

# ON THE ROAD

TO QUALITY











## Editorial

*We are approaching the finish line with the theme of school self-evaluation. The fifth issue of the newsletter is devoted to the final stage of the self-evaluation process in which the self-evaluation report is created.*

- In the **Mainline** we contemplate together the meaning and function of self-evaluation report, the process of its formation and its structure.
- **Lookout Tower** answers the question of to whom and how to communicate what we have actually found out. It assures us that it is perfectly legitimate if the school keeps a lot of information just for itself, while still working with them.
- In the **Intersection of Views** we asked two heads of primary schools about their experience in creating school self-evaluation reports. In both cases, the original people's approach to self-evaluation as a legal obligation has turned into the understanding of the importance of evaluation for school development.
- **Legislation Stop** acquaints us with the changes after the adoption of the amendment to the Education Act. The obligation for schools to perform self-assessment remains valid but they can determine the cycle and structure themselves.
- **Hitchhiker's Guide** will show us ways to ascertain the climate of a school or class. It presents questionnaires for teachers, pupils and parents, examples of which are also listed in the Appendix to this issue.
- The **Safe Passage** column explains the concept of school culture, its development and characteristics.
- **Oasis** captured, to whom the children turn with a big trouble or success. It is parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, sometimes even a teacher – the hierarchy, of course, varies with the age.
- **Meeting on the Road** takes us to a working group of the project that drew up Recommendations for the Provider concerning the evaluation of schools and shows the possibilities of using this document in, for example, educating representatives.
- **Travel Diary** presents an example of school self-evaluation, this time from primary art schools.
- **Journey around the World** takes us to England and Wales and presents us with experience of evaluation of schools in a decentralized school system.
- In the **Filling Station** we will find all sorts of interesting things, including the dates of the final regional conferences of the project. We will learn about what we can base our decisions on when choosing evaluation instruments. The evaluation tools are accompanied with manuals within the project - we will learn about what we find in there. This and other information on the outcomes of the project were summarized at the final national conference in Prague - read about it. The column also includes information on an explanatory dictionary of terms relating to quality assurance and evaluation in education. It also draws your attention to an interesting publication about the work of experienced teachers and to a magazine that extensively deals with communication in the school.
- **Tips for the Journey**, as usual, acquaint us with what is already available for schools in the project and what is in the store left for us.

We believe that we have once again contributed with new arguments to your alignment with the self-evaluation process.

A lot of motivation from reading, wishes  
Jana Hrubá, editor in chief

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In previous issues of this bulletin, you already had the opportunity to gradually learn about the specifics of the individual stages of the evaluation process undertaken in the school. Today, we will focus in more detail on the final phase, in which the self-evaluation report is created<sup>1</sup>. People who are closely associated with the implementation of self-evaluation in schools may have different views on its creation, which is also evidenced by the following statements: „The evaluation has given us so much work and taken so much time and moreover we had to teach at the same time, aiming for an individual approach to pupils, communication with parents, with the management and partners of the school, while being dedicated to projects ... We do not have time or energy to create some reports about what we did ... after all, we do remember everything we need... More paperwork... What is it for, anyway? And can it not be written by the head - they know best what to put there ...“ The purpose of the presented text is not to convince you of the necessity of creating more and more documents, folders, archives in relation to school self-evaluation. Rather, I would like to highlight the importance of the reporting in the evaluation process, and in this context to point out some of its aspects that can significantly enhance (and weaken) the position of evaluation in the school, or another organization.

# Self-evaluation report: necessity, or unnecessary paperwork?

In general terms, a report means an event notification, passing of information, communication of something new. A self-evaluation report is then linked to events in the relevant processes and tells us what has happened and what the results are of evaluation activities in the school (the report evaluates in terms of achieving goals, etc.). Processing of the report results from the need to complete the self-evaluation cycle initiated. In terms of management of the school as a specific organization, the self-evaluation report is a document that provides a current answer to the question: How is our school doing? - while creating a well-founded support for consideration: Where do we go, where do we want to move? The fundamental starting point for how to view<sup>2</sup> the making of a report of implemented self-evaluation in a particular school is the knowledge (acknowledgement) of the reason WHY self-evaluation is actually implemented in the school. In order to meet legislative requirements? Because the pupils, their parents, teachers are interested in the performance of the school? Because the school needs to find new impetuses for further work? Etc. The answer then determines what roles the self-evaluation report can play in the school. - It can:

- become a demonstrable milestone in the work of the school, or just of some people (it allows to clearly separate how they worked „before“ and „after“ a certain time)
- primarily serve to and set up a further career as well as personal development of both the evaluators and creators of the report (after all, structuring ideas, seeking priorities and then communicating them is not a matter of course for many of us)
- become an important tool for explanation and justification of the need for changes planned in the school: it can demonstrably support a decision aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of the educational process, it can help plan activities aimed at developing school
- provide a feedback to all those who directly participated in the evaluation (either as its authors, respondents ...), and can therefore legitimately ask questions about the conclusions of the processes in which they were drawn
- become a way to inform about events at school those who were not directly involved in the evaluation process, i.e. and a wider environment of the school
- be an important stimulus for improving subsequent evaluation activities (the report helps to identify strengths and weaknesses of the implemented self-evaluation), be supporting evidence in obtaining various certificates (e.g. EFQM Excellence Model)
- be evidence that the school keeps to the letter of the law
- become a tool to promote PR of the school (the report helps demonstrate the extent to which the needs and wishes of „customers“ are reflected and even that the organization seeks to work on itself, improve, learn)
- ...



<sup>1</sup> In the following passages I will try to explain the importance of the self-evaluation report, regardless of what is required by the legislation valid at the time the text was written in terms of written reporting of school self-evaluation (with all deadlines and the defined content).

<sup>2</sup> That means to consider its degree of necessity, its character, structure and frequency of reporting and publication.



For all those who carry out the evaluation, the need arises in its course or in reporting to communicate with many different groups of participants who may often have conflicting interests. A common feature of the evaluation activities in school is that after one cycle a probably unexpected situation may occur: instead of finding answers to all questions asked in the beginning, people often ask a broader range of questions about things that seemed obvious at first ... Creating a self-evaluation report is thus an act that requires the authors of the report to be considerably sensitive and cautious. Actually, the report is quite a confidential matter, because the list of planned corrective actions indirectly indicates the weaknesses of the school revealed in self-evaluation (their publication can be threatening for the particular school in the competitive environment of Czech schools).

### Some aspects of self-evaluation report writing

Self-evaluation report may be an interim report or final report that represents a certain completion of self-evaluation processes. Its creation, however, based on documentation maintained during the self-evaluation of the school, such as running commentary, partial findings, progress reports that contain information from various sources obtained using different instruments and in different times. The final report is then created by meaningful exploitation / combination of all these documents.

Although schools may be concerned about the potential flooding of 'paperwork', when teachers could get a feeling that the papers are more important than their work (as can be heard from teachers in different countries), making records of the auto-evaluation has its merits. In addition to the need to process a high-quality self-evaluation report, running records also contribute to ensuring transparency of the self-evaluation processes, which is important for supporting the development of the entire school (details will be discussed in the next issue of the bulletin). Considerable asset of maintaining a continuous documentation is also the fact that because the „school memory“ is created and reinforced in the process since:

- people at school can observe their own development in the records very well – it enables them to better understand the causes of phenomena and their relationships; a map is created of professional activities of the school
- realization of continuous feedback using the records helps improve awareness of what was and what is (what is „better“); then it is even easier to stabilize new situations
- documentation leads individuals to better work with self-reflection
- with continuous records the school can better prove certain things (activities and results)
- continuous documentation facilitates continuous reporting too - the creation of interim reports is planned, since we know not only from research but also from practice of good managers that accepting the final report across different groups can significantly support the publication of certain partial knowledge already in the course of the processes; interim reports are made in practice also suddenly when for a number of different reasons it is necessary within a few days to gather all supporting documents to a particular matter.

Finding an adequacy in how to maintain an effective documentation during self-evaluation is a challenge with which each evaluator / team of evaluators needs to cope while taking into account technical, personnel, time, and sometimes even financial or spatial possibilities of the particular school. Interim and final self-evaluation reports do not always have the written form, the verbal form may also be used, or both can be combined or otherwise supplemented and enriched. In reporting the results, conclusions and the measures taken we can use the internal information system of the school, including intranet, notice boards, school newspaper, also routine methods for presenting the school in public can be applied, such as website, local newspapers, brochures, flyers.; for oral presentation we can use an assembly, a meeting taking place in the school, communication can be supported by ICT (power point ...), it can take place in an exhibition (using collages ...), or we can even use role playing, videos ... However, it is important to remember that a report (unlike e.g. a plan) is something that is made available, published for a certain group of people (who may, however, be extended in time, even unintentionally, with a new teacher, or if students tell, even unintentionally, some things to parents, relatives, friends) indefinitely. It is good to consider some aspects associated with its creation.



## By whom and when the report should be made

When considering who should be the „author“ of the self-evaluation report, we can clearly say: „He/she who can do it.“ For an explanation I would like to use an example of learning a foreign language. If someone wants to be able to speak a foreign language fluently and meaningfully, they need to master the vocabulary, grammatical rules and their exceptions, improve their skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, but first of all they must develop a feeling for the appropriate use of certain replicas in specific situations when dealing with people who may come from many countries, but who may be native speakers as well. Similarly, it is true for self-evaluation reporting that it is optimal if the author(s) know not only many things about the evaluation process, but also about the written and unwritten rules of the school, knowing the operation and situation of the school and its external and internal surroundings. This enables them to recommend a wide range of situationally appropriate solutions/suggestions on how to respond to the findings. And what is equally important, the author of the report needs to develop the ability to communicate highly sensitive issues on various aspects of the school work. It is usually recommended that the creation of „the self-evaluation report on behalf of the school“ be participated in by representatives of all key groups which the self-evaluation processes concern (it can facilitate communication across groups, confirm the sense of partnership, responsibility). Also important is the collaboration of author/authors of the report with the school management, especially when the author of the report is „a beginner or intermediate speaker“ (see the example of learning a foreign language), or in the case where one of the possible versions of the report is created specifically for an addressee whose perspectives and expectations are known to the school management (e.g. the provider). Regarding the deadline to which the interim or final self-evaluation report is created, we can mention two basic options. Either the school has a free hand in making it, and then it can combine informing parents, pupils, teachers at its discretion with other, regular events, or use other communication channels. Or the deadline is obligatorily given to the school, which can be demonstrated in the Czech environment by way of an example of a school self-evaluation report and annual report where the school informs on its own evaluation.



## The structure and scope of self-evaluation report

The structure is a sort of an itinerary guiding the readers<sup>3</sup> in the report: it helps them to distinguish substantial from less important, to perceive the justifiability of the proposed recommendations, etc. A clear structure of a self-evaluation report therefore plays an important role. Its clarity can be highlighted by an appropriate use of visual, graphical, statistical appendixes, etc. The structure of self-evaluation report is not legislatively or otherwise precisely defined in the Czech environment (as opposed to the school's annual report). Perhaps in every mentor, guide, „cookbook“ a mention can be found that three passages should be found in a good self-evaluation report:

1. brief presentation of the particular stages of the process
2. summary of the findings<sup>4</sup>
3. providing recommendations (or setting goals and tasks) to remove deficiencies or to enhance identified strengths in the future, including the determination of the period when further evaluation will be done in this area to ascertain the shift in quality. Obst (1999) points out in this context that it is also important to take into account whether the evaluation is carried out within a certain area for the first time, or whether there have been more of them.

The most popular parts of self-evaluation reports usually include their third passage devoted to the recommendations. What is good to consider in creating it?

- Not to give the impression of an „ode to joy“. In addition to positives it should also include some challenges.
- To make sure that the formulated recommendations had a real basis. After all, what sense it would have to recommend relocating the school building as a response to the finding that the location of school is not good because it stands on a busy intersection (and I totally neglect if that may be considered a finding gained through a meaningful self-evaluation).
- To take into account that the ability to adequately perceive the „imperfect“ results depend on many factors: on the reader's certain personality traits, on his/her ability to understand things presented, but even on the mutual relationship between the evaluators and the reader of the report. It is logical that the „bad“ findings will cause negative feelings with some people (anger, pain), it is therefore necessary to ensure a highly sensitive approach and form of communication of certain knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> Analogically, a listener should be considered with the oral report, a viewer with a visual presentation, generally, various persons may be included in the category of the report users. To simplify the text, I will then use the appellation of a group of people (report users), for which the report is intended, as „readers“.

<sup>4</sup> It is important to remember that the character of the findings is predetermined by the chosen evaluation method (which, in turn, by the objectives, criteria ...), by people's ability to use a particular method, but especially by a certain art to present them. For example, with questionnaires we know that they can help us find out what a broader group of people think about a certain thing (how they perceive it, what experience they have with it, what you would want to change ...). But do we really know that? After all, when filling in the questionnaire, people could be „not thinking“ (choosing the answer „aesthetically“ meaning „marking with crosses across...“), not admitting that „they do not know“ (the questionnaire could have been filled by a father who had not been to his daughter's parents' evening, because it is the mother who goes there) that „they do not understand“ (various words, concepts) ... Even the scales used to describe the response could play their role. (How different people perceive „often“, „enough“, etc.) When interpreting the findings (see previous Bulletin No. 4) it is necessary to consider other aspects as well, such as the return with the quantitative approach, which especially when that questioning parents may not always be high. We find e.g. some evidence of „perceptions, opinions, and experiences“ of 65% of parents (which in practice of many schools is a very good return). We have no idea, however, what the remaining 35% of parents think, how they perceive things. And it is impossible to ignore virtually a third of parents? That is why we should be sensitive to how we interpret and then present the „findings“, as readers may perceive the findings presented as facts (while being rather unlikely to consider the implied context).





Regarding the scope of self-evaluation report, there is definitely no interdependence between the quality of the report and the number of the information given (the more pages, words ... the better the message). Nevo (1995, p. 48) states that „the best final report is the shortest one people are able to draw up“, that the productivity, quality of work are certainly not proportional to the number of pages. Creating a short, one paragraph summary of the main points and findings has proven useful especially in cases where it can be assumed that the reader is quite unlikely to read the entire document. Experience shows that it may seem like a useful strategy.

### What „language“ should be used for creating the report?

The title question may seem funny, because the logical answer would be that in schools where the lessons are taught in Czech it is Czech. The concept of self-evaluation report needs to be receptive to capabilities of potential readers, which not only determines its final appearance, but also the linguistic concept. „Do I write the report to be understandable and readable?“ - is one of the basic questions that the author of the evaluation report needs to ask. The purpose of creating such a report is not to create „a document“, but find a suitable communication material that explains to the readers briefly, clearly and distinctly what was done in the evaluation, what conclusions can be drawn and what would be good to do in the future. It is obvious that depending on the little degree of homogeneity of the set of potential readers of self-evaluation report several of its versions can be generated. These will take into account age, education, experience, but also status, mood, expectations, etc. of the recipients of the report. Also, principles of effective communication are increasingly gaining importance. There are studies that show that the quality of (written) expression is the very main factor that decides whether the report was accepted or rejected by the readers. It proves to be useful (especially with longer documents) to use the so called connecting phrases (in layman's terms called „bridges“, „clues“, etc.) that help readers understand the connections of the text presented with the text to come. Also the principles of effective communication are increasingly gaining importance. For example, the need to adjust the terminology to the recipients (the use of certain words or abbreviations, etc.), linguistics (watch out for too long and complex sentences, etc.). It can be very difficult to capture feelings, impressions (e.g. those obtained in interviews ...), but even those are an important part of the operation of the school and the self-evaluation report should probably not forget them. Then it is possible to express the „incommunicable“ using illustrations, metaphors or a story. Also important is visualization (in the form of tables, graphs) which is essential for sharing significance and small nuances, for transferring the complexity of certain things. While colours may then be a practical aspect (but not everyone can print a document in a colour printer), some colours are not recommended for various associational and other reasons (e.g. green, red...). Everything should be used in a reasonable amount so that the

graphic elements did not drown out the information communicated. Many arguments can also be supported with photos, sometimes called windows into the inner world of the school. But that should be based on a prudent choice, because photos always capture a certain moment, an isolated slice of the school life (and beware, their use is subject to approval by the people captured or, as the case may be, by the legal guardians of children).

### In conclusion

At present, an amendment to the Education Act is being debated that does no longer stipulate the obligation for schools to create a self-evaluation report as one of the sources for the work of the Czech School Inspection. This planned change has its positives and negatives. The positives include the fact that the school self-evaluation report must not formally include all the existing areas as defined in the Decree No. 225/2009 Coll. amending the Decree No 15/2005, Coll. This will allow schools to pay attention to self-evaluation even in the areas which they consider essential while carrying it out in the periods they consider a priority. For this purpose then to process a corresponding functional report (more functional than now?). This will support self-evaluation in schools that care for the meaningfulness of these processes and are able to appreciate it. A negative result of the upcoming change might naturally be that without the obligation to provide „a tangible message“ these processes may not be held formally either in some schools. Which, on the other hand, may initiate an interest of parents, providers etc. in these activities. For all those who implement evaluation, a need arises throughout its course to communicate with many different groups of people who may often have conflicting interests. The final report of the school self-evaluation is a necessary part of self-evaluation processes. It may be a sort of line drawn under these processes, but it also is a sub-issue. Personally, I see its greatest benefit in the fact that it is one of the major impulses to activities aimed at school development. I wish schools and their staff to be successful in creating self-evaluation reports that will contribute to this development as much as possible.

Jana Poláchová Vašátková

### Recommended sources of information

NEVO, D. School-based evaluation: A dialogue for school improvement. Oxford: Pergamon, 1995. ISBN 0080419429.  
 NEZVALOVÁ, D., OBST, O., PRÁŠILOVÁ, M. Řízení kvality. Praha: Ústav výzkumu a rozvoje školství PedF UK, 1999. Available [online] at: <http://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty/řízení-kvality-ve-sfere-vzdělávací-politiky?highlightWords=ř%C3%ADzen%C3%AD+kvality+sfěre+vzdělávac%C3%AD+politiky> [Cited on October 10, 2011].  
 SHAW, F., GREENE, J. C., MARK, M. M. (eds.). The Sage Handbook of Evaluation. London: Sage Publications, 2006. 632 p. ISBN 9780761973058.

*In this issue I will touch upon the question of to whom and how to communicate what we have actually found through the self-evaluation process. I will try to build on the comments from the previous issues of the bulletin where I gradually dealt with the purpose of self-evaluation, methods of its implementation and interpretation of self-evaluation data. In a sort of paradoxical way, I get down to this question in a situation where the ministerial initiative results in removing the obligation to write the school self-evaluation report, which indirectly undermines the status of self-evaluation and its potential for promoting quality of schools controlled from within. In professional circles throughout the civilized world such steps are called differently, but only in a fraction of these discussions it is done with respect. It is quite clear – the accent on the efforts from outside to interfere in everything, so easily acceptable by a part of the general (electorate) public if „you sell it well to them“, then easily gain the upper hand. But to the point. First of all, it should be emphasized that it is perfectly legitimate when the school holds a lot of information just for itself, choosing information for the public carefully and with regard to its own safety. This also applies to self-evaluation - the school informs selectively. However, keeping information only for itself should not mean that the school does not work with this information in order to improve their work.*

# Question Four: to whom and how to communicate what we have actually found out?

People with whom the school communicates about the self-evaluation results (sometimes also about the self-evaluation process) make a very heterogeneous whole. It is usually different groups, sometimes with different interests, almost always with varying degrees of experience, different professional backgrounds. It is therefore appropriate to consider differentiated information, i.e. information tailored to various groups so that they could truly understand our report. Different people sometimes just need a different treatment, which can be projected even in the forms of communication. It is not realistic to expect that most parents will read a long text on curricular development. But neither is many a provider an avid consumer of professional pedagogical and school texts. A student wants to hear clearly particularly what is directly related to him/her. After all, so usually does a teacher. In the first instance we should turn to those who were our respondents. It is them from whom we obtained the data for self-evaluation and it is them - very likely – who will be directly affected by the result in one way or another. Even though the teachers, pupils, other school staff and parents are often quite familiar with the school environment, it does not mean that they perceive the school the way other people working there do, such as those who devoted themselves to a systematic evaluation of some of the aspects of its operation. That is one of the reasons for conceiving communication of self-evaluation findings as a dialogue of the evaluators with those who have been involved in evaluation in a different role. In the discussions between the two sides the findings can be discussed in more details, along with their relevance for the present, causes of the actual state, and possibly even opportunities for improvement. Although it is not necessarily always a relaxed situation, we just have to inform! A practice still emerging here and there when the school does not publish, keeping for itself the results of surveys or other data collection techniques it initiated among the teacher or students is an example of pure dilettantism. An „evaluator“ or „leader“ acting this way cannot henceforth count on the helpfulness of respondents who have had a negative experience with self-evaluation because of him/her. Their confidence in the meaningfulness of such events is then negligible, or more precisely zero. The purpose of self-evaluation is to assess processes and phenomena of the school reality behind which, however, there are always real people. It is therefore quite likely that the results may contain sensitive information about their work – a circumspect way of communication is therefore pertinent. Here, for example, it may come in handy to look around for the rules of providing constructive feedback that are reported in almost every solid handbook of leadership basics. It may even sound trite, but it is advantageous to have someone to pre-read the written report, discuss its form, communicativeness. Rashness doesn't pay, it is better to consider before we post a text on the web, before we share our evaluations with a colleague, before we included the information in the annual report.

Giving information on evaluation findings can be a good opportunity to reach a relative consensus by people about what and how they are doing, what sense it makes to them, or - what and how they might do differently in future. To make this happen, this part of the self-evaluation cycle must be dealt with acceptably for all parties. So - good luck!



## Intersection of Views

**Mgr. Bc. Pavla Jedličková, Head Teacher of the 28th Primary School, Plzeň, Rodinná 39**

The school has 16 classes, 363 pupils, 24 teachers.

What is your experience creating reports on school self-evaluation? Did anything surprise you? What would you recommend to your colleagues?

In retrospect, I perceive the previous experience in creating a school self-evaluation report with a certain detachment, seeing them mostly positive. The hardest was the beginning. Indeed, we did not fully understand the importance of self-evaluation. We understood it as another legal obligation that would just burden us and bring nothing. We lacked the knowledge, skills and experience. Today we know that a school cannot move to a higher quality without looking back and assessing conceptually. We are glad to feel and observe the importance of school self-evaluation now. The necessary changes would certainly not come so quickly. When collecting data for the self-evaluation report, I was surprised by the latitude of ways to approach the collection, processing and evaluation of information. I appreciate that there is no fixed uniform evaluation. Heads then have much room for their creativity and solutions to their real priorities in the evaluation process. I did not perceive it that way in the beginning of the first evaluation. I would like to recommend to my colleagues who still view the school self-evaluation report as a formality to use the report as an opportunity for presentation of their work as well as an opportunity for troubleshooting. I would also recommend them to surround with a capable team of people and create with it an appropriate plan and structure of school self-evaluation. Reflections on school quality criteria with teaching staff can then facilitate rapid changes in the school and its shift towards quality. Equally important is to give some thought to the tools that the school chooses to ascertain the actual state. Heads may create their own tools to determine the actual need, or may use offers by experienced institutions.



# There is no shift to higher quality for the school without evaluation

In the report, do you suggest the direction of the further development of the school? Are you doing well in finding a consensus on it, or do you specify it in your capacity as the head or the management of the school?

Yes, we do suggest the direction of the further development of the school in the report. Without it, the report would not even make any sense. The direction of the further development of the school, as determined by the school head in collaboration with other employees, is based on the concept of our school. The discussion over the conceptual intent of the school is put on the agenda annually in the preparatory week, when the whole staff completes a two-day working trip. The educators use their right to influence the development of the school. The decisive form of the concept of the school is then laid down by the school head. The school self-assessment report then evaluates the settings of individual areas and the quality of their performance.

Who gets acquainted with the self-evaluation report? Do you publish it?

In the first place, it is all teachers, school board and provider who I acquaint with the self-assessment report. We also submitted it to the CSI during the inspection. The report is publicly accessible at the school.

How do you determine whether you implement the school self-evaluation as well as possible?

We implement self-evaluation as best we can. We know that we can do much more, because the process of self-evaluation is very difficult and complicated. The criterion for assessing the quality of implementation for us is involving as many people as possible in the process, promoting desirable changes faster, conscious attitude of workers, a positive school climate and the possibility of comparison with the partner schools.

**Mgr. Irena Lhotková, Ph.D., Head Teacher of Bohumil Hrabal Primary School, Praha 8, Zenklova 52**

The school has 28 classes, 628 pupils, 41 teachers.



What is your experience creating reports on school self-evaluation? Did anything surprise you? What would you recommend to your colleagues?

I would divide making of school self-evaluation and understanding of its meaning into three stages. With the codification came a classic response: something new again, ordained from above? As with framework educational programs no explanation, just an order and cope with it. This sceptical phase, however, changed over time and through involvement in various projects and discussions with others into the second stage, which could be called the stage of understanding the importance. Creation of own evaluation tools, work with them, setting results and outlining new ways. The result was a report on school self-evaluation that not only evaluated but also showed the possibilities of further development. The last year's situation with all the confusion (especially financial), the increase in tabular bureaucracy and the beginning of the school year led me to a phase characterized by the question: Why? Let me explain – on August 31 the school year officially ends, so an objectively necessary evaluation is pertinent and, therefore, I evaluate: the school development plan, the annual plan, the plan for further education for teachers, I prepare the annual report - and watch the criteria for school self-evaluation as well. So in the end I go the easiest way and copy the entire paragraph using Ctrl + C and CTRL + V. But back to the questions - even after the few years as a head of school, hardly anything can surprise me. But what I recommend and what we are working on now is to unify the above-mentioned documents. Build the school development plan on the outcomes of the school self-evaluation, divide the three-year period into annual sub-stages and evaluate them. And put the partial evaluation outcomes in the annual report according to its structure.

In the report, do you suggest the direction of the further development of the school? Are you doing well in finding a consensus on it, or do you specify it in your capacity as the head or the management of the school?

As I mentioned earlier, determination of the direction of the school based on self-evaluation and possible modification of the vision of the school is a matter of course. In addition, we take into account the requirements of parents and social trends. The direction cannot definitely be decided upon in a confined space of the head's office, so it is set collectively. It is not only about the reports, i.e. the official objectives - from pedagogical councils or negotiations of methodological bodies, but I listen a lot and I base on informal interviews. Of these, I then formulate additional objectives and present those to the teachers – they are often surprised at what should be done and that it was actually their idea.

Who gets acquainted with the self-evaluation report? Do you publish it?

I acquaint, of course, the school staff; the effort is to inform parents, the provider and the public. The report is posted on the intranet and the website of the school. Promotion among the parents is sufficient - there is a parent council working at school in which there are representatives of parents of each class. Feedback is minimal, however, because the provider wants to deal with current issues and a past period's assessment is not attractive enough for them. Also, the provider, although the cooperation is otherwise excellent, does not comment the report on school self-evaluation. For them, more important are the economic indicators and the smooth running of the school. I know I can do much more in my own work, perhaps greater parental involvement in the school life, or meeting with the provider on this issue.

How do you determine whether you implement the school self-evaluation as well as possible?

The prerequisite of a good school self-evaluation is the choice of appropriate tools, the involvement of all actors of the school life and effective work with the outcomes. Also thanks to Project Road to Quality Improvement, we have appropriate evaluation tools. We also work with the outcomes, projecting them into the next period - the indicator of improvement is the increasing interest in our school. We can see a bit more about the parental involvement and feedback from pupils in higher grades. We want to work on these two issues and improve school self-evaluation.

### Legislation Stop

# Legislative Changes... or What is the Outcome?

*On November 9, 2011 the Chamber of Deputies expressed consent to the government's bill, amending the Act No. 561/2004 Coll. on the preschool, primary, secondary and higher vocational and other education (Education Act) as amended, according to the Parliamentary Press 340, as amended by the approved amendments. This can be found in Resolution No. 843 of the 30th Session of the Chamber of Deputies or directly at: <http://www.psp.cz/sqw/text/text2.sqw?idd=75992>. The Education Act deals with the self-assessment in Section 12, Section 28 contained a report on school self-evaluation as part of the required documentation. Decree No. 15/2005 Coll. is avoided within the meaning of the implementation of school self-evaluation. What does that mean for schools implementing self-assessment?*

## Responsibilities of Schools

- Schools continue to be obliged to implement school self-evaluation. Section 12, Paragraph 1 reads: „School evaluation is carried out as school self-evaluation and assessment by the Czech School Inspection.“
- Schools are obliged to reflect the outcomes of self-evaluation in the annual report on the activities of the school. Article 12, Paragraph 2 reads: „School self-evaluation is the starting point for processing annual reports on the activities of the school.“

## What is not required anymore

- Schools are not obliged to process a report on school self-evaluation that is now not included in the required school documentation according to Section 28. Thus neither is it binding to discuss the structure of the report with the School Board.
- In Section 28, Paragraph 1, Point e) the words „reports on school self-evaluation“ shall be deleted.

## What is now up to schools to decide

- Schools themselves decide how long the cycle of self-evaluation process will be. Partial results of school self-evaluation, however, must be taken into account in the annual report every year.
- Schools themselves decide on the structure of school self-evaluation, which areas to be monitored in a given period.

This amendment should not inject uncertainty into schools as to how to perform self-evaluation. Outputs of the Road to Quality Improvement Project are designed so that they are not directly tied to a specific legislation. So you may still want to try some evaluation tools offered for free on the portal [http://www.evalvacninaastroje.cz/nuovckk\\_portal/](http://www.evalvacninaastroje.cz/nuovckk_portal/). Examples of inspiring experience in implementing self-evaluation at all types of schools of the target group are listed on the website: <http://www.nuv.cz/ae>. In my opinion, in the outcome it is not important whether the Act was amended, but it is important that schools use the results of self-evaluation for their development.



## Introduction

By school culture we currently express a long-term specificity and uniqueness of each school and, at the same time, we can say that individual schools have much in common because school actors permanently make the culture of their school, showing signs of even more general culture of the school. The concept of school culture permeates pedagogy from the theory of organizational management, particularly from sociology. The concept is difficult to define, but it is a constant factor. School culture began to be discussed in our school system as late as in connection with the ongoing transformation of education in the 1990s. In terms of contents, the concept of school culture draws especially on the concept of culture, then specifically on the concept of organization culture (company, firm). Each school has, therefore, „its“ school culture. We will try to think about what makes the specific school culture, what is common to all schools in this characteristic of the school and what is different. Given that we are dealing with the concept of culture within the project Road to Quality Improvement, at the end we will also mention how to arrive at the desired school culture.

# School Culture

## History of the development of the concept of school culture

Abroad, the concept of school culture appears in the second half of the 20th century. In the 1980s it was found that while schools can not fully compensate for the impact of the social environment their pupils come from, they have a decisive influence on the educational outcomes of their students, thanks to something that has been termed a climate, ethos, spirit or school culture. School culture can be viewed from different angles. We can perceive positively certain types of school culture, such as collegial, collaborative, cohesive. These types of school culture are associated with high pupil motivation, with success strengthened by cooperation of teachers and with improving attitudes of teachers to work. Negatively perceived school cultures have opposite properties. Researches that dealt with school culture initially studied the relation between the school culture and the problem of school improvement in terms of efficiency and later even quality of the work of schools. In these studies dominated the anthropological concept of culture enriched the theory of organizations and especially the theory of school management. The relationship was studied between school culture and pupil learning. It was found that significant differences in behaviour, attendance and development of pupils are systematically related to the characteristics of schools as social institutions. Furthermore, the relationship was observed between school culture and pupil learning. It was found that effective schools, i.e. efficient in terms of pupil learning, have a specific school culture that is characterized primarily by high expectations in relation to pupils. There was an emphasis on acquiring basic skills, clear objectives were set, the curriculum was academically designed with low level of eligibility, with the maximum of time for learning. Thus was created the concept of school culture as a unique constellation of subcultures that affect pupils' learning. Further research focusing on relations between school culture, efficiency of pupils' learning and school management have shown that the link between school management and pupils' learning efficiency is not direct, but the school management with knowledge of the culture of the school allows to create and manage a specific school environment in which pupils feel good and achieve success. Today school culture is examined primarily in terms of its development.

## Characteristics of school culture

School culture covers all areas of school activities, and aims in particular to support pupils' learning and teaching, which are processes for which the school as an institution was actually primarily established.

Above all, it is values and norms that are essential to the concept of school culture. They tend to be perceived as the basis of various manifestations of human behaviour and school life as a whole. Values and norms are thus reflected in the vision of the school, being handed down in rituals and ceremonies, expressed symbolically reflected in the behaviour of people inside and outside the school, permeating all other aspects of school life and connecting with each other. The culture of a particular school may include specific features of the particular school, preferred behaviour of actors of the school life and school's relationships to its surroundings. However, each school is unique and, therefore, so is its culture. Specific features of a particular school are shared values, attitudes, norms, beliefs, opinions, symbols, rituals. Preferred behaviour of the actors of school life includes preferred behaviours of teachers, pupils and staff. The relationships between the school and its surroundings include the school's relationships to its social partners and parents.

## What belongs to the culture of a particular school?

School culture is described by the school climate, school vision, school curriculum, „school ethos“, style of leadership, consistency in the application of common goals and school's prestige in public.

The culture of the school includes the school's public relations, relationships with parents, schools, parent-teacher relationships, teacher relationships with pupils and relationships between pupils. An important and now an integral part of the culture of a particular school is a set of (self) evaluation processes that allow to evaluate the effectiveness of individual features of the culture of the school.



## The development of the school and school culture

School culture is gaining more attention, becoming not just an industry buzzword, but also a strongly managerially beneficial school activity in terms of its perception by the public. We can say that the concept of school culture reflects the optimum state while highlighting the shortcomings of the current state of school. In this sense, school culture includes a wish - what we would like a specific school to be, expectations - what the particular school should be like, as well as the normativeness of the education process, i.e. what and how the particular school performs. School culture plays a crucial role in the meaningful development of the school, being crucial to achieving a balance between the interests of all groups of actors in the school, as already mentioned, between the inner and outer world of the school. In the school development, the culture of the school can be a dynamic factor or an obstacle to change. Most often the development of school culture is associated with the development of the whole school.

Erika Mechlová, Karel Rýdl



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## Filling Station

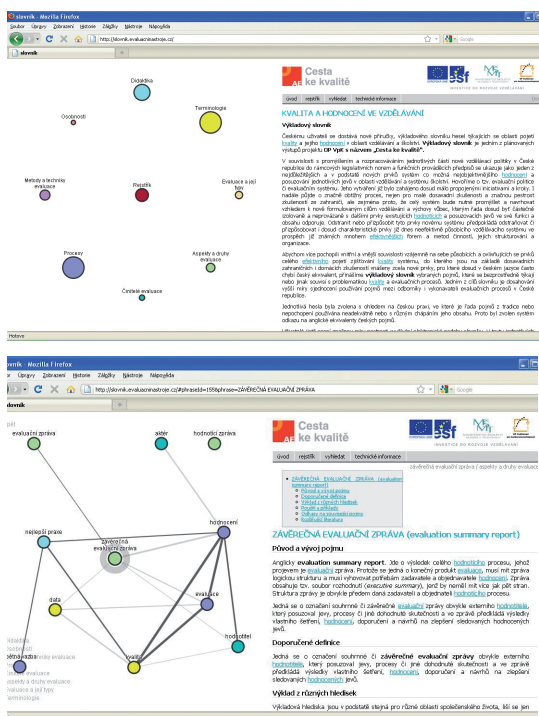
# Quality and Evaluation in Education:

## Explanatory dictionary

The Road to Quality Improvement project website (under the link: <http://slovník.evaluacinaastroje.cz/>) offers a practical handbook in the form of explanatory dictionary entries relating to the concept of quality and its evaluation in education and school system. The explanatory dictionary is one of the planned official outcomes of the project. The evaluation system is a part of the educational policy and school system. On the basis of the existing international and domestic experience, brand new elements and processes are introduced in this issue for which equivalents has often been lacking in the Czech language so far. To help responsible people in schools and school administration, including CSI, better understand the internal and external context of the interacting elements of the whole effective concept of quality assurance system, we are bringing a glossary of selected terms. One of the objectives of the dictionary is to achieve a higher degree of clarity of terms used among professionals and executors of the evaluation process in the Czech Republic. The entries are directly related to or otherwise connected with the issue of quality and evaluation processes. They were individually chosen with regard to the Czech experience in which a number of terms are used due to the tradition or misunderstanding inappropriately or with a different understanding of their content. Therefore, a reference system was chosen showing the English equivalents to the Czech terms. Users will surely appreciate the considerable degree of diversity of the use of the computerized dictionary. This is the same principle as with Wikipedia.

In the text of individual entries, words are marked blue that are described and explained in other entries. The user can just „click“ on the word and the interpretation of the required term. It is also possible to work with the basic version of the arrangement of individual entries in alphabetical order or, by the requirements of the public, processed entries can be grouped into thematic groups (clusters) or by the authors. At this point I would also like to thank for the excellent cooperation all the team members who were carefully preparing the Dictionary for two years and brought it into its present form. Since the goal is not to impose the proposed interpretation upon the public, but rather gradually improve clarity of interpretation of entries, possibly supplement the dictionary with new entries, according to the needs and discussed opinions from the theory, but in particular the practice, the creative team will be grateful for any constructive suggestions and any new proposal. It is thus an open document, the sustainability of which will be demonstrated not only by serving the public with its easy access, but also with the possibility to update individual entries, add sources and bibliography as well as propose and process additional entries to the needs of the interested public. This narrowly focused thematic dictionary should serve primarily the educational and school practice, from which the team of authors expects a permanent participation in further improving the content and form of the explanatory dictionary.

prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.  
head of the team of authors





# A Trouble Shared – a Trouble Halved...

*Every success as well as trouble hides a decent piece of work. Children should be prepared to discuss problems and successes, not to be alone to deal with everything. We asked them a basic question that uncovers the first steps in the decision-making process and reveals to whom the children turn with conflicts.*

## With whom do you handle your troubles or successes?

- With my mom, with Ondra (brother), and with my dad. (Tomáš, 4,5 years, KG Říčany)
- With my parents or the teacher. (Lukáš, 8 years, PS Donovalská, Praha)
- With mom or dad or grandma. (Bára, 8 years, PS Unhošť)
- I prefer handling my worries and successes with my family, because I trust them. (Sofie, 9 years, PS Horáčkova, Praha)
- With Aunt Helen. (Viola, 9 years, PS Žilina, Kladno)
- Mostly with parents. If it is about school matters, then also with the teacher. (Vojtěch, 9 years, PS Šeberov)
- With my family and myself. (Emma, 10 years, PS nám. Svobody, Praha)
- With my horse Jiskra and parents, sometimes with toys. (Anička, 10 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- I handle troubles with my friends, because I'm never alone in that. As for successes, I tell parents and grandparents about those. (Ondra, 11 years, PS Open Gate)
- With my voice and conscience in my head. (Eliška, 11 years, PS Kladno)
- With parents, unlike my mates, they won't tell anyone. (Lucka, 12 years, PS Jižní, Praha)
- With no one, I am a crackerjack. (Adam, 12 years, PS Jižní, Praha)
- With people who can be trusted. With those who are closest to me mom, brother, girlfriend. (Tomáš, 14 years, PS Botičská, Praha)
- Scrapes are handled by the police, while successes by my closest mates and friends. (Jakub, 16 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I handle my mess or success my best friend and neighbour in the school desk. I know he understands me most. Sometimes it even seems to me that we have the same views. (Jirka, 16 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I handle them myself. (Martina, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- With Mom, she can really get me back down to earth. (Adéla, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- With my parents, because I can trust them 100%. (Katka, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- With my friends whom I trust and I know that they won't betray me and that I can say anything to them and so can they to me. (Vítek, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- I handle my scrapes on my own mostly. When I resolve to entrust, then definitely to my mom or my girlfriend, with whom I have been a long time and we tell each other almost everything. I share successes that I am particularly proud of with my family. With friends, when the subject comes up. (Pavel, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I handle my troubles only with my parents, because I trust them and they have much more experience than my friends do. I celebrate successes also with my parents. They are the ones who stand behind most of my successes. (Zdeněk, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I usually handle my scrapes with my friends, because they have those as well and can tell me how to face them and how to fix them. Achievements I handle also with friends, the reason to celebrate ... (Ivo, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I handle troubles with parents, they are adults and sensible, they pin their confidence into me. I see no problem in sharing a success with anyone who wants to hear and evaluate them. (Michal, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)

## With whom do you handle your successes?

- I boast about successes anywhere possible, at home and at school. (Johanka, 13 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- I like to convey my achievements in social networks. (David, 15 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I like bragging about my successes to all those I like. (Karel, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- With everyone of whom I know that they can appreciate it and that it won't be in one ear and out the other. (Eda, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I am not preoccupied with achievements, because I think that one can become arrogant. (Matěj, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)

## With whom do you handle your troubles?

- Depending on the scrapes. When they are minor, for example, if I get a note sent home, I handle it with mom. But when they are major as a class reprimand, so I talk about it with my mate, and then I'll tell mom. (Ondra, 10 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- I handle troubles first with my grandmother, because she addresses everything with a cool head and understands everything. (Marek, 10 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- Mostly with my sister because she can really break things down. (Jana, 10 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- I try to conceal troubles. (Zuzka, 12 years, PS Botičská, Praha)
- With my friends, they always calm me down and cheer when I am in a mess. (Roman, 12 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- Mostly with no one, it comes out anyway. (Kuba, 12 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- I try to solve scrapes by myself. But if it is something serious, I go to my parents with them. (Jindra, 12 years, PS Na Příkopech, Chomutov)
- If it really gets tough, I have a lot of acquaintances and a few very good friends who back me up when I need it. (Matyáš, 15 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- First with my boyfriend, friends. After I hear them their views out, I tell my parents about the trouble. They may curse. With hindsight, however, their „nagging“ may bring to bear fruit, making the original trouble „a success“. (Hanka, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- Mostly with my friends, because they are young and see it better than adults who have a different perspective and often can not comprehend. (Zdeňka, 16 years, Střední zdravotnická škola Chomutov)
- If it is related to the school and it's serious enough, I would go to the class teacher. (Honza, 16 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- Since I am a decent man, I make no mess. So I do not have to handle anything. (David, 16 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- With my dad, because I have confidence in him, he won't tell anyone. I do not have to be afraid of him to give me a slap; he rather solves it with me. (Lukáš, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)
- I handle my problems only by myself (if I can). If I'm not sure, or know someone that knows better than me, I ask for their opinion and listen. The final decision depends only on me. (Martin, 17 years, SS energetická a stavební, Chomutov)

Romana Velflová, Radka Vichová, Jan Mareš

# ... A Success Shared – a Success Doubled

The pages of the On the Road to Quality bulletin regularly inform you about the progress of the project Road to Quality Improvement. One of the objectives of the project is also an effort to provide general guidance to the providers how to comprehensively approach the evaluation of schools and school facilities and how to find an appropriate interconnection between self-evaluation of the school and its external evaluation.

# Providers are involved in formulating recommendations for the evaluation of schools too



Text Recommendations for providers regarding school evaluation are general recommendations that can be added to, reduced, or conversely expanded to best meet the needs of providers and their perceptions of assessment of institutions in education. It was created after a long discussion in cooperation of a 15-member expert group in which providers are represented and contains many interesting insights and ideas. I would like to share with you at least some of them, because they are important input information for future users. Some schools perceive self-evaluation as a meaningful activity without which they cannot imagine any improvement of school work, and thus the educational system as a whole. Also, evaluation of the work of schools by providers should serve to find ways and means to assist schools to improve the quality of their work and how to create, from the position of the provider, conditions for implementation of measures to improve the situation. For this reason in particular, it should encompass most of the activities of the school both in education and in personal, economic, material and technical terms, conditions in which the school works, etc. It should be an obvious and natural principle of the relationship between the provider and the school and a component of its conceptual approach, observing the implementation of the main purpose and scope of activities for which schools are established, i.e. the performance of the public service by providing preschool, primary, secondary and higher vocational education. The obligation to assess the performance of organizations established by municipalities, regions and other entities is given by fundamental legal acts. According to the Education Act, evaluation of a school or school facility may be carried out by their authority by criteria published in advance. The weight of individual criteria, however, is different from the perspective of the. The starting point of a provider's suitable approach to assessing a school is to embrace the need for regular evaluation of the school and its complexity. Each comprehensive assessment has parts that can be strongly objective while others rather subjective, which is given by the view of the evaluator. Objectivity of assessment is certainly facilitated by accurate determination of the parameters and criteria for evaluation, selection of appropriate tools and sources of information.

This principle is also reflected in the aforementioned text. The draft was based on the suggestions, recommendations and criteria with which some providers work in evaluating schools and school facilities when these use them to determine personal or special allowance and bonuses. In many cases the evaluation becomes in effect an evaluation of schools.

Quality of schools to be measured and evaluated is, however, the result of joint action of a much broader range of factors. The presented text is to promote authorities' comprehensive approach to the evaluation of schools as such. It is this approach that should help answer the question of what ways and means can be used from the very perspective of the authorities to influence the development of schools and improve the quality of education therein.

The chapter of Recommended Evaluation Criteria provides an overview of specific recommended criteria that may be used by providers to evaluate schools. Despite the differing opinions and experiences of various providers we have managed to identify some basic priority areas and criteria with which most of the providers agree. They are usually based on specific local conditions that are mostly expressed in the general plan, conception or strategies of the development of education as debated and set by councils.



These medium-or long-term plans may be affected by, for example, the demographic development, planned construction in the immediate vicinity, accessibility (transport links), architectural design of school buildings and campuses, provider funds, local possibilities of youth after-school activities offer or composition of the teaching staff. The list of criteria is thus not exhaustive; it can be complemented, expanded, reduced or refined. Above all, it should be a manual for local education authorities that can use it to guide their evaluation of schools.

Currently, we are at the beginning of a wider public debate on the text of Recommendations for providers regarding school evaluation, endeavouring to present it while expecting the first responses.

Members of the School Committee of the Union of Towns and Municipalities (SMO CR) have become continuous advisors. The School Committee is an advisory body of the Union comprising of representatives of each chamber to ensure the requirements of different types of communities. Each municipality is a member of a chamber. Statutory cities and Prague are members of the Chamber of Statutory Cities. Towns and townships are members of the Chamber of Towns and municipalities of the Chamber of Municipalities. City districts or urban districts of statutory cities and Prague are members of the Committee of Urban and City Districts. This composition allows combining different views of providers, which has been reflected in the forthcoming document. The Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic publishes a monthly newsletter Information Service (InS), distributed to all member municipalities and contracted recipients (ministries, parliamentary committees, non-governmental institutions, etc.). Its mission is to inform about the activities of the Union and draw attention to interesting activities of expert committees. The double issue 8-9/2011 published an article Road to Quality Improvement - Recommendations for providers regarding school evaluation which draws attention to the project including the project's website and calls for sending any suggestions to this topic and views on it.

To improve representatives' activities and strengthen the capacity of local government in the Czech Republic, the Union of Towns and Municipalities offers through its project The Educated Representative various forms of information-education advisory support to elected representatives of towns and municipalities. Based on curriculum implementation and commissioning of comprehensive services, the aim of the three-year project is to increase efficiency, transparency and quality of decision-making processes at the level of towns and municipalities, whose bearers are the local representatives. Training courses are carried out directly in the town or municipality (or in the micro-region), usually in the form of a one-day seminar. The goal is not to discuss topics in depth and professionally, but rather to get acquainted with the representatives' authority in this role, their basic powers, but also obligations. In terms of content, the program focuses on all the roles that a representative performs: for example, he/she manages the budget and administers the assets of the municipality, thus being the „steward“, negotiates with target groups, promotes and represents the community, thus being the „negotiator and representative“, and is responsible for long-term development of the village, but he/she is also the „manager“ and, of course, is active in the field of education. Even within this project, one can use Recommendations for providers regarding school evaluation, which may facilitate, in particular to new representatives, orientation in the field performance of provider competencies. If you think about how to further disseminate the outputs of this project not only towards the Local Education Authorities (LEAs), there is a possibility to use it with some use institutions providing educational services to the general public.

Becoming a provider of quality educational services of a comprehensive development of public administration and elected representatives is, in addition to the Ministry of Interior, a mission of Training Centre for Public Administration CR, o. p. s. - VCVS CR, which is a nongovernmental, non-profit organization for local and regional administration and other institutions of the public and non-profit sector. The organizational structure consists of the control and coordination centre in Prague and a network of 11 regional branches throughout the country (Sokolov, Plzeň, České Budějovice, Liberec, Pardubice, Jihlava, Brno, Zlín, Olomouc, Ostrava, Central Bohemian branch in Prague). Every year, the company trains almost 22 000 participants in 650-700 training courses and seminars. VCVS CR implements its activity through a professional team of internal and external trainers and advisors. The scope of activity includes e.g. providing educational services to the development of self-government, local government and local initiatives, teaching and other staff in schools and other target groups of the public sector, consulting services to representatives of local governments, organizing seminars, training sessions and conferences, etc.

A similar institution is the Educational Institute of the Central Bohemian Region - VISK, which is a region-funded institution established by the Central Region. VISK was established to provide community service activities in adult education and continuing professional education mainly in the Central Bohemian Region. It ensures its activities through nine regional offices - educational centres situated in the district towns of Central Bohemia and Prague. Currently, it has greatest experience with the presentation of the project Road to Quality Improvement. Within the training course, which is conceived as updating and deepening, it responds not only to recent amendments to the relevant legal standards in education, but its content is also focused on issues of concern in relations and competencies of the local education authority (village, town, region) towards schools and school facilities it established. The educational program also provides an appropriate methodological guidance for independent and delegated powers, and therefore the project outputs can be used here as well. Quality of learning is a hot topic. Quality fulfilment of objectives of the education and training program, i.e. the main purpose and scope of activities of the school, must be required conceptually by the provider. I am convinced that the project Road to Quality Improvement will significantly contribute to interconnecting self-evaluation and external evaluation, which will help to ensure the quality of schools, and thus the educational system as a whole. And that certainly is very important for elected representatives in the field of education. We look forward to the opinions of the local education authorities (LEAs) on these recommendations, on their assessment of how one can work with this theme and use it, to what extent it is relevant to them. There will certainly be a space for discussion, sharing of experience and evaluation of the project on the national November conference and winter regional project conferences.

Marcela Štiková

*„I come to school, soak up and I know ...“ - anyone could tell who has had some personal experience with the school. I believe that there is some truth to this answer. I notice how students behave, I'll see how the vicinity of the school is arranged, how clean and decorated the halls are, whether pupils are involved in decorating, I can see and hear how students treat one another in the hallway between classes, how teachers treat one another and how they treat students, how students react with the headmaster who shows me around the school. As an occasional visitor I can be satisfied with such an estimate. As a director and teacher such an estimate based on feelings is insufficient for me. I am aware that to make pupils, teachers and parents feel well in the school we do much, it shows, but there may be weaknesses somewhere. The truth is that I do not notice a number of things because they are part of my everyday experience and I do not actually perceive their partial changes. Therefore, it may be very useful to look at „one's own“ school through unbiased eyes of someone else, even critical. A single voice can then be useful, but far more useful is information from multiple observers. Their connection then gives a far more plastic picture of how most of main actors of education perceive the school. For example, do parents regard the information for about their children's progress as sufficient? What else do parents expect from the school and consider it important? Do the pupils like attending our school and feel the teachers' support in their learning difficulties? Do the teachers treat me honestly? Do they not feel overloaded administration and lack of support from the school? To answer these and similar questions, we won't get by in a school of average size only with a subjective view of the „I see and perceive“ type.*

# How do we know the climate in school?

School climate is a complex phenomenon and it can be seen from different perspectives (see Recommended reading at the end of text). With each deeper perspective we need to further structure this phenomenon, mainly from two perspectives – from the point of view of:

1. participants - climate as perceived by students, teachers, parents and other people (graduates, community)
2. factors that we are interested in - which elements of school life are most important for the formation of opinions, what is the actual source of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with the school, so what specifically we consider the climate and what is it that we want to ask the participants

It's good to know that „climate“ in the survey is always „created“ as an aggregation of views (experience and evaluation) of individuals. Experiences and evaluations relate to their perspective of perceiving the school, which is what they come into contact at school - and what they can remember or name. It is therefore important to ask about things that could be problematic in the school or its parts (and are often a discussed problem), and ask specifically. Generally, people do not realize the environment (of the school) that works well, they are more aware of things that bother them. And the things that bother most people are - according to this logic - the biggest problem („worsening“ the climate most). When we want to work with the climate, it is good to guide the respondents in advance and let them think about the topic a bit.

It makes sense to aggregate respondents' views in any case where the connection has some interpretive potential for those who will work with the results. Information obtained and confirmed from multiple sources (different evaluation instruments and groups of respondents) has a higher seriousness.

In this sense, the project Road to Quality Improvement provides several tools based on interviews with students, teachers and parents. Some of them have a „climate“ in the title, because the surveyed factors are considered part of the school climate. Some other are not primarily focused on the climate, but provide certain partial information. We shall briefly introduce this type of evaluation instruments and describe them in more detail in Appendix to this bulletin issue.

## Teaching Staff Climate. Questionnaire for Teachers

As the title suggests, participants interviewed are the teachers. They respond anonymously in the electronic version of the questionnaire to 40 items grouped into five factors studied - namely, how teachers view: 1 support to the staff by the management, 2 firmness of the school management, 3 involvement of teachers, 4 frustration of teachers, 5 friendly relations in the staff. To be able to evaluate we need at least 70% return. Satisfied teachers are one of the prerequisites of the good school and quality teaching.

### Climate in the Classroom. Questionnaire for Pupils

Participants interviewed may be students in a particular class starting with the upper primary school. Some of the observed factors are directly related to the teaching of specific teachers, some are more focused on relationships between classmates. The factors monitored are: 1 good relationships with classmates, 2 collaboration with classmates, 3 perceived support from teachers, 4 teachers' equal approach towards students, 5 transfer of the learned between the school and family, 6 competing preferences of the students, 7 events during breaks. In addition to these fixed factors the school can also assign four voluntary factors to a specific class: 8 possibility to discuss during the lesson, 9 initiative of students, 10 students' effort to learn, 11 effort to please the neighbourhood. The questionnaire is available in short and extended versions. Pupils who are happy in their classroom and have good relationships with classmates and teachers actually show better performance in the school.



### School Climate. Set of questionnaires for teachers, pupils and parents

Each questionnaire addressed to three main actors of school life contains approximately 50 items. The questionnaires chart how these groups perceive some aspects of school life, including physical facilities of the school. The focus of this tool lies in comparing the testimony of individual actors. This evaluation tool was designed with the intention to offer a simple and rapid feedback on the school climate to the management of the school: it does not offer information on specific sub-areas, but an overall view identifying potentially problematic aspects of the school life.

Evaluation tools providing partial information about the climate in the school

- Interaction of teachers and pupils. Questionnaire for pupils. Responses of students in a particular class can provide the teacher with information on how pupils perceive it in terms of his/her educational relationship to pupils and in terms of educational management in the sense of toughness and freedom. At the end, pupils may grade the way the teacher treats the pupils, smiles and has fun with pupils, his/her kindness and help with pupils' difficulties, management and organization of lessons, interesting classes, fair approach to student assessment.
- Community of the Lower Primary School. Questionnaire for students in the form of a computer game. It is the only questionnaire tool for pupils at the lower level. Students record their responses by „clicking“ and „dragging“ files on the computer. The school obtains information on how students perceive breaks, after-school care centre, older pupils at the school, classmates, teacher, for example.
- Preventing students' behaviour problems. Questionnaire for pupils. Pupils express their opinions on seven thematic areas of the school life: 1 overall satisfaction with the school, 2 opportunity and success in learning, 3 negative experience of the school life, 4 relationship between teacher and pupil, 5 school status of the students, 6 students' identity formation, 7 interaction with peers.
- Good School. A method for setting the school's priorities in order to stimulate discussion at the school on the priorities of the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to the school. Questionnaire for pupils. The questionnaire is to explore pupils' attitudes to learning, school and selected subjects. Specifically, we consider the Czech language and literature, mathematics, foreign language and ICT lessons, which are considered „core subjects“, the core of general education. The evaluation tool is intended for students of all types of secondary schools and pupils of upper primary schools.
- Website presentation of the school. Assessment sheet. This tool can be used at primary and secondary schools of all types. The conclusions derived from the questionnaire, are not to be so much „final“ and „impartial“ examination, as rather a source of food for thought over the appearance and functionality of the school websites as a communication channel of the school.

Also in the surveys for pupils, parents and teachers, which were presented in the bulletin On the Road to Quality No. 3, the school may ask these target groups individually questions speaking about the climate in the school. The choice of questions is up to the school itself. Climate-related are especially the issues in the blocks of „relationships“.

Some information of partial nature about the school climate can be obtained even from leaving students using the tool Group Balance of the Graduates. The school climate and its detection by means of evaluation tools you can learn more from the Annex to this bulletin issue.

With all evaluation tools, a report is automatically generated for the school after they are filled in electronically. Each evaluation tool is equipped with a manual containing detailed information about it, recommended mode of its assigning and interpretation of results. For more information the manuals see the article What's in the manuals to the evaluation tools? on page 26 in this issue of the bulletin.

Martin Chval, Jan Mareš



### Recommended reading about school climate

ČAP, J., MAREŠ, J. Psychologie pro uitele. Praha: Por-tal, 2001. 655 p. ISBN 80-7178-463-X.

GRECMANOVA, H. Klima školy. Olomouc: Hanex, 2008. ISBN 978-80-7409-010-3.

JEŽEK, S. Možnosti diagnostiky psychosocilnho klimatu školy. Dissertation. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, FSS, 2007. Available [online] at: [https:// is.muni.cz/auth/th/18832/fss\\_d/](https://is.muni.cz/auth/th/18832/fss_d/).

MAREŠ, J. Sociln klima školy jako teoreticky a vy-zkumny problm. Dissertation. Brno: Masarykova univerzita, FSS, 2007. Available [online] at: [https:// is.muni.cz/auth/th/22918/fss\\_d/](https://is.muni.cz/auth/th/22918/fss_d/).

On the website <http://klima.pedagogika.cz/>, publications such as the following are available:

JEŽEK, S. (ed.). Sociln klima školy I. Brno: MSD, 2003. ISBN 80-86633-13-6.

JEŽEK, S. (ed.). Sociln klima školy II. Brno: MSD, 2004. ISBN 80-86633-29-2.

JEŽEK, S. (ed.). Sociln klima školy III. Brno: MSD, 2005. ISBN 80-86633-45-4.

### Example of good practice in self-evaluation – Self-evaluation at J.B. Foerster Art School Jičín as an inspiration for primary art schools

*For JB Foerster Primary Art School Jičín, self-evaluation (self-assessment) is a very specific area of the school life which should be viewed in connection with its intended development. With its previous experience in this area, the school can serve as an inspiration especially for other primary art schools. Attention is paid to the following aspects of self-evaluation: 1 importance of self-evaluation, 2 method of setting goals and schedule, 3 delegation of powers and the role of the Art School Board (ASB) in planning and evaluating goals, 4 method of evaluating goals, 5 influence of the vision and focus of the school on goals and tools. First, however, J.B. Foerster Art School is characterized by basic information about the school also in terms of progress and focus of the past self-assessment, including self-evaluation of teachers so intensely pursued in this school.*

**Basic characteristics of J.B. Foerster Art School Jičín, [www.zusJicín.cz](http://www.zusJicín.cz)**

- **Head:** Bc. Jaroslava Komárkova, DiS. since 1993
- **Provider:** town of Jičín
- **Size of the school:** about 684 pupils, 30 teachers
- **SEP:** HO-TO-VO (2008, 2010)

# Self-evaluation as a defence against

JB Foerster Primary Art School Jičín (hereafter Jičín Art School) as a school of the artistic character is committed to complex developing and cultivating the personality of a child with an important goal to develop aesthetic perception, self-presentation and self-respect in the area. Currently there are four artistic disciplines taught here: Music (HO), dance (TO), art (VO) and dramatic literature (LDO). The school is known for its keen participation in the cultural life of the town of Jičín, cooperation with other schools with similar orientation, organization of district and regional rounds of competitions announced by the Ministry of Education, successful representation at the national level, and active approach to the curricular reform (it is a pilot school). As if the efforts outlined reflected the school motto expressed by the words of Comenius: „Our teachers must not be similar to the poles along the roads, only showing where to go, but they do not go themselves.“

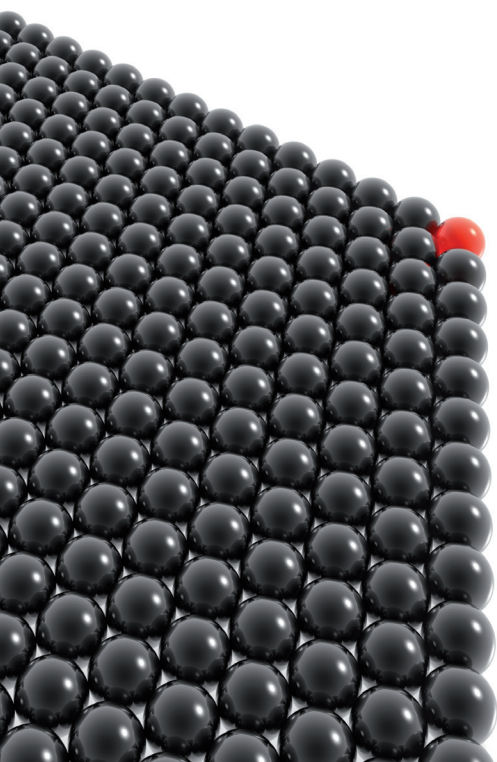
## About the course and focus of self-evaluation at Art School Jičín

In the words of the head, the school began self-assessment in 1994 by founding the Art School Board (ASB). Since then, a whole range of self-evaluation processes has taken place and numerous tools have been used. Respondents/participants/subjects were the students, teachers, parents. Regarding the frequency of self-evaluation in Jičín Art School, the first cycle was concluded with the school self-evaluation report in October 2006, the second cycle lasted until October 2008. „Today, it is convenient for us to evaluate every three years - every year at the beginning. Who has not started until now - it will take about ten years.“ (From the head's statement.) The concept and history of self-evaluation in the Jičín Art School is discussed in details in inspiring practice examples available at: [www.nuov.cz](http://www.nuov.cz). A significant positive of JB Foerster Jičín Art School is the area of teachers' self-evaluation.

## Self-evaluation of teachers

Self-assessment of teachers, including the head, has been an important line of the school history, at least since the current head assumed the office in 1993, more precisely since 1997, when she was forced to write her self-evaluation. Reflection she carried out, in her words, „influenced her very much and became an impetus for her long-term effort to encourage students and teaching staff to go in for self-evaluation.“ The Art School Jičín is currently implementing self-evaluation of teachers in several ways: 1 with a sheet for self-assessment of teachers, 2 with a self-assessment questionnaire, 3 with an interview of the head and a teacher over the self-evaluation questionnaire. Currently teachers are carrying out self-assessment in relation to the educational process priorities set out in the School Self-evaluation (2008). The school also considers self-evaluation of teachers to be „a means of personal talks of individual teachers with the head of the school on the theme of cooperation with pupils, parents, school management, colleagues, satisfaction with the evaluation of the work, etc.“ (School Self-evaluation, 2008, p 7). Finally, self-evaluation of teachers, especially the structure of the self-evaluation sheet for teachers, affects the structure of the evaluation reports by the school, departments and disciplines.

However, the head came very gradually to these forms of self-evaluation of teachers as well the connection of self-evaluation of teachers to the official output, i.e. the evaluation report by the school, departments and disciplines, over about a ten-year effort and search in the area of school self-evaluation. The following steps have proven suitable as a gradual preparation for self-evaluation of teachers - according to the head some sorts of initial stages of self-evaluation of teachers: the first small questionnaire to evaluate a section or department (1998), self-evaluation in departments (2002/2003), mutual (peer) assessment of individual departments (2003/2004).





## The importance of self-evaluation for the Art School Jičín

The school management views self-evaluation as a necessary part of the school development requiring a set of rules and clear direction, etc.: „It must have a system; it must be clear to you what you want, what people are to do. You need a methodology, set of rules, system.“ They are trying to see the process, contribution as well as the development of self-evaluation in the context of reserves, among which they rank the „classroom, teachers' autonomy (perhaps too big), error handling, strategy and motivation of students“ (the school management). From the perspective of an external observer, however, these alleged reserves represent rather other targets. The subjective comments of teachers show a predominating fact that they do not perceive self-evaluation only as another legislative duty, but as a necessity of growth, a tool for communication, a tool to combat operational blindness and stereotype.

Sample from teachers statements on the topic of Self-evaluation – beneficial, or useless

*„Self-evaluation = a source of orderliness, security and more secure planning.“*

*„I personally see the self-evaluation as something, without which I can not make any progress, it is impossible without it. Self-evaluation is a tool for me to fight against the stereotype (I felt it like that before too, but subconsciously). Self-evaluation is in the man/woman ...“*

*„For me, self-evaluation is like a battle with operational blindness ... it's a good thing.“*

*„I understand self-evaluation as a way to communicate, to clarify one's priorities, a tool for communication and cooperation.“*

*„It leads to a view of the development, where we have come ... 1 increasing the quality of the school, 2 improving children's attitude - children enjoy it more, 3 teachers enjoy it more, 4 parents are more motivated, 5 greater departmental cooperation (see drama with dance, etc.).“*

*„The benefit is self-reflection for teacher, self-reflection for students, self-reflection for the head, a source of ideas for improvement, a defence against the stereotype.“*

*„In addition, self-evaluation led to better communication, we are not afraid to tell our opinion in the departments - promoting the safe environment. One looks back, where we have moved.“*

*„Self-evaluation gives an opportunity to create a better system, a system of school work and clearly defined points.“*

# the stereotype

Teachers emphasize and appreciate the benefits of school self-evaluation especially on the level of motivation to look back, to reflect on the procedures used in the teaching, on the needs of the child, in terms of a means to actually improve one's own teaching professional and personal competence.

## Method of setting goals and self-evaluation schedule

Art School Jičín objectives are set by the management of the school after consulting the Art School Board in School Self-evaluation (2006, 2008) continuously and in close connection with the assessment of individual areas, in the first general part of the School Self-evaluation (2008, p 1-7, 2006 , p 1-8). But at the same time, in terms of setting and evaluation, the goals are part of the second specific part of the school self-evaluation - annexes, which are evaluation reports of individual departments and branches (sections).

School Self-evaluation (2008, p 1-7, 2006, p 1-8) includes a timetable that consists in setting the deadline when the task is to have been fulfilled / or to be fulfilled, and in the subsequent brief evaluation of one of seven areas:

1. Conditions for learning
2. Course of education
3. Support for the school, pupils and students, cooperation with parents, influence of mutual relations between the school, pupils, parents and others in education
4. Learning outcomes of students and pupils
5. School management, quality of personnel work, quality of further education staff
6. Results of school work, especially given the conditions of education and economic resources
7. Priorities pedagogical educational process

Deadlines (sometimes in the form of a particular date, sometimes in the form of „immediate, ongoing, as needed“) are set continuously in the text. Along with the date is also indicated who is responsible for implementation: the powers in school self-evaluation are divided among the heads of the sections, the heads of the departments, head of the school and the legal representative. Despite this brief and very general official plan of self-evaluation in School Self-evaluation (2006, 2008), it is evident of the school life that this form is not the only working plan in the school. In addition to the official one, there is actually an official plan in Jičín Art School. It follows from the school life, from the general form of the official plan and the immediate nature of communication and information sharing system that the management defies formal planning and evaluation „on paper“ and thus doing it „for the look of the thing“. They have their goals and plans firmed up „in their heads“ while developing and constantly adjusting them flexibly depending on the current situation in the school. It is illustrated by the first implementation of teacher self-evaluation in 2008, although there is no mention about teacher self-evaluation in the 2006 self-evaluation plan. The unofficial self-evaluation plan emerges at the level of oral communication in interaction with the Art School Board, heads of the departments and ordinary teachers. The school and ASB are playing the central role in planning.

Delegation of powers and the role of SUR in the planning and evaluation of goals

*„The position of the head of the section = career = importance = responsibility. Role in the section = I have my place, my professional opinion is heard and I am not afraid to say it.“*  
*(Komárková, presentation Our Journey to Self-evaluation, 2009)*

The head now considers delegation of powers a necessary part of the effective management of the school. According to the head, heading towards school self-evaluation began in 1994, by „establishing art sections (Art School Board - ASB) and electing their heads (team building - only intuitive at that time) ...“ (Komárková, presentation, 2009). ASB at the Art School Jičín usually consists of eight members: the music department heads, representatives of art, dance and literary dramatic subject field, head of the branch. ASB was established by the head as an advisory body, a means of delegation and support for higher motivation and participation of the teachers.

The school also makes use of the ASB for more efficient deliberations. This advisory body to the Head meets every month. Subsequently, if necessary, there are only meetings of individual artistic sections under the system of delegation of powers and duties. Major meetings of the entire staff, which the school finds too formal and very little effective, are therefore held at the Art School Jičín only about twice a year. Usually several times a month, at least once a month after the ASB meeting, teachers of departments and arts sections meet. Also members of the department continuously communicate with each other, in electronic form.

From the beginning of the self-evaluation efforts till the autumn of 2010, self-evaluation objectives in the school were set by the school management (head teacher, deputy head teacher, SEP coordinator) while the role of ASB consisted in finding ways to meet them and design a measuring tool. The autumn of 2010 was a turning point in the history of Jičín Art School's self-evaluation, the school starts to apply the ideas from the vision of the school, „teamwork, system and interdisciplinary cooperation,“ even in planning and evaluating the objectives. In September 2010 the school began more systematically and as a team preparing for evaluation with the completion planned for the next school year. The school conceived this preparation mainly as a search for topics of self-evaluation and distribution thereof. Primarily, it was the head teacher again who had brought a certain thematic design, „the head teacher brought the topics forward at the ASB.“ (From the head's statement), but this primal proposal of hers was first talked through. The result was not only modified topics, but also new ones. Since October 2010, in three areas selected and specified by the ASB there are three teachers charged even with coordinating self-evaluation. Each of them is responsible for one of the topics: 1 co-operation with parents, 2 school climate, 3 Cooperation of teachers at the school.

School self-evaluation process involves delegating already in the phase of planning and setting goals, they consider it an important move and step forward. The head comments this moment when the school self-evaluation becomes a matter of teamwork starting from the planning phase: „We were talking about preparation of subsequent self-evaluation in the next period and this occurred to us. The initiator was me :-)), but the whole school art board assumed the discussion. Tomorrow we will have a meeting and discuss it in detail that with all our colleagues.“ Each of the persons responsible for a given area draws up in the first place his/her own view on the issue, own procedure proposal, etc. These proposals as well as our next moves were further discussed with the teaching staff.

Method to evaluate objectives: examples of the structure of evaluation reports by departments, branches

Annexes form an essential part of a self-evaluation report because in addition to goals formulated for self-evaluation of individual departments or disciplines it contains their evaluation too. Any such assessment has a distinctive structure, concept and content, and thus the autonomy and full responsibility and self-evaluation skills of departments and disciplines are preserved. Evident, however, is the gradual trend towards a single concept, structure, uniform categories assessed in evaluation reports of individual departments and disciplines. The main factor influencing the development of evaluation reports seems to be a SWOT analysis used at the school in 2006 and since 2008 it has also been the use the annual self-evaluation sheet for teachers. The influence of these two assessment tools on the structure and concept of evaluation reports and various departments and disciplines is illustrated by an analysis of categories used in the individual evaluation reports that form the content of annexes to School self-evaluation (2006) and Self-evaluation (2008).

For example, in the structure of the evaluation reports of individual departments and disciplines in 2008 there are the following evaluated categories (School self-evaluation, 2008, pp. 9-21) - for convenience, these are divided into two groups in the table:

categories showing the continuity of evaluation (the future objectives in connection to the objectives set in the earlier period)	categories differentiating the focus of evaluation
what we wanted what went wrong - what we want to change objectives for the following years meeting the objectives objectives for the future objectives for the oncoming period	biggest weaknesses seem to be these phenomena are positively evaluated... general objectives specific objectives school program conditions for learning the educational process: - planning preparation - implementation and management of lessons - motivation, evaluation - climate, relationships, communication learning outcomes quality of support from the school management cooperation with parents quality of outcomes of school work drawbacks we see the positives in ...



The categories differentiating the focus of evaluation are linked to the structure and items evaluated in the worksheet for teacher self-evaluation used at school as a basis for self-evaluation of teachers and in the subsequent interview with the head annually since 2008. The self-evaluation sheet for teachers contains 75 items divided into seven areas marked in bold in the table (the educational process area includes four partial sub-areas); the items are largely focused on teachers' self-evaluation (44 items), 31 items map the subjective teachers' view of selected aspects of the school life.

It follows from the structure and method of evaluation of schools, departments and disciplines in the official reports as well as from the life of the school and its management's working style that the management not only motivates the departments and disciplines for continuous reflection, but also that it itself strives for the continuous evaluation of the objectives set. The key sources of information for it in doing so are: direct communication and sharing information with teachers, pupils and parents, a mental analysis of selected aspects of the school life now and in comparison with earlier times, reflection of the development of the school.

### Effect of the vision and focus of the school on self-evaluation objectives and instruments

However, AS Jičín formulated the first vision and focus of the school in its school curriculum as early as 2008. The focus and vision of the school are set out in the School curriculum HO-TO-VO (music-dance-art disciplines) 2010. It follows from a comparison of the visions of two school programs (SEP), in SEP 2008 and SEP 2010, that the school achieved a remarkable development in defining the direction of the development, increasing specificity and profiling in particular. Also more concise formulation, greater brevity, etc proved to be useful. Specification of the vision and focus of the school is considered in AS Jičín not only as an important step in its development, but also as an important shift towards more concrete and realistic goals and self-evaluation tools. The trend towards more specific and concrete formulations of the focus is evident in the school also in the character of self-evaluation tools. This shift is illustrated by, for example, a brief comparison of questionnaires for pupils from 2004, 2005/2006 and 2010. Questionnaire No. 1 for pupils (2004) contained 46 items - closed questions mapping the pupil's view of the school climate and the educational process. It follows from the comments by the school management to these questionnaires that they had set the goals too big („our eyes at the school were bigger than our stomach“) and wanted to map too much. Eventually, they had a problem with it as to who will evaluate the huge bounty of the data obtained (we had a pile of detailed questionnaires, but there was no one to process it, we were too busy. We also found out that we even do not wish to know so much at one time. And that there is no reason to ask about so many things at once ...). The resulting effect with this first questionnaire was thus minimal, „probably also because we had not made it clear what exactly and why we want to find it out.“ Questionnaire No. 2 for pupils (2005/2006) was much more concise, containing only seven open questions: there was already no problem with the evaluation. The school evaluates positively not only lesser processing requirements, but also its informative value that it evaluates as „much better“. The latest questionnaire for pupils to be used by the school (2010) is focused most specifically - on the teacher's approach from the perspective of the pupils; with its four questions (three closed and one open) it confirms that the school carries out constant reflection and evaluation of the direction and efforts in self-evaluation. Functioning of AS Jičín self-evaluation in close association with the development, vision and focus of the school is also confirmed by the fact that „the team, system and interdisciplinary cooperation“ set out in the vision is applied in the school and proves to be useful in the implementation of self-evaluation too. The management is trying to engage more teachers not only in reflections on the focus and visions for the school development, but also for self-evaluation, especially by delegating powers, using multilevel school management, art sections, ASB and heads of departments.

### In conclusion

On the basis of reflection on its past experience with self-evaluation focused on setting and evaluating objectives, Art School Jičín would like to continue with self-evaluation efforts, taking into account the positive effects that it brings. In terms of more specific objectives set by AS Jičín in the given area for the future it is possible to recommend to others, especially primary art schools the following objectives for consideration:

- continue in this path to a better school through self-evaluation and other work on its system
- reflect the experience of self-evaluation, continue sharing in general as well as sharing visions and strategies
- do not be undaunted by the fear of the new, by disgust, fears, resistance to the new
- devote time, space and energy to reflect school self-evaluation by each individual school teacher and draw benefits of self-evaluation for own work teachers
- support the basic premise of the school development - teamwork, delegation of responsibilities and powers

From the perspective of representatives of school partners it would be good to think about a way to use self-evaluation outcomes for the presentation of the most possible image of the school in public. The school will seek to make more use of ZUSkovinky (school newspaper) for more systematic and thorough information on self-evaluation outcomes, including measures taken. AS Jičín makes its experience available - for inspiration and instruction, even despite the belief that each school has to find an appropriate way for itself and that some experiences are non-transferable despite all their inspirational character.

Daniela Vrabcová



*School self-evaluation in England and Wales constitutes a key concept of assuring quality in the state-guaranteed services in the areas of education. Having been promoted for several years, the recommendation was transformed in a statutory obligation in 2005, which carries a constantly evolving system of both the contents and forms of self-evaluation processes accompanied by the creation of methodological materials and ICT systems. In the following text, we describe the distribution of forces in the field of responsibility and accountability in the service of school education. We will try to capture the developmental line of the introduction of self-evaluation in schools, major governmental and independent activities that accompanied these achievements. We look at the self-evaluation real practice in both countries and define future prospects in the mode of criticism and anticipated changes.*

## Introduction

The introduction of self-evaluation in the complex and variable system of state control, while maintaining the professional responsibility of schools, is considered in England and Wales from the developmental perspective as pragmatic and reactive rather than linear and continuous. Before the introduction of the statutory obligation to carry out school self-evaluation (2005) extensive discussions had been held for more than ten years about the importance and status of these professional activities, with the direct involvement of government parties and inspection bodies. Despite the lively dialogue on issues of self-evaluation on the world stage, the government initiated addressing this issue as late as 1997, when Labour launched a comprehensive reform of school education. But it were government interventions, however, that led to liberation of self-evaluation as a fully-fledged form of quality assurance. An increased role is attributed to professional associations, independent organizations and academics, who were able to clearly articulate their vision and bring concrete proposals for solutions in an effort to promote each other's initiatives to achieve the objective pursued.



# School self-evaluation in England

## Permeability of systems and responsibilities

In England and Wales there were efforts from the beginning to achieve permeability of both forms of evaluation. The real practice corresponds to this intent and the procedural and substantive provisions in the two countries are complementary. The requirements for school self-evaluation are based on inspection procedure frameworks. Outputs of school self-evaluation are used and taken into account in inspections and the inspection report includes a treatise on self-evaluation results. Reciprocally, the school can incorporate the conclusions and recommendations of the inspection into planning its own development. Practitioners consider the interconnection useful, because it prepares schools well for the state-secured inspection. Conclusions of both the surveys can also be compared functionally, allowing more efficient use of the evaluation potential and objectifying the evidence of quality assessed. In England, a key source of information on the level of education and training provided is inspectional Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – Ofsted, independent of the Department for Education - DfE. In Wales, the central inspection body is Estyn (the name comes from the Welsh meaning to extend). Ofsted and Estyn are independent inspection authorities obliged to carry out an external inspection at least once every six years in all schools. Also local educational authorities - LEAs have enhanced powers and spheres of competence to control and supervise schools in England and Wales. In terms of self-evaluation, the role of the office is to be a critical friend of the school. Many LEAs powers in both countries have been delegated to another level of responsibility for the management of schools - Governing Body. Along with the head and teachers, the governing body is directly involved in the preparation and implementation of self-evaluation. Their joint responsibility is also to prepare self-evaluation report in the form of school action plan (School Development / Improvement Plan in Wales). A particular government's achievement was the publication of a White Paper entitled Excellence in Schools (DfE 1997). It pointed out the importance of integrating content and methodology of internal and external evaluation of schools connected with the use of the same quality criteria and evaluation techniques. The actual approaches and methodological systems of self-evaluation were in this period also developed by LEAs and the year 1998 also saw the first formal step by Ofsted (School Evaluation Matters, 1998). Inspectors were inspired by the Scottish model of self-evaluation and recognized its importance as a starting, qualitative aspect of the school development.

The late nineties saw the importance of internal evaluation increasing, which also increased the requirements to implement it. Inspection authorities in this period encouraged to implement self-evaluation process at least once a year, between external inspections. National criteria for the quality of education were determined by Ofsted and Estyn, but the school was to free to choose self-evaluation system.





- centre on the current external inspection on the processes taking place exclusively in the school environment and take into account the specificities and the uniqueness of this environment
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school including the development plans
- assess the school success rate of pupils with an emphasis on personal and social skills
- adjust the external inspection of the self-evaluation model that the school has chosen, developed or adapted

## The practice of self-evaluation in England

- assess the progress against the criteria set by the inspection - submit the evidence underlying the self-evaluation results
- identify strengths and weaknesses
- explain the policies and procedures with which the school intends to eliminate the weaknesses and enhance the strengths

Until school year 2010/2011 all public and private schools in England were required to use in self-evaluation on-line self-evaluation forms developed by experts from Ofsted - Self-evaluation form (SEF). The school was to implement an internal evaluation at least annually, or between inspections, and as already mentioned, the results served as starting points to the follow-up external control. The main areas of self-evaluation form in the SEF system: learning outcomes achieved by pupils and students, the effectiveness of education and training provided, quality of the school management, quality of catering services, summative evaluation. Each area is specified in detail in two other sub-levels. These are supplied with quality indicators with characteristic descriptions and examples of value judgments that fall under each grade of the assessment scale: 1 outstanding, 2 good, 3 satisfactory, 4 inadequate. In England, a web application RAISEonline (Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through School Self-evaluation) is also developed in a compatible form to the SEF, which can be used to compare selected educational achievements of pupils of individual schools. Outputs are available to schools, education authorities LEA and Ofsted inspectors.

## Self-evaluation practice in Wales

In Wales, similar principles are upheld in the implementation of self-evaluation in schools as in England and since 2004 self-evaluation has been considered as the initial phase of the external inspection. Welsh schools have a high degree of autonomy in choosing self-evaluation system. The offer is provided by Estyn, LEAs, associations of governing bodies, and profitable organizations. The contents of self-evaluation and requirements for the final report are based on Estyn inspection framework (Common Inspection Framework) and the government's strategies of reform and development of quality of school education (School Effectiveness Framework). Self-evaluation forms with the principles of self-evaluation, areas and sets of the quality criteria are specified in the manuals for each level of education (e.g., Self-Evaluation Manual for Primary Schools). The core of self-evaluation in Wales comprises three starting questions: what quality have we come to? How have we found out about it? How can we improve it? The areas of self-evaluation consist of two levels, with the first level including: the quality of learning outcomes, quality of education and training, quality of leadership and management. Schools in Wales are encouraged to perceive self-evaluation as a continuous, cyclical process, being an internalized part of the school life, not just a crash events before a planned external inspection. It is within the discretion of schools what areas and when they will be subject to investigation.

## The future of self-evaluation in the mode of criticism and expected changes

Future prospects are coloured with critical feedback and forthcoming changes to both systems of the school evaluation. Under criticism is the procedural complexity and length of both the school inspection and self-evaluation. Seen as problematic is the detailed processing of quality criteria into many subdivisions, which detracts attention to less important aspects of the school work. The inspection is criticized for increased attention to monitoring compliance with bureaucratic obligations. Practitioners are not happy with the prescribed form of self-evaluation, which is in their view created with regard to the interests of Ofsted rather than to individual needs and specifics of individual schools. Although the school is free to choose an evaluation system independently, most schools in England, for obvious reasons, use the SEF forms developed by Ofsted. Since June 2011, the SEF application has been closed and amendments are being prepared to these two forms of evaluation. Outcomes of the existing school self-evaluation will be used in this form by the inspected for the last time in the school year 2011/2012. From this year on more autonomy is also planned for schools in choosing their own models and systems of self-evaluation.



## In conclusion

From the late nineties until the rise of the conservative government in 2010, school education in England and Wales went through numerous reform interventions. Positively evaluated are the increased investments in education, rise in teachers' salaries and material security of schools. Reflected is also the increasing level of educational attainment of pupils in national tests. However, they fail in reducing the number of „below-average“ schools, especially in cases where the socioeconomic status of their pupils' families shows certain specifics in comparison with other schools. The constant rising of the minimum educational standards means that long-troubled schools have no chance to achieve it. Increasingly more often discussed is the need to assess the education outcomes with regard to a wide range of indicators. To see the importance of the value added and „compare the comparable.“ Reform voices see the crux of solution to the problems in returning to the school itself. To the pupils, parents, teachers and representatives of local communities. Only the cooperation and participation of all stakeholders can unravel the difficulties of schools, find solutions and, in doing so, assist the growth and development. The local accountability should be superior to meeting the centrally set requirements and harsh penalties for violations thereof. „Desirable is the activity from the grass-roots level, which means that professionals work with the community as with citizens, not as with consumers.“ (Chapman et al., 2010, s. 205)

A significant feature of education policy in England and Wales in the last twenty years was an effort to centralize the supervision of schools by a state-regulated external inspection. Despite the many initiatives that have led to the strengthening of the importance of self-evaluation, respect is still emphasized for the teaching autonomy of teachers, which is actually implemented with delegated powers to oversee the quality of their own professional practice. Respecting the individual peculiarities of each individual school and preparing concrete solutions „tailored“ involving all stakeholders as partners. According to experts on education policy of the country, that is the basic principle of the school evaluation reform.

Alena Seberová, Martin Maláčik

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# National Conference of the Road to Quality Improvement Project

The final national conference was held in Prague at the CITY Pankrac conference centre on November 29, 2011. The program of the conference and PowerPoint presentations are on the project website.



School head teachers have the option to use the tools, methods and other support activities of the project Road to Quality Improvement to manage the quality of „their“ schools – this was the main topic the lead project manager, Martin Chval, talked about. Speeches were also given by directors of partner organizations of the National Institute of Education, School Counselling Facilities and Facilities for Further Education of Pedagogical Staff Vaclav Horejsi, and Plitzova Helena of the National Institute for Further Education. She informed about how NIFE would ensure sustainability of the project activities after its completion. A speech was also given by Jaromir Krejci, representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, who presented the context of the implementation of self-evaluation and amendment to the Education Act, which is in the approval process. The conference also brought insights into how self-evaluation processes can contribute to the development of schools, the conditions under which these processes work and under which they do not - Milan Pol of Masaryk University in Brno spoke about various aspects of self-evaluation. Participants were familiarized with the experience of evaluation of schools by the providers and educational activities that are carried out and planned for the providers in this area. This information, including basic methodological recommendations, was presented in a joint speech by Chairwoman of the school committee of the Association of Towns and Municipalities Marcela Štikova and Director of the Educational Institute of Central Bohemia Jiřı Holy. Presented were inspiring examples of practice from Czech schools, how self-assessment serves to develop a Litvinov school and a school of Prague Kunratice. Pavel Škramlık and Vıt Beran, head teachers of these schools, shared their experience with the implementation of self-evaluation and realization of various



project activities. The afternoon program was conducted in five sections. Evaluation tools were presented to the participants by Stanislav Michek, examples of inspirational practice by Jana Polachova Vařatkova, education activity by Iva Shanilova, consultancy was presented by advisor Vıt Beran and Jana Ostrytova, and mutual learning activity by threesome of facilitators Kateřina Žeřulova, Jana Kargerova and Jana Kazıkova. The speakers talked about how the activities were implemented, what was their content and what opportunities they saw if these were to continue. Each participant could visit all the sections they were interested in, discussions were held there until late afternoon. Among those present were also colleagues from Slovakia, namely from the State School Inspectorate and the National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements. Colleagues from the Slovak Inspectorate said they had come to draw inspiration. It is a pity that the Czech School Inspectorate was missing among participants. The conference was attended by a total of 193 people; mostly they were representatives of schools. But there were also representatives of providers or educational institutions, and of course the Ministry of Education. Everyone agreed on the undisputed benefits of the project. Project Road to Quality Improvement showed schools ways to improve themselves.

Jana Ostrytova

## Final Regional Conferences of the Project

From January to March 2012 final regional conferences will take place (with an emphasis on the presentation of outputs of the project activities and evaluation of merits of the project) in all NIFE regional offices. The conference aims to introduce and pass the outputs of various activities of the project to educational experts and providers of schools and school facilities. The regional conferences will give participants an opportunity not only to find out more about the issue of self-evaluation and what is the current state of self-evaluation processes in schools, involvement of schools in the project activities and how the project itself helped schools, but also about the state the schools reached in this area, and thus they will share their own experience. It is a great benefit of these conferences that head teachers of schools not only have an opportunity to meet with experts in the field of self-evaluation, but also with representatives of the Czech School Inspectorate and providers. In the morning, presentations of outputs from the individual project activities will be held for all participants, and in the afternoon workshops will be held with topics Mutual Learning and Evaluation Tools which the conference participants, by virtue of their choice, will be invited to attend.

Iva Shanilova

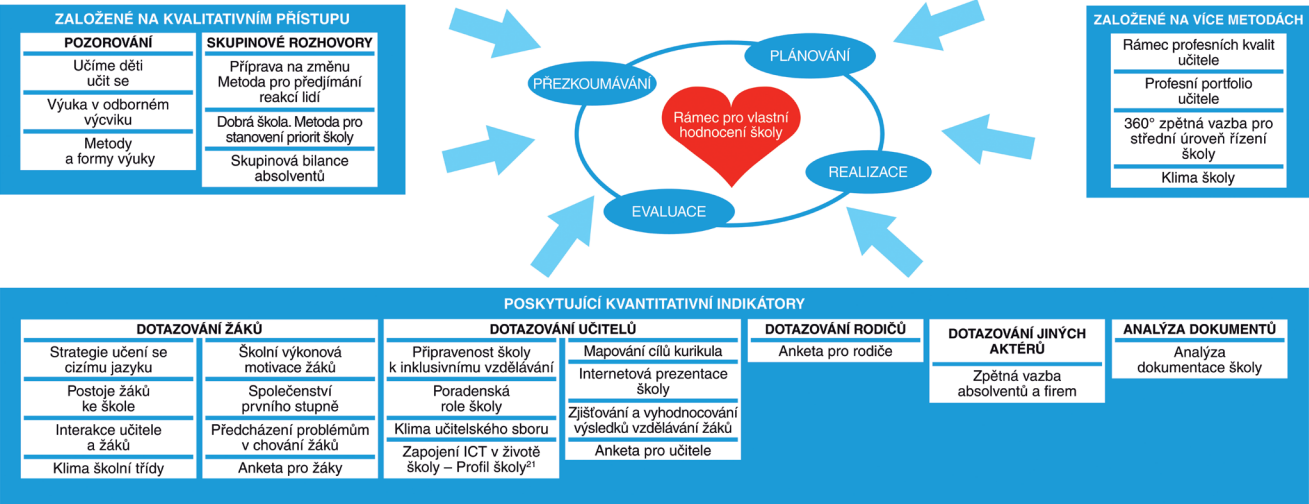
Month	Tuesday	Wednesday	Regional Office
January		January 11	Praha
		January 18	Česke Budejovice
	January 24		Hradec Kralove
February		February 1	Praha
		February 8	ustı nad Labem
		February 15	Ostrava
		February 22	Olomouc
		February 29	Pardubice
March		March 7	Liberec
		March 14	Jihlava
	March 20		Karlovy Vary
	March 21		Plzen
	March 27		Zlın
		March 28	Brno



In the second issue of the bulletin we offered readers an unfinished overview of evaluation tools (hereafter ET) to be created and published by the end of the project (April 2012). As we have previously mentioned (Issue 2, page 4), self-evaluation - or more precisely school quality management - should not begin with the choice of technology, i.e. the selection of tools. Still, in planning self-evaluation it is important to reflect on what areas the school wants to deal with, what it wants to focus on in detail what it wants to identify, measure, etc., so that it fit into the process of improving the quality of education provided. The school has to answer an important question: what use will it make of information identified through the evaluation tool? To facilitate the decision of what a tool is suitable for in evaluation of the school, the following text describes one of the views how to make decisions

# Evaluation tools created and published

An imaginary heart (core) among the tools is School Self Evaluation Framework, a methodological guide (1; the method was introduced in Bulletin No. 3). The tool guides the school meaningfully through some pitfalls of self-evaluation. According to one head teacher, it is „a notebook“ for school quality management. It covers all the activities of the school and allows teachers to comprehensively evaluate their work they perform in school at all stages of the quality cycle, i.e. planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Since it is a complex, comprehensive tool that does not go to details in many areas, it is recommended to supplement it with any of the other 29 instruments. By their methodological nature, these provide quantitative indicators, stimulate discussion during the evaluation (qualitative tools) or a combination of several methods. The qualitative approach tools are based on observation (inspection of classes) or group interviews with teachers and pupils. The quantitative tools are either questionnaires or assessment sheets and document analysis. Respondents interviewed are students, teachers, parents or secondary school graduates. Three instruments consisting of multiple methods relate to the evaluation and development of teaching staff and are based on questionnaires, self-assessment sheets and document analysis and are always accompanied by an evaluating interview. The fourth one is based on multiple methods - School Climate consists of three questionnaires: a questionnaire for pupils, a questionnaire for teachers and a questionnaire for parents (more on page 14 of this Bulletin).



The list of all evaluation instruments is published on the website of the project and it is also included in every manual of evaluation tools (see text on page ZY of this bulletin). In this list, each instrument has its own number (1-30) and apart from its name, which is in bold in the following text, it also has a sub-name, which is a methodological clarification in terms of the dominant method in some cases also in terms of the target group of the provider of information.

In the project there are following ET for inquiring the pupils:

- Survey for pupils (3), a survey made-to-measure for the school (introduced in Bulletin No. 4) consists of a set of questions focused on the course, teaching outcomes and educational activities of the school, pupils' motivation and other benchmarks of their participation in the performance of the school from which the school can prepare its own questionnaire or survey for pupils.
- School pupil achievement motivation (24), a non-anonymous psycho-diagnostic questionnaire for pupils, measures school pupil achievement motivation, consisting of the need (efforts) to achieve a successful performance in the school and the need to avoid a school failure (fear of failure or being unsuccessful).
- Pupils' attitudes towards the school (25), a questionnaire for pupils that allows you to map pupils' attitudes towards education, school and selected subjects (Czech language, mathematics, foreign language and ICT lessons).
- Strategies to learn a foreign language (23), a questionnaire for pupils, determines what procedures pupils apply when learning a foreign language and how teachers support the use of strategies by students in their lessons. These two views are linked in the ET report.
- „Climate“ questionnaires for pupils: Classroom Climate (14), Interaction of the teacher and pupils (18), Preventing problems in the behaviour of pupils (20) and The Lower Primary Community (17) are presented in the Annex and on page 14 of this bulletin.

In the project there are ETs for inquiring the teachers:

- Survey for Teachers (4), a survey made-to-measure for the school (presented in Bulletin No. 4) consists of a set of questions focused on the teachers' priorities, evaluation of their own work, professional development (continuing education of teachers), evaluation of team's work, the level of cooperation between teachers, pupils and parents, which the school can use to prepare its own questionnaire or survey for teachers.

- Methodological guide ICT in the life of the school, School Profile (27) helps schools determine the extent to which they manage to integrate information and communication technologies in the life of the whole school. It is not focused solely on technical parameters; it mainly deals with how technologies actually affect the process of teaching.
- Assessment sheets Identification and evaluation of the pupils' learning outcomes (26) serve as a guide in selecting an evaluation tool to assess learning outcomes (e.g., didactical tests) and assess its quality.
- Assessment sheet Advisory role of the school (21) supports self-evaluation of school's advisory services. School advisory departments, or school advisory officers (e.g., educational advisor, prevention methodologist of the school, school psychologist, and special education teacher of the school), can use the tool offered to describe and reflect on their own focus and activity.
- Assessment sheet School Website (28) offers the possibility to generally evaluate the form of web sites of the school both in terms of content and form. Information obtained through the sheet are not to be the „definitive“ and „impartial“ assessment, but rather a source of food for thought over the appearance, functionality, and some issues of web presentations as a means of school communication.
- Assessment sheet Mapping the curriculum goals (22) supports exact work of teachers in defining, realizing and evaluating the educational goals. Based on the outcomes of this sheet, the teacher adequately may modify his/her teaching strategies with regard to curriculum requirements, or needs of pupils and their own needs.
- Questionnaire for teachers School's readiness for inclusive education (19) offers the possibility to generally assess to what extent the school (i.e. all teachers) are ready for the inclusive concept of education, that is, to what extent they are open to include various students in education, whether relationships within schools and relationships of the school with others are adequately adjusted, how teachers work with students, etc.
- Questionnaire for teachers Teaching staff climate (16) is further introduced in the Annex and on page 14 of this bulletin.

The instruments providing quantitative indicators also include:

- Survey for parents (2), a survey made-to-measure for the school (presented in Bulletin No. 4), consists of a set of questions focused on assessing satisfaction with various aspects of the operation of the schools and include questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. A specific of the surveys is areas targeted to the extent of parents' involvement in operations of the school and their awareness about the school from which the school may use to prepare its own survey or questionnaire for parents.
- Feedback from graduates and companies (30), a questionnaire for graduates and an interview for representatives of cooperating firms, allows to determine satisfaction of graduates that graduated just a year ago with the school - specifically, with the course and outcomes of education in the secondary school - and offers suitable questions for interviews with representatives of businesses.
- Analysis of school's documentation (5), a catalogue of quantitative indicators, provides an overview of the catalogue in the form of quality indicators that can monitor the school's documentation and evaluated in relation to specified criteria. The tool works with data maintained in compulsory school and other documentation (school register, class books, class reports, pupil books, catalogues, competition results, etc.) with information that is passed through the school to other institutions of Statistics (IIE, CSI, CZVV, Labour Office, KEVIS, the annual report on the activities of the school, annual reports of the region, system information portals, etc.), and data that the school receives for its own use.

In the project there are the following inspectional sheets:

- Inspectional sheet Methods and forms of teaching (11) supports teachers' thinking about the purposefulness and efficiency of the methods and forms of teaching.
- Inspectional sheet We teach children to learn (12) gives the users an option to assess lessons in terms of opportunities for the development of learning competencies. Assessed are situations and characteristics of teaching that support the development of learning competencies, but also those in which this competence is limited, blocked.
- Inspectional sheet Teaching in vocational training (13) helps to find out information about the quality of teacher's work, which are obtained in the classroom during the vocational training as an essential component of the study in vocational programs.
- In the project there are qualitative tools based on group discussions:
- Good school (6; method presented in Bulletin No. 1), a method for school's prioritizing, helps to stimulate discussion about the school's priorities and visions, i.e. it encourages the development of consensus on core values and needs of the school, helps to clarify the procedures how to fulfil the priorities and the vision, stimulates discussion about how to change, promotes collaboration of teachers or other school staff.
- Preparing for change (7; a method presented in Bulletin No. 2), a method for anticipating reactions of people, allows the prediction and analysis of the possible reactions of people (e.g. school pupils, teachers, parents) to a planned change that concerns them more directly. The use of the method supports detecting a range of mechanisms that may hinder the development and block changes in the school, enables it to find and select such interventions and methods of communication that will facilitate the introduction of changes and support its successful adoption.
- Group review of graduates (29), a method for evaluating the course of the school education, helps schools receive from pupils prior to their departure from the school (primary or secondary) feedback on their satisfaction with the course of education in sufficient detail and yet clearly so that their statements are understandable and could be taken as an opinion of the group and not that of individuals.

The Project offers schools the following tools based on several methods:

- Framework of teacher's professional qualities (8), an evaluation and self-evaluation sheet, provides a comprehensive teacher's self-evaluation and evaluation. It reveals not only their strengths but also areas for improvement. Besides the principal formative function it can be used also in the „summative sense“, i.e. to review and propose other ways to professional development of teachers.
- Teacher's professional portfolio (9), a set of methods for evaluation and self-evaluation, is intended for the development and reflection of the teacher and his/her portfolio that demonstrates a range of activities of a particular teacher.
- 360° feedback for the middle level of the school management (10), a set of questionnaires and methodological recommendations, is a multi-source evaluation, feedback from multiple evaluators. The evaluation system is designed to evaluate the senior teaching staff (e.g. deputy headmasters, heads of subject committees, education heads, coordinators) of all types of major schools.
- School climate (14), a set of questionnaires for teachers, pupils and parents, is introduced in detail in the Annex and on page 14 of this bulletin.

In conclusion, I wish the directors and teachers to choose an evaluation tool suitable for their purpose and use it to improve the quality of education provided by school to its pupils.

*In a certain stage, evaluation tools are used for evaluation of the school. To be able to use them well and properly, the school staff, external evaluators, users in general need to first familiarize themselves with the information disclosed by their authors about them. In the project Road to Quality Improvement they form a manual to each of them (user guide). This is a text that should help users of the tools to in deciding whether to use them for evaluation. Users will also find out information on how to properly and meaningfully use the tool. They will thus answer questions such as: What can I find using it and what not? Under what conditions can I get reliable information? What has been done to ensure that the tool „measures“ what its authors declare? What not to measure using it? What pitfalls to avoid when using it? Etc.*

# What's in the manuals to the evaluation tools?

For ease of reference, they usually contain information in this structure (if relevant for the particular instrument):

- Objectives and purpose of the tool
- A general introduction to the issue
- Instructions for assigning and evaluating the tools
- Interpretation of the tool
- Procedure for verification of the tool
- General recommendations – action/measures
- Example of the use of the tool
- Risks of the use of the tool
- Annexes:
  - A specific form of tools (e.g. full text of the questionnaire)
  - A example of an automatically generated evaluation report
  - Psychometric properties of the tool and norms



By way of introduction, the users learn what can be measured with the tool, what it serves for, what is its purpose, function, etc. To some extent, this defines what the user does not find out while using it. In addition to the mission, it is also mentioned in the introduction for which type of school and for what respondents it is intended. Subsequently, the authors report on theoretical bases, familiarizing the reader with the area to investigate. Thus, the users learn about the questionnaire for pupils School pupil achievement motivation, what are the models of achievement motivation, about the origins and development of achievement needs, about anxiety, fear of pupils at the school, the link between fear and academic performance (achievement). Consequently, the users are made familiar with how to proceed when working with the tools, i.e. how to proceed when, for example, assigning the questionnaires, when inspecting with the inspectional sheets, how to hold various forms of group discussions. An important phase of work with each tool is the interpretation of what the users learn from pupils, parents, teachers, etc. The authors of the manuals then discuss how the instrument was created, with how many representatives of schools it was discussed, how it was modified, how it was tested, at how many schools, under what conditions, etc. Readers will find an accurate description of how the tool was developed and how it was modified. Each manual also contains recommendations to improve the state detected, e.g. how to improve pupils' attitudes, what to do to better the climate in the classroom, etc. In order to be sufficiently practical, the manuals also contain anonymised example of how the tool was used in piloting. Manuals are slightly different from each other depending on how you can methodologically classify the tool contained. Quality instruments do not contain an annex of the evaluation report, psychometric properties and norms. On the contrary, they highlight recommendations on how to navigate through various byways, and also describe the risks of the use of the tool. In creating the manuals, it is particularly made sure that the user of the instrument has the most relevant information for its use. The authors try not to hold any details from the users seeking, i.e. „play“ fair with them. To make sure that the manuals serve the users well, special care is given to the quality of their elaboration. After submitted by the author, they go through peer review being read at least by two reviewers. The reviewers usually focus on the quality of: clarity to the user, usability for teachers, theoretical background and terminological purity, logical reasoning, offer of appropriate interpretation of outcomes, clarity of instructions for the use of the tool, adequacy of the description of verifying (standardization), processing and work with the sources. Eventually, the manuals are made available on the project website and will also be included on the final DVD, which will be sent at the end of the project to each school.

**At present, there are eight manuals for these tools teachers, experts, etc.:**

- Framework for school self-evaluation - a methodological guide
- Good School - method for prioritizing of schools
- Preparing for change - method for anticipating people's reactions
- Interaction of teachers and pupils - a questionnaire for pupils
- Strategy of learning a foreign language - a questionnaire for pupils
- School pupils' achievement motivation - a questionnaire for pupils
- Pupils' attitudes to school - a questionnaire for pupils
- Group review of graduates - method to evaluate the course of the school education.

Manuals to other evaluation instruments are in the process of creation so that they can be gradually published on the project website by March 2012.

In conclusion, I wish the users much success when working with the tools and I recommend to give their time to familiarize themselves with the various byways of their use described in the manuals

Stanislav Michek



## A new publication about experienced teachers

Lazarová, B., et al. Pozdní sběr: O práci zkušených učitelů. Brno: Paido, 2011. 158 s. ISBN 978-80-7315-206-2.

In recent years - or decades, rather - they speak of an aging society and also the topic of the impact of age on performance in various professions has become more important. As for teaching, attention is traditionally paid to young novice teachers, while much less attention is paid to teachers with years of experience - it is yet a very large group of teachers! While their professional work is sometimes bound with a number of prejudices and myths, it is obvious that they have a specific position and specific professional needs.

It is the topic of experienced teachers that the publication by a team of authors led by Bohumíra Lazarová is devoted to. The first part of the book includes texts that are aimed at the issue of an aging workforce, demographic indicators in the education/school system, and transformations in the teaching profession in the last twenty years, the influence of the age on the profession, teachers' job satisfaction in relation to age or career. The second part of the publication presents the results of a research conducted in 2008-2010, whose main objective was to get to know selected aspects of the work of experienced teachers in primary schools in the Czech Republic. Attention is thus paid to the older teachers' working self-concept, relational transformations, motivation and willingness to remain in the profession as well as the expected support. The book is primarily intended for teachers and school managers, who can draw from it a number of suggestions for managing people and teams that respects their age differences. It may, however, be an inspiration for all those interested in educational issues - and especially the topic of the teaching profession.



## Interesting reading about teaching communication in school

Studia paedagogica: Řeč školy. 1/2011, Vol. 16, No. 1, ISSN 1803-7437.



The new monothematic issue of the magazine Studio paedagogica is called The Speech of the School. Editors (Roman Švaříček and Klára Šedová of the Institute of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University where the magazine is published) managed to compile an issue, in which all contributions in all sections are directly connected to the topic of pedagogical communication in the school. And in many respects it is a very challenging reading. First of all, Roman Švaříček offers an extensive study of functional analysis of teachers' questions in communication in the classroom in the upper primary school. Then Zuzana Makovská acquaints us with pupil strategies to find answers to the teacher's questions. Christoph Wulf and his colleagues write about communication practices within the school culture, specifically about the application of recognition and respect culture. Constellations of power in teaching communication are the subject of a text by Klára Šedová (the text is already available on the new website of the magazine - see: [www.phil.muni.cz/journals/sp](http://www.phil.muni.cz/journals/sp)). Peter Gavara deals with pupils' boldness and shyness at grammar schools in Slovakia. Bernd Hackl and Sandra Hummel then offer a text on a topic which occurs relatively rarely - about body language in education. Thus far, these are empirically-based texts. Two other reports have a theoretical-summarizing character - Zuzana Petrová pays attention to some aspects of pedagogical communication in approaches inspired by the famous Russian psychologist Vygotsky and Tomáš Svatoš writes about pedagogical interaction and communication - in the recapitulation of a number of activities associated with the use of the method analysing pedagogical communication in the classroom (so called Flanders category system). Student work, a traditional section of the magazine, consists of two texts this time. First Jarmila Bradová offers a study of the variations of the spatial arrangement of the classroom and their impact on teaching communication. Lucie Vaňurová writes about gender-stereotyped patterns of behaviour in educational communication in upper primary schools. The reviews look back at Průcha's Dítě v procesu osvojování jazyka (The child in the process of language acquisition) and offer a critical view of Čapek's treatise on class and school climate.

We think that the reader will find each text included interesting, perhaps most notably those based on solid empirical research, the outcomes of which often significantly enrich the professional discourse on pedagogical or teaching communication in the school. It is a volume that should not pass unnoticed by those interested in the traditional theme, but this time viewed in many cases in a remarkable way.

*Dear readers,*

*the project Road to Quality Improvement approaches its end, and therefore outputs will be finalized extensively, which we have planned for you to facilitate implementation of school self-evaluation.*

Recapitulation of what we have already prepared for you:

- the call centre remains in operation with phone number: +420 775 583 513, it is also possible to use e-mail: [cesta@nuov.cz](mailto:cesta@nuov.cz) - and we will answer your questions about self-evaluation
- until November, we offer you at <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/evaluacni-nastroje> other evaluation tools to use - the total of 29 has been published:
  - Advisory role of the school (assessment sheet)
  - Preventing problems in students' behaviour (a questionnaire for pupils)
  - Classroom climate (a questionnaire for pupils)
  - Methods and forms of teaching (inspectional sheet)
  - School's readiness for inclusive education (a questionnaire for teachers)
  - Teaching in vocational training (inspectional sheet)
  - Framework of teacher's professional qualities (evaluation and self- evaluation sheet)
  - Lower Primary School Community (a questionnaire for pupils in the form of a computer game)
  - School Climate (a set of questionnaires for teachers, pupils and parents)
  - Analysis of school documentation (a catalogue of quantitative indicators)
  - Survey for pupils (a survey made- to- measure for the school)
  - Feedback from graduates and companies (a questionnaire for graduates and an interview for representatives of cooperating companies)
  - Teacher's professional portfolio (a set of methods for evaluation and self- evaluation)
- we have published eight manuals for evaluation tools
- we have published ten examples of inspirational practice - at: <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/inspirativni-praxe>
- events are taking place such as workshops, exchange visits and peer reviews - details are published on the site: <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/aktivita-podporujici-vzajemne-uceni>
- in September and October self- evaluation consultants returned to schools to complete their intervention in schools - we offer the advisory model especially to providers, who are interested in providing advisory services to „their“ schools – since September the training program Self-evaluation Coordinator has been taking place again.

# What has been done and what the future holds for us in store

And what you can look forward by the end of the project...

- by the end of 2011 all evaluation tools will be published at the portal of evaluation tools: <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/evaluacni-nastroje>
- by the end of 2011 all peer-learning activities will take place, i.e. 13 workshops, three of which will be devoted to practical training of working with evaluation tools and other self-evaluation processes - you can get information on the dates and places at: <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/ostre-workshopy>; also, 14 mutual visits will take place and we will complete four peer reviews - by the end of 2011 the above mentioned training program Self-evaluation Coordinator will take place in all regional offices of NIFE - during the summer holidays our creative team worked intensively creating the texts, so you can look forward to five publications: Mutual learning in Self-evaluation, Consultancy in Self-evaluation, monograph Schools on the Road to Quality Improvement - self-evaluation support system for schools in the Czech Republic, Examples of Inspiring Practices in Self-evaluation, Self-evaluation from the External Perspective; these publications will be issued gradually by the end of the project in spring 2012
- from January to March 2012 final regional conferences will be held, which you can sign up for at e-mail: [muhlheimova@nidv.cz](mailto:muhlheimova@nidv.cz) - addresses and locations are available on the Web: <http://www.nuov.cz/ae/krajske-konference> - in April 2012 the final issue of the bulletin On the Road to Quality Improvement will be published with the topic Implementing the Changes - a Learning School; Issue 6 will bring a DVD as an insert with all the final outputs of the project, as well as all evaluation tools for you to install in the school network and work with them.

We wish that the outcomes we offer were useful for you and assisted you in managing the implementation of self-evaluation.  
We look forward to working with you in 2012.

Jana Ostrýtová  
In behalf of the project team of Road to Quality Improvement



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