

S.D. Mukanova<sup>1</sup>, O.A. Akifyeva<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>*Karaganda University named after Academician E.A. Buketov, Karaganda, Kazakhstan*  
(\*Corresponding author's e-mail: zam\_23@bk.ru)

<sup>1</sup>ORCID 0000-0002-9734-7574,

<sup>2</sup>ORCID 000-0003-3473-7740

## Contemporary concepts and practical approaches to teacher professional development

The article is devoted to modern concepts and approaches to teachers' professional development based on international and Kazakhstani research. The paper emphasizes the importance of continuous professional learning, collective development and competency-based approach, as well as the introduction of digital technologies in the educational process. Successful practices such as professional development programs, mentoring, coaching and the use of online platforms that actively contribute to the development of teachers' professional skills and share experiences are discussed. The Lesson Study methodology, widely used in Kazakhstan, is presented as an effective tool for improving teachers' pedagogical skills and collaborative development. The article analyzes the impact of national initiatives and legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the development of teachers' professional competencies, as well as the role of government and educational institutions in organizing and supporting learning processes. Special attention is given to current problems, along with proposed solutions to overcome them. The results of the questionnaire survey of teachers confirm the high interest in professional development and the need to integrate individualized approaches into the professional development system. The author also offers recommendations for improving teacher professional development practices in Kazakhstan.

*Keywords:* professional development, competency-based approach, digitalization, inclusive education, mentoring, coaching, pedagogical leadership, Lesson Study, continuous learning.

### Introduction

In 2021, Kazakhstan completed the renewal of school education, focusing on the integration of technologies, adaptation to the changing needs of students and society, as well as the introduction of inclusive and differentiated approaches. As noted in the Concept for the Development of Preschool, Secondary, Technical and Vocational Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2023–2029, the renewal of educational content is focused on the formation of 21st century competencies and corresponds to national priorities and global challenges [1].

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) positively assesses the modernization of school education, noting its significance for the entire education system. In the context of these changes, the professional status of teachers is becoming crucial, reflecting public recognition and influence on the quality of the educational process. OECD reports and research confirm the importance of teacher leadership in improving the quality of education and creating an environment conducive to professional development and improved student outcomes. According to a review of Schools for 21st-Century Learners, successful educational systems encourage leadership at all levels, from individual teachers to systemic change, emphasizing the importance of innovation and self-management in educational practice [2].

Teacher professional learning is emphasized through the TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) program, which provides an analysis of approaches to teacher leadership development and its impact on school climate and educational outcomes. These initiatives contribute to the creation of professional communities that support the exchange of experience and the implementation of innovative practices in educational institutions.

A teacher with a high professional status is perceived as an authoritative leader who is able to effectively implement modern technologies, adapt to changes and develop key skills in students, such as critical thinking, creativity and self-management. Such status increases the teacher's motivation, responsibility for the results of his/her work and plays a key role in cultivating of an atmosphere of trust.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On the Status of Teacher" (2020) enshrines the legal status of teachers, defining their rights, duties and guarantees aimed at strengthening the prestige of the profession and

supporting their professional activities [3]. According to Article 15 of the Law, teachers are obliged to “constantly improve their professional skills, research, intellectual and creative abilities”, which is an integral part of their continuous professional development. The adoption of this law facilitated the introduction of a number of systemic initiatives aimed at creating favorable conditions for teachers and stimulating their professional development. However, despite these efforts, in order to raise the status of teachers and improve the quality of education in general, problems remain relevant, firstly, related to insufficient professional competence and limited opportunities for professional development of teachers, and secondly, to the lack of qualifications in such areas as IT competence development, emotional intelligence, lesson study, action research, critical thinking, time management and working with children with special educational needs.

The issue of ensuring quality training of qualified teachers and their professional development continues to be relevant for Kazakhstan, especially against the background of population growth since the mid-2000s. This has necessitated the construction of new schools and an increase in the number of teaching staff.

For 2024, one of the priority areas for professional development is the training of English language teachers. The increased interest in the professional development of such specialists is due to the growing demand for quality language teaching, which is becoming a key element of the competitiveness of the country's educational system.

To solve the problem of shortage of English teachers, the Ministry of Education has introduced the practice of hiring specialists with international certificates TESOL, CELTA and DELTA, which allows them to work in schools despite the lack of specialized pedagogical education. This step is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and creating opportunities to attract highly qualified specialists willing to share their experience and methods [4].

We believe that the problem of English teachers' professional development is interdisciplinary and occupies an important place in the modern fields of psychology, acmeology, sociology, pedagogy and other applied sciences. For many years, scientists have been investigating the essence of the concept of “teacher's professional development”.

#### *Materials and methods*

Theoretical and practical methods were used to investigate modern concepts and practical approaches to teachers' professional development.

Scientific literature was analyzed in the form of a review of domestic and foreign sources devoted to the issues of teachers' professional development. Special attention was paid to key concepts, such as “unlimited development”, as well as models of continuous professional development presented in various educational theories and practices.

Comparative analysis was used to identify the specifics of teacher professional development in different countries and educational systems. Approaches based on the requirements for teachers' qualification, as well as methods of improving their competence, such as professional development programs, courses and trainings that include IT competencies, emotional intelligence, critical thinking and other skills, were considered.

The case study method was used to analyze real-life examples of teacher professional development programs and initiatives in different educational institutions and countries. This allowed for an assessment of the effectiveness of different approaches and the identification of successful practices that could be adapted in other contexts.

A questionnaire survey was conducted to collect data on teachers' perceptions of their professional development opportunities and needs for certain aspects of their career development. The surveys were conducted among teachers of different subject areas and educational levels, which allowed to identify the most relevant issues and preferences.

The analysis of statistical data was carried out by collecting data on staff composition, qualification level and training needs of teachers, as well as statistics on teachers' participation in professional development programs.

#### *Results and discussion*

According to scientists N.G. Zharkikh and S.S. Kostyrya, in recent years the concept of “unlimited development” presented in psychology by such researchers as B.G. Ananyeva, L.I. Antsyferova, A.V. Brushlinsky, I.S. Kon, K.K. Platonov, and A.V. Tolstykh has become widespread. According to this concept, development is a continuous process of evolutionary and involutionary progress that persists until the very end of life. We believe that this concept can become the basis for the model of teachers' continuous

professional development. It suggests that since human development occurs throughout a person's life, the professional development of a teacher should not be constrained by age or time. Thus, the system of teachers' professional development should take into account their personal and professional needs at all stages of their career [5].

Thus, the concept of "unlimited development" opens new opportunities for the professional growth of teachers, giving them a chance for continuous improvement and enhancement at all stages of their career. This, in turn, contributes to the improvement of the quality of the educational process and promotes the development of future generations.

B. Johnston [6] proposes the concept of collective professional development of teachers based on cooperation between teachers, university scientists, students and other participants of the educational process.

This concept implies the creation of a synergistic educational space in which different participants can share experience, knowledge and ideas. Such cooperation gives teachers access to current scientific research, methodological materials and modern teaching methods developed by experts. Interaction with future educators and practicum students enables teachers to share their experience, while also guiding and motivating young individuals. Importantly, interaction with other participants in the educational process, such as parents and school administrators, contributes to the creation of a more complete system of support and development of teachers.

Collective professional development can take place through joint projects, workshops, conferences, online platforms and other forms of collaboration. The main element of such an approach is to create an atmosphere of trust, openness and support in which teachers can share their problems, jointly seek solutions and learn from each other.

Thus, the concept of collective professional development is an effective and promising approach to teacher professional development that promotes teachers' professional growth and improves the quality of education.

A. Craft emphasizes in his work that teacher professional development should go beyond monotonous, formal courses. He offers a variety of methods that allow teachers to develop their competencies based on their individual needs and interests. Independent study provides teachers with opportunities to deepen their knowledge in their chosen field, learn new techniques, and implement them in their practice. Pedagogical research helps to develop critical thinking, analytical abilities and self-reflection skills [7].

P. Cullen notes that traditional methods of teacher professional development, such as short-term or one-time professional development programs organized by external experts, usually focus on transferring knowledge developed by others. These programs are popular because they provide teachers with an opportunity to get out of their routine, network with colleagues, and discuss new ideas. However, the main disadvantage of such programs is that the knowledge acquired often fails to align with the actual conditions and needs of teachers, both in practical and theoretical terms [8].

D.I. Pozdneva emphasizes the importance of a continuous process of professional development of a teacher, which reflects changes in external requirements to the set and level of professional competencies, as well as in the list of professional and personal qualities. She identifies three key directions in the development of pedagogical activity: increasing professional mobility, principles of open professionalism and stimulating dialog in collective professional work [9].

D.I. Pozdneva emphasizes that a modern teacher should be ready for constant changes and flexibly adapt to the rapidly changing educational environment. Increasing professional mobility implies the teacher's ability to quickly and effectively adapt to new working conditions, master the latest technologies, methods and approaches to teaching.

From the perspective of teacher professional development, aimed at improving the level of student knowledge in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the studies of such scientists as J.A. Karayev, A.I. Chokusheva and I.U. Sagindikov are of particular interest [10]. The authors emphasize the importance of teachers' professional development for improving the quality of education in schools, and highlight the criteria and indicators that are commonly used to assess teachers' professional development.

J.A. Karayev, A.I. Chokusheva and I.U. Sagindikov, analyzing the professional development of teachers in Kazakhstan, note the need to create a system that will contribute to improving the quality of education and learning outcomes. They emphasize that professional development should be a continuous process rather than a one-time event that accompanies a teacher throughout his/her career.

Thus, as outlined above, teacher professional development plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education. In the context of globalization, digitalization and changes in educational systems, the require-

ments for teachers are changing significantly. Modern approaches to their development are focused on individualization, integration of technologies, collaboration and implementation of innovative methods.

The modern educational environment places high demands on the qualifications of teachers, forcing them to adapt to changes, implement new technologies and take into account the individual needs of students. In this situation, teachers' professional development becomes a strategically important and integral element of educational policy and practice. A variety of approaches to professional development, taking into account both individual and institutional aspects, help educators to successfully cope with modern challenges. Let us consider the main approaches that underlie modern professional learning programs.

A modern teacher should not only possess deep knowledge in his/her subject area, but also develop a wide range of competencies such as critical thinking, digital literacy and the ability to work in interdisciplinary teams. In this context, the competency-based approach becomes the basis for educators to develop skills that meet the requirements of society and the educational system.

Competency-based approach is a methodological framework aimed at the development of teachers' key professional competencies necessary for the effective performance of educational activities in the context of modern challenges. It includes a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, skills and personal qualities that a teacher should demonstrate in his/her pedagogical practice [11].

The main element of the competency-based approach is result orientation, which consists in the achievement of specific competencies, such as the ability to collaborate, critical thinking, use of digital technologies and learning management [12]. Important tools for the implementation of this approach are project activities, mentoring, trainings and professional communities that encourage teachers to develop their own educational programs and teaching methods [13].

Competency-based approach also helps teachers to adapt to changes in the educational environment, such as digitalization, development of inclusive education and intercultural interactions. This is possible through various forms of learning such as online courses, webinars and online platforms that provide access to innovative methods [14].

The introduction of the competency-based approach requires revision of teachers' professional learning programs, creating conditions for its effective application and ensuring support from educational institutions and national strategies [15].

Integration of digital technologies in recent years has become an important strategic direction in the system of professional development of teachers, providing them with access to relevant knowledge and innovative teaching methods. In modern educational systems, digitalization provides educators with the opportunity to participate in online learning, attend webinars, use virtual simulations and collaborative platforms [16].

Digital tools facilitate the individualization of educational trajectories for teachers. Platforms, such as Coursera, EdX, and Khan Academy not only provide subject content learning but also enable the mastery of pedagogical approaches, including blended and project-based learning methods.

In addition, professional communities in social networks, forums and collaboration platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom) create conditions for sharing experiences, discussing pedagogical problems and joint development of educational materials.

In Kazakhstan, digitalization of teachers' professional development is integrated into the programs of the Center for Pedagogical Excellence, where teachers are trained in modules aimed at developing digital skills [17]. Digitalization is also actively supported by the National Centre for Professional Development "Orleu", which has developed online courses to develop digital competencies. These courses include modules on working safely with information, using distance learning technologies, creating interactive lessons and introducing the "flipped classroom" methodology. The courses contain 30 videos, 40 lectures and interactive assignments, which allow teachers to master ICT tools to improve the quality of the educational process and stimulate student motivation [18].

Mentoring and coaching play a key role in the system of professional development of teachers, providing not only knowledge transfer, but also support at all stages of their career path. L. Darling-Hammond emphasizes that mentoring contributes to the successful adaptation of young professionals through the exchange of experience and joint solution of pedagogical tasks [19]. In turn, S. Zepeda states that coaching helps teachers analyze their work, develop critical thinking and improve the educational process [16].

In Kazakhstan, mentoring programs are actively implemented through the initiatives of the Center for Pedagogical Excellence [17]. These programs include the participation of experienced teachers who help novice teachers to develop professional competencies, master new teaching methods and effectively use

modern educational technologies. Mentorship is carried out through courses, seminars and practical trainings, where mentors share their experience and help to solve real pedagogical problems.

One of the key methods used by the Center is the Lesson Study method, which is actively used for teacher professional development. This method includes joint lesson planning, implementation and discussion, which contributes to the improvement of teaching practice and the development of professional reflection among teachers.

Young teachers are provided with mentors to help them develop their professional skills. Mukanova S.D. notes that in the conditions of digitalization these programs are evolving to include digital tools for feedback and learning [20].

In international practice, coaching is used as a tool for personalized approach to educators' training. For example, the UK has implemented programs aimed at developing professional reflection and innovative thinking through regular coaching sessions [21].

Collaboration and participation in professional communities are important approaches to professional development of teachers, facilitating the exchange of experience, creating joint educational projects and solving common professional tasks.

In international practice, collaboration is becoming an integral part of educational systems. Programs such as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which have proven their effectiveness in the USA, UK and Canada, help teachers to meet regularly to discuss pedagogical practices, assess student progress and develop educational strategies [22].

European educational initiatives, such as Erasmus+ programs, actively introduce collaboration in international professional communities. Teachers participate in experience exchanges, collective projects and workshops, which contribute to the introduction of innovations in pedagogical practice [23].

Studies by L. Darling-Hammond and S. Zepeda confirm that teacher collaboration organized through workshops, network groups or communities of practice significantly improves the quality of education and professional competence [16, 19].

In Kazakhstan, this practice is actively developed through the Center for Pedagogical Excellence and the National Center for Professional Development "Orleu". The NCPD "Orleu" is a national platform offering various forms of professional development, including mentoring. Young teachers are provided with opportunities to participate in mentoring programs where experienced educators help develop professional skills and solve pedagogical challenges.

One of the key elements of NCPD "Orleu" work is the use of online courses and trainings for teachers, which promote the integration of modern technologies in the educational process, the development of critical thinking and the introduction of innovative approaches to teaching. The mentoring system in this center includes not only formal training, but also exchange of experience and regular participation in professional communities, which contribute to the development of competencies in young teachers [18].

Inclusive education and interdisciplinary approaches are becoming important directions in the professional development of teachers, meeting the modern requirements of the educational environment, which value the diversity of students and the integration of different subjects.

Inclusion is focused on creating an accessible educational process for all categories of students, including children with special educational needs. In this regard, teachers are trained to develop skills in differentiating instruction, individualized approach and application of adaptive technologies [24].

International platforms such as Coursera and EdX offer specialized courses on inclusive education, such as the course "Inclusive Education: Essential Knowledge for Success" from the University of Cape Town [25].

In Kazakhstan, the Center for Teaching Excellence offers professional development courses that include modules on inclusive education. These courses help to master the principles of Universal Design for Learning, which promotes an accessible educational environment for all students, regardless of their physical and cognitive characteristics. These programs train teachers to adapt instructional materials, use differentiated teaching methods, and support students with special educational needs [17].

The organization "Orleu" is also actively introducing inclusion practices in Kazakhstan, including modules in its courses aimed at creating inclusive classrooms. These courses familiarize teachers with the use of universal design for learning and methods of working with children with special needs. The "Orleu" platform offers online courses, trainings and webinars where teachers can learn modern pedagogical technologies and share experiences within professional communities [26].

As part of a survey among 175 teachers of the Karaganda region, conducted in March 2024 during the regional seminar “Professional Development of Teachers. Pedagogical Excellence”, important data were obtained on the perception of modern concepts and approaches to the professional development of teachers. The purpose of the survey was to study the opinions of teachers on the importance of professional development, preferences for methods and forms of teaching, as well as to identify problems and needs in this area. Most teachers (85%) realize the importance of professional development for their careers, which confirms the high level of interest of teachers in improving their qualifications. About 10% of respondents consider professional development important but not critical, and only 5% consider it insignificant for their work. This emphasizes the importance of this aspect for the teaching profession, especially in the context of continuous changes in the educational environment.

Regarding preferences for methods and forms of professional development, 35% of teachers identified online courses as the most effective form. This indicates a high interest in modern educational technologies and the availability of online resources. 25% of teachers consider seminars and trainings the most useful, which confirms the importance of offline formats that provide an opportunity for personal communication and practical acquisition of skills. 20% prefer joint planning and sharing experiences with colleagues, which emphasizes the importance of collective interaction for pedagogical growth. To a lesser extent (15%), respondents highlight workshops and master classes, and 5% indicated mentoring and coaching as an important development tool. The question about the importance of technology for professional development showed that 78% of teachers consider it important, which reflects a modern trend in education — the need to integrate technology into the process of teaching and development of teachers. This confirms the need to introduce innovative methods, such as e-learning and the use of digital platforms, into the system of advanced training for teachers.

When respondents were asked to identify the most relevant concepts for professional development, 40% highlighted lifelong learning as a key concept. This confirms the growing attention to the continuous improvement of pedagogical competencies, which meets the modern requirements of educational systems. 30% of teachers support the competency-based approach, which focuses on achieving specific educational results and mastering key skills. 20% consider innovative pedagogical practices, such as the flipped classroom, to be the most relevant, while inclusive education and blended learning scored 5% each. Teachers pay the greatest attention to developing skills in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT) — 30% of respondents noted this as a priority area. 25% of teachers want to develop project-based and blended learning skills, which indicates a willingness to adapt to new forms of teaching. It is also important to note the significant interest in skills for working with students with special educational needs (20%), leadership and coaching skills (15%) and teaching strategies in multicultural classrooms (10%).

One of the main challenges teachers face is the lack of time (40%), which limits opportunities to participate in courses and trainings. 30% of respondents indicated the lack of suitable courses and trainings, which indicates a shortage of quality educational programs. 15% of teachers named a lack of motivation, and 10% — a lack of resources and support from management as the main obstacles to active professional growth.

The majority of respondents (60%) emphasized the importance of teamwork for their professional development. This indicates the high value of teamwork and sharing experiences among teachers. The question regarding the form of feedback revealed that 40% of teachers consider peer assessment to be the most useful, while 30% prefer feedback from students. 15% of teachers positively assess self-assessment as a source of growth, and 10% — feedback from administration and mentors.

Teachers expressed interest in developing leadership skills, such as effective communication, time management and mentoring skills. 60% of respondents consider courses and trainings useful, 30% prefer seminars and master classes, and 10% believe that the greatest effect can be achieved through practical mentoring.

The survey results showed that most teachers are committed to professional development, recognizing the importance of upgrading their qualifications and introducing innovations into the educational process. Teachers are active in sharing experiences and are interested in learning new methods and technologies. However, the main barriers to their active participation in teaching are related to the lack of time and resources. This highlights the need to adapt professional development programs to be more flexible and accessible, as well as to introduce support mechanisms such as mentoring and coaching.

### *Conclusion*

It should be noted that there is no universal model or form of professional development that would be suitable for all cases. The choice of the optimal model depends on the specific conditions of the school and its teaching staff. It is important to take into account the needs, cultural characteristics, specific problems and achievements of the institution in order to choose the most effective approach.

Professional development of teachers is a continuous process of search and experimentation aimed at identifying the best combinations of various forms, methods and technologies that will give the greatest result in specific conditions.

We propose to interpret “professional development of a teacher” as a process of quantitative and qualitative changes that has a positive impact on his professional activity.

Professional development of teachers plays a decisive role in maintaining high quality of education. This process is necessary so that teachers can effectively work with students, master modern teaching methods and keep abreast of new trends in education.

The analysis of professional development revealed three key components that should be taken into account to achieve better results:

1. The teacher as a subject of continuous education: it is important to understand that the teacher is not just an object of training, but an active participant in the process who strives for continuous improvement.

2. Continuity-oriented training programs: it is necessary to develop educational programs that are not one-time events, but a unified system that promotes the continuous development of pedagogical competencies.

3. Structural and functional organization: the professional development system should be based on the cooperation of different educational institutions, which will create a set of educational services characterized by systematicity, consistency and continuity of educational programs for a smooth transition from one level of professional development to another.

Thus, the professional development of a teacher is a multifaceted process that includes both the development of professional skills and the improvement of personal qualities. This process reflects the dynamics of changes in the role of the teacher and his approaches to work. Continuous learning, sharing experiences and striving for improvement not only strengthen professional skills, but also increase the motivation, confidence and effectiveness of the teacher, which ultimately contributes to improving the quality of education and creating a successful educational environment for all participants in the process.

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С. Д. Муканова, О. А. Акифьева

## Мұғалімнің кәсіби дамуының заманауи тұжырымдамалары мен практикалық тәсілдері

Мақала халықаралық және қазақстандық зерттеулер негізінде мұғалімдердің кәсіби дамуының заманауи тұжырымдамалары мен тәсілдеріне арналған. Үздіксіз кәсіби оқығудың, ұжымдық дамудың және құзыреттілікке негізделген тәсілдің маныздылығына, сонымен қатар білім беру үдерісіне цифрлық технологияларды енгізуге баса назар аударған. Мұғалімдердің кәсіби дағдыларын дамытуға және тәжірибе алмасуға белсенді ықпал ететін кәсіби даму бағдарламалары, тәлімгерлік, коучинг және онлайн платформаларды пайдалану сияқты табысты тәжірибелер талқыланған. Қазақстанда кеңінен қолданылып жүрген *Lesson Study* әдістемесі мұғалімдердің педагогикалық шеберлігін арттыру мен

ынтымақтастықты дамытудың тиімді құралы ретінде ұсынылған. Мақалада Қазақстан Республикасының ұлттық бастамалары мен заңнамасының мұғалімдердің кәсіби біліктілігін арттыруға әсері, сондай-ақ оқыту үдерістерін ұйымдастыру мен қолдаудағы мемлекет пен білім беру мекемелерінің рөлі талданған. Мұғалімдермен жүргізілген сауалнама нәтижелері кәсіби дамуға деген жоғары қызығушылықты және біліктілікті арттыру жүйесіне дараланған тәсілдерді енгізу қажеттілігін растайды. Авторлар Қазақстандағы мұғалімдердің біліктілігін арттыру тәжірибесін жетілдіру бойынша ұсыныстарын білдірген.

*Кілт сөздер:* кәсіби даму, құзыреттілікке негізделген тәсіл, цифрландыру, инклюзивті білім беру, тәлімгерлік, коучинг, педагогикалық көшбасшылық, курстық жұмыс, үздіксіз оқыту.

С.Д. Муканова, О.А. Акифьева

## Современные концепции и практические подходы к профессиональному развитию учителей

Статья посвящена современным концепциям и подходам к профессиональному развитию учителей, основанным на международных и казахстанских исследованиях. В работе акцентируется внимание на значении непрерывного профессионального обучения, коллективного развития и компетентностного подхода, а также внедрения цифровых технологий в образовательный процесс. Рассмотрены успешные практики, такие как программы повышения квалификации, менторство, коучинг и использование онлайн-платформ, которые активно способствуют развитию профессиональных навыков учителей и обеспечивают обмен опытом. Методика Lesson Study, широко применяемая в Казахстане, представлена как эффективный инструмент повышения педагогического мастерства и совместного развития учителей. В статье изучено влияние национальных инициатив и законодательства Республики Казахстан на развитие профессиональных компетенций педагогов, а также роль государственных учреждений и образовательных организаций в поддержке процесса обучения. Особое внимание уделено актуальным проблемам и способам их преодоления. Результаты анкетирования педагогов свидетельствуют о высоком интересе к профессиональному росту и подтверждают необходимость интеграции индивидуализированных подходов в систему повышения квалификации. Авторами предложены рекомендации для совершенствования практик профессионального развития учителей в Казахстане.

*Ключевые слова:* профессиональное развитие, компетентностный подход, цифровизация, инклюзивное образование, менторство, коучинг, педагогическое лидерство, Lesson Study, непрерывное обучение.

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### Information about the authors

**Mukanova, S.D.** — Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Karaganda Buketov University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan, e-mail: [mukanova\\_s@mail.ru](mailto:mukanova_s@mail.ru), ORCID ID 0000-0002-9734-7574

**Akifyeva, O.A.** — Doctoral Student, Karaganda Buketov University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan, e-mail: [zam\\_23@bk.ru](mailto:zam_23@bk.ru), ORCID ID 000-0003-3473-7740