

# Factors Influencing Didactic Competency Development in Polish English Teachers: Analysis of Veteran Educators' Experiences

Inga Maria Smoleń

Doctoral School of Social Sciences, University of Warsaw, Poland

## Abstract:

- This study investigates factors influencing the development of didactic competencies among English language teachers in Poland, focusing on veteran educators (n=143).
- Survey results highlight the critical role of mentoring, professional development programs, and resource accessibility in fostering effective teaching practices. The findings offer actionable recommendations for enhancing professional support for novice teachers.
- This research is part of a broader doctoral project examining methods for developing didactic competencies among English language teachers in Poland, particularly those teaching in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) contexts.

## Methodology:

- The research was designed within a quantitative paradigm and aimed to gather structured data from experienced English teachers to understand their perspectives on effective developmental practices and resources. This approach aligns with the study's main research question:
- Through a quantitative research approach, the study analyzes in-depth survey responses and open-ended comments to uncover patterns in teachers' experiences.

## Tools:

Google Forms, designed to collect quantitative data in October and November 2024.

## Research Questions:

### Main Research Question:

What factors influence the development of didactic competencies among English language teachers in Poland?

### Specific Research Questions:

Q1 - What forms of professional support are most commonly utilized by English teachers at the beginning of their careers?

Q2 - According to teachers with varying levels of experience, what factors have the greatest impact on the development of their didactic competencies?

Q3 - What barriers do English teachers encounter in the development of their didactic competencies during their initial years of teaching?

Q4 - What forms of support do experienced English teachers recommend for young teachers to enhance the effective development of their didactic competencies?

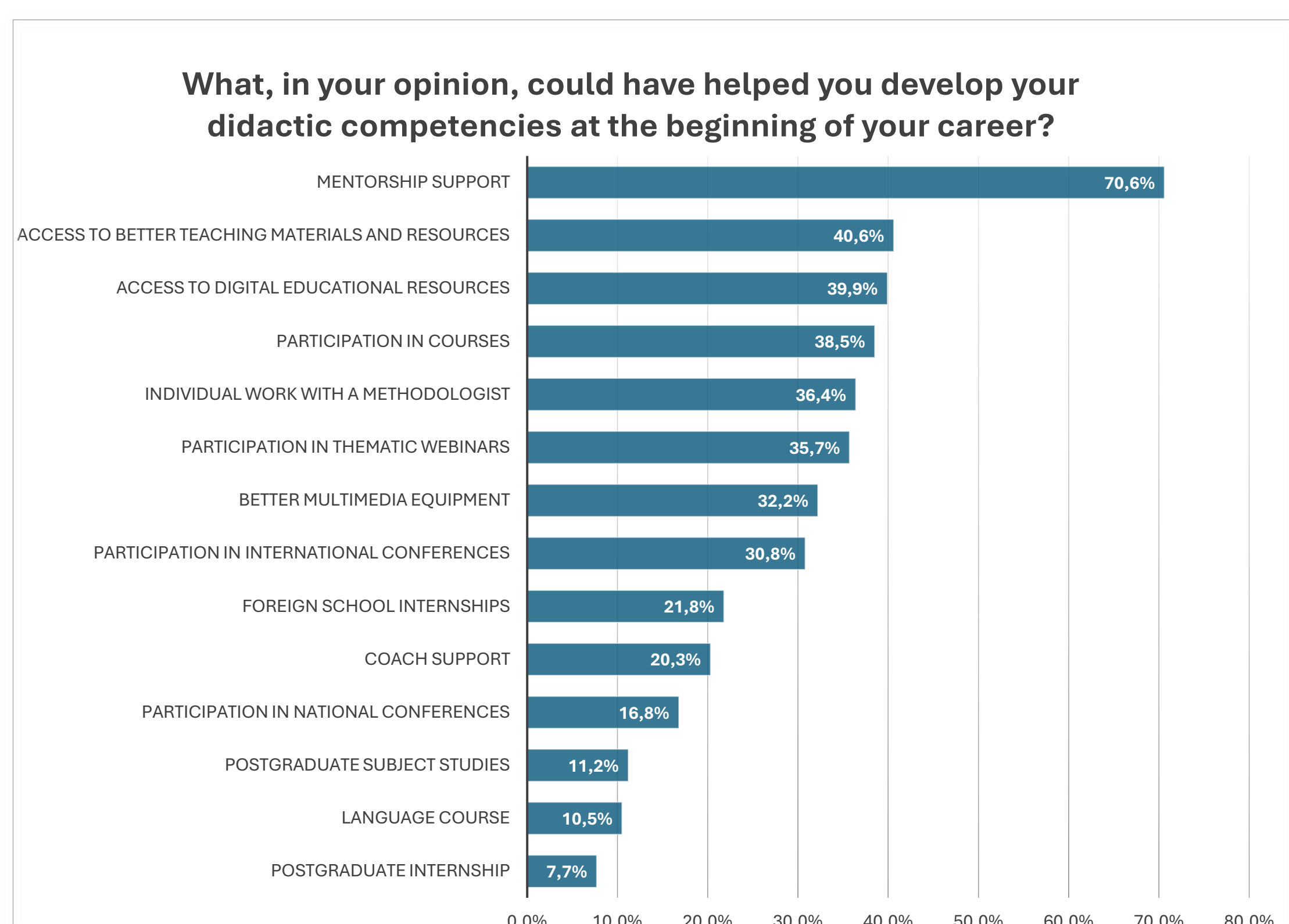
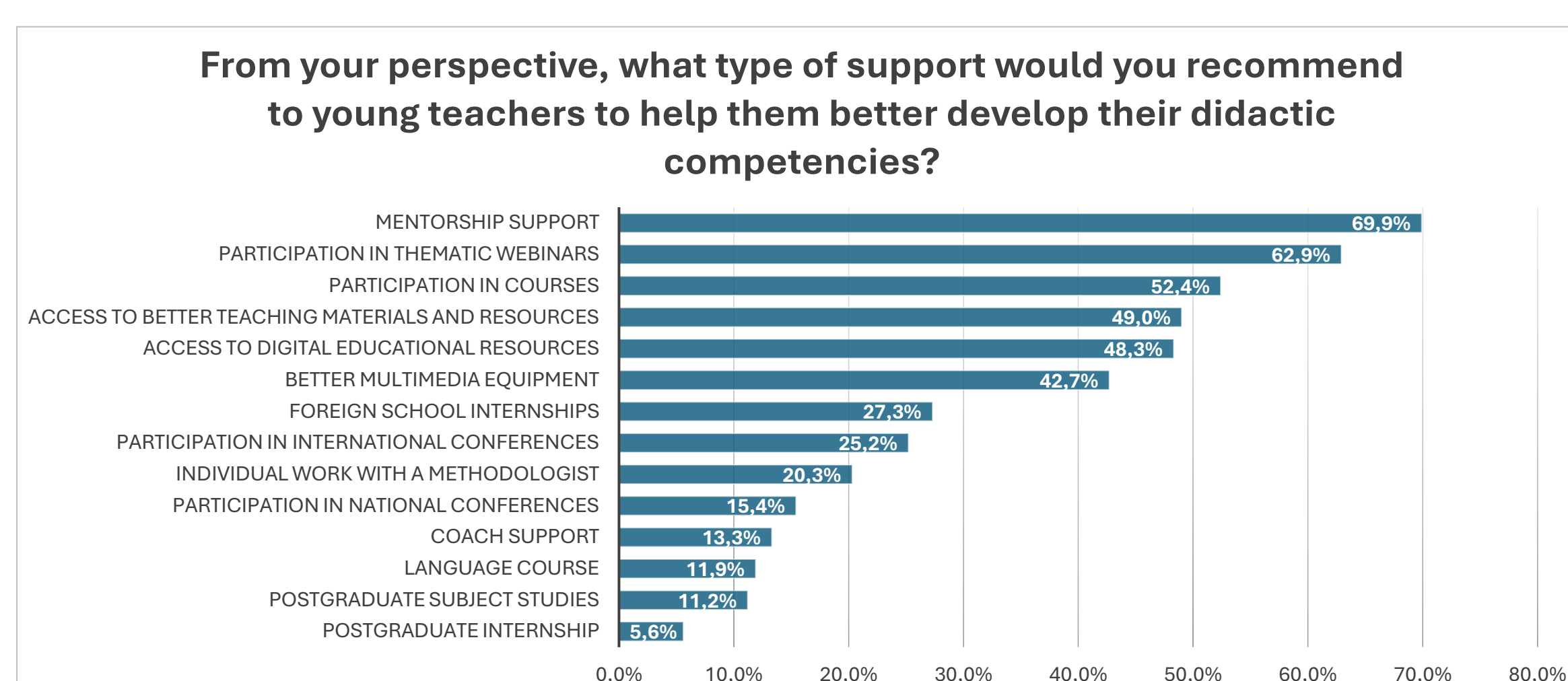
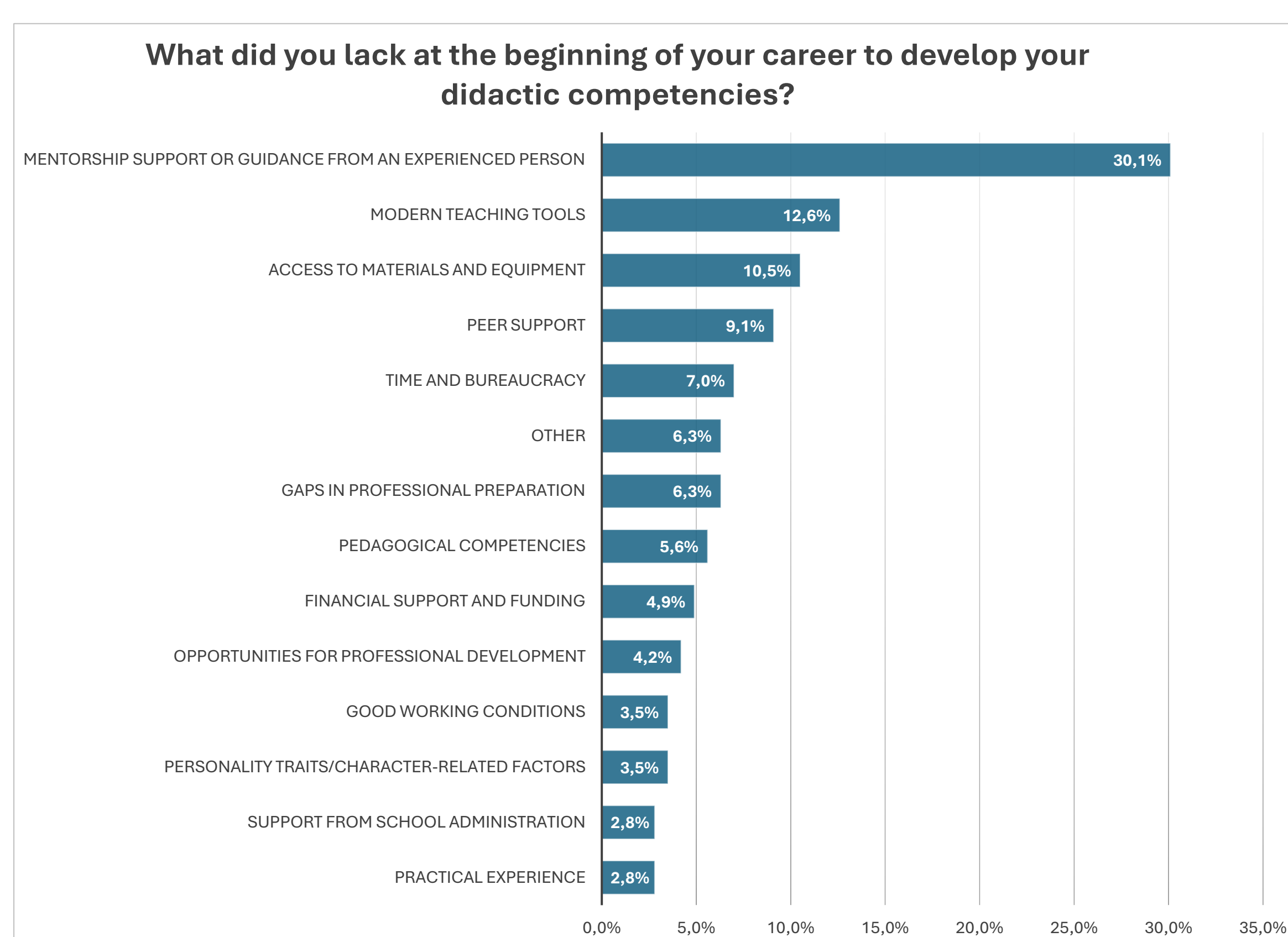
## Findings:

•**Mentorship:** Over 70% of participants prioritized mentoring as critical for developing teaching skills, highlighting its significant impact on professional growth.

•**Professional Development:** Teachers valued workshops, webinars, and courses but emphasized the need for continuous, practical programs over isolated sessions.

•**Barriers:** Challenges included insufficient mentoring, lack of digital tools and teaching materials, and limited institutional support.

•**Gaps in Support:** Collaborative practices and access to international training were undervalued and underprovided despite their potential benefits.



## Discussion

The findings confirm the pivotal role of mentorship in supporting early-career English teachers, addressing gaps in preparation, and fostering growth. Short-term PD initiatives are limited in their effectiveness without sustained follow-up. Systemic barriers, such as inadequate collaboration and resource constraints, hinder teacher development.

## Conclusion

Systemic reforms are essential to improve English language teaching in Poland:

1. Establish robust mentorship programs.
2. Foster collaboration through peer observations and joint lesson planning.
3. Ensure equitable access to digital tools and advanced training.
4. Prioritize ongoing, practical PD initiatives.

These steps can empower teachers, improve teaching quality, enhance student outcomes.

