education and advanced training courses became the basis for further development.

Teachers shared their experiences completing courses and programmes, particularly those from the Regional Institute of Postgraduate Education, the British Council, Coursera, EdEra, and TalkEn.cloud.

Most said that programmes, including smart boards, online platforms and psychological training, were beneficial.

They especially noted that courses on the British Council and Coursera platforms were the most powerful in their professional development.

Teachers indicated that they used various forms of non-formal education. Five teachers mentioned the importance of training, three mentioned master classes, and all mentioned webinars, which allow them to gain new knowledge and share experiences. They also emphasised that interaction with methodologists, administrators, and colleagues was important to professional development.

Thanks to non-formal education, teachers have noticed changes in their teaching style. Introducing project-based activities and research methods helped develop students' communication skills. More active use of media resources has become an important element of the learning process. All teachers pointed out the benefits of non-formal education, and the answers were the same:

- Non-formal education allows one to acquire the necessary knowledge.
- It promotes the development of creativity and critical thinking.
- The flexibility of non-formal education allows us to solve various educational problems.

Respondents' answers about the difficulties they face were also typical:

Two respondents said they could not overcome these difficulties due to lack of time and knowledge.

Technical difficulties: Four participants noted that the introduction of new technologies requires information technology literacy. Therefore, they had to take courses to master new tools. One respondent noted that the support of colleagues in overcoming technical difficulties was important.

The study confirms the importance of non-formal education for the professional development of English language teachers. It also points to the need for further improvement of training programmes that meet teachers' needs. The findings of the study can serve as a basis for developing new professional development strategies that incorporate non-formal education elements and for implementing recommendations to improve the effectiveness of existing programmes.

Results of the analysis of resources and opportunities for professional development of English teachers

The modern education world requires teachers to improve their skills and knowledge constantly. The professional development of English language teachers is becoming an important aspect of their work as new methodologies, technologies and approaches to teaching are constantly changing. In this context, non-formal education plays a key role by providing teachers access to various resources, platforms and learning opportunities. Therefore, we have analysed several resources and summarised and systematised the main tools to help English teachers remain competitive and effective in their profession. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1 (Appendix A).

Thus, online courses allow teachers to learn new teaching methods, modern technologies and other important aspects of education in a convenient format. Platforms such as Coursera, EdX, and FutureLearn provide access to courses from leading universities and industry experts. Teachers can choose courses based on their interests, take them at their own pace, and receive certificates that confirm their achievements.

Webinars allow teachers to learn from experts in real-time, discuss current issues, and share experiences with colleagues. They often include interactive elements, such as Q&A, to promote a deeper understanding of the topic. Webinars can cover various aspects of English language teaching, from grammar to using new technologies in the classroom.

Attending conferences provides an opportunity to learn about new research, techniques and innovations in English language teaching. Conferences such as TESOL or IATEFL bring together teachers from all over the world to discuss global trends in teaching. They also offer the opportunity to attend workshops to apply new knowledge practically.

Joining online and offline professional communities can be useful for sharing ideas, resources and support. Social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn have groups for English language teachers to discuss news, share materials, and get advice. These

communities can also organise meetings where teachers share experiences and make professional contacts.

The platforms allow teachers to share their own learning materials and lesson ideas, which helps to improve teaching. There are also ready-made lessons, tests and other resources, which saves time on preparation.

Language clubs and communities help teachers improve their English communication skills, an important aspect of their professional development. Participation in such clubs allows one to practice public speaking, receive feedback and develop self-confidence.

YouTube video tutorials and podcasts about teaching English allow teachers to get new ideas and approaches to teaching at their convenience. Podcasts can cover topics related to modern teaching methods or interviews with experts in the field.

Programmes such as Fulbright and Erasmus+ offer opportunities for internships and exchange of experience between teachers from different countries, which contributes to international professional development. Participation in these programmes allows them to gain new perspectives and learn about other countries' cultural characteristics and educational systems.

Regularly reading articles, books, and journals on pedagogy and teaching methods helps teachers stay current with new ideas and approaches. Professional journals, such as English Teaching Professional or The ELT Journal, offer articles written by experts that can improve teaching and inspire new lesson ideas.

Collaboration with more experienced colleagues can provide valuable advice and support that fosters professional growth. Mentors can help teachers develop their skills by providing feedback on their work, suggesting resources and sharing their experiences. This can be particularly useful for new teachers just starting their careers.

To summarise, these non-formal learning tools can help English teachers stay current with new trends, improve their professional skills, and provide quality student learning.

Teachers regularly attend online courses on English language teaching methods. These courses update them on the knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively.

Teachers note that webinars are an important part of their professional development. They allow them to receive up-to-date information on the latest teaching methods and discuss relevant issues with colleagues and experts.

Experienced teachers actively participate in summer schools held both in Ukraine and abroad. Summer schools provide an opportunity for intensive training and exchange of experience with colleagues from other regions and countries.

Teacher training on various aspects of English language teaching helps them develop their professional competencies and improve their teaching approaches.

Teachers attend masterclasses run by education experts to learn new methods, technologies and approaches to teaching.

Oxford University Press and its organisations provide a variety of learning resources, including textbooks, articles, study guides, and other materials that teachers regularly use in the classroom. These resources ensure that they are effective and impactful and significantly systemise students' knowledge.

Thus, the main needs of teachers in terms of professional development are:

1. Improving linguistic and foreign language competencies: Teachers need to regularly improve their knowledge and skills in English to teach the subject effectively.
2. To ensure compliance with modern educational standards, curricula must be quickly adapted.
3. There is a great need to master new technologies and teaching tools to help teachers make learning more effective and interesting.
4. Teachers need support and resources to prevent professional burnout, including psychological support and professional development.
5. Teachers need support from the school administration regarding resources, professional development opportunities and moral support.

These observation results can serve as a basis for further improving the professional development of English teachers and for developing new methods and approaches to their training and support.

The focus group and interviews revealed that English teachers' attitudes towards non-formal professional development are quite positive, indicating the existence of certain common trends.

Firstly, an important motivation for participating in non-formal education is the desire to improve their professional qualifications and gain new knowledge and skills to improve teaching and learning quality. Teachers know the importance of continuous self-improvement in a rapidly changing educational environment.

Secondly, the frequency of teachers' participation in non-formal education professional development activities also indicates their professional activity. Usually, teachers who are systematically developing their professional skills are constantly involved in seminars, webinars, training, and online courses. Such regular participation helps to maintain a high level of professional competence.

Another important aspect is the confirmation of participation in non-formal education activities. Certificates, diplomas, and reports on learning outcomes can provide confirmation, facilitating official recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired.

It is worth noting that most teachers positively assessed the impact of non-formal education on their professional activities. In particular, they note that the knowledge gained helps them to improve teaching methods and adapt teaching materials to modern needs.

In addition, their participation in non-formal educational activities has led to changes in teaching methods. Teachers are introducing the latest pedagogical approaches and innovative technologies, increasing the effectiveness of their work.

Finally, active teachers regularly update their teaching content by integrating new materials and technologies into their practice to meet modern educational standards. This ensures that the learning process is up-to-date and contributes to improving students' skills.

General recommendations:

- **Introducing online courses and webinars** as a mandatory part of professional development.
- **Organising professional discussion groups** to share experiences among teachers.

- **Supporting individual development through non-formal education** through mentoring or counselling.
- **Encouraging teachers to participate in professional communities** to share best practices.

Discussion

Our study on the professional development of high school English teachers through non-formal education has unearthed several crucial aspects that demand attention. These findings are not just informative, but they also hold significant implications for the future of teacher professional development.

The ratio of formal and non-formal education. The relationship between formal and non-formal education is an important consideration in teacher professional development. Formal education typically involves structured programmes of study that lead to formal qualifications such as diplomas and certificates. In contrast, non-formal education allows teachers to choose their development paths and adapt learning to their needs and schedules.

It's important to note that non-formal education is not a replacement for formal education, but a valuable complement. It provides teachers with the flexibility to choose their learning paths and adapt to their needs and schedules. This balance empowers teachers to better tackle current educational challenges by integrating new technologies and methodologies into their practice.

Motivation of teachers to participate in non-formal education professional development programmes. Teachers' motivation to participate in informal professional development programmes is a critical factor influencing their readiness to learn. Teachers aware of the importance of continuous professional development usually have a high intrinsic motivation. The main motivations are the desire to improve their professional skills, adapt to changes in curriculum and technology, and improve the quality of learning for their students.

However, as the survey results show, specific barriers, such as lack of time, financial constraints and administrative support, may reduce teachers' motivation to participate in non-formal education programmes. Therefore, it is important to create conditions that facilitate teachers' active participation in such programmes, including administrative support, access to free resources, and the possibility of obtaining credits or certificates for participation in programmes.

The impact of teacher professional development on the quality of student learning is significant. Teachers who complete non-formal education programmes introduce new teaching methods, positively impacting student engagement in the learning process.

Participation in training and webinars allows teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills that they can apply in practice. This, in turn, helps to increase students' motivation, improve their academic performance, and foster a positive attitude towards learning. For example, teachers who introduce interactive teaching methods may notice that students become more active, engaged, and cooperative.

Thus, teacher professional development not only improves their skills but also directly affects the quality of education received by students. This creates a positive cycle, where improved teacher skills lead to improved student learning outcomes, which in turn increases the prestige and effectiveness of educational institutions.

Availability of differentiated professional development programmes is an important aspect that allows teachers to meet the different needs of their experience. For beginners, it is important to provide basic knowledge and skills to help them adapt to the new working environment. Experienced teachers may need more specialised programmes covering the latest teaching methods and technologies.

Master trainers need to provide opportunities for sharing experiences and developing leadership skills. For example, mentoring programmes can be useful for those who want to pass on their knowledge and experience to younger colleagues. Such a differentiated approach to professional development allows each teacher to find the most appropriate programmes for themselves, contributing to improving the overall quality of education.

It is also important to consider the specifics of subjects and disciplines, as different subjects may require different teaching approaches. For example, mathematics teachers may need training in using new technologies in teaching, while humanities teachers may focus on developing critical thinking and analysis skills in their students.

Thus, differentiated professional development programmes not only meet teachers' needs but also contribute to the overall improvement of the quality of education in educational institutions.

Recommendations for improving programmes. To improve the accessibility and effectiveness of non-formal education for English language teachers, it is proposed:

- **Organising flexible teaching schedules** that take into account teachers' workloads.
- **Financial support** for participation in training programmes from educational institutions.
- **Expanding access to free educational resources**, such as open online courses and learning platforms.
- **Involvement of experienced teachers and trainers** to conduct workshops and seminars.
- **Creating local professional communities** to facilitate the exchange of experience and ideas.

The study has confirmed that non-formal education is a powerful tool for the professional development of teachers. Konotop Lyceum No. 12 teachers are highly interested in improving their skills through various forms of learning. Implementing the proposed recommendations will remove existing barriers and increase the effectiveness of non-formal education, contributing not only to the professional development of teachers but also to the development of Ukrainian education in general.

Thus, our study confirms the importance of non-formal education for the professional development of English teachers. Not only does it contribute to their professional development, but it also has a positive impact on the quality of student learning. To make non-formal education programmes more effective, it is necessary to provide access to free resources, organise administrative support, and create conditions for flexible learning that meet teachers' needs.

All stakeholders in the educational process must work together to create a favourable environment for professional development. This collaborative approach ensures that everyone is included and contributes to the larger mission of improving education.

Conclusion

The study of the professional development of high school English teachers through non-formal education has revealed several important aspects that emphasise the importance of this process in the modern educational system.

There is a high interest in professional development. Most teachers are actively involved in non-formal education programmes, which indicates their desire to improve their professional skills and knowledge continuously. The study found that participation in professional development programmes positively impacted teachers' teaching performance. This confirms that they are aware of the importance of continuous learning in a rapidly changing educational environment.

The effectiveness of non-formal education contributes to improving teaching methods, introducing new technologies, and enhancing teachers' communication skills. They noted that the new approaches they learned during their training helped them interact better with students. This, in turn, has a positive impact on the quality of student learning as teachers become more adaptive to their students' needs.

Teachers have identified a need to develop new teaching methods and use modern technologies. They want to learn more about integrating digital tools into the learning process. This indicates the need to adapt professional development programmes to the specific needs of teachers, which will allow for more targeted learning.

The main barriers to participation in non-formal education programmes are time and financial constraints. Teachers report difficulties in balancing their studies with their main job. This calls for school administrations and educational organisations to develop strategies that support them in pursuing professional development. For example, flexible study schedules or funding for course participation should be considered.

Enhancing the effectiveness of non-formal education programmes requires a multi-faceted approach. This includes providing access to free resources, organising administrative support, and creating conditions for flexible learning that meet teachers' needs. Additionally, engaging experienced practitioners to conduct workshops and seminars can equip teachers with practical skills and knowledge, further enhancing the quality of professional development.

The study confirms the importance of non-formal education as a powerful tool for the professional development of English language teachers, which contributes to improving the quality of education in Ukraine. Implementing the recommendations can significantly improve the teaching process and prepare teachers for modern challenges, providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful career in a globalised world.

Non-formal education plays an important role in the professional development of high school English teachers. It allows teachers to independently determine the direction of their development and respond quickly to changes in the educational environment.

It is important to consider teachers' individual needs, provide access to a variety of learning modalities, and create a favourable environment for innovation. A systematic approach to professional development, including mentoring, support from the administration, and the integration of new technologies, can significantly improve the quality of education.

Further research could focus on the impact of different professional development models on students' learning outcomes, including the development of individual motivation for non-formal education, as well as on the experience of other countries in this area. This will allow us to find effective solutions to improve the quality of professional development for English teachers. It is also important to investigate how changes in educational policy can affect teachers' professional development and study the role of international organisations in supporting teachers' professional development.

Thus, the professional development of English teachers is a key factor in improving the quality of education, and its effectiveness depends to a large extent on adapting programmes to the real needs of teachers and creating favourable conditions for their professional growth.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Table 1. Ways of professional development of English teachers

Resource Name	Resource Type	Interface language	Cost	Level (user/material)	Brief description	Link	Additional features
Coursera	Online platform	English, Ukrainian (some courses)	Paid and free courses	Miscellaneous	Courses in English teaching methods, linguistics, learning psychology	coursera.org	Certificates, specialisations, forums
Udemy	Online platform	English, Ukrainian (some courses)	Paid courses	Miscellaneous	A wide range of courses from independent tutors, including English teaching methods	udemy.com	Flexible study schedule, the ability to teach your courses

EdX	Online platform	English	Paid and free courses	Miscellaneous	Courses from the world's leading universities, including English teaching methods	edx.org	Certificate, specialisations
FutureLearn	Online platform	English	Most courses are free of charge	Miscellaneous	Courses for teachers, including TEFL and other aspects of teaching	futurelearn.com	Forums and discussions
TESOL International Association	Professional organisation	English	Paid membership fees, paid courses	Miscellaneous	Online courses, webinars, conferences for English teachers	tesol.org	Certificates, networking with colleagues

Ranok Publishing Academy	Publishing house, training centre	Ukrainian	Paid seminars, trainings, materials	High school English teachers	Seminars, training and methodological materials for high school English teachers	https://academyranok.com.ua/	Certificates, opportunity to purchase training materials
British Council	International organisation	English, Ukrainian	Most materials are free of charge	Miscellaneous	Webinars, online courses and materials for teaching English	britishcouncil.org.ua	Free certificates, forums for teachers
Macmillan Education	Publisher	English	Free webinars	Miscellaneous	Webinars on new textbooks and teaching methods	macmillaneducation.com	Access to copyright materials
Pearson Education	Publisher	English	Free webinars	Miscellaneous	Webinars on English teaching methods	pearson.com	Access to copyright materials

IATEFL	Professional association	English	Paid membership fees, paid participation in conferences	Miscellaneous	Annual conference, online resources for teachers	iatefl.org	Ability to publish articles, networking
TESOL	Professional association	English	Paid membership fees, paid participation in conferences	Miscellaneous	International conferences, online resources for teachers	tesol.org	Ability to publish articles networking

Appendix B

Опитувальник для вчителів англійської мови щодо професійного розвитку через неформальну освіту

Шановні вчителі англійської мови!

Запрошуємо Вас взяти участь в опитуванні, яке присвячене вивченню особливостей вашого професійного розвитку засобами неформальної освіти. Ваша думка допоможе нам краще зрозуміти, які форми неформального навчання є найбільш ефективними для підвищення кваліфікації вчителів, а також які потреби та виклики виникають у цьому процесі.

Опитування займе приблизно 10-15 хвилин вашого часу. Воно є анонімним, а всі відповіді будуть використані виключно для дослідницьких цілей. Ваша участь дуже важлива для нас і сприятиме покращенню освітніх програм для вчителів.

Дякуємо за Вашу підтримку та готовність поділитися своїм досвідом!

Всі відповіді будуть конфіденційними!

Зірочка (*) указує, що запитання обов'язкове

Ваше ім'я:

Ваша відповідь

Ваш вік:*

Ваша відповідь

Стать:*

чол.

жін.

Тип Вашого навчального закладу*

міський

сільський

1. Скільки років Ви викладаєте англійську мову?*

Менше 1 року

1-3 роки

8-15 років

Більше 15 років

2. Чи брали Ви участь у програмах неформальної освіти для професійного розвитку?*

Так

Ні

3. Якщо так, то які форми неформальної освіти Ви використовували?*

Онлайн-курси

Вебінари

Семінари

Тренінги

Літні школи

Інші (укажіть): ____

4. Як часто Ви відвідуєте заходи неформальної освіти для підвищення кваліфікації?*

Регулярно (щомісяця)

Час від часу (кілька разів на рік)

Рідко (раз на рік або рідше)

Ніколи

5. Які зміни Ви помітили у своїй викладацькій діяльності після участі в заходах неформальної освіти?
(Можна вибрати кілька варіантів)*

Покращення методики викладання

Більш ефективно використання технологій

Краща комунікація з учнями

Зростання мотивації до викладання

Інше (укажіть): ____

6. Як Ви оцінюєте ефективність неформальної освіти у Вашій професійній діяльності?*

Дуже ефективно

Ефективно

Середньо

Не дуже ефективно

Не ефективно

7. Чи вплинуло це на Ваш рівень мотивації до викладання?*

Так, значно

Так, незначно

Ні

8. Які навички або знання Ви хотіли б розвивати найбільше?*

Поглиблення знань англійської мови

Новітні методики викладання

Використання новітніх технологій

Управління навчальними проектами

Інше (укажіть): ____

9. Оцініть свою потребу у професійному розвитку за наступними напрямками (1 – не потрібно, 5 – дуже потрібно):*

Методика викладання англійської мови

Використання сучасних технологій у навчанні

Управління класом

Оцінювання та тестування учнів

Підвищення мовної компетенції

Інші (вказіть): _____

10. Які формати професійного розвитку Ви вважаєте найефективнішими? (виберіть всі, що підходять):*

Семінари

Онлайн-курси

Майстер-класи

Вебінари

Конференції

Інші (вказіть): _____

11. Що Вас мотивує брати участь у заходах неформальної освіти?*

Бажання професійного розвитку

Потреба відповідати новим вимогам

Підвищення кваліфікації для кар'єрного росту

Спілкування з колегами

Інше (укажіть): ____

12. З якими перепонами Ви стикаєтеся при участі у заходах професійного розвитку? (виберіть всі, що підходять):*

Нестача часу

Відсутність фінансування

Обмежений доступ до інформації

Відсутність підтримки з боку адміністрації

Інші (вказіть): _____

13. Що, на Вашу думку, могло б полегшити участь у неформальних програмах?*

Підтримка школи

Зменшення навантаження

Доступ до безкоштовних програм

Інші (укажіть): ____

14. Які у Вас є пропозиції щодо поліпшення програм неформальної освіти для вчителів англійської мови?*

Ваша відповідь

Щиро дякуємо Вам за участь в опитуванні!

Ваші відповіді є надзвичайно цінними для нас і допоможуть у покращенні програм професійного розвитку для вчителів. Бажаємо Вам успіхів у подальшій роботі та постійного натхнення на шляху до вдосконалення!

З повагою,
Команда дослідження

Appendix C

Питання для обговорення на фокус-групі для дослідження ставлення вчителів англійської мови до професійного розвитку через неформальну освіту:

1. Який ваш досвід участі у програмах неформальної освіти для професійного розвитку?

Які програми ви відвідували останнім часом?

Чи були ці програми корисними для вас? Як саме?

2. Які форми неформальної освіти ви вважаєте найбільш ефективними для професійного розвитку?

Чи надаєте ви перевагу онлайн-курсам, вебінарам, семінарам, або іншим формам? Чому?

3. Які труднощі ви зустрічали при участі у програмах неформальної освіти?

Чи відчували ви нестачу часу, фінансові обмеження, або інші перешкоди?

Як ви долали ці труднощі?

4. Як неформальна освіта впливає на ваші професійні навички та викладання?

Чи помітили ви зміни у своїй методиці викладання після участі у таких програмах?

Які нові навички або знання ви здобули завдяки неформальній освіті?

5. Які теми або напрямки для навчання вам найбільш цікаві та корисні?

Чи є конкретні теми, які ви бажаєте глибше вивчити?

Як ви обираєте програми, що відповідають вашим потребам?

6. Як ви оцінюєте ефективність програм неформальної освіти у порівнянні з формальною освітою?

Чи вважаєте ви, що неформальна освіта є більш гнучкою та актуальною?

Які переваги та недоліки ви бачите в обох формах освіти?

7. Які рекомендації ви могли б надати колегам, які тільки починають займатися неформальною освітою?

Які ресурси ви б порекомендували?

Як краще організувати своє навчання?

8. Чи вважаєте ви, що школа надає достатню підтримку для участі у програмах неформальної освіти?

Що можна було б покращити в цьому плані?

Яку роль відіграє адміністрація школи у вашому професійному розвитку?

9. Як ви бачите розвиток неформальної освіти у майбутньому?

Які тенденції ви вважаєте найперспективнішими?

Які нові форми або технології, на вашу думку, можуть бути впроваджені?

10. Як ви мотивуєте себе до постійного професійного розвитку через неформальну освіту?

Чи маєте ви особисті стратегії або методи для підтримання мотивації?

Як впливає участь у програмах неформальної освіти на вашу особисту мотивацію та задоволеність професією?

Appendix D

**Сценарій та запитання для інтерв'ю щодо професійного розвитку вчителів
англійської мови**

Шановні колеги,

Мене звуть Любов, і я рада можливості провести з вами інтерв'ю на тему професійного розвитку вчителів англійської мови старшої школи засобами неформальної освіти. Це дослідження має на меті виявити, як неформальна освіта може сприяти вашому професійному зростанню і покращенню навчального процесу. Я вважаю, що ваші думки та досвід є надзвичайно важливими для глибшого розуміння цієї теми.

Зірочка (*) указує, що запитання обов'язкове

1. Опишіть ваш професійний шлях у викладанні англійської мови. Які ключові етапи ви пройшли?*
2. Які курси або програми підвищення кваліфікації ви проходили? Які з них виявилися найбільш корисними?*
3. Які форми неформальної освіти ви використовували у своєму професійному розвитку? Чому ви обрали саме ці форми?*
4. Які зміни у вашому стилі викладання відбулися завдяки неформальній освіті? Наведіть конкретні приклади.*
5. Які переваги ви бачите у неформальній освіті для вчителів? Як це впливає на навчальний процес?*
6. Які труднощі ви мали під час впровадження неформальної освіти у вашій практиці? Як ви їх подолали?*

Дякуємо за вашу готовність поділитися своїм досвідом!

З повагою, команда дослідження!