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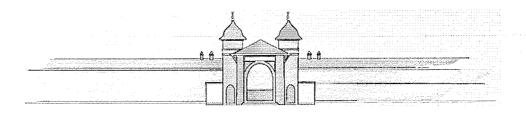
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SELF-EVALUATION IN PRE-SCHOOL - SITUATION, CHALLENGES

Snezana Jovanova-Mitkovska¹

Abstract

The quality of the work of pre-schools largely depends on the key actors - practitioners in the Child-care Institution (educators, professional associates). Integral mechanism that contributes to improving the quality of Child-care Institution is self-evaluation, which leads practitioners to understand, modify and develop their own practice. Providing the best stimulate environment for learning and development, fostering a holistic approach, providing a quality education is the primary goal of self-evaluation. How much and how it is practiced by practitioners, what are the obstacles encountered in its realization, what are the recommendations for its improvement are the key issues that we tried to answer in this paper.

Here we present the results from a survey conducted with 115 respondent practitioners (educators, professional associates) in several Child-care Institution in Stip, Sveti Nikole, Radovish, Kocani, related with the subject of self-evaluation, the way how to make it, the steps and activities through which it passes, participants, commonly applied techniques and instruments for self-evaluation, problems and difficulties encountered in the process, gained experiences, challenges, and suggestions for its improvement.

Keywords: self-reflection, child-care Institution, educators, professional associates

INTRODUCTION

Preschool period is the period of most intensive child/man development, period of turbulent quantitative and qualitative changes, period which is characterized by the so-called biological deficit, vulnerability, sensitivity, flexibility, self-centeredness, a natural inclination toward the game, period of investigation, curiosity, search, during which the child develops, socialize, develop and improve their motor skills, speech, adopting elements of logical thinking, acquire basic hygiene, organizational and work habits, period in which child acquire experience and acquire elementary knowledge for life and environment, period in which child learn and easily perceived impacts (most acceptable) of adults and of the environment where they live.

The family is the first social environment that really has a big impact on the child development. But, even the best organized family cannot fully satisfy all the desires and needs of the child which resulting from his nature. Preschool education, in fact, its institutional form (child institution, kindergarten) and everything what they offer, enable to satisfying the numerous children needs, everything, what cannot achieve a family environment, and above all the need to continuously and fully pedagogical and educational activities.

Preschool education is an integral part of the organized system of education, and with other subsystems makes a coherent whole. It is intended for children from birth to start to the primary school. In R. Macedonia pre-school educational system includes children from aged 7-8 d months until starting school 5.8 years.

The same represents "a conscious, directed toward the goal, more or less organized process focused on the development of individuality and sociability of preschool children, socially determined and individually marked with a system of activities and processes that affect the overall formation of the child's date until they start school", or "formative process in which actualized child physical and mental potential, encourage and diversified the positive tendencies that are expressed in its development, meet the children's needs as a source of various opportunities, and create conditions for better and more successful expression and using these opportunities to achieve a higher level in skills, expanding and improving the experience, building the will and character features and attitudes, elevate the child emotions and behaviors, and establishing and developing positive traits of his personality in terms of physical and sensory, emotional-social development". (Kamenov, 1995: 4)

In these determinations of organized preschool educational system, clearly looms the goal of preschool education which is toward to allow healthy and happy childhood for the youngest generation and to contribute for their normal physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic development, to provide to them conditions for the development of their potentials and for acquisition of basic knowledge about the world that surrounds them.

The basic premise on which is based the organized preschool system in most European countries, the last few years are:

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- O Holistic approach-each child is solely and entirely creature, so it is needed a necessary integration of all separate aspects that will lead the child to constructed its own knowledge through the experience of one coherent and comprehensive manner;
 - o Approach which understand full orientation toward the child, toward their development;
- O The child is at the center of education and upbringing, which in turn implies a clear determinations of the anticipated results, as the nurturing of new philosophy of education in which the focus of education is not on the lecturing, teaching, but on the learning process. Creating programs considering the so-called child curriculum, curriculum oriented towards children, in which we have in mind developmental characteristic, child interest, his personality, his experience, his natural curiosity, the way in which child learns, acquire findings, the way in which he/she establishes interaction, communication."
- O Dynamism and developmental taking into mind the famous saying "Everything flows everything changes", taking into account contemporary knowledge of child development, child learning, child understanding of the world, child potentials and capacities for learning, and on that base create a programs in real contexts and on that basis the determination of the manner of teaching.
- O Tendency to constantly evaluate and self critical examination of their own practice as a step toward changing, upgrading, innovation, improvement.

The last premise-evaluation, self-evaluation is in the focus of interest in the last few years of the people from educational field who work on advancement, modernization, innovation of teaching practice.

What is evaluation, self-evaluation?

Actually, there are two complementary processes, each other complement, each other permeating, and they are directed toward to the advancement, innovation of teaching practice. The evaluation is increasingly seen as a mechanism for developing and promoting responsibility practice and is performed by the persons who is in or outside of institution whose activities or separate aspects of the activities is evaluate.

When we talk about educational sphere, more specifically for educational institutions-kindergarten, the goal of the evaluation process is to achieve higher standards to improve the work of the institution, to increase quality, to identify development needs, to improve planning, improve practice, to improve the quality of work of the educators and other professionals, children higher achievement.

Self-evaluation usually refers to the systematic, continuous monitoring, analysis, evaluation, assessment of own achievements, own work, achieved results, or, the "notion of self-evaluation refers to the assessment of individual work, group of people or of the whole organization by themselves, it relates to readiness for critical review of own work and operations and continually question concerning referral of questions on himself for own work" (Zivkovič, 2009);

Self-evaluation is a continuous systematic process that allows the individual teacher to constantly critical review of his works, allowing the teacher to assess their own skills and expertise, and on this base to take measures for his improvement, to create plans for future professional and career development; to recognize the achievements of children and review what can still be done towards higher achievements; provides information for future practice based on identifying what is good, and what is disadvantages, and based on that creating a plan in accordance with the previously set priorities for development; allows the teacher to take measures that will lead to creating a safe and stimulating environment for learning, creating an environment in which there are opportunities for successful interaction and communication, creating an environment that will promote learning, not the teaching and lecturing.

Without self-evaluation cannot get a glimpse of what we have achieved, which should continue to go, what to take. The critical approach to practice, openness for a review (the way you work, the way on which children understand their needs ...) as well as the willingness to undertake and accept change, are essential elements of the process of self-evaluation, whose ultimate objective is the achievement of quality education.

The implementation of the process of self-evaluation also passes through several stages. The first step is determination of the area of self-evaluation; defining the objectives, determination of the basic framework of self-evaluation; clearly defining, specifying organizational, methodological and technical aspects of self-evaluation; identifying participants, implementers of the process, determining their competence, professionalism in the educational process; determination of the timeline for the implementation of the process of self-evaluation.

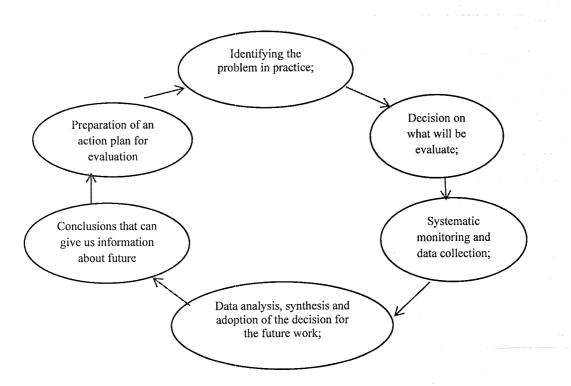
The process of self-evaluation is implemented by the participants in the educational process, parents, educators / teachers, professionals, means all those who are interested in promoting the work of a concrete educational institution.

In kindergarten, self-evaluation is usually carried out by the teacher, it is a daily teacher's job, with which teacher takes a critical review and assessment of all stages of the process and on the basis of that results taking appropriate actions.

The successful implementation of the self-evaluation process largely depends of methodical and methodological teacher's abilities, his skills in identifying problems and finding out the possibilities and ways for their overcoming, of his abilities for the application of appropriate procedures, techniques and tools, abilities for collating and processing, data analysis and extraction of concrete conclusions.

The process of evaluation and self-evaluation resembles of the process of research, mostly resembles of the socalled action research, cyclic process of researching, study passing, which passes through several stages as follows:

- o Identifying the problem in practice;
- o Decision on what will be evaluate;
- o Preparation of an action plan for evaluation;
- o Systematic monitoring and data collection;
- O Data analysis, synthesis and adoption of the decision for the future work;
- o Conclusions that can give us information about future planning.



Schemes: Cyclic process of self-evaluation

In that sense, people who perform the process of evaluation and self-evaluation should be familiar with the specifics of the research process, and also to possess specific knowledge about techniques and instruments that will be used in the process of self-evaluation, which serves to aid in the achievements of set of goals. Evaluation and self - evaluations always denote application of objective, accurate and appropriate instruments. Namely, without developed theoretical and methodological basis cannot even imagine realization of the process of evaluation and self-evaluation.

But what happens in practice? Whether and how to apply the process of evaluation, self-evaluation? Who realized it? What is usually the subject of self-evaluation? Which are the obstacles that are encountered in its implementation? What are the recommendations for its advancement? ...

METHODOLOGY

To the response of the set questions we came with the realization of micro research which has conducted in R. Macedonia, more specifically, we realized survey in which we include practitioners (teachers, professional) from several preschool institutions of Eastern Macedonia (Stip, Radoviš and Sv Nikole, Kocani). The objective of the survey was to obtain qualitative and quantitative information about the implementation of the process of self-evaluation in preschool institutions... In the survey, has been used questionnaire composed for this study, which includes 14 issues of open and closed type. Processing of the results are used SPSS and Interim Analysis.

RESULTS

The sample was made of 115 subjects whose structure we can mention at the figure 1..

Figure 1. Sample structure according to experience



Of them, 30% have work experience of 0-10 years, 32% have work experience of 11-20 years and 34% have work experience of 21-30 years and 4% have more experience of 31 years. This means that the experienced teachers during their experience in practice used the process of self-evaluation as a way to enhance the educational practice.

The questions in the questionnaire may be divided into several parts: questions relating to identification, definition of self-evaluation by educators and the possibility of its application in practice, in their daily work, as well as identifying the objectives of self-evaluation, the questions about implementation of the process of self-evaluation in preschool institution, questions about techniques and instruments which are used in the process of self-evaluation and obstacles in its realization.

Regarding this first set of questions from the questionnaire responses received from the following respondents:

- 1. Application of the self-evaluation in their daily work 88% of respondents used the process of self-evaluation in their daily work, while 12% do not apply it. On the further question: Why the process of self-evaluation is not applicable as reasons which they cited: lack of time, too many children in classroom, excessive workload, ignorance, etc.
- 2. In the identification of this term, qualitative responses of respondents generally boil down to this:
- O Something that we apply in our everyday work, and on that basis we derive conclusions about the success or failure in our work;
 - o A process that leads to the development and improvement of our practice;
- O A process that leads us to the answer of the question where we are, what we can change, on what we should devote more attention, a process that leads our institution to be success

Based on these identifications, notions of self-evaluation we can draw the conclusion that educators perceive processional of self-evaluation, and self-evaluation is not something that starts and runs just once, but involves constant activity by educators conducive to growth and development practice.

Educators identify the objective of self-evaluation. And here, the answers could be divided into several categories:

- The objective of self-evaluation is getting to a better education for children;
- o The objective of self-evaluation is to review and improve their own practice;
- o The objective of self-evaluation is to contribute to the development of the institution;

O The objective of self-evaluation is a personal and professional career development and development of community who learn development of kindergarten.

Based on these notions can be carried out the conclusion that educators have a clear objective which must be achieved by the realization of the process of self-evaluation.

The second set of questions concerned the implementation of the process of self-evaluation in preschool institution.

Namely, from the educators are looking answers about whether self-evaluation is an integral part in the annual development plans of the institution, the stages through which passes the process self-evaluation, which is the subject of self-evaluation, the existence of teams of self-evaluation in the institution.

- 85% of respondents answered that the self-evaluation is an integral part of annual development plans of the institution. For 15% of the educators the self-evaluation is an integral part of their operational plans. At the statements of educators feels a need for interventions in direction of further education, which objective would be familiarization with the structural elements or the annual development plans of the institution, as well as their abilities of the preparation of the same.
- 2. All educators have agreed with the fact that self-evaluation is a cyclical process that passes through several phases: observation, analysis, assessment, taking action.
- 3 As a subject of self-evaluation, educators identify: their activities and the activities of the children and on that basis they make any assessment of their own work and work of its improvement, innovation. Insignificant number of them, eight educators believes that self-evaluation should cover all activities of the institution. These determinations will also go in favor of the need for additional intervention-education of educators.
- 4 As to the existence of team of self-evaluation, team who lead and initiate activities for self-evaluation, 72% of respondents believe that such a team exists, while 28% not familiar with the existence of such team and if there is, it should be constitute by: the principal, counselor, musical collaborator, social worker and managers of the different objects, components of kindergarten.

The third set of issues concerns the techniques and instruments used in the process of self-evaluation, questions about with who cooperate in the implementation of self-evaluation and, what are the obstacles faced by educators?

- 1. As a tool for self-evaluation, educators often use protocols and diaries, and occasionally some of them apply the check list.
- 2. In the realization of the process of self—evaluation educator commonly collaborate with the director and pedagogue.
 - 3. As an obstacle to achieving the process of self-evaluation, educators emphasize the lack of specific literature in this area.
 - 4. To overcome the obstacle they cited:
 - o Appropriate literature, newsletters, and manuals;
- o Education, training, ongoing exchange of information with colleagues from institutions in the same, the institutions from other cities in the Republic Macedonia and beyond;
 - o Cooperation with the teaching staff by teacher's faculties.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the theoretical discussion of this problem and empirical data to which we have come on the basis of research in which he applied the technique surveys lead to the following conclusions: The questions that we set at the beginning of the paper, and during the research, found their answers in theoretical debates and in the results of the realized research.

The conclusion of this research should not be accepted as categorical, because the results concerning to the specific sample in a specific time period... However, they should be taken into account because they lead to highlighting the need for change in the daily practice of educators, its improvement. 4 Educators clearly identify the process of self-evaluation, the constitutive elements of this process, understand its processuality.

- 5 Based on the results clearly are identifying obstacles, barriers encountered in the process of realization of self-evaluation: lack of time, too many children in classroom, excessive workload, ignorance and lack of appropriate key literature.
- 6 The results of survey also identify areas for intervention further education of educators through various forms (seminars, symposia, workshops etc.), the exchange of experiences among colleagues not only in the Republic of Macedonia, but wider at Balkan region, Europe, collaboration with staff from the faculties of teacher education, necessary literature in this area.

At the end

"Self-evaluation cannot learn until you start to practice." (Radulovic, L., Miskeljin, L., 2013).

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