ON THE ROAD TO QUALITY

Cesta ke kvalitě

AE

2010/9

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Welcome to the pages of the newsletter of the national project Way to the Quality, designed to help schools with self-evaluation processes.

We will be meeting on this collective journey twice a year for three years. About 500 schools signed up for direct participation in some activities of the project, but we would also like the rest of you to find something useful for yourselves and the inspiration for your own assessment of your school in the newsletter. For that, we used your requests and suggestions from the questionnaire of the project published in Učitelské noviny newspaper and from other surveys.
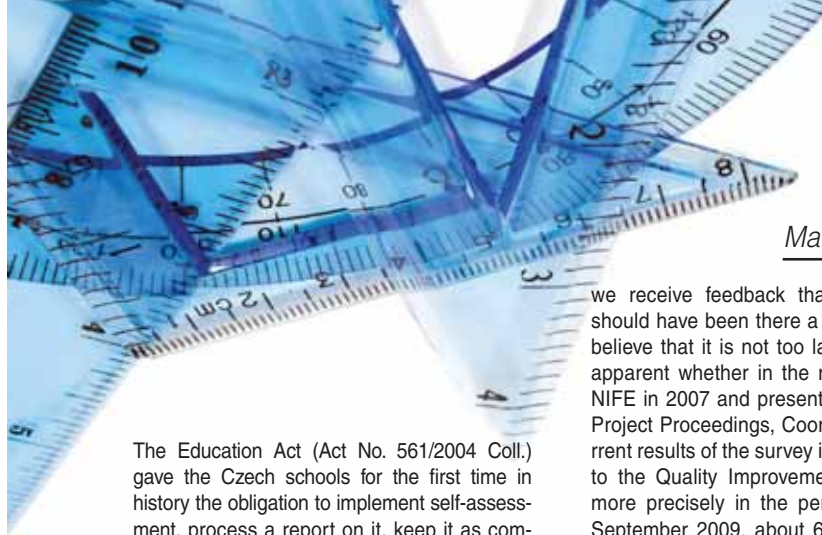
Welcome to the road!

What do we offer in the first issue?

We believe that you will get to like the various „travel" columns.

Jana Hrubá, Editor-in-chief

The Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.) gave the Czech schools for the first time in history the obligation to implement self-assessment, process a report on it, keep it as compulsory school documentation and submit it to the Czech School Inspection. This fact is on one hand a change in the work of schools compulsorily enforced from outside, thus a change inherently unpleasant, on the other hand it is a clear signal and an acknowledgment that the quality of the school is known best to those who care about it every day. This confidence in the care for quality by the schools themselves could not naturally occur in the time of the tightened system strictly centrally controlled from outside before 1989 as in the countries with a longer tradition of democracy and greater autonomy of schools. Discussions in the 1990's about how to ensure quality of the education system in the new conditions resulted in 2001 in the formation of a strategic document National Programme for the Development of Education in the Czech Republic (White Paper). The White Paper addressed the need to pass the school quality assurance to the schools themselves, which was subsequently enacted in the aforementioned Education Act.

A Few Words of Introduction

Correctly, the requirements towards the schools should come alongside an offer of assistance from the State. In this case, as in some other areas of the school system, it did not happen. At least a specification what the school's self-evaluation should entail along with rather general requirements for its implementation were specified in Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll. and newly regulated by Regulation No. 225/2009 Coll. (for details see the column Legislation Stop). Some partial assistance from the State was offered by the Research Institute of Education through methodical portal www.rvp.cz, National Institute for Further Education (NIFE) in courses for School evaluation Programme (SEP) coordinators School Educational Programme and through establishment of advisory centres, Cermat offered testing of the 5th and 9th year pupils and the corresponding grades of multi-annual grammar schools, here and there a regional project appeared that sought to help a limited number of schools with the problem. Furthermore, some private companies seized the selective offer of help.

Repayment of this debt towards the schools comes with the project of the Road to the Quality Improvement, the full title being SELF-EVA-LUATION – Creation of the system and support for school in the self-evaluation field or to the Road to the Quality Improvement. Although we receive feedback that such a project should have been there a long time ago, we believe that it is not too late. It is becoming apparent whether in the research made by NIFE in 2007 and presented in the National Project Proceedings, Coordinator, or the current results of the survey in the project Road to the Quality Improvement. Also In 2009, more precisely in the period from June to September 2009, about 60 % of headmasters declared that they do not have sufficient knowledge to realize self-evaluation the way they would imagine. We received responses from the total of 531 schools. It can only be assumed about the schools which did not respond to our questionnaire. At the same time, we realize that there are schools where the self-evaluation has been carried out for several years and where they did not need to wait for legislative obligation to be drafted for them. They implement it purely because they perceived it as a meaningful activity without which they can not imagine improving school work (more than 60 % of the schools in our research). More on the results of this research in the article by Lucie Procházková What we have learned from you from the questionnaires.

I used the word self-evaluation, which some bear with disapproval as a foreign word bringing confusion into what schools are supposed to do according to the requirements of the Act and the Regulation. The curriculum framework uses the concept of self-evaluation too. Under the project, and I am convinced that especially for the need of schools, the concepts of self-evaluation and self-assessment of schools can be considered synonyms, although theorists may find semantic nuances among them. The project uses the concept of self-evaluation in the meaning of school self-assessment, mainly for the reasons of a shorter expression. The project bears the abbreviated name „Road to the Quality Improvement", to avoid both the long term „school self-assessment" and "self-evaluation", obscure to the public and difficult to pronounce. The name of the project thus simultaneously refers to the main purpose of all self-assessment activities. We will return with more detail to these concepts briefly in the Terminological Column.

In the Project of Road to the Quality Improvement, we respect that there are schools experienced in self-assessment as well as those more or less helpless, both schools with a positive relationship to it and those with a negative one, full of fear of misuse of their findings. The project offers opportunities for all such schools. They all will eventually be offered instruments proven useful in the self-evaluation; they all will be able to participate in their verification, and thereby to gain something for themselves. A tool for setting priorities for the school has been for instance already placed on the pro-ject website and offered for verification (see more about it in this newsletter in the article Good School), together with pupils' achievement motivation questionnaire or a pupils' attitudes questionnaire survey. Some schools that have something to offer and are eager to share their experiences were given the opportunity to be heard in the regional conferences of the project and also their experience will be welcome in workshops or mutual visits of schools and peer assessment of self-assessment processes in the so-called peer review. Also, the less experienced schools will naturally benefit from the latter activities, perhaps sometimes even the sceptical ones. It is in particular them to whom the project offers a school's representative participation in pilot testing of the self-evaluation coordinator educational program or a field counsel's assistance or an already available telephone and email consulting.

Unfortunately, the compass of the project is not sufficient enough to fully meet the needs of all schools in the Czech Republic in all three directions within three years of its solution. The project keeps in mind the special kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools, music schools, conservatories and language schools with the right to the state language test, indeed all schools that can be targeted with activities of the Operational Programme Education for Competitiveness. The project cannot of course solve the possible reluctance of colleagues in the college to participate in the self-evaluation processes and set the self-evaluation system for the school so that it will be perceived at school, at least with hindsight, as useful and meaningful. It is in the hands of the school headmaster, or whoever is responsible for coordinating the school self-assessment activities. The project, however, tries to offer these very people different options to help. Naturally in a way to make it also meet the currently applicable regulatory requirements.

Some outputs of the project, which will continually arise by the spring of 2012, will permanently be of benefit to the schools at the website www.ae.nuov.cz.

The issue of the newsletter you are holding in your hands is extensively focused on the concept of value (in the Safe Guide from the terminological perspective, in the Oasis from the children's point of view, the Hitchhiker's Guide offers you a evaluation tool Good School designed to help with clarifying the priorities and vision of the school, thus to stimulate discussion about values at school). This focus of the first issue is logical, without clarification of values within the school and without the joint care of them all the self-assessment activities would lack sense. Shared visions and specific priorities reflect the values with which planning of self-assessment must begin and continually return to them again.

Martin Chvál

The Road to the Quality Improvement Project aims to support schools in implementing self-assessment. It is a national project of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic, the investigator of which is the National Institution of Technical and Vocational Education (NITVE) and National Institute for Further Education (NIFE), it is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the national budget of the Czech Republic.

Cesta ke kvalitě

Activities of the Project

Research and Analysis

The aim is to collect and analyze information on the processes of promoting self-evaluation and selected domestic and international instruments and to make a comparative study of approaches to self-assessment of schools in the international context with regard to the educational systems of each country.

Development and Verification

The aim is to create and verify supporting methodological means for self-evaluation processes in schools, such as evaluation tools, described examples of good practice, and glossary. Another challenge is to develop a methodology to link external evaluation and self-evaluation in cooperation with authorities and the Czech School Inspection.

Supporting Systems for Schools

The aim is to create mechanisms to encourage and support schools to communicate (within the school and with other schools as well), to their mutual cooperation and to share experiences with self-evaluation. Our task is to mediate encounters of schools at, for example, workshops, mutual visits and to promote mutual learning in the field of self-evaluation, provide self-evaluation consulting, issue a newsletter and other publications and software tools to support evaluation.

Education

The aim is to design and validate a teacher training pilot system in the area of self-evaluation, to inform a broader educational and professional public about the introduction of self-assessment practices in schools. The challenge is to implement educational programs Self-Evaluation Coordinator and Self--Evaluation Adviser, propose a standard of study to carry out specialized occupation of the Self-Evaluation Coordinator, and to organize regional conferences.

Project Management Team
(from right):
PhDr. Martin Chvál, Ph.D.
– Principal Project Manager of Road to the Quality Improvement
PhDr. Iva Shánilová
– Education Manager
Mgr. Jana Ostrýtová
– Project Secretary and Manager of "Supporting Systems for Schools" Activity
Ing. Stanislav Michek
– Deputy Principal Manager and "Development and Verification" Activity Manager
Mgr. Lucie Procházková
– "Research and Analysis" Activity Manager

Recently, after a few adjustments to the Education Act and certain regulations that deal with various aspects of the school life, we have noted also an amendment to the Regulation No. 225/2009 Coll. amending Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll. in Part IV of which we are interested with regard to the topic we pursue.

Change by Change
in the Education Legal Acts

– **What was amended in the Regulation concerning the school self-assessment and how to deal with this change in the life of the school?**
In § 9, Clause 1, the periodicity of processing the self-assessment report was extended from 1–2 years to 3 years. What is, however, the impact of the change on the implementation of self-assessment? Apart from the fact that the school processes the self-assessment report for a longer period, this change should be reflected only minimally in the processes of self-assessment in terms of systematic reflection of the school performance.

Amendment of the Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll.

Self-assessment is a continuous and ever-recurring process, even if in some elaborate variations, regardless of how long the cycle of observation is, i.e. for how long period the school compiles the report and how long is the evaluated period.

It is true that you – school headmasters, coordinators of the evaluation processes at schools or teachers will have more space to think about the choice of areas and sub-areas, which you will follow, the criteria and evaluation tools. This seems to be particularly beneficial for schools that are less experienced in the self-assessment processes while fairly trying to find their bearings in the issue, without renouncing the benefits of properly conducted self-assessment, and not intending to accede to a purely formally processed „turnkey self-evaluation" from the outside.

The extension of the cycle may, however, be accompanied also by a concern that schools were not lulled by putting off the deadline by having enough time and „did not pursue" everything at the last minute. It is necessary to realize that by extending the cycle the schools may generate a report on self-assessment up to once every three years, but the tracking of individual areas is continuous. The school should benefit from these findings, and in looking back over 3 years keep finding a more reliable basis for decision in subsequent periods. It is up to the schools what frequency of monitoring they choose for specific areas or sub-areas. It also depends on how the school perceives its own priorities. In practice, this frequency often arises from setting criteria to specify the ideal situation in the region, quality indicators, which will allow us to characterize the current state of research areas or a selection of evaluation tools.

When creating a report on self-assessment, the school evaluates all of the findings for the three-year period and establishes new priorities for the next period. In § 8, Clause 1, Letter c) it is generally stated that the school should focus on areas in which it is performing well and also areas where it should be improved. In the outcome, a request is thus raised to the school to either maintain their quality, or increase it. We believe that this request is legitimate and that every school that wants to offer quality education, attract the interest of students (and even those „non-catchment ones"), acquire a reputation, satisfied teachers, pupils and parents, monitors and evaluates various aspects of school life and chooses strategies to improve just as well.
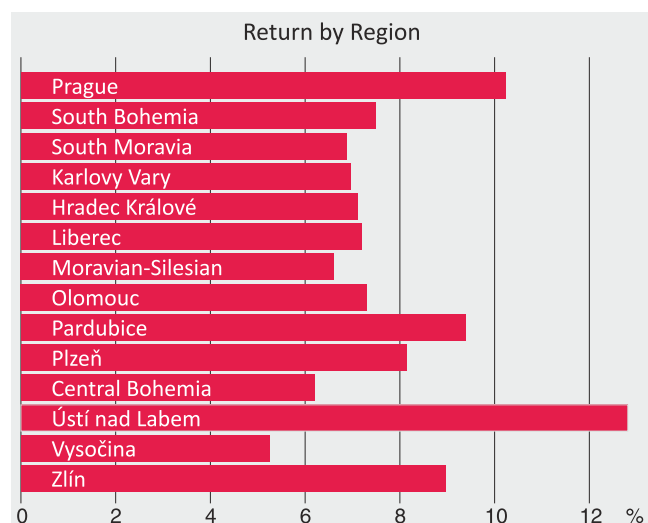
Jana Ostrýtová

What have we learned from you?

Results of the Survey

From June 12 to September 15, 2009 schools had the opportunity to participate in the survey and sign up for the project. Via a web form or by sending a questionnaire printed in Učitelské noviny, Issue 26,531 schools responded. Through an e-mail, we directly contacted 5,473 schools with an e-mail address. In the register of schools, however, there are still about a thousand other schools of various types that can be supported by the project. The total return of the questionnaires is thus around 8 %. Detailed results and statistical analysis of the survey were published in December on the project website. In this article we want to acquaint you with some interesting data.

	Number of participating schools	Situation as of September 30, 2008 according to Statistical Yearbook	Return
Kindergartens Special	17	127	13 %
Primary Schools	264	4133	6 %
Primary Schools Special	31	455	7 %
Primary Art Schools	13	478	3 %
Secondary Professional Schools	150	916	16 %
Vocational Training Schools	54	471	11 %
Secondary Schools Special	11	142	8 %
Gymnasiums	50	377	13 %
Conservatories	3	18	17 %
Language Schools	1	40	3 %

Let us now consider the returns in terms of characteristics of this sample of schools. The table shows that interest in the theme of school self-assessment predominates in secondary schools. With the number of schools, it needs to be clarified that with more than 60 schools, two or more types of schools come under one entity, and thus with the total sum of the types of schools we would arrive at a higher number. In the table, we separate for clarity the types of schools; in evaluating the answers,

Return by Region

Prague
South Bohemia
South Moravia
Karlovy Vary
Hradec Králové
Liberec
Moravian-Silesian
Olomouc
Pardubice
Plzeň
Central Bohemia
Ústí nad Labem
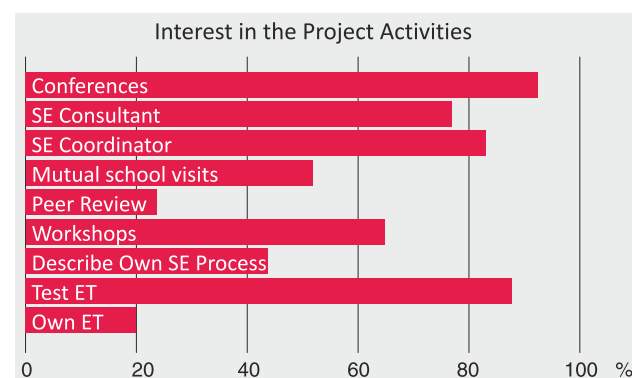Vysočina
Zlín

0   2   4   6   8   10   12   %

however, we always count an answer once. Mostly, this relates to the situation of merged special kindergartens, primary and special primary schools, merger of secondary professional and vocational schools or a Gymnasium and a Secondary school in one body.

The greatest interest was shown by the schools in the Ústí Region while the least represented is the Vysočina Region. 20 % are schools in small villages with up to 5000 people (especially prevalent in Central Bohemia) and medium-sized cities with up to 100 000 inhabitants, most of those were again in the Ústí Region.

The overwhelming number of schools in small villages is also linked to the size of the schools – almost one-third of the participating schools falls into the category of smaller schools with the number of pupils up to 200. Of these, 7 % can be categorized as the schools with junior classes only (up to 50 pupils).
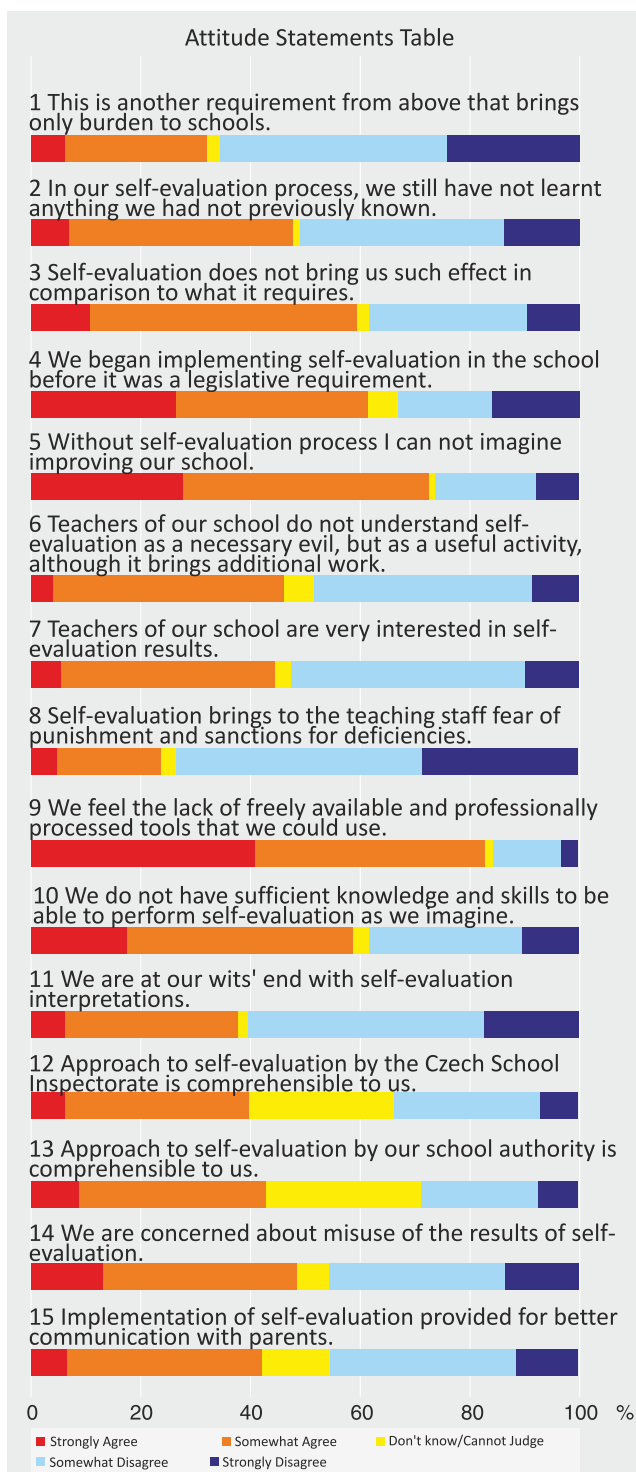
The schools showed the greatest interest in participating in regional conferences that created a space in the autumn 2009 for schools to meet with representatives of the school autorities and the Czech School Inspection. Another activity, on which the schools rest their hopes, is verification of the tools – the schools will receive an evaluation tool (e.g. ET taken from abroad or produced by another school) and test its performance on the school of their type, size, and orientation.

Interest in the Project Activities

Conferences
SE Consultant
SE Coordinator
Mutual school visits
Peer Review
Workshops
Describe Own SE Process
Test ET
Own ET

0   20   40   60   80   100   %

They will thus be able to use it relatively early for evaluation of certain areas of school work, giving feedback to the project team and also participating in the standardization of the tool. Equally popular is the traditional form of acquisition of new knowledge, namely training of Self-evaluation Coordinators (and after that training of SE Consultants), in which around 82 % of schools expressed their interest. The project will be focused on the piloting of a new accredited curriculum and its teaching materials. The NITVE educational program will consist of a full-time part and an e-learning part.

The Road to the Quality Improvement Project features two levels of support for schools – partly, it wants to pass on to the schools some information, knowledge, assistance, advice, and it also wants to give schools the scope for mutual assistance, sharing of experiences and transfer of these techniques and methods that have proven successful to more schools. These two levels can also be used to characterize the incentive of schools to sign the project. Some are interested in „taking the advice", others like to offer it. This is evidenced by more than a third of the participating schools that wish to describe the process of self-assessment at their school and provide an example of practice that has proved suitable. The data shows that the interest or the ability of schools to describe their process of self-evaluation increases in proportion to the experience given by the number of self-evaluation cycles they passed. A relatively high percentage of the Gymnasium headmasters mentioned that they had conducted the self-evaluation process at least on three occasions. Of those schools that indicated that they had conducted the self-evaluation process three or more times, it is more than a half of the schools that wish to describe the actions taken as an inspirational example of the practice.

Number of SE Cycles	Did not conduct AE	Once	Twice	Three or more times
Special Kindergartens	0 %	47 %	29 %	24 %
Primary Schools	4 %	40 %	41 %	15 %
Special Primary Schools	0 %	50 %	33 %	17 %
Primary Art Schools	0 %	54 %	31 %	15 %
Secondary Professional Schools	3 %	38 %	42 %	17 %
Vocational Training Schools	0 %	49 %	36 %	15 %
Secondary Schools Special	0 %	55 %	27 %	18 %
Gymnasiums	2 %	30 %	40 %	28 %

Attitude Statements Table

1 This is another requirement from above that brings only burden to schools.

2 In our self-evaluation process, we still have not learnt anything we had not previously known.

3 Self-evaluation does not bring us such effect in comparison to what it requires.

4 We began implementing self-evaluation in the school before it was a legislative requirement.

5 Without self-evaluation process I can not imagine improving our school.

6 Teachers of our school do not understand self-evaluation as a necessary evil, but as a useful activity, although it brings additional work.

7 Teachers of our school are very interested in self-evaluation results.

8 Self-evaluation brings to the teaching staff fear of punishment and sanctions for deficiencies.

9 We feel the lack of freely available and professionally processed tools that we could use.

10 We do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to be able to perform self-evaluation as we imagine.

11 We are at our wits' end with self-evaluation interpretations.

12 Approach to self-evaluation by the Czech School Inspectorate is comprehensible to us.

13 Approach to self-evaluation by our school authority is comprehensible to us.

14 We are concerned about misuse of the results of self-evaluation.

15 Implementation of self-evaluation provided for better communication with parents.

0   20   40   60   80   100   %

■ Strongly Agree   ■ Somewhat Agree   ■ Don't know/Cannot Judge
■ Somewhat Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree

Surprising for us was the number of the schools that want to offer their own evaluation tools they use – almost 20 % of the schools reported that they used their own or adopted tools, which they may offer to other schools for checking. We will get more detailed specification of the instruments by contacting individual schools, but according to an outline within the questionnaire these are mostly differently focused questionnaires, as well as making of their own quality criteria of the school work, scoreboards, portfolios, content analysis of student essays, recommendations of some commercial products or experience with models of quality management CAF or ISO 9001.

Finally, let's briefly look at the attitudes of self-assessment. Over 60 % of the schools understand the self-assessment as a necessary feedback process surrounding their work. This is evident from the consents to statements 4 and 5 (see Attitude Statements Table), which also explains why some schools implemented self-assessment process more than twice – they approached the initiation of evaluation processes even prior to the enactment of the obligation to make self-evaluation of the school by Regulation No. 15/2005. These „advanced" schools demonstrated in their responses a greater certainty in the implementation of the entire process and less fear of possible negative impacts. With the increasing number of school self-evaluation cycles carried out increases also the motivation of schools and the sense of meaning with which they approach the whole process: 22 % of those who had carried out the self-assessment cycle once can not imagine school work improving without self-evaluation. With the experience of two cycles it is already 28 % and those who carried out self-evaluation of their school three or more times and consider it necessary comprise already 46 %.

As for clarity of the approach of the school authority and CSI to self--evaluation of the school (statements 12 and 13), more than a quarter of respondents could not consider this issue, and for a large part the access of these external evaluation actors is incomprehensible. At the same time, 49 % of schools are concerned about misuse of the results of self-evaluation by the public or the very external evaluation. We believe that the autumn regional conferences contributed to the opening and clarifying of this issue a lot. 59 % of respondents feel a lack of knowledge and qualification for the realization of self-evaluation as they would have imagined. Linked to this is also the perceived mismatch between the demands of the process and the resulting effect. The project will prepare an educational program SE Coordinator that should illuminate the issue of self-assessment process and contribute to its effectiveness. 83 % of the respondents also expressed their need for affordable and proven evaluation tools. We believe that also at this stage the project will bring to schools what they need – a planned schedule of bid of evaluation tool has already been published on the Project's Web and the evaluation tools will gradually increase in amount.

Lucie Procházková

Safe **Passage**

...VALUE

1. Definition of the Term

Generally, the definition of the concept of value may be expressed as follows: Value is a property of a subject, phenomenon, person or process that is specified subjectively by an examining individual or is referred to a generally recognized standard, which was set on the basis of objective validity.

Thus, the value is an information, usually only quantitative, established by evaluation, assessment, valuation or measurement of the given phenomenon, process, object or person. Values may as well be defined as a projection of our own individual will. Phenomenology defines the value as secondary (according to J. Patočka it regards evaluation sediments) to the concept of evaluation that we can safely declare. Values are what we follow in our own evaluation of the monitored phenomena. Because values are not things or objects that can just be found, defined and followed, modern philosophy is based rather on assessment of processes and not on somehow pre-set or given values that underestimate the creative nature of freedom (Paul Ricoeur).

The term „value" may be defined by various perspectives – mathematical (the value of a variable, the value of a function, intrinsic value), philosophical and ethical (what governs our choices and decisions), logic (truth-value 1 or 0), economic (exchange, utility, customs, value for the owner, customer value, etc.).

The term of value thus appears to us in different disciplines and fields as a synonym for other terms, such as cost, importance, intensity, importance, gravity and so on. The study of values is dealt with by a science called axiology (from the Greek axios, equivalent, well-deserved), which being a philosophy of values is a part of the philosophical sciences.

Values as a research topic in social and natural sciences may be characterized by the following eight points:
– Values are attributed to objects, groups of subjects, details, processes and all existing phenomena.
– There are values of different types according to different disciplines: economic, educational, sociological, religious...
– People look for values, they believe in values, they undervalue them and reject values, criticizing and establishing more or less by a value.
– Values have the persistence over time, even when moving from some groups to others.
– Values are created, expire, stand against each other, are subject to change, affect people's behaviour and are tailored to subjects and their groups.
– Values exist in union with the social character of people, for example changes in values are linked to changes in the character, thus an unduly appreciation of values depends on the character.
– Values tend to be immediate, circumscribed, forming hierarchies.
– Values may cease to serve objects, thus including humans. (D. Riesman, 1962)

There are more than 4,500 individual works about values in the world today containing nearly 180 different definitions of the concept of value which can be divided into three groups:
– Values are absolute and exist by the will of God as eternal ideas.
– Values lie in the material and immaterial objects as valued groups needed to meet the needs.
– The value lies in a man in his/her biological needs and the values are generated from these needs under the influence of psychological, internal states and attitudes of man. It is then a way of self-awareness through subjectively perceived values.

2. The Concept of Value in Everyday Practice

If we search for the meaning of the word value for educational and pedagogical practice, we are dealing with the concept of quality. We can say that we understand the quality or state we project to the object (thing, phenomenon, living creature), which is subsequently observed (in order to adopt evaluating judgments), according to certain criteria.

The problem often is that the object of assessment is confused with the value. Such thinking then leads to confusion and mistakes. Often, we hear that someone has created cultural or economic values, but what just happened is that someone has created objects (property, things) that have cultural or economic value, but the objects themselves can not be the value itself, because that is attributed and introduced into them by people. Each quality corresponds to a certain (appropriate) value because the value is a quality quantified (determined in terms of quantity), that is that the value is the quantity (measure) of quality.

Assessment is then a process that is applied to an object (phenomenon, being), which implies a certain value, but it is not the value itself. The value carried in an object is actually a measure of an expected quality about which we conclude an evaluating judgment. The quality of the evaluated object gives us a direction and the content of evaluation. So we need to know how and what we are to assess, be it a man or a house. If the subject of evaluation is, for example, a school, the core problem is adopting the value of quality as the value in general (e.g., society-wide valid and recognized). If we ruminate this issue deeper, we come within the ambit of the following few issues, such as expression of the value using value and non-value words, which attaches to very specific social conditions. Another problem is the manipulative role in the value vision of different motives of conduct (the party enforcing describes it as „bold", „good" and „necessary" and the opposite party describes it as „purpose", „bad" or „unnecessary"). The degree of manipulation of the values can be identified by theoretical reflection, which, combined with practical actions, can according to I. Kant update the concept of values.

According to the ways of seeing the world we then deduce appropriate qualities and the resulting values of the ontological, teleological and normological. More about them in the evaluation entry.

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Karel Rýdl

what has not yet been **talked about** in connection with **self-evaluation**

Views on what can contribute to the quality of schools can be very diverse. Self-evaluation, i.e. processes that systematically, systemically and periodically assist in meaningful work with feedback from people connected with the school – teachers, pupils, parents, social partners, non-teaching staff from the school is also considered good to this... Self-evaluation has therefore a potential to positively promote the development of schools. It is often likened to a mirror: through mirroring of reality, it may help to maintain and develop the quality of a certain school. The results obtained will first of all help in understanding WHY something needs to be changed, WHY something succeeds, and HOW to ensure that this continues. Despite its current form given in a directive manner by the Czech legislation it should be, rather than an enforced activity, schools' own „property" to protect and cherish schools, because this „ownership" makes a lot possible to them.

There is a fairly broad agreement that the mandatory implementation of self-evaluation/self-assessment means for Czech schools a change in the way of working, whether it relates to the frequency, method of implementation and reporting. However, it should be stressed that not every implementation of these processes necessarily means a change (in some schools, they have long been perceived as an integral part of work) and not in every school it presents a change in a positive direction. As a number of previous surveys show, many people perceive the school self-evaluation to be an unnecessary bureaucratic requirement, a threat or something to be feared. Every Czech teacher and school works in a specific context: they are influenced by a unique combination of internal and external factors. It is therefore important to perceive the principle, which was expressed a few years ago: „Good work in education can not be cloned; school problems can not be solved for them from outside by some other institution, but only by the school itself. In recent rapidly changing and complicated time, this would be just a kind of a dream – unrealistic, out of context / people / their relationship / values ... Since all these phenomena affect the quality of education ..." (Posch, 2004). This means that for using the potential of self-evaluation we should primarily perceive the real intricacies of „concrete situations". However, self-evaluation is not „just" administration, use of tools, etc., but it hides inside other more

or less obvious dimensions that could significantly affect its character in every school. Significant and quite large is the socio-ethical dimension, which is still in the Czech environment (in both theory and practice) sadly given very little attention. In the operation of schools it is pervasive, affecting individuals and different groups of people, their work, needs. In self-evaluation, the very planning activities extend not only to regarding the objectives, strategies, etc., but also bring the need to ponder the appropriateness and acceptability of certain kinds of activities for the participants in the given place and time. The ethical side of the self-evaluation then involves considering assumptions, options, impacts and consequences; it highlights ambiguities of the proposed solutions and shortcomings of „simple instructions". Ignoring this moment could in the self-assessment activities lead to the acquisition of false or irrelevant information, which according to the outstanding specialist MacBeatha (1995) is „the worst thing to happen in self-evaluation."

Ethical pitfalls that can considerably complicate the effort in meaningful self-assessment could be divided into several key areas on the basis of past experience:
Scope I: the challenges associated with the „meso-political" influences – are based on, for example, the school authority's educational approach to these processes,
Scope II: issues relating to micro-political aspects of the individual schools – for example, related to the situation where the school management wants to know how it is perceived by subordinates workers,
Scope III: issues relating to the collection of information, i.e. the use of evaluation methods – such as the recording of an interview without obtaining informed consent from respondents,
Scope IV: challenges associated with analyzing data and information and also with the findings – such as when pupils are told that the investigation is an anonymous while the class teacher usually finds out easily who wrote a particular statement ...,
Scope V: difficulties arising from the need to take action on the findings – negative findings are then excused, distorted, information providers mocked... „so that the person in question didn't take offence"
Scope VI: issues relating to reporting and the decision whether to publish the findings – the self-evaluation often works with highly sensitive information, which sometimes is or is not

desirable to fully disclose to, for example, parents or other social partners,
Scope VII: contentious issues concerning the archiving and access to the original, yet-not-reproduced information collected through self-evaluation – such as with a change in the school management, etc.
VIII. ...
The key to the self-evaluation approached to mean more than ‚mere' compliance with legislative requirements is an ongoing dialogue conditioned by confidence between interested individuals. It is necessary to clarify in time the responsibilities, rights and competences of individuals, their capabilities, interests and expectations. This dialogue must, however, be held primarily with oneself; it is necessary to take care of one of the fundamental (not only teaching) values lying in assuming the responsibility for one's own professional growth and development. Realistic self-knowledge and self-understanding are prerequisites for the partnership communication, for creating confidence in oneself as well as in the others, for the fine work. In other words, experience shows that the most critical moment of self-evaluation is often very well hidden inability/unwillingness of individual school workers to work with the reflection of their own experience, with the feedback (particularly if it does not match expectations). It is thus obvious that teachers and their approach to their own work are the determinant of the success and meaningfulness of the self-evaluation activities.

Our „mental-health column" of the newsletter, Lookout Tower, will gradually look more closely at the socio-ethical dimensions of self-evaluation. It will open discussion, because its sensitive perception and treatment of it is a prerequisite for the „hygiene" contributing to maintaining a „mental health" not only of the teachers but also other participants of the school life (students, parents, etc.), thus to a successful operation and development of the school even the recent highly variable time and society. The „column" should be regarded primarily as a kind of inspiration for a meaningful long-term implementation of self-evaluation processes, not as a „cookbook" or „law", which must be literally obeyed. If you already have a direct experience of the self-evaluation leading, for example, to a „three-pronged life" (life in front of the public, in front of the colleagues and life in the working privacy) that it sometimes awakens too high and unrealistic expectations, that someone will „appropriate" the questionnaire created by you, that someone „brings out the internal affairs" ... let us know and in the next issues we will use your suggestions.
Or if you know how to prevent the mentioned ills, write also to: cesta@nuov.cz.

Jana Vašťatková

Terminological *Column*

In connection with our topic, we can encounter in principle three concepts: self-evaluation, school self-assessment, and self-assessment. Other possible modifications of the type of internal evaluation or internal evaluation of schools (as used in the White Paper, for example) will not be dealt with herein and we refer to the terminological dictionary, which will be made within the project and published electronically on the project website.

School self-assessment – the importance of this term is given in particular by its use in the Czech obligatory legislative documents – the Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll.) and the follow-up Regulation (No. 15/2005 Coll. and its amendment No. 225/2009 Coll.). These documents define the content of the concept.

Self-evaluation (within the meaning of school self-evaluation) – the term is not tied by a legislative regulations and is thus open to possible questions about its appropriate, desirable or meaningful implementation. Therefore, this term is in popular use in the professional community. In English, the term self-evaluation is used and in this sense also the school internal evaluation was used in the White Paper (National Education Development Programme in the Czech Republic, 2001). Contrary to the concept of self-assessment (or school self-assessment), in its interpretation is highlighted the systematization and the related methodology. Common to both concepts is the relation to values and goals derived from them. Self-assessment can be, and in the conventional understanding is, an unplanned and dominantly non-rational process. In school we can meet the self-assessment of teachers or self-assessment of pupils. In relation to individuals, it is preferable to use the concept of self-assessment than self-evaluation, although with the pupils and teachers these should be smarter and thus more systematic processes. We then use the term of self-evaluation for the school as a whole.

Within the project, we shall consider the terms self-evaluation and school self-assessment as synonyms. The reason is that project activities will be implemented in accordance with legislative requirements for schools, but at the same time they will exceed them in offers and recommendations and the project outputs will therefore be more general. Self-assessment will be used exclusively in relation to pupils, teachers or other persons, not in relation to the school as a whole.

Hitchhiker's *Guide*

The Good School

A tool to stimulate discussion about values and priorities of the school

During October 2009, the standardization was launched of the first of qualitative tools that can serve as a useful tool for self-evaluation in schools. It is a tool called the Good School. In this text, we present it briefly and offer it to the candidates for noncommittal testing in its current form.

The origin of the instrument is not entirely clear; it probably originated as a tool for group work with teachers in order to clarify values and priorities of schools and to encourage cooperation. It proved successful to us as a stimulating element in various activities supporting the development of schools and further education of teachers. Gradually, we redesigned it, equipped it with instructions and now we offer it as one of the tools to support self-evaluation.

Standardization of the Good School tool will take place in selected schools in the coming months. We welcome any experiences and suggestions for further work with this tool, even for possible changes. Please tell us about your experience at http://www.nuov.cz/ae/dobra-skola. Thereby, you will significantly contribute to the possible adjustments and recommendations for use of this instrument.

Objective:

The main objective of the tool is to stimulate the discussion in the school about priorities and visions of the school.
Sub-goals:
Promoting consensus on the principal values of the school. Clarification of the procedures necessary to fulfil the priorities/visions of the school. Support to teachers' cooperation.

Target Group:

Teachers of primary and secondary schools at a minimum of 12 people.

Tools:

Pre-printed cards with statements about values and priorities of the school (cut up and ready in envelopes for each teacher or printed on A4 and ready for slitting), pencils, markers, paper, glue, large paper (flipchart), paper tape, or other wall clips, scissors.

Room:

Movable tables and chairs. More rooms would be an advantage.

Time:

2–3 hours of the actual work with the method.
Procedure and instructions:
We will familiarize the participants with the method and its purpose, with the expected output and its use for evaluation and school development.

The Good School – Instructions

Step I:
Teachers will be given envelopes with cards – phrases that relate to various aspects of the school's operation. Each teacher will receive 66 statements about the school – cards (or pre-printed statements on the A4 and the teachers can reshape them themselves to small cards). Taken together, these statements do not omit any of the major areas of the quality of the school. We will first ask the teachers to choose 10 statements each, statements which they consider well characterizing the priorities/visions, or preferred values of the school as the case may be. On the blank cards, each participant may write their own statement/statements that in their opinion characterize significant aspects of the school's operation missing--in-the-offer. Time: 15 minutes
Instructions:
First, read all the statements about the school. Everyone select for yourselves 10 statements which in your opinion characterize the most important things that should be happening in the school, how a good school should look like. If you find the submitted offer inadequate, you can add your own statements to the blank cards about how the school should look like, what should be a shared priority. You have about 15 minutes for this task.
Step II:
Once all teachers have chosen tickets, ask them to find a partner – a colleague with whom they will continue to work in pairs. A pair of teachers is responsible for discussing the selection of the selected statements; each of the teachers explains their choice of ten tickets, which they bring to the next selection. The discussion of a pair of teachers results in a jointly agreed selection of ten tickets (out of 20 inserted). Again, they may agree on supplementing the missing statements. Time: about 20 minutes
Instructions:
Work in pairs now. Find a partner to work with in a pair and bring with you your choice of 10 statements. Together, go through both your selections, discuss them, explain them to each other and agree together on a common set of 10 tickets from the two original selections.

It should not be a compromise, but rather a result of a consensus – if possible. If you need to add something to any statement or reword it, do so by mutual agreement. You have about 20 minutes for this task.
Step III:
Once the pairs have accomplished the task, they shall be asked to find a partnership couple. If the number of the teachers is not divisible by four, we must choose another form of grouping (for example, a group of six will work and collect a higher number of statements from all the tickets already selected). The instruction is similar. Each couple has a task to explain their choice to the partnership couple and to agree together on the selection of the reduced number of statements (10), in the formed group of four/six. Again, they can add their own statements to the missing values.
Time: about 20 minutes
Step IV:
Once the groups of four have accomplished their tasks, they will be invited to create hierarchies and links of the selected statements and represent the hierarchy/importance and links between the statements by placing the selected tickets to a big paper (flipchart). They can use glue, markers, show links, importance, etc.
Time: about 30 minutes
Step V:
We will stick up all the models of statements on schools on the wall or on a flipchart. Gradually, we will invite all groups to present their model and hierarchy of the „school's priorities" and moderate the discussion.
Questions for discussion:
– Which of the priorities chosen seem to be crucial (shared by all groups)?
– Which of the priorities chosen aroused and arouses the most discussions, and why?
– Which do we clearly differ about?
– Which one is surprising?
– What was missing?
– Which of the priorities does our school manage to fulfil? How? What do we do for that?
– Which of the priorities is the school still unable to fully fulfil?
– What interventions can we use to fulfil this priority?
– How could our chosen priorities be viewed by the students, parents, school management?
– What was the hardest thing to do about this work?
– What did I realize while working on this task?
Time: 30–60 minutes, depending on the discussion

Alternatives

The number of the statements may be reduced, yet not to less than 50 statements so that they represent all the categories of the statements. Analogically, we reduce the individual selection of statements as well as the selection in the groups to 7–8 statements and shorten the working time by the situation. The wording on the cards can be altered by the specifications of the school, but they should respect the original categories.

The wording of the statements and categorizing
School Objectives
1 The school strives to set their own objectives and standards.
2 The school objectives are clear to everyone.
3 The objectives of the school are accepted by all or at least by the vast majority of the school staff.
4 The objectives of the school are mandatory for teachers.
5 Individual teachers reflect the objectives of the school in their teaching.
6 The school's main priority is quality education and training.
Curriculum – Teaching Plans
7 Teachers plan lessons taking into account the interests of pupils.
8 The school is based on a relatively firmly defined school curriculum.
9 Teachers try to make the pupils as active as possible.
10 Teaching in all the subjects is linked with the needs of real life.

11 The school strives to promote general individual development of pupils.

12 The school management places great emphasis on developing teaching plans.

13 The contents of each subject follow each other up.

Relationship to the Location and External Relations

14 The objectives of the school are set with regard to the needs of people in the place where the school operates.

15 The school is a place of equal opportunities for students as well as teachers.

16 The school aims to actively involve parents in its life.

17 The school co-operates with local communities or with the municipality as the case may be.

18 Parents have the opportunity to influence the objectives of the school.

Competence and Teacher Education

19 The educational attainment of teachers is of great importance.

20 The school management is responsible for further teacher training.

21 Continuing education is an individual responsibility of each teacher.

22 Teachers visit each other in lessons and discuss their findings from these visits.

23 Teachers share their experiences with each other.

24 At meetings, the attention is paid to professional growth of staff.

School Administration and Management

25 The school has a strong and creative management.

26 People in the school management work closely together and complement each other.

27 The school management discusses regularly the value system of the school with teachers.

28 The school management tries to treat everyone in a fair way.

29 The school management discusses their decisions with all the teachers.

30 Economic and HR management of the school is completely transparent.

Commitment and Motivation of People

31 The school staff is prepared to dedicate even more to the school.

32 The school management supports and encourages employee initiative.

33 Innovative and creative work is rewarded.

34 Remunerating of the staff is transparent.

35 Teachers and students express their loyalty to the school.

Reflection and (Self)Evaluation

36 The school critically reappraises its actions.

37 Regular self-assessment is the responsibility of each teacher.

38 The school provides a tool for self-assessment.

Equipment and Appearance of the School

39 The school continues to care for its physical development (including equipment).

40 The school cares about aesthetic arrangement of the classrooms.

41 The school is a nice and open space.

42 Students are free to move within the whole school premises.

Division of Work and Organization

43 Responsibility for the development of the school is born by each individual.

44 The main force behind the development of the school is a group around the school management.

45 Staff functions are clearly identified.

46 All the teachers are involved in the joint planning and development of the school.

47 Meetings at the school are effective and have a clear goal.

48 The teachers are encouraged to independence and creativity.

49 Not only the teachers are involved in the creation and implementation of school objectives but also other school staff.

Decision Making

50 The school priorities are decided at meetings of individual subject teachers.

51 Discussion of values is governed by given procedures and rules.

52 Interpersonal relationships play the most important role in pursuing matters in the school.

53 Teachers agree on setting the rules of the school life.

54 The school has a lot of freedom in managing.

55 If someone has a different opinion on the value system, they can communicate it in an open discussion.

Relationships at School

56 The school management endeavours to create a good working climate.

57 The conflicts between the teachers are discussed openly.

58 The school is ruled by collegiality.

59 Individuals receive support when they need it.

60 Teachers listen to pupils' personal problems.

61 Most pupils confidently turn to teachers even with personal problems.

62 Relationships of teachers and pupils are open.

63 Communication between teachers is very open.

64 The teaching team respects expressions of emotion.

Innovation and Change

65 The school has an incessant need to innovate.

66 The school focuses on improving the daily routines.

Milan Pol a Bohumíra Lazarová

Journey *through Time*

The Birth of Evaluation

... And God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

God rested on the seventh day from all His work He had done.

His Archangel who bore light came to Him to ask: „God, how do you know what you have created is very good? What were your evaluation criteria? And what data did you consider and how did you assess them? Were you not, God, himself accidentally closed a bit in the self-assessment interest while a serious and truthful evaluation should have taken place?"

God thought about The Archangel's questions throughout the day and His rest was severely disrupted.

And on the eighth day God said, „Lucifer, go to hell."

Karel Rýdl

Travel *Diary*

Regional **Conferences** of the Project – an Extraordinary **Meeting Place**

From mid-October 2009, conferences took place within the project in every region of the Czech Republic. They were launched in Olomouc, concluded in Prague. The objective of the conferences was to exchange experience between external and internal evaluators on the topic of school self-assessment, i.e. between the representatives of schools, school authorities and the Czech School Inspection. The conference also presented the activities of the Road to the Quality Improvement project, and emphasized the usefulness of its outputs. In each region, a representative of the Regional Inspectorate of CSI appeared, most regions managed to secure a presentation by the region representative as the school authority, in some regions even municipal representatives accepted the invitation to a presentation.

The school heads got the biggest time-space. As it turned out, the presentations of the headmasters played an important role in the inspiration for the other participating schools for how well it is also possible to carry out their school self-assessment. The conference reserved enough time for discussion. The regions differed in how participants used this time, somewhere they discussed more, and somewhere less. The headmasters often expressed their pleasure in their statements that it was actually the first time the above mentioned parties involved could meet for discussing a common topic in one place. Also, specific recommendations were heard to address the project apropos of evaluation tools, such as not to forget the simplicity, user friendliness, think of schools with small classes in which headmasters are alone to deal with many issues. Polls were held at the conferences that we shall evaluate in detail and then publish their results on the project website.

The project team expects that the poll results from the conferences will help them further to aim the project solution. The conferences were attended by the total of 870 representatives of schools, of which 68 actively performed, and for some it was their first experience to appear in front of their fellow headmasters. Based on the frequent requests of the participants, presentations have been placed on the project website.

The regional conferences have played an important role in elaborating a general discussion to cultivate the evaluation environment in the Czech Republic and significantly contributed to the achievement of one of the project objectives directed to the appropriate linkage of the self-evaluation and external evaluation. Among other things, awareness of the project gradually grows.

Martin Chvál, Iva Shánilová

One of the main goals of the project is to find an appropriate linkage between the school self-assessment and its external evaluation. What „appropriate" means is precisely the subject to be solved by one of the project activities. The solution is being sought in cooperation with representatives of schools, or associations of schools as the case may be, representatives of the school authorities from regions and municipalities, the Czech School Inspectorate, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Czech Society for Quality. The idea is to find a link that will help ensure quality schools and thus the education system as a whole. The activity is designed with support of the legal rights and obligations of the parties involved.

Under the Education Act (Act No. 561/2004 Coll., also the Education Act, § 12):
– The school evaluation takes place as the school self-assessment and evaluation of CSI, the self-assessment is the basis for the annual school report and one of the sources for the evaluation of CSI.
– Evaluation of the school and school facilities can also be carried out by their authorities, according to criteria published in advance.

While at the same time it applies:
– The report on school self-assessment is part of the compulsory school documentation (§ 28).
– The School Board (one-third of its members is appointed by the school authority) approves the annual report and the rules for the assessment of learning outcomes of students, has access to school documents (§ 168) under the Education Act.

Self-evaluation is also
aimed at external **evaluators**

The first working group meeting was held on September 21, 2009 at the Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority Office in Ostrava. After a mutual acquaintance, a project was introduced, called „Road to the Quality Improvement". Martin Chvál also presented the preliminary results of the survey. It followed from these, inter alia, that some of the schools on their own initiatives involved even their school authorities in certain phases of the process of self-assessment, as they are seen as important social partners. A representative of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Jaromír Krejčí pointed to changes in the Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll., brought by Amendment No. 225/2009 Coll. as concretized in the follow-up communication by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Then, the individual members presented their views on self-assessment. A discussion followed on the topic: How to link all school evaluations? How to link school self-evaluation with external evaluation of the school? The result of the group members' work was an agreement that they shall create criteria for the school self-assessment plan, for the school self-assessment process and for the school self-assessment report, including its structure. In addition, they will also create a methodology for applying those criteria. At the first meeting, all the members agreed on the following points:
– What will be created in the project should be of minimal administrative burden for schools. It is designed to help schools with the implementation of school self-assessment.
– It is necessary to solve the problem of publishing reports on school self-assessment by defining mandatory published information and internal information, i.e. the public and non-public parts of school self-assessment.
– This entails ensuring the „safety" of schools. School self-assessment makes sense only in the environment of confidence.
– It is also necessary to work bearing in mind that the school clients and the school authorities are entitled to information.
– The methodology could be differentiated by the size of community, school type, etc.

To be able to fulfil tasks assigned to it within the „Road to the Quality Improvement", the working group of experts shall hold meetings three times a year. You will be regularly informed about interim results of this working group on the project website and in the individual issues of the Newsletter.

List of participants in the first meeting of Working Group:
SKAV – Mgr. Ivo Mikulášek, Headmaster of ZS Dobronín, Mgr. Jindřich Monček, Headmaster of ZS TGM Poděbrady
CZESHA – Ing. Jiří Kaličinský, SPŠ chemická akademika Heyrovskeho a gymnázium, Středoškolská 1, Ostrava-Zábřeh
Association of SPS CR – VOS, SPS, OA – Ing. Jiří Kaličinský, Headmaster of SPŠ chemická akademika Heyrovskeho a gymnázium, Středoškolská 1, Ostrava-Zábřeh
Association of headmasters of PS of CR – Mgr. Jiří Bakončík, Headmaster of ZS and MS Šeříková 33, Ostrava-Výškovice
Directors of Gymnasiums of the Czech Republic – Ing. Alfred Dytrt, Chairman of the Association of headmasters of Gymnasiums of the Czech Republic, Headmaster of Gymnasium, Jateční 22, Ústi nad Labem
Association of Private Schools of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia – PaedDr. Vladimír Zelinka, Chairman, Headmaster of VOS and SOS podnikatelská, s. r. o., Hradecká 1151, Hradec Králové
CSI – Ing. Eva Zátopková, headmaster of the Inspectorate of the Moravian-Silesian Region
MSMT CR – PaedDr. Jaromír Krejčí, headmaster of the Educational System Department of MEYS – 20
NÚOV – Ing. Jitka Pohanková, Deputy headmaster of National Institution of Technical and Vocational Education
Central Bohemian Region – PaedDr. Pavel Schneider, Head of the Department of Education and Sport
Vysočina Region – Mgr. Miroslav Pech, Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sport
Moravian-Silesian Region – PaedDr. Libor Lenčo, Head of the Department of Education, Youth and Sport, PhDr. Jana Tománková, Education Development Officer, Department of Education, Youth and Sport
Union of Towns and Municipalities (municipalities with population over 100,000 – statutory towns) – PhDr. Marcela Štiková, Chairman of the School Board of the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic
Union of Towns and Municipalities (municipalities with population under 100,000) – Mgr. Hana Richtermocová, Deputy Mayor of Hořice v Podkrkonoší
Czech Society for Quality, o. s. – Ing. Miroslav Jedlička, Chairman

Erika Mechlová

In the recent years, the self-assessment area has been developing not only in our country but also abroad. When travelling across our borders, stop in Austria and see how they solve the issue there. In Austria, schools are not obliged to carry out self-evaluation by law. However, they are indirectly prodded into the self-assessment and development of quality management systems. The dominant initiative is played by the Federal Ministry of Education and Culture, which in 1999-2003 supported the project Quality in Schools (QIS, Qualität in Schulen) and since 2004 it has been supporting the project VET Quality Initiative (QIBB, Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung). What the projects aimed at encouraging the development of schools dealt with, what they contained and what results they had can be found out in the following lines.

Supporting the Self-evaluation
in Austria

Quality in Schools (QIS)

The aim of this project was to ensure that the self-evaluation and development of quality become an endless process. The project was designed for all types of schools (primary and secondary, general and vocational schools). This was an initiative that was intended to win the schools for setting their own development program and evaluating their own performance and its mission.

What do experts think it brought to Austrian students, teachers, parents, schools? For teachers, the project meant that they focused on the „main business" of the school, got more satisfaction from work, better understood the school and pupils and got a wider perspective through the exchange of experience. For pupils, it brought identification with the school, advice on choosing the right school, a new understanding of performance assessment, more opportunities to participate in shaping the processes of school, better school climate. For students' parents, it brought a better quality of education and training for students, awareness and accountability of schools. The project has contributed to the development of (not only) the Austrian schools also by presenting the principle that the quality of the school is regarded as a never-ending process, not a thing that could be accomplished and settled, which could be taken from someone else.

What did it put emphasis on and how did it support the schools? QIS project emphasized the following key areas: teaching and learning, the environment of schools/classrooms, collaboration with the school partners and public, school management and professionalism and further development of teachers. When evaluating these areas, the school received as a support for its work questionnaires for teachers, pupils and parents; descriptions of other methods/tools for self-evaluation, guidelines for implementing self-assessment, glossary, mediated by professional training consultants, a network of organizations and the environment exchange of experiences among schools. Even though it was a comprehensive methodological support of schools, this project had features typical for most projects coordinated „from above". The schools were supported at the time of the project, after completion of the project the online discussion, exchange of experiences on the implementation of self-assessment and the work of trained counsellors were over.

Despite these facts, the project can be considered successful. In schools that have implemented it, discussions were held on the issues: What is meant by education? What makes a school „good school"? Are we a good school? How do we know? What do we do to be a good school? What do we do to improve our school? How do we recognize success? Thus, a discussion emerged of issues that go to the heart of the matter.

Before the end of the QIS project in 2003, the Ministry of Education decided to focus its attention on vocational training and in the following year it launched a project called „VET Quality Initiative".

VET Quality Initiative (QIBB)

The aim of the second project is to integrate the activities of vocational schools in providing and further improving the quality of teaching and management. What is characteristic of this project? The project, on one hand, encourages the vocational schools to implement the common principles of the quality management, but it also leaves room for developing their own particularities. Since its inception in 2004, it has been focused on the providers of vocational training for 6 types of schools: vocational schools, technical schools, commercial academies, service schools, agricultural schools and educational schools. Its content found inspiration in the approaches used for quality control in industry. The common framework is created from a network of training institutions (schools, inspectorates of the provincial offices of education and vocational training departments in the Ministry of Education).

What does the QIBB project put emphasis on and how does it support the schools? The key areas that the project highlights are: teaching and learning, quality, economy and society, international initiatives. These quality areas are developed into 17 goals and 48 sub-goals for vocational education. To support the evaluation of individual areas, the schools get questionnaires and forms for teachers, pupils, parents and inspectors, descriptions of other methods/tools for self-evaluation, guidelines for implementing self-evaluation, terminological dictionary, training; networks of cooperating organizations; the environment for exchanging experiences between schools. For evaluating teachers, school managements, inspectors, questionnaires are used that are located in a robust information system that allows collecting information for all levels of the education management. And thus every participant to the vocational education continuously receives feedback to their activities from other parties involved (e.g. students, teachers, managers, and inspectors).

And what can one gain from the previous lines? In Austria, fairly efficient approaches were created and are still being developed that encourage and assist schools in continuous self-evaluation and development of quality of schools (known as QIS and QIBB). Key elements of these initiatives include: the school development plan and self-evaluation with an emphasis on teaching and learning. However, in contrast with other countries, the self-evaluation of schools in Austria is of a voluntary nature and it is not required or regulated by the educational legislation. Austrian experts say that it results, inter alia, in the fact that the level of education is very diverse, so you can run into very good schools developing education services, but also into those on the other side of the spectrum.

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Stanislav Michek

Teaching and Learning	Quality
Economy and Society	International Initiatives

we keep our fingers crossed!

When I went to the headmaster of the prof. Otokar Chlup FZS in Prague 13 PaedDr. Blanka Janovská, I had pangs of conscience. It was two days after the beginning of the school year 2009/10, which she started in a newly merged school. Junior Chlup FZS (320 pupils) became the successor organization in merging with the full FZS Fingerova (284 pupils), which is located in a building with a capacity of 800 pupils and whose headmaster retired.

What preceded it? Why were you interested in merging with FZS Fingerova?

„The interest of parents in our school had been constantly increasing, but it was limited by the existing premises of the former crèche. Also, the existence of incomplete schools for 1 to 5 years in Prague was threatening the good co-operating teaching staff with its possible temporariness. All this contributed to the large welding together and motivation of the staff who did not want to lose the opportunity to work together in the jointly created style," explains Blanka Janovská.

The solution to the problem of space was found in merging with FZS Fingerova, in which the parents were heavily involved too – financial and emotional support, physical work in moving. Underpinning the headmaster was the excellently working Parents Board.

It sounds simple. Was this the case also in reality?

The school authority had set a condition that the request to merge the schools be signed by 75 % of parents (both father and mother) from Chlup FZS who were to ensure that they would transfer their children to the „new" and larger building, even though three underground stations away. The biggest problem was to get fathers to the school to sign it, but we managed to do so. 85 % of parents signed with the condition that the management Chlup FZS would be retained and that the merged school would continue in the same manner of teaching in the spirit of the same philosophy.

So the school has been in a new building since September 1, 2009, but the enrolment for first classes was held pursuant to the law in early 2009. Where did you realize it?

The enrolment took place in the „new" object. „I was a little worried that there would be few parents. The opposite was true. We enrolled a record – 150 children, 104 future first grade pupils could be enrolled," says with satisfaction Blanka Janovská. The unusual merger was realized under the name Otokar Chlup FZS and teachers and many parents spend vacation by moving and modifying the new and larger premises. They did an incredible job.

The most difficult thing is still yet to come – work with people. How do you want to deal with this difficult task?

„I agree. Indeed, I'm not in an enviable situation. The new teaching staff consists of 23 teachers from Chlup FZS, 17 from Finger FZS and of 11 newcomers. It will not be easy to reconcile these groups to cooperate and assist each other with respect. I see the hardest challenge in their winning and consolidating for a common approach to students and learning style. We should be assisted to do so by a weekend seminar with Mgr. Jitka Kašová during which the teachers should agree on what in which school curriculum was good and what should be preserved to build on it. Upon mutual agreement, the School Educational Programme (SEP) would be modified. It is clear to me that it would be a „long-distance run"," realizes Blanka Janovská.

Did you have any evaluation system and what was it good for?

„Evaluation at Chlup FZS always pervaded all school activities. It started already in the first grade by guiding the children to self-assessment to know how to evaluate their work and find their mistakes, which is the foundation of learning. Teachers have a system of tables, where the knowledge and skills are listed for each topic that the child should gradually command. These tables will then become the basis for quarterly reviews for parents in a range of three options (I know, I sometimes make mistakes, I need to catch up). It also serves in self-evaluating of teachers who see the results of their work, or what the children need to practice more. As a basis for evaluation serves a portfolio that each pupil keeps from the first grade.

The evaluation is then commented on at a consultation interview by the child, teacher and parents who are deliberately pulled into the school work. The objective of this effort should be to make the parents aware of their responsibility for the education of their children and their failures. If the child has some flaws (as in multiplication facts) a „contract" can be written how to remedy it. Parents can come anytime to the lessons and many attended afternoon workshops where they personally tried the RWCT program method, project teaching, activity learning or drama in education used by the school. Feedback from parents was gathered from various questionnaires and discussions."

What tools do you use in the evaluation?

A number of tools proved useful in the ongoing evaluation of teachers at Chlup FZS that allow for direct and constant self-reflection: discussions and interviews, mind maps created in groups, peer inspections and headmaster's inspection as „visits", analysis of video recordings of lessons, keeping of teachers' and pupils' portfolios and others. These tools were very often suggested, used or evaluated in workshops and projects. Since 1995 the school had been using Kalibro tests for measuring knowledge and skills. Also important was the regular work with the pupil parliament that gave the children an opportunity to exercise their views in a safe environment and for the school management it was a valuable source of feedback. A school magazine Chlupík became a platform for the publication of students' opinions.

What procedures and methods did you choose in writing the self-assessment that the school is obliged to prepare by law?

„Both the management and the teaching staff of our school consider self-assessment as a condition for improving their work. To determine the baseline, we used the SWOT analysis, which involved not only teachers, but also the Parents Board. In addition, regularly once in two years we assign the Kalibro questionnaire "The School and Me" for pupils, parents, teachers and the school management," explains Blanka Janovská.

In accordance with Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll., the teachers of Chlup FZS jointly set goals, indicators and suggested possible tools that would enable them to verify objectives. Like about 10 other schools in the CR they used the Framework for Self-assessment of Education Conditions, which is an adapted version of the Index for Inclusion, a standard used by all English schools.

The results, which the school received from the Kalibro Company, then allowed comparison with the average of other schools (of course, these are just the schools that are interested in feedback and used the same service). Synthesis of questions was used from the questionnaire to the topics as areas of regulation. The questionnaires were combined therein for different respondents (pupils, teachers, parents). The synthesis and evaluation of questions was carried out by external evaluator Dr. Pavla Polechová, CSc.

In her review, she writes: „The parents of the children from Chlup FZS are high above the average of parents of children attending other schools in the CR as for the rate of agreement with the question whether the school develops their child's ability to express his/her ideas and understand others, then in the questions how often their child receives in teaching the opportunity to interact with others and to thus realize their own and others' strengths and weaknesses. They agree to an extent far greater than the corresponding national average that the school encourages their child to be able to learn and to enjoy it while teaching their child how to make sense of new situations and cope with them. Superiority above the average is also in responses to the question whether the school strives to make their child creative and enterprising, and the question whether the school teaches the child to live as a free and responsible human being lives..."

Is there consensus on the vision?

One of the goals in the management area in Framework for Self-assessment of Education Conditions of Chlup FZS was:

„The vision of the school is clear to all the staff and they take it as their own."

„The question of the principles of the ideal school, the perception of the nature of school quality can be considered a primary issue of self-evaluation. Only after finding what the teachers consider the quality, we can talk about finding ways to improve it. In other words, without a similar finding, a real school development can not be planned. The school can hardly know where to head forward if everyone has a different idea of what quality of the school is," explains Pavla Polechová.

She examined this objective with the Q-methodology, including the Q-factor analysis. Q-methodology serves for the objective reporting of subjective reality. Teachers including the school management were giving priorities to 60 statements defining the quality of education depending on how they feel subjectively about these meanings. In conclusion, the analysis states: „In Chlup PS, there is a common view on what represents the quality of the school. The vision of what a quality school is, is actually shared by all members of the congregation. This quality concept is based on a priori respect to the child."

And what next?

Self-assessment of the original Chlup FZS was processed in the school year 2006/2007. According to the results of the then analysis, the teachers as well as the school management could be satisfied. They could have a sense of self-affirmation that they are doing their job well. The time they invested, many years of training the staff as well as their own teaching activities of teachers had bore their fruit.

Blanka Janovská would now apply the system tested and certified by sixteen-year experience at a small school as a basis under the new conditions. „It's always about people," she says, being aware that she will have to win them for adopting the system and working style. It certainly will not be easy. We'll keep our fingers crossed fro her.

Jana Hrubá

Naše základní škola.

ZÁKLADNÍ ŠKOLA

Oasis

Children are going to tell you what the notion of value means to them:

Value means evaluation, when I am good /Naneta, 6 years/

It's what we do /Jonas, 4 years /

Value is that you have some toys and as you like it, so it's your value /Julie, 9 years/

Value, that is like if something is being evaluated. Like the jury, so the value. Maybe if there are races, so they evaluate who took first, second or third place... /Dorotka, 6 years/

… that you get A's to the jotter /Anička, 7 years/

… to write 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 /David, 7 years/

... that someone falls in love with you /Kačka, 7 years/

Value, well it's always there when I draw a helicopter here, so then I write it here /Ondřej, 4 years/

Value equals price. And another possibility, for example, valuable literature is literature of great value and the book is not meant to be expensive, but valuable due to its content. /Veronika, 10 years/

Throwing a note :) /Veronika, 10 years/

Money, sister Elizabeth, friendship – that we appreciate them /Lukáš, 6 years/

… that I'm very good /Kačka, 6 years/

… when people agree to repair the castle, and then they call it value /Valentýnka, 7 years/

… to tell my mother that I am going for a walk and buy her a bouquet /Honzík, 6 years/

… if someone can not swim and then they save them /Patrik, 7 years/

Love is of inestimable value, as well as life and friendship, that is at least for me! And the family, especially them, I love them very much. Money has value, too. /Adéla, 10 years/

What is...
the value?

The value is what is good, maybe *** hotel or maybe marks in the school. And maybe a superior at work may be promoted. Or maybe MSc. MA. Or when someone wins something. /Adéla, 10 years/

When I hear the word „value" I think of many meanings. For example, the value of life, the value of some things, moral values, spiritual values. The most precious value may be that of life. Everyone has only just one life and it's up to him/her how he/she spends it. Who does not respect life does not respect anything, in my opinion. Moral values are important for life too, such as helping others, liking people and not harming anyone intentionally. The value of things is ephemeral, things age or get destroyed by time. For me, the biggest value is in life, that I have two parents who care about us and love us. Another value for me is that we are all healthy and we can enjoy nice moments together. /Aleš, 14 years/

The value may have different meanings. There are values measurable by numbers, money and other measurement units. Moreover, there are values incalculable, immeasurable which identify various human characteristics and feelings. Goods in the shop have a set price, but try to quantify the value of health, friendship or love. Each of us considers different things to be important in our lives. To me, I cherish health and love most. But I think that money might come in handy too, because a lot of things are simply impossible without them. Yet I believe that most important are the relationships between people, in the family. /Karolína, 14 years/

Each of us, when we hear the word value, thinks of something else. I've thought of mutual trust and friends. Trust among friends should be 100 %. Friends should not lie to each other, and certainly not denigrate each other. Often we thereby disappoint the other one and the friendship is over. Everyone can make mistakes, but few will forgive. So for me, the value of friendship means the most, life without friends would be boring, nobody would help us, give use advice, say: „Come out." You would become withdrawn and it is then about nothing, you can easily get provoked by someone and no one stands up for you. Nobody says: „Leave her alone or you'll have to face me." /Michaela, 14 years/

Different people believe in different values. For some, the most important is a lot of money, but for me the greatest value is my family. I have a background in them that I would not trade. I can rely on all the members of our family. I reveal all secrets to my brother, and I know that he will never betray me. I turn to my parents when I need help with a problem in the school or outside it. I prefer when we're all together and do things together. /Zbyněk, 13 years/

Value can be measured, weighed; its intensity can be quantified. This obviously applies to a product. But what about the value for humans? What is important for us? What are the values we profess, recognize or perceive? Which values should someone have with whom we will live, work, spend our free time? What do we mean by values and what do we want from friend and what do we imagine for the future with our life partners, and they with us? These are things that we encounter since childhood. The values that our parents respected will most likely be recognized by us and we will find our own in the adolescence and adulthood. It is respect for people, nature, animals, it is the values that we can not see, but we somehow feel with the sixth sense. /Bára, 14 years/

Ladislava Šlajchová a Radka Víchová

Advisory Centre of Road to the Quality Improvement

write to us or call,
we will advise you

Do you need help with a specific problem relating to the implementation of self-assessment in your school? Ask us your question, describe the particular situation, we will try to help you.

You know what are the strengths and weaknesses of your school, but you would need an advice on, for instance, the formation of such self-assessment report? Not sure how to properly involve the faculty, students and their parents into implementing self-assessment?

Tell us about your specific needs for self-assessment and send us your questions or call to:
E-mail: cesta@nuov.cz (write Advisory Centre of Road to the Quality Improvement to the subject line)
Post: Advisory Centre of Road to the Quality Improvement, NÚOV, Weilova 1271/6, Praha 10, PSC 102 00
Call Centre: +420 272 022 416 (non stop – the phone is also connected to a recorder – Leave us your message, we will answer it)

You can read the FAQ, including answers to them, already now at: www.nuov.cz/ae.
At the same time, we assure you that the questions we get are made anonymous before publication, which you can now check at our Website.
We provide a safe environment for you – questions are not published with names.

Questions are consulted with experts:
Prof. RNDr. Erika Mechlová, CSc.
Prof. PhDr. Milan Pol, CSc.
Prof. PhDr. Karel Rýdl, CSc.
PhDr. Ladislava Šlajchová, Ph.D.
Mgr. Jana Vašťatková, Ph.D.

Want to become **the face** of the **newsletter**?

We announce a literary and photographic competition on the theme „What is good about our school.“
Send literary or photographic work of the children and pupils of your school on the theme „What is good about our school" to our address:

Competition – Road to the Quality Improvement
NÚOV
Weilova 1271/6
102 00 Praha 10

Participation is open to children of special kindergartens, pupils of primary schools, secondary schools, academies, primary art schools and language schools.
Participation is open to all the above mentioned individually or in groups (and across years), or whole classes, supported by their class or other teachers or even individually – choose a group as it is close to you and how you like creating together.

HOWEVER, ALWAYS CHOOSE AND SEND ONE WORK FOR A SCHOOL.

The deadline February 26, 2010
We will choose the best 5 works and come to do a report from your school, which will be published in one of the following newsletter issues.

Be sure to include your name or team and the address of your school.

An unnamed company offers us products for self-assessment, in the sense that they will do it for us. But is it still self-assessment then?

The technical point of view indicates that the school self-assessment can not be performed for the school by any external entity. In practice, tough, we have met with so-called „self-assessment made to order".

This way of implementing self-assessment can not be accepted because it is a misunderstanding of the basic ideas of self-assessment. The result of this way of performing „self-assessment" is that the evaluation processes in an indoor environment of schools is de facto absent, and if they do, they are not used for school development, but merely for reporting obligations fulfilled!

The most important moment in the process of self-evaluation is an internal transformation of the organization into a learning organization where elements are continuously applied of the systematic and systemic reflection of the activity so that the learning process of pupils and the whole school is supported maximally, reinforcing thereby its role in the learning society.

External entities may, for example, provide quality monitoring in various areas or provide the school with support within the meaning of counselling, educational activities, development of appropriate evaluation tools as it also done by the project Road to the Quality Improvement. It is essential that each school realize the purposes for which the service is used, how it relates to its priorities, how to deal with the information provided, and thus how the findings will help it improve the quality in the future.

Sample of the **Questions** and **Answers**

The full version is available at www.ae.nuov.cz.

Can you clarify whether it is necessary to process self-assessment each year, or once for the whole period? In the three-year cycle of implementing self-assessment, is it necessary to include all the years, or to evaluate annually, or enough to evaluate only every third year?

The process of self-assessment that leads to the development of quality education provided by schools should take place continuously in schools, and schools should receive and process data continuously over (and across) the previous periods, and not only in its conclusion or only for some parts of the cycle. Following the amendment of the regulation, a three-year period is set that concerns a report on the school self-assessment.

Must the school conduct self-assessment in all aforementioned areas, or may it choose to start with just a few of them and focus on those only?

Under the amended Regulation No. 225/2009 Coll., stipulating the essential elements of long-term plans, annual reports and school self-assessment, the school carries out self-assessment activities in all areas that are defined by this Regulation (see § 8, Clause 2, Point a) – f)), during a period of three school years. The school may choose the areas that it will pay more attention to, for instance because of the need to improve, and these will be evaluated in shorter periods of time. Other selected areas will be evaluated annually and some will be evaluated only once every three years, however, monitoring of all the areas should be continuous.

We consider it appropriate for the school to strengthen monitoring in particular areas gradually and to have elaborated a system in the longer term (when and at what frequency it will pursue each area in detail).

Is it possible to use a template, guide or questionnaire, which will be correct for implementing self-assessment?

Such a versatile product that would suit all schools is not and should not be available, and hopefully, none of the companies on the Czech market will pass „their product" off as the only accurate self-evaluation tool and universal for all schools. The materials related to self-assessment suggest that self-assessment is a systematic, regular and structured process in which the school itself verifies and evaluates data on the main areas of its activities (see Part Four, § 8, Article 2 of Regulation No. 225/2009 Coll., stipulating the essential elements of long-term plans, annual reports and school self-assessment). Given that self-assessment is based on the internal needs of the school and is important for the school self-reflection in an effort to change and achieve a higher quality of education in the school, it is not effective „to issue" a universal instrument, for example a questionnaire for the schools only to fill it in formally.

We believe that in pursuit of a higher quality of education it is more effective if the school itself selects (or creates) an instrument that corresponds with its school curriculum, and thinks about the areas and criteria to monitor, evaluate, and use for drawing conclusions and choosing a strategy for improvement. It is not in conflict if the school at its discretion selects a tool offered from outside, which corresponds with its priorities. The aim of our project is to provide schools with 30 standardized evaluation tools that will focus on different areas of evaluation. Schools will learn to use these instruments, interpret the findings, and determine strategies for improvement. The project Road to the Quality Improvement will be piloting those evaluation tools at schools, educational programs will be offered such as Self-evaluationt Coordinator and Self-evaluation Consultant and other products to support schools in implementing self-evaluation.

There are comparisons hidden in every assessment. How could the schools compare between themselves through self-assessment?

The aim of self-assessment is not to compare schools. The school, however, at its discretion, may choose one area in which it wishes to know how it stands compared to other schools it selected. This comparison, which is controlled by the school itself, is called benchmarking. The information thereby obtained by the school is a bit more informative for the school itself. In terms of self-assessment process, however, it is basically a monitoring part (thus a survey) that has to be followed by the actual evaluation of the results obtained and setting of priorities for the next period.

Tips for **the Journey**

What the future holds
for us in store …

Dear readers,

the moment you are holding the first issue of the newsletter „On the Road to Quality Improvement" in hand, with your permission, I dare to compare our project to an expectant mother expecting any minute the arrival of their first child into the world. You may probably wonder why I associate this with this time. It's been almost 9 months since our project realization started, and indeed something is coming to the world and there might be more descendants...

So what was „born" within the project and what are we planning for you in the spring and summer?

– regional conferences held in the autumn aimed at informing the experts about launching of the project and about what we want to achieve with the project;

– discussions have begun with the promoters and the Czech School Inspection about the access rules for the school self-assessment, the first entries have been created for the dictionary so that we all understood each other in the evaluation and monitoring;

– results have been published of a survey on the state of school self-assessment in the CR, a call centre is operating and e-mail address for consulting is available – for the cases when you are at your wits' end when implementing self-assessment (contact information is available on the imprint on the last page of the newsletter);

– preparation is under way of training for the school headmasters and teachers who want to be coordinators or advisers self-evaluation;

– first self-assessment tools are going to be tested at pilot schools, such as:

– pupils' achievement motivation questionnaire, pupils' attitudes questionnaire, teachers' teaching styles questionnaire, students' learning strategies questionnaire in foreign languages and the Good School – a technique for setting priorities for schools (see the cut-out cards attached to this newsletter issue). Individual instruments will be gradually described with their characteristics, methods of use and moreover, software will be created for some to be accessible for you via the Internet in a user friendly environment;

– We will continuously collect and describe examples of good practice of the school self-assessment process, which you may find inspiring;

– in March, the third meeting will be held of representatives of schools, school inspectors, school authorities, representatives of the Ministry of Education where the next step is expected of reconciling the access of different parties to an self-evaluation – we expect to result it in a safer environment for you;

– further entries from the assessment and monitoring areas will be added in the dictionary;

– in the spring, different ways of cooperation between partner schools will be piloted – to test how the schools can learn something new from each other.

And should you still find this not enough, we can tell you that beautiful boys were born to our two colleagues (Lucie Procházková and Jana Vašťatková) in the autumn of 2009. ... So may they and their mothers and of course project do well and may you benefit from it!
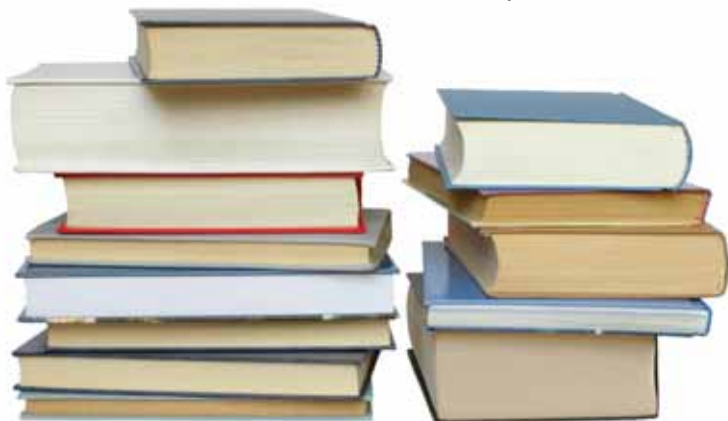
Jana Ostrýtová

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The project team recommends
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Sdělení k termínům vydávání vlastního hodnocení školy (according to the amendment of Regulation No.225/2009 Coll. amending Regulation No. 15/2005 Coll., stipulating the essential elements of long-term plans, annual reports and school self-assessment)

[online] http://www.msmt.cz/uploads/VKav_200/sdeleni_9_09/sdeleni_terminy_vlastni_hodnoceni_skoly.doc

NÚOV

šedesát let v odborném školství