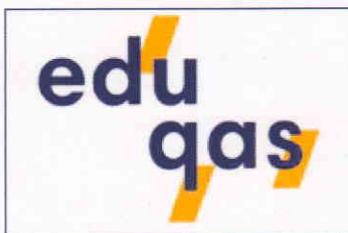


ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫНЫҢ БІЛІМ ЖӘНЕ ҒЫЛЫМ МИНИСТРЛІГІ

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### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER AT A HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN UKRAINE

**Abstract:** The article studies the ways to enhance the professional competence of English language teachers, in particular, self-educational activities using various modern opportunities.

**Key words:** professional development, professional self-education, teaching English.

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### ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ ПРЕПОДАВАТЕЛЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В ВУЗах УКРАИНЫ

**Аннотация:** В статье рассматриваются пути совершенствования профессиональной компетенции учителей английского языка, в частности самообразовательной деятельности с использованием различных современных возможностей.

**Ключевые слова:** профессиональное развитие, профессиональное самовоспитание, преподавание английского языка.

Professional self-education is aimed at providing opportunities for vocational and personal teacher's potential realization. The striving for self-improvement and self-education are important factors for any educator's professional growth, which provide for the expansion of his/her creative skills, cognitive interests and the formation of constructive personality.

The following components are essential for an English teacher professional growth:

1. Mastering advanced pedagogical experience, scientific work. As a result of researching the works of the best educators and their analysis, the teacher deeply understands the postulates of the educational process, learns pedagogically approaches to perceive student actions, and finds the causes of conflicts and ways of their solution.

2. Systematic study of philosophical and psychological-pedagogical literature, state legislation on education, upbringing and education; meetings with innovators; participation in methodological associations, seminars, conferences, pedagogical readings, etc.

3. Getting acquainted with the pedagogical press, radio, television, the Internet websites, online platforms e.g. MOOCs. They are quick to respond to any changes that occur in the pedagogical education system, educational process, and language itself, familiarize novice teachers with world best practices, scientific and pedagogical innovations, materials of various meetings, conferences, as well as foreign periodic psycho-pedagogical publications.

4. Raising awareness on the national education system at large which embodies the educational wisdom of the Ukrainian people, its best scholars, the educational value of Ukrainian folk customs, traditions, holidays, rituals.

Since Dignity Revolution in 2014, there has been a significant increase in the need for a better command of English as a result of which one can interact, share experiences and learn from the world practices. This process has affected managers, teachers and society at large, culminating in the proclamation of 2016 as the Year of the English Language by President Petro Poroshenko's decree. Much work is being done to develop and support initiatives and programs aimed at improving both the current level of English language proficiency in Ukraine and the professional development of English language teachers, especially at the university level (for instance, the British Council conducts researches, US Embassy supports different initiatives and projects for the sake of long-term, positive and lasting impact on the English language teaching process in Ukraine's education system).

The author cannot but mention one of the major project, "English for Universities" that is one of the flagships that brings positive, new and sustainable changes in the teaching and learning English language at higher educational institutions, as well as in English knowledge among University staff in order to be able to fully participate in international exchange and collaboration programs whereas students can complete their studies with more employment skills and international practices understanding.

In the process of professional self-education, the teacher has to have independence to personal expression. Professor's activities cannot be regulated or bounded. Only with the assertion of professional freedom it is possible to effectively organize the process of teacher's professional growth, which is a peculiar search for one's way, to acquire one's own "voice", one's own "handwriting". The educator, who has the freedom of expression, can manage own development, direct forces to search for new ways of teaching and educating students.

Leading universities in Ukraine are extremely interested in raising English to be more attractive to prospective students and to foster more international connections and partnerships. Therefore, the British Council is a partner of the Ministry of Education and Science in this direction to ensure continuous professional development for English teachers. A number of priorities have been identified in the higher education sector, each of which requires particular emphasis on English teaching process [1, p.23]:

i) Assisting the Government in updating higher education approaches with the insights to European future applying the UK professionals' expertise and capacity building in these sectors.

ii) Support in the preparation of "next generation" leaders who will hold influential positions in the higher education system in 10-15 years.

iii) Assistance in meeting the aspirations of young people, their educational and professional needs through closer educational links with the UK and English language.

(iv) Higher education reform, assistance in the formation of a university sector capable of building effective international partnerships on the basis of quality assurance, autonomy and leadership.

v) Achievements in transformational changes in the level of English proficiency at leading Ukrainian universities, both among teaching staff and students, through work with 20 universities over the first three years.

This development has increased the demand for English language skills in all education sectors, since graduates need a higher level of English to work or study abroad, and professors need more English training to conduct and publish research studies; teachers of all levels need advanced English skills to teach students at all educational levels.

In order to ensure a high quality of English language teaching, it is necessary for a teacher to know his or her strengths and weaknesses, to constantly form the inner core of personal growth, which is a prerequisite for their professionalism. The scheme below depicts the main directions of professional and pedagogical self-improvement of an educator in order to assure high-quality educational process (Fig. 1).

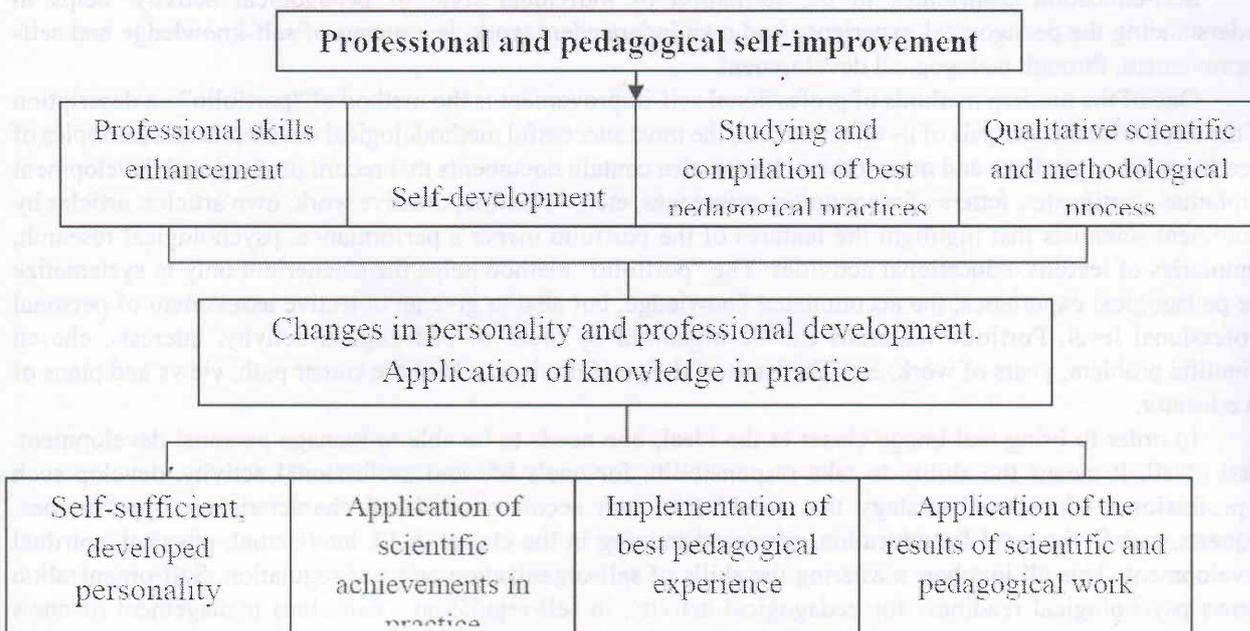


Fig. 1 – Principal directions of professional and pedagogical self-improvement of an educator *Compiled by the author*

Formation of a teacher as a professional and a subject of productive activity is a process of approaching the ideals of culture, the pinnacles of professionalism, creative self-realization. Scientists emphasize the uneven stages and steps for professional formation of the individual, marking it as an individual trajectory of professional growth, professional career.

English language teachers usually lack the practical training and the capacity and resources to receive this training. In some universities, professors do not realize the need for further practical training. The absence of practical training is particularly noticeable in the following areas:

- modern methodology: many English teachers have poor understanding or misunderstanding of the

*variety of approaches and techniques used in similar teaching contexts around the world;*

- mixed-level teaching: many teachers complain that they usually cannot cope well with a mixed-level group consisting of first-year undergraduate students;
- English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses / Academic Purpose and Learning Skills: modern approaches to teaching ESP courses, Academic Purpose and Learning Skills are not widely known and practiced in Ukraine;
- materials development: when working with texts it is necessary to focus on the analysis of discourse and genre as the basis of work with text, introducing up-to-date information and logical presentation of material;
- assessment: an understanding of how students' progress and academic achievement are assessed, how the standards of the Common European Guidelines for Language Education work, and how language proficiency testing-system works.

Recommendations in this direction can lie in the following shape: the professional training of teachers ought to be based on practical issues of teaching English in the professional field at the university.

A significant problem, as the author views it, is that an English language teacher, having a certain level of required competencies, including speech competence, unfortunately usually limits his/her communication to the university curriculum, narrowing the range to basic phrases and language patterns. It is well-known, vocabulary requires active use and constant extension; otherwise it becomes passive to the level of the individual lexical units recognition in the text or phonetically, and eventually disappears from memory. The professional activity of educators implies constant interpersonal contacts with people, so the use of pedagogical novelty based on innovations is also updated. These are interactive technologies (collaboration technologies) that are widely used in educational institutions and have been studied by foreign (S. Kashlev, V. Trainev, etc.) and domestic scientists (L. Ampilogova, L. Artemova, O. Komar, I. Kulish and others). Therefore, it is understandable that the process of teaching a foreign language for years with only one textbook will not contribute to the enrichment of speech competence, the improvement of communicative competence, which is of paramount importance for foreign language teachers. Communication and collaboration in a online platform (for instance, EdEra, Prometheus, Coursera, TESOL online courses, IATEFL online webinars etc.) helps participants to significantly expand the range of communication topics from personal to professional, as this ICT tool not only encourages them to perform the tasks they offer, but also participation in forums, discussions, open chats which brings live practice.

Self-education contributes to the formation of individual style of pedagogical activity, helps in understanding the pedagogical experience and own independent work, is a means of self-knowledge and self-improvement, through pedagogical development.

One of the modern methods of professional self-improvement is the method of "portfolio" - a description of the work with the analysis of its effectiveness, the most successful methodological developments, examples of creative work of students and many others. It may also contain documents that record professional development (diplomas, certificates, letters of recognition, references, etc.), scientific, creative work, own articles, articles by prominent scientists that highlight the features of the portfolio owner's performance, psychological research, summaries of lessons, educational activities. The "portfolio" method helps the teacher not only to systematize the pedagogical experience, the accumulated knowledge, but also to give an objective assessment of personal professional level. Portfolio materials can be organized by areas of pedagogical activity, interests, chosen scientific problem, years of work, etc. The basis of the portfolio is to reflect the career path, views and plans of an educator.

In order to bring real image closer to the ideal, one needs to be able to manage personal development. First of all, it means the ability to take responsibility for one's life and professional activity, develop such a professional educational strategy that would take into account individual characteristics, opportunities, requests, satisfy the need for education, advanced training in the chosen field, intellectual, physical, spiritual development. This all involves mastering the skills of self-organization and self-regulation. Self-organization shows psychological readiness for pedagogical activity, in self-regulation - conscious management of one's behaviour, psychological, energy potential, control over emotions, preservation of the ability to think critically and solve complex problems.

Therefore, the main ways of professional development are vocational training, career development and teacher's education. Professional development leads to a fundamentally new way of performance - constructive self-realization in the profession, which allows revealing individual and professional opportunities. The shortest formula for a teacher's professional activity is constant work, creativity, knowledge harmony, feelings and behaviour.

Thus, the professional development of teachers from the current standpoint is regarded as a continuous process, which must be carried out on the basis of known, modified or newly created, developed forms and methods of organization of professional development. It is a constant process of choosing and combining different forms, methods, technologies that are most optimal in a particular situation, in a particular place, etc.

Therefore, in the organization of training and professional development of pedagogical workers on the available technologies, forms and methods of education, which are introduced in the education system, English language teacher ought to choose those that most contribute to the formation of professional competence (attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, qualities required) for effective professional activity). In modern conditions of information rapid spread, new teaching approaches evolving, and quick depreciation of the previously acquired education only with the continuity of education can the English language teacher be considered as a competent professional in the field.

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