

## Guidelines for in-service training of teachers in secondary schools in the Sokółka district

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### INFORMATION

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### ABSTRACT

This article attempts to define the concept of in-service training and its impact on the education system. Using a research method involving a diagnostic survey, in-service training needs were diagnosed from the teachers' point of view, and it was determined which forms and types of training are most attractive from the teachers' perspective. An evaluation of the in-service teacher training system was also made in the context of the changes taking place in the contemporary world. The research concluded that in-service training should be an integral part of the teaching profession.

### KEYWORDS

education, in-service training, teachers, development



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## Introduction

The teaching profession involves constant and continuous improvement. Nowadays, a teacher is expected to be a mentor guiding their pupils through the modern world. He or she should be extremely competent, i.e. demonstrate a high level of subject knowledge, the ability to pass this knowledge on to students, but also familiarity and high personal culture. His or her duty is not only to impart this knowledge to the students, but also to show them the direction they should follow to acquire this knowledge. Only such a person can gain the respect of both his pupils and their

parents and guardians. Therefore, in-service training should be an integral part of a teacher's career and it is what is expected of the modern teacher.

The teaching profession is one of the oldest professions in the history of culture and civilisation. It is a profession of particular symbolism and importance, with a not inconsiderable heritage of meaning, history and culture. The teacher is – next to the pupil – one of the fundamental subjects of the didactic and educational setting, of the education and upbringing process. The person of the teacher has been an object of interest for theoreticians, practitioners, decision-makers since the dawn of time (Lorek, 2011). He or she plays an important role in building the future of his or her students, supporting them in their quest to find their own path. “Such will be the Republics as the upbringing of their youth” – despite the passage of centuries, the words of Jan Zamoyski do not lose their relevance. This extremely important responsibility rests precisely on the shoulders of teachers.

Since they have a significant impact on shaping the consciousness of children and young people, teachers should be ready to accept the changing needs of the modern world. The dynamic changes taking place in the social consciousness and resulting from economic change, technological development and globalisation make it necessary to redefine the concept of education, which has become a “commodity” available to all. At the same time, in order to meet the challenges of modern times, it is necessary to continuously develop and improve one's competences. In this way, lifelong education is becoming a defining feature of the modern age. These changes significantly affect the role and tasks set for teachers. Therefore, it is important that the in-service training process for teachers keeps pace with ongoing societal changes.

The aim of this article is to diagnose in-service training needs from the teachers' point of view. The question posed as the main research problem was: what types and forms of training are most attractive from the teachers' perspective?

## **1. The essence of in-service teacher training**

Education is “the entirety of interactions that serve to form (change, develop) a person's life capabilities” (Rubacha, 2003, p. 25). Malewski believes that education “can mean the entirety of educational procedures and corresponding cognitive activities oriented towards the achievement of intentionally adopted developmental goals, formulated in relation to

individuals, social groups and entire societies. Thus, education is constituted by teaching and learning activities. Their rank in the processes of adult education has changed with the change in the social functions assumed for this type of education” (Malewski, 2010, p. 46).

According to Tomaszewska, the teacher: “does not only impart knowledge, but is supposed to be an advisor in learning, is expected to support the acquisition, discovery of knowledge, views, skills” (Tomaszewska, 2009, p. 181). An innovative teacher “introduces” the student to the idea of reflective thinking, analysis and rational interpretation (of problems, phenomena, information – reduced to a common denominator of the category of knowledge), as well as encourages the student to draw conclusions, value the discovered knowledge and acquired skills. By preparing the student for change and making them aware of its unpredictability, it triggers in them the skills to react optimally, to act in dynamic, unique, difficult situations. At the same time, it shapes key competences in students through a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes for self-realisation and personal development.

The notion of in-service training is even inscribed in the term “teacher” itself. According to Kosiba, “it is an integral part of a teacher’s professional development. It is most often identified with a purposeful, planned and continuous process of his or her continuing education, consisting in increasing and modifying his or her professional competences and qualifications, comprehensive development of personality, organised and implemented by institutions specialised in this direction, as well as in the course of self-education and self-improvement; a process lasting from the decision to choose the profession throughout the entire period of professional activity” (Kosiba, 2012, p. 124).

Norkowska also notes that in-service training is “an integral part of a teacher’s professional development. Self-education and in-service training is inscribed in the teaching profession and is not a privilege but a statutory obligation to be carried out within working time and an established remuneration” (Norkowska, 2018).

Griffin defines in-service training as “teaching managers and employees the professional skills (qualifications) necessary for their current and future positions” (Griffin, 1996, p. 456).

The concept of in-service teacher training is closely linked to the concept of professional qualifications. Ustawa z dnia 26 stycznia 1982 r. Karta Nauczyciela (The Act of 26 January 1982, Teachers’ Charter) specifies that the position of teacher, may be held by a person who:

- 1) has a higher education with adequate pedagogical preparation or has graduated from a teacher training institution and takes up a position for which these are sufficient qualifications;
- 2) respects basic moral principles;
- 3) fulfils the health conditions necessary to practice the profession (Ustawa z dnia 26 stycznia 1982 r. Karta Nauczyciela, 1982, art. 9, par. 1).

The Act also stipulates that a teacher of all types of schools and educational institutions is obliged to undergo systematic in-service training in accordance with the needs of the school (Ustawa z dnia 26 stycznia 1982 r. Karta Nauczyciela, 1982). Therefore, he or she should not refuse to participate in in-service training activities organised by the school and those to which he or she is delegated.

The object of in-service training for teachers is to update their pedagogical and directional knowledge, to exchange professional experiences, to plan and discuss research work in which teachers participate. In-service teacher training may be conducted by teacher in-service training institution that have been accredited by the school superintendent. Accreditation is a confirmation that the institution ensures the quality of the in-service training provided (Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Prawo oświatowe, 2016).

For several years now, Polish education has been undergoing fundamental changes in terms of improving teachers' qualifications. The new model includes recommendations presented in Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 28 maja 2019 r. w sprawie placówek doskonalenia nauczycieli (The Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 28 May 2019 on teacher in-service training institution). According to it, the basic assumptions of the new school support system include: operating in its closest possible environment, building the support process on the needs of the institution and accompanying it from the diagnosis of needs to the implementation of changes, as well as supporting schools in the long term (Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z dnia 28 maja 2019 r. w sprawie placówek doskonalenia nauczycieli, 2019).

In-service teacher training in the Polish educational structure has a systemic character, which consists of (Baracz, 2022):

- 1) the activity of teacher in-service training institutions operating at the following levels:
  - a) national – run by the minister in charge of education and upbringing, the minister in charge of culture and national heritage and the minister in charge of agriculture,

- b) provincial – run by province self-governments,
  - c) local – run by communes and districts,
  - d) non-public teacher in-service training institutions run by natural and legal persons;
- 2) methodological counselling – understood as assistance to teachers in planning, organising and examining the effects of the didactic and educational process, developing, selecting and adapting curricula, developing methodological skills and undertaking innovative activities;
  - 3) intra-school support, which is aimed at the joint learning process of the whole or a part of the teachers’ board in areas relevant to a particular school/institution;
  - 4) self-education activities, which, although not part of the system exposed in the legislation, remain an important link in the preparation of the teacher for the implementation of the educational process. Self-education activities include: reading professional literature, journals, using professional websites, watching selected television broadcasts, exhibitions, exchanging knowledge and experiences, cooperation with universities, institutions related to education, employers, etc. (Norkowska, 2018).

Therefore, the aim of the in-service training system is to meet the challenges facing education as a result of:

- the changing demands placed on the teacher by society and the education system;
- political, socio-economic and demographic changes;
- changes in the qualification process of teachers due to the demands of developments in educational science, as well as improvements in the educational system itself (Pachociński, 1994).

The above review of considerations, although showing a variety of approaches to the definition of in-service teacher training, finds a common denominator. This is the conviction that the teaching profession is closely linked to continuous development and improvement of competences.

## **2. Types and forms of in-service teacher training**

In-service training for teachers can take many forms. These include various types of professional courses, methodology conferences, seminars, postgraduate studies, workshops, foreign and domestic placements, training courses, but the core is self-education (Nowacki et al., 2000).

A vocational course is a training programme designed to provide information and qualifications in the participant's chosen profession. The participant of vocational courses has the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills needed to perform specific professions (Ustawa z dnia 8 stycznia 1999 r. – Przepisy wprowadzające reformę ustroju szkolnego, 1999). During a vocational course, various types of training are used, e.g. group activities such as lessons and lectures, work with texts (textbooks, books, manuals, encyclopaedias) and practical activities such as workshops and studio or laboratory classes (Nowak, 2017).

Participation in such courses has many benefits, both for employers and the participants themselves. In addition to a certificate confirming the acquisition of knowledge and skills, participants gain training for a particular position – which offsets costs, experience, and the particular advantage of having the most up-to-date information on a particular industry (Janiak-Rejno, 2001), which can be particularly attractive for modern teachers.

According to the *Słownik języka polskiego (Dictionary of the Polish Language)*, a conference is “a meeting of representatives of some institutions or organisations held to discuss specific issues” (Konferencja, 2023). The *Encyklopedia Zarządzania (CEOpedia Management)* specifies that the main purpose of a conference is to discuss matters related to the professional activity or occupation of those attending (Trąbka, 2023). Attending conferences has many benefits, including: gaining valuable knowledge, establishing contacts or keeping up to date with new trends and solutions.

A workshop is a joint working session in which a team achieves an agreed objective. The goal may be to solve a problem, create ideas or find agreement between team members. Workshops use a creative approach, and this is how they differ from conventional meetings. Therefore, they have a different kind of agenda and behaviour. Workshops are characterised by limited time, so the instructor has to plan and lead the workshop so that the goal is achieved in the given time (Hamilton, 2016). The main idea of the workshop is to solve problems in a creative way in order to broaden horizons and develop a solution.

Postgraduate programmes are a form of education to which candidates with at least a first degree qualification are admitted. They are conducted at universities, scientific institutes of the Polskiej Akademii Nauk (Polish Academy of Sciences), research institutes or the Centrum Medycznym Kształcenia Podyplomowego (Centre of Postgraduate Medical Education), which end with a postgraduate qualification (Ustawa z dnia 20 lipca 2018 r. – Prawo o szkolnictwie wyższym i nauce, 2018).

This is a form that can provide not only a great deal of knowledge and skills, but above all a qualification to teach new subjects. As a result, many teachers are able to demonstrate that they are qualified to teach several subjects. It is a remedy for the declining economic status of the profession, especially in small, rural schools. It provides solid support for the institution's management as it enables the necessary teaching staff to be assembled from a small number of teachers. The question remains whether this is a good solution for students and whether it reduces the quality of teaching. After all, postgraduate studies take only one third of the time of a master's degree, moreover, in view of new technological developments (e.g. online studies), they can significantly reduce the level of knowledge gained.

According to the *CEOpedia Management*, training is another form and way of extending qualifications and specialisation, both within and outside the school system. It involves different types of activities aimed at improving skills and knowledge. It has four basic functions:

- adaptive – aims to match the knowledge and skills of the employee to the requirements of the job,
- modernising – refers to the constant need to renew skills,
- innovative – relates to the creation of conditions favourable to the introduction of new solutions,
- social – refers to interpersonal cooperation, developing interpersonal skills, integrating employees and focusing them on common goals (Stafińska et al., 2023).

Staff training, or teaching, is a process that occurs both incidentally and in situations where it is a systematic, planned and directly guided training process. It can occur in two ways. The first is the accidental confrontation of an employee with a problem, which becomes a new experience and an extension of their existing knowledge. The second is fully planned and cannot be carried out without the supervisor's control. This element is very important as it draws attention to the mistakes made and teaches how to correct them in the future (Waściński et al., 2002).

According to the *CEOpedia Management*, "training is among the basic tools of human resource development, which is seen as a process of acquiring new knowledge, skills and abilities. It is recognised that training should lead to the improvement of skills and the growth of employee qualifications and competencies that contribute to the fulfilment of the job function. It is the process of completing the knowledge necessary to maintain the competencies required by the job and improving behaviours that

influence work outcomes, as well as fostering the development of employees' personalities, stimulating their inventiveness and entrepreneurship" (Jachimczyk et al., 2023).

A particular form of training is e-learning. With the rapid development and widespread use of technologies such as big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence in education, it is becoming an increasingly popular method of learning due to its rich resources, freedom of time and space, and variety of learning styles (Zhang et al., 2023).

E-learning is a method of education that uses information technology, electronic devices and the Internet to transfer knowledge and skills. E-learning is made available by tools that offer a wide range of educational opportunities. Basic e-learning tools include: educational platforms, online courses, multimedia materials, videoconferencing, webinars, virtual laboratories and simulators or shared documents (*Nowoczesne narzędzia e-learningowe w procesie kształcenia*, 2023). An important advantage of e-learning is the possibility to adapt the content to the individual's education plan. On the other hand, however, many people, especially those of an older age, are still reluctant to work with a computer, so it will not work in every case. It is also important to remember that in this particular type of training a lot depends on the participants themselves and their commitment. However, when dealing with a young audience, it is important to enter their environment, which is the Internet.

The last form of in-service training described is self-education. The *CEO-pedia Management* describes it as a process "in which the individual takes the initiative and responsibility to acquire knowledge, skills and competences outside the formal education system. It is a form of learning that relies on the self-discipline, commitment and motivation of the individual to develop his or her skills and expand his or her knowledge" (Samokształcenie, 2023). In the system of improving teachers' qualifications, self-education plays a very important, or even key role.

Trainings, courses, conferences and workshops are basic and very important forms of in-service training, as they not only provide professional staff but also offer a completely new perspective on the same topic. Education is a sector that requires teachers to be up to date with the world around them. They need tools that will interest young learners, who are surrounded by many stimuli on a daily basis. Nowadays, this is becoming more and more difficult, so it is extremely important to constantly update their knowledge, refresh their messages and learn new and innovative teaching techniques.



### 3. Methodological assumptions

The research method used in this article was a diagnostic survey. The intended research was carried out through surveying, while a survey questionnaire was used as the research tool. The survey was conducted anonymously using an online questionnaire. The form consisted of twenty-three single or multiple choice questions. Some of the questions allowed the respondent to add their own answer.

Conducted from the beginning of May until the end of June 2023, the survey on teacher support and in-service training was aimed at teachers actively practising their profession in the Sokółka district. All respondents are teachers of secondary schools located in Sokółka district. 13% of respondents also teach additionally in primary school. The research group consisted of 40 people – 26 women and 14 men. The largest age group was over 51 years old (45% of respondents) and between 41 and 50 years old (40%). People aged between 30 and 40 years accounted for 10%, and the smallest group of respondents were those aged between 25 and 29 years (5%). The vast majority of respondents (40%) were teachers living in a town with a population of between 6,000 and 10,000. The second largest group of respondents (28%) were those living in a city with a population ranging from 11,000 to 25,000, followed by those (17%) whose place of residence was a town with up to 5,000 inhabitants. Residents of cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants were the least numerous group of respondents.

The vast majority of those who took part in the survey (as many as 68%) are teachers with more than 20 years of experience in the profession. 20%

Table 1. Sex and age of respondents

Age \ Sex	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
up to 29 years old	2	14.3	0	0	2	5
30-40 years old	1	7.1	3	11.5	4	10
41-50	3	21.4	13	50	16	40
over 51 years old	8	57.2	10	38.5	18	45
Total	14	100	26	100	40	100

Source: own elaboration.

of respondents have between 11 and 20 years of work experience, and those who are taking their first steps as teachers (up to 5 years of work experience) comprise only 12% of respondents.

The number of years worked is closely linked to the degree of professional promotion achieved. A teacher starting at school is a beginning teacher. After working for a minimum of 3 years and 9 months (or according to an abbreviated procedure of 2 years and 9 months), he or she can become an appointed teacher. After a further 5 years and 9 months of work, he or she can become a chartered teacher, which under current law completes the professional promotion path. Appointed teacher is, according to the latest legislation, the first level of professional promotion, awarded by administrative decision on the teacher's application. Pursuant to Art. 9a of the Teachers' Charter, university teachers who hold a degree and who have been employed at the university for at least five years are granted the rank of appointed teacher as of the date of their employment at the school. Currently, two degrees of professional promotion have been established – these are the degree of appointed teacher and the degree of chartered teacher (Ustawa z dnia 26 stycznia 1982 r. – Karta Nauczyciela, 1982, art. 9a). Thus, the legislation does not provide for the possibility of obtaining another promotion degree for a chartered teacher.

In the described group, chartered teachers constituted the largest group of respondents, as much as 80%. 13% of the respondents were beginning teachers and 7% were appointed teachers.

The aim of the research was to diagnose in-service training needs from the teachers' point of view.

#### **4. Guidelines for in-service training of teachers in secondary schools in the Sokółka district**

The structure of the in-service teacher training system outlined in the previous section of this article draws attention to several issues. The first is the great emphasis on self-improvement. This means that it is mainly up to the individuals concerned to make the system work properly. Therefore, they are required to be very aware of their own needs, those of the institution in which they work or those resulting from changes in the education system and the surrounding world. They bear a great deal of responsibility on their shoulders.

Another issue that draws attention in the process of improving teachers' qualifications is the design of the system itself. Despite decentralisation and the emergence of regional support and in-service training centres, it appears that the system does not reach every place in Poland. An example of such a place is the described Sokółka district.

According to the system, teacher in-service training institution at the provincial level are run by the provincial self-government and, in addition, "a district and a commune may establish and run, within their own tasks, public teacher in-service training institutions and teaching libraries" (Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 2016 r. Prawo oświatowe, 2016). The voluntary nature of the creation of the above institutions, specifically in Sokółka district, indicates their absence. Therefore, the situation described makes it difficult for teachers to set an adequate course of development.

Table 2. Interest in cooperation with a methodological consultant

	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Definitely yes	3	21.4	5	19.2	8	20
Rather yes	9	64.4	13	50	22	55
Neither agree nor disagree	1	7.1	6	23.1	7	18
Probably not	1	7.1	2	7.7	3	7
Definitely not	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total	14	100	26	100	40	100

Source: own elaboration.

As presented in Table 2, the research shows that the vast majority of teachers would enter into cooperation with a methodological consultant if given the opportunity. 20% of respondents strongly agree, while 55% of respondents would rather enter into such a co-operation. 18% of the respondents have no opinion in this regard and only 7% of the teachers participating in the survey would rather not be interested in assistance from a teaching consultant. This means that most teachers need someone who can professionally help them choose the right course for their development.

Table 3 shows the respondents' opinions regarding the positive impact of cooperation with a methodological consultant on their professional

Table 3. Influence of cooperation with a methodological consultant on professional development

	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Definitely yes	2	14.3	4	15.4	6	15
Rather yes	9	64.3	14	53.8	23	58
Neither agree nor disagree	2	14.3	6	23.1	8	20
Probably not	1	7.1	2	7.7	3	7
Definitely not	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total	14	100	26	100	40	100

Source: own elaboration.

development. 15% of the respondents answered that, in their opinion, cooperation with a methodological consultant would have a positive impact on their development. 58% of the respondents are rather convinced about this, while 20% have no opinion on this issue. Only 7% of the respondents answered that such cooperation would rather not have a beneficial effect on their professional development. These responses again confirm that the teachers are open to collaboration, moreover, they believe that such cooperation would benefit both them and the institutions in which they work.

Table 4. Interest in the opportunity to speak out on initiatives taken by the methodological consultant

	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Definitely yes	4	28.6	3	11.5	7	17.5
Rather yes	9	64.3	12	46.2	21	52.5
Neither agree nor disagree	0	0	8	30.8	8	20
Probably not	1	7.1	3	11.5	4	10
Definitely not	-	-	-	-	0	0
Total	14	100	26	100	40	100

Source: own elaboration.

The question of being able to speak out on initiatives taken by the methodological consultant is presented in Table 4. 70% of respondents view this favourably. 20% have no opinion and only 10% would rather not be interested in such an opportunity. The results of the diagnostic survey show that teachers want to be involved in the support and in-service training system. They seek to participate in dialogue in order to have more influence on their own development.

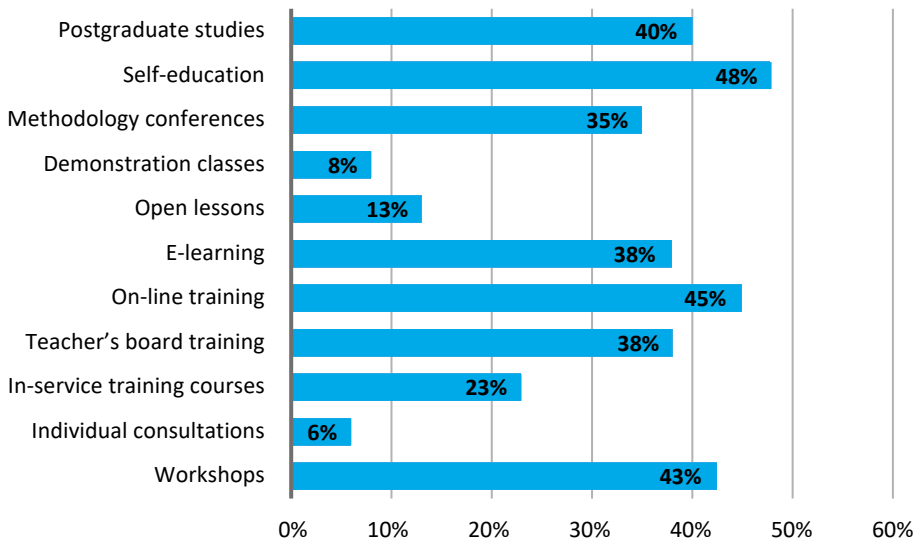


Fig. 1. Desired forms of in-service training

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 1 presents the forms of in-service training preferred among respondents. The analysis shows that self-education (e.g. reading articles on a website or self-improvement materials) is among the most desirable forms of training, with 48% of respondents preferring it. 45% of respondents indicate a willingness to participate in online training and just under 43% in workshops. This indicates the high maturity of the group of teachers analysed, as such forms of qualification improvement require creative thinking, considerable self-discipline and high self-motivation. 40% of teachers are interested in postgraduate studies and 38% would choose a teachers' board training. The same number of respondents indicate an interest in e-learning in the form of webinars or video conferences. 35% of respondents are interested in methodology conferences and 23% in in-service courses. 13% of respondents prefer open lessons, only 8% in individual consultations.

demonstration classes and 6% individual consultations. The low popularity of the choice of demonstration classes and open lessons may indicate that teachers experience reluctance towards sharing their knowledge. This may also be due to a fear of evaluation.

Table 5 shows that the most important factor that influences the choice of a specific form of in-service training, chosen by as many as 88% of the respondents, is its subject matter. In second place, teachers are guided by the needs of the institution (60%). Further determinants influencing the choice of forms of in-service training are the teachers' interests and the date of the training, as indicated by 48% of the respondents. 45% of respondents' choice is driven by the duration of the training, and slightly less, 43%, by the needs resulting from the specificity of work with pupils. For 35%, an important factor was financial resources and for only 5%, the priorities of the state's education policy.

The topic most frequently chosen by respondents (73%) among the forms of in-service training of a methodological nature was challenging behaviour of pupils, 48% chose issues related to working with pupils with

Table 5. Factors influencing the choice of form of in-service training

	Men		Women		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Training date	6	42.9	13	50	19	47.5
Duration of the training	7	50	11	42.3	18	45
Subject matter	11	78.6	24	92.3	35	87.5
Interests	7	50	12	46.2	19	47.5
Needs resulting from the specificity of work with pupils	3	21.4	14	53.8	17	42.5
Needs of the institution	8	57.1	16	66.7	24	60
Education policy priorities	1	7.1	1	3.8	2	5
Financial resources	4	28.6	10	38.5	14	35
Total	14	100	26	100	40	100

Source: own elaboration.

autism spectrum disorder, and 30% of respondents indicated methods of working with pupils with intellectual disabilities and issues related to the novelties of methodology and educational publications (e.g. in the form of meetings with specialists). 15% were interested in content on working with a pupil with ADHD and 13% focused on developing pupils' creativity through innovative learning methods. The same number of respondents expressed a desire to participate in the construction and education of an IPET (Individual Education and Therapeutic Plan). The respondents additionally indicated such aspects as: methods of working with gifted students, training related to the profession or meetings with representatives of institutions related to the taught subject, e.g. Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (the Institute of National Remembrance) for historians.

In the field of education and prevention, respondents paid particular attention to forms of in-service training such as: issues related to pupils' health (depression, eating disorders, obesity) – these were highlighted by 65% of respondents. 63% of participants pointed to issues of aggression and violence at school. 35% emphasised the importance of working with “difficult” parents in terms of relationships and communication, and 33% highlighted the conditions for good cooperation with parents.

When describing the area of improving teachers' qualifications related to the specifics of their work, it should be emphasised that as many as 60% of the respondents indicated the issue of assertiveness. 53% of respondents were interested in training on stress and 48% in personal communication. 45% raised the issue of professional burnout and 40% teacher authority. Only 18% of respondents highlighted the topic of voice projection and hygiene at work, and 15% on teacher professional ethics.

Among the training suggestions for improving the quality of education, the majority of teachers (58%) mentioned supporting the student in active learning and 48% supporting the development of gifted students. The area of in-service training indicated by 35% of the respondents was creativity lessons on the mechanisms of creative thinking, while didactic strategies to support the individualisation of teaching in a diverse training group was selected by 33% of the respondents. The same number of teachers paid attention to stimulating the emotional intelligence of their students, and 28% would choose an issue concerning neurodidactic aspects in the learning process.

Another area considered in the study to improve teachers' qualifications was the issue of students with special educational needs. The largest number, 60% of respondents, indicated the issue of working with a student

with learning difficulties. In second place (48%), respondents distinguished building the emotional self-awareness and mental resilience of the student. 45% of respondents were interested in the topics of working with students with Asperger’s syndrome in the school environment, while 43% indicated motivational assessments for remote and onsite students. 15% of teachers were interested in content covering the subject of using remote learning tools in organising work with a student with special educational needs (SEN), and 5% in specific difficulties in working with SEN students during remote education.

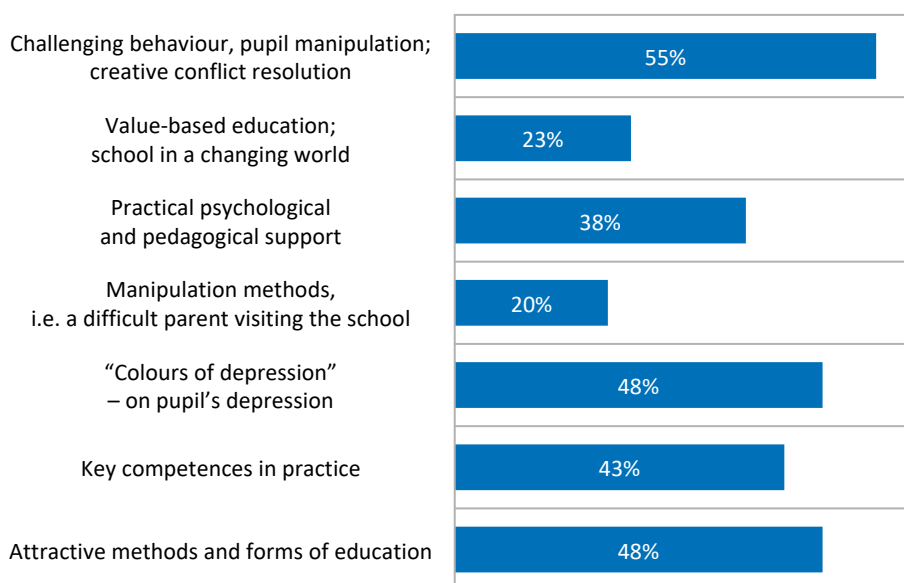


Fig. 2. Desired subjects for training in the field of educational competence development and prevention and school safety

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2 shows the desired topics for training in the area of the development of educational competences and prevention and safety at school. In the area of the development of educational competences and prevention and safety at school, training on challenging behaviour, student manipulation and creative conflict resolution at school were indicated by the majority of respondents (55%). 48% highlighted topics including depression among pupils, as well as inspiring attractive methods and forms of education. 43% of the respondents mentioned key competences in practice, i.e. ways to build competences for the future, integrating knowledge and skills,



and 38% practical psychological and pedagogical support. The training concept indicated by 23% of respondents was value-based education, and 20% would choose training on manipulation.

In addition to the many suggestions made in the above diagnostic survey, teachers also had their own ideas for improvement, such as: training or workshops on new methods of working with students, optimal use of interesting software and equipment in classrooms, e.g. interactive displays or whiteboards. They also mentioned preparation for external examinations, individualisation of work with linguistically gifted students or methods for motivating students to learn. Many highlighted the important issue of emotional intelligence, positive thinking and psychological help for students in difficult situations. Another development idea was training on how to obtain European Union funds for international projects.

The above overview of the surveys shows that teachers are open to improving their qualifications. They are open to cooperating with a methodological consultant and therefore want to make informed and thoughtful choices about their own development. They also believe that such cooperation would have a positive impact on their professional career. They are interested in self-education as well as online training or various workshops. They also have many ideas of their own for professional development, which is also encouraging.

## Summary

In-service training plays a significant role in the process of teacher education and should be an integral part of it. The functional structure of the system is based on four pillars: teacher in-service training institutions, teaching consulting, in-school support, but mainly on self-education. This assumption places a great responsibility on the shoulders of the teachers themselves, as it requires a high degree of intrinsic motivation and self-discipline.

After the analysis conducted on the basis of the research, the following conclusions arise:

- The lack of a methodological consultant in Sokółka district is unfavourable for the informed development of teachers. However, they are willing to cooperate and believe that it would positively influence their professional development. They would also like to be able to express their opinions on initiatives taken by the methodological consultant.

- Teachers are open to collaboration and, moreover, they believe that such cooperation would benefit both them and the institution in which they work.
- The results of the diagnostic survey show that teachers want to be involved in the support and in-service training system. They seek to participate in dialogue in order to have more influence on their own development.
- The preferred forms of in-service training include self-education, on-line training and workshops. This indicates the high maturity of the group of teachers analysed, as such forms of qualification improvement require creative thinking, considerable self-discipline and high self-motivation.
- The factor that mainly influences the choice of the form of in-service training is the subject matter of the training. In second place, the teachers indicate the needs of the institution. This means that, despite their specific preferences, they are flexible and able to adapt to changes, e.g. system changes.
- Among the most interesting issues from the teachers' point of view were challenging behaviour of pupils. Popular responses also included student health issues such as depression or eating disorders, as well as aggression and violence at school. This means that teachers do not isolate themselves to the contemporary problems of a changing world. They try to understand the problems of their students so as to manage them skilfully. This demonstrates the high emotional intelligence of the described research group.
- The analysed group of teachers also shows their own initiative regarding the subject matter of the various forms of qualification improvement. They have many ideas of their own that could contribute to their professional development. These include: training or workshops on new methods of working with students, optimal use of useful software and equipment in classrooms, preparation of students for external examinations, individualisation of work with linguistically gifted students or methods of motivating students to learn. Many highlighted the important issue of emotional intelligence, positive thinking and psychological help for students in difficult situations. Another development idea is training on how to obtain European Union funds for international projects. These are interesting suggestions that can contribute to the quality of education in schools, as well as improving communication with students and helping to better understand their needs.

The conclusions presented above give an optimistic view of the continuing in-service training system. However, not all of its elements are working properly. Its most important shortcomings include:

- The lack of a methodological consultant in the Sokółka district makes teachers take decisions regarding their professional development on their own. As a result, teachers often make certain choices about improving their qualifications unconsciously, which can lead to poor decisions.
- The lack of a methodological consultants also means in practice that teachers' needs are not sufficiently diagnosed. This may affect the difficulty of identifying in-service training problems on their own.
- Although the majority of respondents show interest in cooperating and engaging in dialogue with a teaching consultant, there are those who are not interested or do not have an opinion on improving their qualifications. On the one hand, this may be related to a high degree of self-awareness and is based on a self-assessment of one's own needs, but on the other hand, such answers may imply a complete lack of interest in one's own development. Such an attitude contradicts the idea of a modern teacher who is open to development and challenges.

Summarising the research on the issue of the system of support and in-service training for teachers, it should be stated that there are obstacles that prevent the whole education sector from functioning properly. Teachers express their needs, concerning, for example, the desire to cooperate with a methodological consultant, who, due to the design of the system, is not an obligatory part of it. One should consider as encouraging the fact that the vast majority of respondents are interested in such cooperation and are open to dialogue. They also have plenty of ideas of their own to improve their effectiveness and gain a better understanding of their pupils.

"How modern teachers perform and will continue to perform is one of the determinants of a country's capacity for long-term development" (Fedorowicz et al., 2014, p. 7). This statement demonstrates how important it should be to invest in the development of modern teachers, as enhancing their qualifications takes on a strategic dimension. In order for it to work appropriately, it should be given priority, thereby improving the education system as a whole.

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### **Kierunki doskonalenia zawodowego nauczycieli w szkołach ponadpodstawowych powiatu sokólskiego**

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#### **STRESZCZENIE**

W niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę zdefiniowania pojęcia doskonalenia zawodowego oraz jego wpływu na system edukacji. Przy użyciu metody badawczej w postaci sondażu diagnostycznego dokonano diagnozy potrzeb doskonalenia zawodowego z punktu widzenia nauczycieli, a także określono, jakie formy i rodzaje szkoleń są najbardziej atrakcyjne z perspektywy nauczycieli. Dokonano również oceny systemu doskonalenia zawodowego nauczycieli w kontekście zachodzących zmian we współczesnym świecie. W wyniku przeprowadzonych badań stwierdzono, że nieodłącznym elementem zawodu nauczyciela powinno być doskonalenie zawodowe.


**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** edukacja, doskonalenie zawodowe, nauczyciele, rozwój

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### **Conflict of interests**

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### **Author contributions**

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

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### **Ethical statement**

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.