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SEL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EFL TEACHERS: EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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Abstract. Drawing on the theoretical framework and empirical findings of the research on SEL-based EFL teacher professional development, this paper formulates a set of evidence-based practical recommendations for educational practitioners, teacher educators, and policymakers in Uzbekistan. The recommendations are organised across four levels: individual teacher, programme design, institutional, and policy.

Keywords: practical recommendations, SEL professional development, EFL teacher training, educational policy, teacher well-being, Uzbekistan education reform.

The translation of research findings into actionable practice is a defining obligation of applied pedagogical science. The present paper synthesises the theoretical and empirical insights generated by the research programme on SEL-based EFL teacher professional development into a structured set of practical recommendations directed at four distinct levels of the educational system: the individual teacher, the professional development programme designer, the school or institutional leader, and the educational policymaker.

At the level of the individual EFL teacher, the evidence supports three primary recommendations. First, teachers are encouraged to cultivate structured habits of reflective practice — including regular journal writing, peer observation partnerships, and engagement with professional learning communities — as foundational strategies for developing SEL self-awareness and self-management competencies. Second, teachers should actively seek out professional development opportunities that address the emotional and relational dimensions of EFL instruction, rather than limiting their continuing education to linguistic and methodological content. Third, teachers experiencing significant occupational stress or burnout — conditions that significantly compromise SEL competency expression — should be supported in accessing appropriate well-being resources and should be encouraged to view self-care as a professional rather than merely personal responsibility.

At the programme design level, the research findings suggest several concrete implications. SEL competency development should be explicitly embedded in the learning outcomes, instructional design, and assessment frameworks of EFL teacher preparation and in-service development programmes, rather than treated as an incidental or supplementary concern. Programme duration and intensity matter: short, one-off training events are insufficient to produce lasting SEL competency development; programmes of at least 12–16 weeks' duration, combining structured instruction with reflective practice and peer collaboration, are recommended. Assessment of SEL-related competencies should employ multi-method approaches — combining self-report measures, peer observation ratings, and portfolio evidence — to capture the multidimensional and process-oriented nature of SEL development.

At the institutional level, school leaders and university administrators play a crucial enabling role in SEL-based professional development. Institutions are recommended to establish formal Professional Learning Community structures that provide regular, protected time for collaborative reflection on the emotional and relational dimensions of teaching practice. Institutional cultures should actively normalise the discussion of teachers' emotional experiences — including stress, uncertainty, and interpersonal conflict — as legitimate professional topics rather than signs of professional inadequacy. SEL-oriented

mentoring programmes, in which experienced teachers with demonstrated SEL competency support the development of novice colleagues, represent a high-impact institutional investment.

Table 1. Summary of Evidence-Based Recommendations by System Level

System Level	Key Recommendations
Individual Teacher	Reflective journaling; peer observation partnerships; active pursuit of SEL-focused CPD; professional self-care
Programme Designer	Explicit SEL outcomes in curricula; 12–16 week minimum programme duration; multi-method SEL assessment
Institutional Leader	Professional Learning Communities; emotionally safe professional culture; SEL mentoring programmes
Policymaker	National CPD standards incorporating SEL; SEL in teacher certification frameworks; targeted funding for SEL research

Compiled by the author based on research findings and CASEL (2020), Darling-Hammond et al. (2017)

At the policy level, the research findings support a number of systemic recommendations for educational authorities in Uzbekistan. The national framework for continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers should be revised to explicitly include SEL competency domains alongside traditional pedagogical and subject-knowledge requirements. EFL teacher certification and recertification processes should incorporate assessment of SEL competencies as a recognised dimension of professional qualification. Targeted research funding should be directed towards longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of SEL-based teacher development on student language learning outcomes in the Uzbek educational context.

In conclusion, the recommendations presented across these four levels are most powerful when implemented in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing manner. Isolated interventions at any single level are unlikely to produce sustainable system-wide change. The transformation of EFL teacher professional development in Uzbekistan towards a genuinely SEL-integrated paradigm requires coherent action across individual, programme, institutional, and policy levels — guided by a shared commitment to the holistic professional flourishing of teachers as the foundation of educational quality.

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