

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

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ABSTRACT

Teaching adults differs from teaching children, which also applies to teaching foreign languages. Teachers that teach adults, adult educators (AEs), especially in non-formal education programs (NFEPs), often find themselves teaching adults by chance. Some of them are teachers by training, but there are many experts in their field who do not have a teaching background (e.g. are translators). In Slovenia, there is a limited body of research exploring the perspective of AEs teaching foreign languages to adults in NEFPs towards their professional development. The objective of this study was to address this gap. We were interested in which competencies AEs want to develop, what hinders them in the pursuit of professional development, and what encourages them along the way. In the study, semi-structured interviews were carried out with a convenience sample of AEs of foreign languages in NFEPs. Qualitative data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The results of the study showed that AEs recognize the importance of their professional development. They agree their competences would be best developed in training courses where they could exchange experiences with other AEs working in a related field (e.g. those who teach foreign languages to adults). They believe access to training for professional development is mostly hindered by the limited time they can devote to training and training that is not adapted to their needs. Foreign language AEs in non-formal adult education emphasize the need for tailored, practical professional development, peer collaboration, institutional support, and adaptable teaching methods addressing adult learners' unique needs.

Keywords: *adult educators, foreign language, non-formal education, professional development, thematic analysis*

Introduction

Adult education relates closely to the concept of lifelong learning (LLL), which encapsulates different types of learning (formal, non-formal, informal) and promotes the idea that there is no maximum age for learning. Although there are multiple possible ways to define LLL (Jelenc, 2016), LLL is a concept that states that we learn in various situations throughout our lives. Its goal is to enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities for

personal development and ultimately offering people of all ages the possibilities to fulfil their potential (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning [UIL], n.d.). The approaches and methods used, as well as the skillset of adult educators (AEs) often differs from the approaches used in teaching children. Also, the settings in which adult education is performed may diverge from the regular school ones.

Adults in lifelong learning

Adult learners often turn to LLL to learn what they didn't have the opportunity to learn earlier in life, or to secure something better for themselves – a better job position, or lifestyle. Adult learners are a broad and diverse group that needs defining. One could say adults are people aged over 18 or 21 when reaching legal age. The Slovenian Adult Education Act (2018) defines adults as “*individuals who have completed their elementary school obligations and wish to acquire, update, expand, and deepen their knowledge*” (Article 2). The Act (2018) also states that anyone above age 15 may enrol in the Elementary school of adults (Article 8), which is why age 15 is sometimes taken as a reference age for adult learners. While choosing an official age for adulthood is difficult, adult learners have studying/learning traits that distinguish them from school children. Adults tend to be goal-oriented in their learning, reflecting on how and when to use acquired knowledge (Zavrl and Radovan, 2016). Their motivation to learn often connects to family, job, or adapting to life changes (Kump and Jelenc Krašovec, 2009). They bring past learning experiences (Cercione, 2008), developed personalities, fears, and concerns that influence their learning. They value classroom spirit (Letnar and Širok, 2014), come to socialize (Radovan, 2012), as well as to learn something new.

Non-formal adult education in Slovenia

Adult education in Slovenia is provided by various institutions, including high schools, universities, private institutions, and Adult Education Centers. Slovenia has 34 Adult Education Centers (Brezovec et al., 2023) offering programs for a wide range of adult learners. In addition to formal programs, they provide non-formal education aimed at developing competencies for improved work or life quality. Non-formal education, a cornerstone of LLL, differs from formal education in organization, classroom atmosphere, and certificates issued. It is typically carried out in form of workshops and courses of varying lengths (Zupanc Grom, 2013). Non-formal education is still planned and structured; mainly around content, goals, methods, and timelines (Hozjan, 2010). At least part of the content may be adapted to group needs (Zupanc Grom, 2013). AEs in non-formal education have more flexibility in curriculum, methods, and materials. Groups are smaller, and learners are usually motivated to participate and learn. Upon completion, adults receive certificates, which do not confer any degree (Hozjan, 2010; Zupanc Grom, 2013).

Non-formal education courses have fewer teaching restrictions, allowing institutions greater freedom in selecting AEs. They also cover a wide range of topics to meet adults' needs and interests, with foreign language courses being particularly popular.

Adults learning a foreign language

When learning a foreign language, adults may use different strategies than children. We often hear that it is best to start learning a language early. Muñoz (2010) explains that this idea originates from research focused on naturalistic language learning and has been overly generalized to foreign language learning, as more recent studies suggest this is only true if children are sufficiently exposed to the foreign language. Otherwise, the experience of schooling and learning in structured environments is considered an advantage for adults in learning a foreign language. Adults also draw from greater experience with their native language, which can sometimes aid them in acquiring a new language (Fujs, 2019). However, Deng and Zou (2016) highlight that adults' more developed personalities make potential limitations in learning more rigid than children's. Zavrl and Radovan (2016) note that younger learners have a better biological predisposition for language learning, but adults have certain advantages that enable them to successfully learn a foreign language. Adults possess a better understanding and knowledge of grammatical structures, the abstract thinking ability, they establish associations and connect experiences with language learning. The learning environment also plays a key role. Letnar and Širok (2014) emphasize the motivational importance of a pleasant classroom atmosphere and qualities such as kindness, professionalism, and resourcefulness in AEs. As no universal teaching method exists (Fekonja, 2016), AEs should consider adults' established learning strategies and their connection of new knowledge to personal and professional experiences (Miklič, 2018).

Therefore, AEs need a wide range of competencies, many of which may be developed through professional development. In fact, it is not uncommon for those teaching adults not to have a teaching background. AEs who teach adults are often professionals in a field, e.g. skilled translators, but have not learned how to teach in class. This creates unique challenges for AEs. They often teach diverse groups of adults varying in proficiency, motivations, and goals, demanding adaptability and creativity from AEs. To effectively meet these demands, continuous professional development is essential. Continuous professional development is crucial for providing strategies to enhance instruction, foster engagement, and address individual learner needs. Yet, AEs' training and professional development often receive little attention (Ioannou, 2023).

This article explores foreign language AEs' perspectives on professional development, examining the competencies they need, motivations for ongoing learning, and barriers they face. Given the limited literature on this topic in Slovenia, a qualitative study was conducted, using interviews analyzed with thematic analysis.

Methodology

Study design, study sample and setting

Due to the lack of research in this area, an exploratory approach to the data was used. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect the data and thematic analysis to analyze them. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample.

A convenience sample of foreign language teachers who teach adults in non-formal education programs was used in the study.

Qualitative data collection

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers via Zoom to facilitate the audio recording and later transcription of the interviews, as well as to facilitate scheduling an appropriate interview time. Interviews were transcribed with the help of the online tool Transkriptor (<https://transkriptor.com/>), later-on revised and corrected manually by the researcher. Interviews lasted 41 minutes on average. All interviews were carried out in the period of approximately two months in 2025.

The interview questions addressed the views of teachers on professional development; what hinders and facilitates it, who do they see as responsible for the professional development, which format of professional development they seek ... Part of the questions was aimed to shed light on the teachers' background. These data were left out of the qualitative analysis and used to describe the study sample.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an inductive approach to analysis, moving from description into interpretation and "*telling an overall story of the data*" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.21). After familiarising with the data by re-reading it multiple times, the researcher creates nodes (i. e. keywords) that carry a meaning in the data. Gradually, the researcher merges the nodes into codes or sub-themes and themes that encapsulate all the data and provide insight in them or tell a story that is more than a summary of the initial information provided by the data.

In the present study, the researcher first read the transcribed interviews multiple times to familiarise herself with the data and get a general idea about the topics expressed in the interviews. Afterwards, the researcher coded the citations and statements addressing the same topic into categories. The category was named according to the citations it contained. Step by step, the researchers coded all the citations; if a citation did not fit into any of the existing categories, she created a new category. The researcher went back and forth between the transcripts, the citations, and the categories, sometimes moving a citation from one category to another and renaming the categories to better describe the encapsulated citations. Coding was an iterative process.

Once the categories were established and all the citation from the transcripts were contained by one of the categories, the researcher proceeded to check whether the categories could be connected into broader themes. At the end of the data analysis phase themes, subthemes and their descriptions were created.

Results

Participant characteristics

The sample consisted of 4 female and 2 male teachers (see Table 1). All teachers taught adults in non-formal educational programs. Two of the interviewees were teachers as their primary profession, they taught in regular high schools, one of them was primarily

Table 1 Study participants

Participant characteristic	n of participants (N = 6)
Gender	
Female	4
Male	2
Field of study*	
English	3
French	2
German	2
Italian	2
Pedagogy	1
Spanish	1
Education program**	
Formal	2
Non-formal	6

*Note. It is common to combine study fields in several universities, especially when studying foreign languages/ translation.

**Note. Some teachers teach in different adult education programs.

employed in an administrative position, while three of the interviewed teachers were freelancers, working for different employers.

The teachers had between 2 and 30 years of teaching experience, with a median of 9.5 years (*IQR* = 15 years) of experience teaching adults. Two interviewees were teachers of Italian and English, one was a teacher of English and French, one a teacher of Spanish and French, and two taught German, although one of them also had a degree from pedagogy.

Thematic analysis

Two major themes emerged from the data, each with two subthemes, as shown in Table 2. The two main themes focus on the experiences AEs have teaching adults and how they can improve in their teaching.

Table 2 Themes and subthemes identified in interviews with key findings

Theme	Subtheme	Key findings
In a class-room of adult students (T1)	Professional(s) teachers (<i>sT1a</i>)	The AEs, initially inexperienced in adult education, faced fears, doubts, and lacked support. They discussed didactic methods they learned to use, they appreciate organisation (though they report a lack of it) and creativity the teacher role brings.
	Adult students are human, so am I (<i>sT1b</i>)	AEs recognize that adult students need different approaches compared to younger learners. They involve students in lessons, offer support and encourage them. AEs also emphasize the importance of creating a comfortable classroom environment, maintaining friendliness without crossing into friendship, and ensuring mutual respect.

Theme	Subtheme	Key findings
Learning to be better (T2)	Do and show (sT2a)	AEs learn through experience and prefer short, focused workshops that provide practical, concrete knowledge, reflecting their pragmatic approach.
	Motivated but supported (sT2b)	AEs acknowledge their responsibility to pursue future learning and express eagerness to grow. However, they desire more support, such as notifications and events tailored to their needs. They feel the investment, particularly in time, for current workshops often outweighs the benefits. Learning from peers in the same field is perceived as the most effective learning approach.

Note. T1 and T2: theme 1 and theme 2. sT1a: first subtheme of T1, sT1b: second subtheme of T1. sT2a: first subtheme of T2, sT2b: second subtheme of T2.

In a classroom of adult students (T1)

The theme In a classroom of adult students carries two subthemes. The first one, Professional(s) teachers, narrates about the beginnings of the AEs' careers.

Professional(s) teachers (sT1a)

Adult educators (AEs) pointed out that their initial classes were challenging due to their lack of teaching experience. Most had received little to no training in teaching methodologies, particularly for adult learners.

"And I had never even had any contact with teaching before, and the very first courses were something completely new." (INT 2)

"I have never attended a course on how to educate adults." (INT 3)

Teachers had doubts and had no one to turn to for help.

"So if I look at some of my beginnings, in the beginning, when I first got a job as a teacher in a language school, no one explained to me how to structure, say, an hour. There I was left to my own devices, although I had a mentor, whom I saw twice. I didn't get any feedback." (INT 1)

The interviewees had solid language skills but lacked information on how to pass them on to others. They are professionals who have developed into AEs almost by themselves.

The AEs shared insights into the didactic methods they use and how they familiarize themselves with technology. Overall, they felt they were good at teaching, based on the feedback they received from their students. They emphasized the importance of making a class dynamic, engaging students actively, and frequently varying their teaching methods:

"Yes, I think I am quite good with these didactic approaches, I make sure that I change different activities and never sit, for example, this is one such thing that you are active all the time." (INT 4)

AEs vary in their comfort level with technology. Although none of the interviewed AEs fear using it, some are more confident with it than others. Regardless they admit to the inevitable use of technology in their classrooms:

"I would absolutely say digital skills these days. It helps us teachers tremendously. But it's also related to adults; they're pretty much already involved in it. Definitely, the digital skills and the possibilities that all possible applications offer us today are a great help." (INT 6)

In the interviews, AEs spoke about the importance of organization and structure. Interestingly, they feel that they are not as structured as they think they should be, but at the same time they appreciate these qualities in other teachers.

"So that's one thing, for example, and consistency, which I can say for myself. I'm structured, I'm organized. Let's say I can be organized, but at the same time, I can admire this consistency in the work of some, that they are so consistent with filling out paperwork, with preparations, and I need a little more self-control." (INT 3)

While structure is important to AEs, they like teaching because it gives them the freedom to be creative and, especially in non-formal education, to be open to various methods.

"Because you can really be very creative, very independent in your work in a way that means a lot. Well, I can be very autonomous in teaching." (INT 5)

The second subtheme of T1 gives us information about how adult students act in a classroom and how AEs approach them.

Adult students are human, so am I (sT1b)

Adult students require a different approach to them, the AEs reported:

"At a higher level, some kind of politeness /.../. This kind of ... respectful attitude, especially with adults, you can't treat them like schoolchildren. These are grown people, formed persons. You should never interfere in sensitive areas of life." (INT 4)

AEs know their students bring also their past experiences in class; therefore, they try to include them in teaching and are careful not to discourage the students from participating in class with being too eager to correct their mistakes. They try to find a way to connect with them.

"So if they came to this course, they came voluntarily. So we conclude that they are interested in this culture, in this language, where it comes from, many travel /.../ Get close to them [the students], that they will be comfortable during the lessons. When you impart this knowledge of the language, to not do so with rigor..." (INT 6)

They realize that adults learn language in a different way than children do.

"Especially with adults, also grammar helps, because they usually need a certainty. It's not enough just to be. You talk and that they stay and that the language remains just some I'll say, like a mixture with no rules, just some string of phrases – that's not enough for them." (INT 2)

AEs understand that their students have a lot going on in their lives and are willing to take time to study, and they respect that. AEs try to be friendly, open and relaxed with their students, they feel this is what works best with adult students:

“What is really interesting is that those little things that we add. When I think I’m doing this, I see that the motivation goes up, not because they see, he’s [the teacher] interested, he cares that I know something. It’s not me who works all the time, I try to basically be there for them, but they’re responsible for making sure they learn something.” (INT 3)

However, AEs still expect and require some distance and respect from their students and may struggle to maintain an appropriate distance:

“I just act like a human being, like their friend. At the end of the day, I see the matter more like that, although at times it beats me because people don’t know how to set boundaries sometimes.” (INT 2)

Despite already being formed AEs, the interviewees discussed their perspectives on further education.

Learning to be better (T2)

In the interviews, AEs reflected on their professional development opportunities. They agreed that they learn best through straightforward, concrete activities. While they acknowledged that time constraints and financial challenges might limit their ability to pursue such opportunities, they felt it was primarily their responsibility to seek professional development. However, they emphasized the importance of receiving support in this endeavor.

Do and show (ST2a)

AEs and teachers in general are under a lot of time pressure and dislike being trapped in workshops where they feel they are wasting their time. They appreciate short workshops that convey practical knowledge that they are immediately being able to use:

“What I’m really interested in is concrete things that I can use. I am an operative and it seems to me that whatever I go to study, it makes sense and I can use it in my work. This is very important to me, which is why I am not attracted to certain theoretical matters.” (INT 5)

Some of them also expressed the feeling that something should change if they attend a course, that they should benefit from it in a significant way:

“That motivation, I think, we are usually pragmatists and we always weigh whether it is worth it or not. Well, because someone, for example, will see that if he does a good job with his method and it’s getting paid the same. This should be enough in a way, right?” (INT 2)

Finally, AEs sometimes feel they have to put a lot of extra work to understand and be able to use what they learned. Often, they have no one to turn to for help, when they encounter problems that they cannot solve.

Motivated, but supported (sT2b)

In interviews, AEs often referred to their motivation to learn:

“I’m one such very learning person, and I always think I don’t know enough. Some refinement is always welcome, because there’s always something new, and sometimes certain things that we learned years ago, but sometimes it’s good to look back a little bit again and say to yourself, oh, yes, I’ve not been in that direction for a while now /.../. One can’t rest on their laurels and do the same thing all the time. This also brings some new energy, some new knowledge into what you do every day.” (INT 5)

They are also willing to take the first steps if they feel they need improvement, or a certain skill set will ease their work:

“No one offered it [a certain course] to me. I wanted it, and I paid for it, which is quite expensive. Because I was truly interested in it, and I saw that there was a real need for it, and actually, it was very useful.” (INT 6)

And they feel it is imperative they act and play an active part in their professional development:

“Here I would say that it’s kind of shared, I can think that this is how the task of the institution is, to give some initiative, but also the teachers have to be engaged, that they want to. Now everything is free, if a lecture and discussion is organized, then there is no interest, then it is up to both of us. That’s how I see that responsibility.” (INT 1)

Despite recognizing the time and financial issues of attending workshops and similar activities, AEs put in the first place the lack of a proper support system in hindering their professional development.

“Now, in my opinion, if they see in this additional education, they don’t get anything concrete. So, if in return, I don’t know, or they don’t get any some promotion points or whatever, they are probably self-sufficient enough.” (INT 2)

They further develop their thoughts on how the existing reward system may fail to adequately reward all teachers as well as to reward what needs to be rewarded (new knowledge, higher quality of teaching etc.):

“The other obstacle is the scoring all of these projects, which in the end we all do for money, and I find it unfair in certain cases, that only the one who is the project promoter gets, let’s say, some points, but he has a team of people working hard for it in the background, and they don’t get anything. Here it seems to me that things are not going in the right direction and then people just prefer not to do

it. I see this a lot, even with colleagues, that it's not right. We all learn a lot from projects and these are valuable experiences, but those who participate must also be appropriately rewarded, because this is extra work and really, we teachers are very busy." (INT 5)

AEs agree the best way to learn is from competent others. They are eager to exchange experience with their colleagues, who must come from the same field (e.g. be language teachers themselves), who have experience working in the classroom and have ideas about how to solve concrete issues that arise in the classroom:

"Who knows how to give you some instructions on concrete examples, so that you can actually get help from lectures, because someone is just lecturing you on what would be nice and how it would be good and that they have no concrete experience of absolutely nothing." (INT 6)

At the same time, they encourage institutions to foster connections, giving them opportunities to meet other AEs in their field. In adult education, AEs often teach their scheduled hours and leave immediately after; they do not have a group of colleagues to discuss challenges or collaborate on solutions. Left largely to their own devices to find a way to work around what bothers them, they urge institutions to:

"Connect with each other and organize some congresses and meetings. I don't know, once one school would host someone else, let's say this one, maybe not so much formally, but to some informal association with sharing of experiences, workshops." (INT 3)

Peer collaboration was mentioned very often over the interviews.

Discussion

General

This study examined professional development of adult educators (AEs) who teach foreign languages to adults in non-formal education programs. Semi-structured interviews used to collect data were analyzed through thematic analysis. Two key themes emerged: the role of adult educators in classrooms and their need for professional growth and support.

AEs reported entering the profession with little prior knowledge about teaching adults, developing expertise through practice. They expressed a need for early-career mentorship and have since adapted various strategies, methods, and materials to meet students' needs, including fostering engagement, co-creating learning experiences, and addressing students' desire for structure and logic (Fekonja, 2016; Miklič, 2018; Zavrl and Radovan, 2016). Respecting students' experiences, teachers create a welcoming environment and focus on motivation over mastery by leaving room for mistakes and correcting them gently (Cercone, 2008; Letnar and Širok, 2014).

Professional development is important to AEs. They feel that the most important factor influencing their participation in professional development activities is the motivation of the AEs. If motivated, they will actively seek out opportunities and are willing to pay for them if they feel they will benefit from them. However, they define themselves as pragmatists, meaning they will attend a professional development activity if they see value in it. AEs have busy schedules with little time to spare and do not like wasting it on boring, overly theoretical courses led by academics with no classroom experience. They prefer concrete knowledge they can use immediately. Adult educators want to share experiences with colleagues in similar settings, compare methods, and solve specific issues. Because of time constraints, these activities should be short and repeated only a few times yearly. When learning a new skill, teachers want to see it in action, learn it on the spot, and understand how to implement it. They also feel they would benefit from technical support in the first weeks of applying what they have learned, in case they encounter problems.

Despite being motivated to pursue professional development, AEs do not feel supported in doing so. They see a major problem in recognizing the extra work they do – whether it's the effort they put into teaching or projects they undertake. AEs find little value in learning new methods or attending projects unless it significantly improves their teaching performance or includes additional pay. Their usual teaching receives excellent feedback from students who attend voluntarily, engage actively, and participate enthusiastically. This makes AEs question investing time and effort in activities without notable impact. They believe learning something that simplifies classroom tasks – like motivating adults, communicating effectively, or structuring lessons – would be worthwhile, especially during early stages of their teaching careers. AEs feel that learning new skills or integrating tools like digital classrooms or educational videos demands considerable extra time. Time pressure seems to be the most significant factor hindering participation in professional development. Educators also highlight an uneven evaluation system; team members involved in projects do extra work without earning promotion-related points. Generally, AEs feel professional development requires more investment than it delivers. Yet, they remain curious and eager to learn new things, maintaining a practical approach to their work.

Finally, AEs see the role of institutions as bringing teachers together by providing a place and time for them to meet. They feel that there is a general lack of events tailored to the needs of AEs, especially if they are language professionals who do not teach in regular schools. They would like the institutions they work with to be willing to (partially) fund the workshops they attend, as some of them may be pricy. AEs are eager to learn from others in their field and encourage institutions to network more, to organize useful events and to let AEs know about them.

Strengths and weaknesses

First, despite the data repeating themselves over the course of the interviews, which means data saturation was achieved the sample of teachers is relatively small. Secondly, all the interviewees were language teachers, which limits the possibility to generalize

the findings to all AEs. The predominant teaching experience was related to teaching in non-formal programs, usually attended by adults motivated to learn the chosen language, which may influence the teacher's classroom work and affect their professional development needs. Finally, all the interviewed AEs teach in the same adult education center, and all of them teach multiple groups in multiple jobs, therefore it might be reasonable to assume that there are underlying similarities between the teachers that influence their perspectives. This study sought to raise questions rather than provide definitive answers, yet some suggestions are proposed in the next section.

Implications for further research, practice and policies

More educational activities are needed to equip adult educators (AEs) especially at the beginning of their careers with the skills to navigate the classroom – how to engage students, interact with them, and explain concepts effectively. Integrating these topics into regular teacher training programs at universities could be a valuable step forward. When designing professional development activities, they should be practical and focus on specific, concrete topics with clear instructions on applying the knowledge in the classroom. Organizing (non)formal gatherings where AEs can exchange experiences, provide support, and offer suggestions to one another would be an excellent practice. Tailoring professional development to specific needs AEs have is essential.

All activities must remain short to respect AEs' time. Accessibility is crucial, requiring affordable prices for AEs employed in schools and freelancers alike. Additionally, a fair reward system is necessary. While teachers in schools earn career advancement points for attending workshops, the current system ties these points to workshop length. AEs prefer short, concise workshops with immediate benefits and consider lengthy seminars a waste of time if they fail to significantly enhance their performance. AEs also believe that participating in projects should be rewarded equally, as the current system only credits project leaders. Other team members face extra work to carry out the projects while handling their regular tasks, often without recognition or bonuses. This issue poses a challenge for schools and adult education centers to address.

Finally, AEs would benefit from extended support after professional development workshops. Such support would allow them to apply their learning in practice, seek guidance when needed, and navigate their learning process more effectively.

Conclusion

This study focused on perspectives of foreign language educators in non-formal education programs (NFEPs) for adults. Adult educators value professional development but feel unsupported, lacking events tailored to their specific needs and an adequate reward system. They prefer short, practical workshops and feel the best way to learn is from colleagues working in similar fields, while dislike theory-focused, time-consuming activities. Educators prioritize staying connected to the language they teach and fostering respect and encouragement in their learners, focusing on engagement. They recognize

adult learners' unique needs, incorporate their experiences, and utilize diverse teaching methods, including the increasing use of technology. Few educators had prior training in teaching adults, highlighting the need for early-career training and mentorship. They see future adult educators as requiring strong technology proficiency, communication, and soft skills. Institutions that offer NFEPs for adults are viewed as crucial for organizing events to facilitate experience-sharing among educators.

Despite the rather small convenience sample, the study results offer a valid starting point for both future research and the changes needed to happen on a systemic level.

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