



Leonardo da Vinci

QualiVET
project

National Institute
for Vocational Education and Training
Ob železnici 16, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Phone.: +386 1 5864 200
Fax: +386 1 5422 045
E-mail: cpi@cpi.si
<http://www.cpi.si>



REPORT OF THE FIRST-PHASE OF THE QUALIVET PROJECT

1 Introduction

1. 1 Short Review of Quality Assurance Elements in Slovenia

In the past, the elements of quality assurance in Slovene VET were centrally defined and they were principally based **on input and process criteria** governed by law. They took the form of centrally prescribed curricula on the basis of the “nomenclature of occupations”, which was prepared in collaboration with the social partners. The nomenclature defined minimum standards of skills and competencies for each occupation. Enterprises were actively involved in the practical segment of the educational programme. Employers’ representatives were also included in the examination team. A university degree and a special state exam for teachers of theoretical subjects were prescribed as quality criteria. VET trainers had to complete a 2-year higher education programme. Both teachers and trainers had to participate in the in-service teacher training which was organised by specialised institutes.

The state invested a lot of funds in the equipment for VET, especially in the ICT technology, school books and other school resources.

The consequences of economic and social changes in the 1990s reflected in the modifications of the educational legislation. The acts, such as the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (1996)¹, the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act (1996)², the Adult Education Act (1996)³ and the Gymnasium Act (1996)⁴, completely reformed education and training.

The changes focused on improvement and quality assurance in the following six key areas:

¹ Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja, Ur. L. RS, 12/96, 115/03 / Organization and Financing of Education Act, Official Gazette of the RS, 12/96, 115/03.

² Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju, Ur.l. št. 12/96, 86/04 / VET Act, 12/96, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 12/96, 86/04.

³ Zakon o izobraževanju odraslih, Ur.l. RS 12/96, 56/94 / Adult Education Act, Official Gazette of the RS 12/96, 56/94.

⁴ Zakon o gimnazijah, Ur.l.RS št. 12/96, 59/01 / Gymnasium Act, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 12/96, 59/01.

- new curricula solutions with improved cooperation of the social partners, their involvement in preparation and implementation of educational programmes;
- introducing external examination elements;
- accelerated and obligatory in-service training of teachers;
- easier access to education for all;
- investment in new buildings, equipment;
- adopting social corrective measures (subsidizing meals, setting up funds for school books).

A strong emphasis was given to practical education and training in TVET and to facilitated transition of graduates into the labour market, as well as to their better employability. The system of career promotions for teachers which allows them to hold different titles was introduced as a measure to improve the quality of teaching. At the same time, the supply of the in-service training which brings credits for the attainment of these titles was improved and increased. At the national level, the general secondary school – gymnasium – was launched as a school which prepares exclusively for university programmes and higher education levels. The process was complemented with the introduction of the external examination, “*matura*”, which has put forward a new instrument for a quality label and has provided a ticket for further studies. In very short time, enrolment rates into general secondary education programmes have increased substantially, partly because of the labour market conditions as the demand for technical occupations dropped, the other reason being the possibilities offered by the final examination “*splošna matura*”. Similarly, the VET final examination, “*poklicna matura*” was introduced, but since it has not provided a direct transition into further studies, it has not fundamentally improved the attractiveness of VET programmes.

When Slovenia became a full member of the EU, numerous measures in the sense of quality assurance had already existed at different levels. The Phare programmes were very important for the development of quality in TVET in the pre-accession period as they helped to develop the system for preparation of occupational standards; and as a measure of quality assurance, the possibility was also given for the certification of national occupational qualifications. The National Reference Point for Vocational Education and Training (NRP) enables the comparison of educational standards in VET and provides the transparent overview of national qualification structures which should be included into the National Qualification Framework.

Slovenia has also made an important step in the development of the curricula in VET by improving flexibility (modularisation) and assuring better response to the needs of the labour

market. It is very important that a new culture of learning and teaching is gaining ground. Other important elements from the view of improved quality assurance include: system of (partly) external examination of skills and competencies, preparation of reports on results in external examinations, system of permanent in-service teacher training co-financed by the state, monitoring of the results via specialised public institutions (but systematic analyses are still lacking), as well as important investments from the national (educational) budget into the equipment, school manuals and public institutions which support the development efforts of schools.

The Ministry of Education and Sport supports better access for all, greater efficiency and higher quality of VET also by modified funding system of schools and other providers of VET, which goes in the direction of strengthening their autonomy and rewarding their output.

New VET Act (adopted in June 2006) in Article 14 call the attention to the “**quality management**”: an obligatory component in the management of VET schools; each school is obliged to set up a team responsible for quality development and assessment and prepare a report on **self-evaluation**- each year;

It would also be necessary to clearly define the criteria and indicators for monitoring at the national level, with special emphasis on output standards which are valid both for the providers and individuals. At this moment, we still do not have the plan for the national quality indicators in VET regarding employability and responsiveness for matching supply and demand at the labour market.

1. 2 Projects for Quality Assessment

Apart from the above-mentioned measures for better quality assurance at the national level, the first special projects for quality assurance were launched, both at the national level and at the level of the chosen institutions. “The Mirror Project” (National Education Institute)⁵ was introduced in 50 schools in the period from 1998 to 2002. The project was based on the Scottish quality criteria model. In 2002, the project was replaced by a similar project set up within the Ministry of Education and Sport. *The Learning Schools Network* project (School for headmasters)⁶ was launched in 1998. The project aimed to improve classroom practice. It was assumed that classroom practice could be improved through the development of collaborative culture in schools. The main objective of the project was to encourage and maintain the process of self-improvement of schools, to develop collaborative ways of

⁵ Zavod RS za šolstvo, project Ogledalo. / National Education Institute. Mirror project.

⁶ Šola za ravnatelje, Mreža učečih se šol. / School for headmasters. Learning Schools Network.

learning within and among schools and to share examples of good practice. It was expected that the project would contribute to higher quality of work in schools, not only in terms of results, but also in terms of commitment to improvement. The school improvement teams were trained in planning, management of changes, team work and problem solving. Special areas of development were identified within the participating schools. The following areas among the selected priorities deserve mentioning: student's assessment, student's working habits and motivation, cooperation with parents, development of social competencies, cooperation among primary and secondary school teachers, communication, active school breaks, the school environment protection etc. The project involved primary schools as well as gymnasiums and vocational and technical schools. The project became a part of the School for headmasters, and had attracted 168 schools until 2004⁷.

In the framework of the Phare-Mocca programme,⁸ the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for VET ran a project entitled "The Concept of Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in VET". The concept was based on the Dutch and Danish model of quality assurance in VET and it assumed that TVET schools have the obligation to draft their own plan of quality assurance based on four obligatory areas:

- management;
- performance in the educational process;
- results/outcomes of the educational process;
- values and atmosphere in the school.

The obligatory indicators included:

- for performance in the educational process: collaboration with schools and enterprises;
- for results of the educational process: follow-up of the information about the employability of graduates.

Vocational and technical schools also had to submit a report about the realization of their plans on quality assurance. The report had to be prepared with a special self-evaluation method. The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for VET launched the project in 12 schools, but the project has never been completely finished. The report on "The Concept of Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in VET in Slovenia" was published in the final publication

⁷ Ways towards Quality in Education, International Conference Proceedings, 8-10 April 2000, National Leadership School, Open Society Institute.

⁸ Phare – Mocca programme, Concept of Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ljubljana, October 2000.

of the Phare-Mocca programme in October 2000, which was supported by the European Training Foundation⁹.

Several interesting projects should be mentioned among the projects for quality assurance. The Slovene Institute for Adult Education launched the project entitled "Offering Quality Education to Adults (QAEA)" ¹⁰ in 1999. Until 2005, the project had been used by 45% of all folk high schools in Slovenia, 19% of secondary schools which carry out adult education programmes and 7% of private educational organisations which provide verified adult education programmes. If the organisation decided to join an organised and funded implementation model, it would have to comply with the following standards:

- collective beginning, deadlines and end;
- directives for quality group formation;
- methodology for preparation of the self-evaluation report;
- methodology for preparation of the quality development plan;
- recommendations for communication with various users;
- duty to enable training on self-evaluation for quality group members.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport founded the National Commission for Quality Assessment and Quality Assurance in Pre-School Institutions, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Adult Education Institutions in 2003. Its role is to connect various activities in the area of quality assessment and development, and provide less fragmented and better coordinated work in the area. The commission compiled a draft of a basic manual which contains 5 different areas and indicators for quality assessment¹¹.

- attainment and achievements;
- teaching and learning;
- ethos and support for pupils;
- management and leadership;
- cooperation with parents and stakeholders.

The project contributed many useful tools, questionnaires and indicators, but it was not implemented on a large scale, although it promoted the development of self-evaluation in schools. In 2005, the government established a new national committee with the aim to

⁹ See 23..

¹⁰POKI- Offering Quality Education to Adults (OQEA), Slovene Institute for Adult Education, Ljubljana, 2004.

¹¹ Modro oko: Ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti v vzgoji in izobraževanju / Blue Eye: Quality Assessment and Assurance in Education in 2001, 2002, Ministry for Education, Science and Sport, Ljubljana, 2001.

upgrade the Quality Assurance Project. The implementation is to be financed by the European Social Fund. The project is very extensive since it is to be initiated simultaneously in pre-school institutions, primary schools, TVET and high schools.

All quality assurance projects were important because they raised the awareness about the importance of quality at a school level.

1. .3 The QualiVET project

A lot has already been done in many Slovene educational institutions in terms of development and quality using different models and approaches. However, there are still many educational institutions where nothing has yet been done in terms of systematic development and improving quality. Thus National Institute for Vocational education and Training has decided to dedicate phase one of QualiVET project to establishing what a current situation in terms of development and quality at two school centres (School Centre Novo mesto, School Centre Celje) is. The choice of the school centres was not random. They are, namely, typical representatives of the above-mentioned educational institutions: School Centre Novo mesto - Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering has already taken part in some projects for improving quality, has accepted the idea of permanent development and has already taken some important decisions to ensure its continuation. On the other hand School Centre Celje - Vocational and Technical School for Mechanical Engineering, is aware of the importance of quality but is still at the beginning of its systematic development.

For a successful quality development and its further implementation it is important for all school staff including the management to participate. They have to reach a consensus on all decisions which should not be imposed by any outside institutions. All changes need to be made gradually. Staff members need to adopt certain changes and start using it systematically. Nevertheless, they still need to follow certain procedures and processes defined by current legislation.

In project phase one project teams were organised. They were a link between National Institute for Vocational education and Training and individual schools. There were nine project team members at School Centre Novo mesto - Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering and six members at School Centre Celje - Vocational and Technical School for Mechanical Engineering. The members were teachers and both principals.

Project teams first did a research about a current situation at their school using a structured interview. Thus they conducted interviews with both principals, twelve teachers, four students, two employers, a representative of Chamber of Craft of Slovenia and a representative of Ministry of Education and Sport.

2 Interview Results

The answers were very diverse so no general conclusions can be made. What follows are all the answers given by the interviewees.

2.1 VISION

2.1.1 Does your school have a defined vision of expectations?

The teachers know their school has a vision of expectations but most of them know little about its contents. Some schools have their visions and statements about their mission included in their documents. They have also introduced them to the communities, employees, students and parents in order to evaluate them. In some schools visions are only in principals' heads.

2.1.2 What are future tasks of your school?

The answers were very diverse, which implies that there are many areas where quality can be improved. Schools want:

- Maintain or increase the enrolment
- Motivate their students to be more active
- Provide schools with better equipment
- Be respectable members of their communities
- Establish better company – school cooperation
- Prepare pupils for future profession, life and further education
- Contribute to students' personal development
- Ensure security and students' well-being in school
- More successful students
- Encourage less successful students
- Improve quality of lessons
- Improve student-student relationships
- Reduce the number of drop-outs and increase enrolment
- Improve and maintain school's reputation
- Acquire new educational programmes
- Become regional centres of vocational, technical and post secondary-vocational education

2.1.3 Which projects and documents are directly linked with the vision of your institution?

School's vision is based on two sets of documents. The first are system documents defined by legislation (annual work plan, work analysis, work report, chronicle). There are also documents prepared within different projects schools enter voluntarily:

- project Quality – Blue Eye
- Project School Network
- Open school
- Project ECO schools and out-of-school activities
- JUNIOR, student council
- project Comenius, Phare

The interviewees also think that for forming a vision also teacher-teacher (and principal) discussions and project work are important.

2.1.4 What were the bases (ideas, beliefs...) for forming the vision of your school?

- School should be connected with the community
- Students should be adequately prepared for a certain profession
- Students' and teachers' personal development
- Environment protection
- Possibilities for further education
- Students' motivation
- Students should feel well in school and should cooperate
- Better lesson and learning quality and better relationships
- Better teachers' professional qualification with seminars, projects...
- Needs of companies and economy
- The basis is values of modern school as defined in EU demands and school documentation about Slovene education development and ideas of quality being formed under the influence of public expectations (they are the users of education)

2.1.5 What were the plans and actions for accomplishing the school's vision?

- With projects they took or still take part in
- Using new work methods
- inter-subject cooperation
- School's annual work plan
- seminars and workshops
- student-student help
- joint agreements and contracts
- teamwork with a defined culture of relationships
- permanent education and training of teachers
- consistency in terms of disciplining
- parents being satisfied with parents-school cooperation
- research work

- students taking part in various competitions
- presentation of technical professions to primary school pupils...

2.2 CURRENT PROCESSES THAT ARE CHANGING YOUR INSTITUTION

2.2.1 What are current activities/areas where changes are being introduced?

- Introducing active teaching and work methods
- Professional education and training
- Inter-subject cooperation
- Activities in the project Blue Eye
- ECO activities and out-of-school activities
- Projects for making students more active
- New educational programmes with new teaching methods (e.g. mechatronic)
- School rules
- JUNIOR
- Improving students' attitude to school inventory
- Cooperation with local community
- Starting to use descriptive assessment criteria

2.2.2 What parts of current activities/areas are related to organisational activities?

- Inter-subject cooperation (sports day and nature day),
- Culture day celebration
- Organisation of lessons in new educational programmes (distribution by subjects)
- JUNIOR
- project Quality
- cooperation with education programme councils
- teacher's annual work plan
- organisation of extra-curriculum activities (extended curriculum)
- project week (Eco school)
- certificate education
- computer education being co-financed by EU

2.2.3 What concepts do you follow when planning developmental activities?

- Motivating students to be more responsible and active
- Quality cycle: plan – do – check -act
- Personal growth
- Increasing quality of education
- Concept of establishing cooperation between school and industry
- Teamwork
- Sharing good experiences and examples

- Self-evaluation
- Each individual makes an effort to work hard in teachers' assembly, professional staff meetings, parents' council
- Following the philosophy of quality TQM, adjusting services to expectations and standards, methods of evaluation and self-evaluation
- Being comparable to Europe

2.2.4 What is the status of developmental activities (judging by success and time planned for their implementation)?

- One before last year we started using new active teaching methods and evaluating them
- In some cases students' motivation increased
- There were some teacher-training seminars,
- We increased inter-subject cooperation,
- Short-time plans are being carried out, long –term plans (equipment) are not yet being carried out
- Too few projects
- Eco-school is stagnating
- Tasks are defined, research of the current status on various levels is being done
- We are trying hard to increase the quality of lessons
- Certain activities take more time (even 2 years), short-term activities are evaluated

2.2.5 What problems do you face when making changes?

- Big classes,
- Teaching technology ,
- Lack of space
- Lack of adequate student's books and workbooks
- It is harder and harder to motivate students for work,
- Teachers are too busy and stressed
- People's habits
- Reaching a consensus among students
- Accepting students' opinions and taking them into account
- Financial,
- Different interests of society and individuals
- Teachers face too high norms, problems with lack of time and space, group divisions, motivation, lack of information and professional education and training and are too busy and stressed

2.2.6 What are you going to try to change in the future?

- More fieldwork
- Encourage students to be more active and motivated
- Change students' attitude to school inventory
- Improve student-student and student-teacher relationships
- Teaching methods
- Increase inter-subject cooperation
- Make ECO school more active again
- Those that have proved to be ineffective in practice
- Increase enrolment

- Increase lesson quality
- Work methods with the employed and unemployed (all-life learning)
- Teaching methodology (methods of student-oriented activities, cooperative learning, teamwork), increasing students' sense of belonging to school
- More emphasis on process knowledge and use of information-communication technology, international cooperation and bringing curriculum more up-to-date with regards to social development

2.3 BEING PART OF CHANGES

2.3.1 Who takes part in processes of changes?

- teachers,
- management
- students
- parents
- society and social partners
- school council

It is interesting that according to the principals' opinion 30% of teachers' assembly takes part in changes, but according to the teachers they all take part in changes.

2.3.2 What is the role of teachers in making changes?

- Following what is new, especially in terms of new methods
- Increasing professional qualification
- Teachers are the ones who make changes happen
- Taking into account students' opinions
- Leadership and coordination of projects
- Studying materials ,
- Research on school's needs
- Making changes in practice/classrooms
- Cooperation
- Leaders of planning and implementation – members of quality teams

2.3.3 Do you face any restrictions when making changes?

- Lack of space
- Lack of equipment in classrooms, specialised classrooms
- Disagreements with principal/assistant principal (school's management)
- Lack of time,
- Routine work
- New work methods
- Companies have many different conditions and interests which cannot all be included in changes
- Usually there are limitations in terms of knowledge, training, motivation, support of community (parents usually do not see quality teaching in encouraging students to find answers themselves, they think that by doing so teacher evade responsibility for students' lack of knowledge, motivation)

2.3.4 Do you have any suggestions for making changes?

- Smaller classes
- Reduce teachers' paperwork
- More new equipment for all subjects
- More questionnaires about changes done among students
- Team of students (3-5), that can be actively involved in making changes
- Ensure that the process of making changes is not complicated but clear, increase communication, informal – discussion lessons, better student-student and teacher-student relationships in a class,
- To make educational system as uniform as possible suitable for wider range of people
- Encourage parents, society, students... to take part in changes

2.4 CONTINUITY – PERMANENCY IN MAKING CHANGES

2.4.1 Is there a need for making changes constantly?

- yes
- partly
- all teachers agreed with some additional comments: new times demand new knowledge, constant technical improvements, needs of the market and companies

2.4.2 If you agree, explain why? Why should there be constant changes?

- More interesting work
- More active students
- Because technology development forces us to make changes
- To avoid routine and boredom
- Pedagogy changes and develops
- Increase lesson quality and students' motivation – personal growth
- Because the world is changing, industry and society are also changing and school has to follow these changes
- Definitely there is a need for changes since society is constantly changing

2.4.3 Have you taken any measures to speed up the process of constant making of changes?

- Taking part in projects
- Using active teaching methods
- Sharing experience in workshops
- We agreed on timetable of reaching quality
- Any measure is a synonym of force
- I do not think so
- Taking into account the need of the region
- Control points, deadlines and different ways

2.5 QUALITY DEVELOPMENT (QD) AND QUALITY Assurance (QA)

2.5.1 What is the role of QD and QA at your school?

- Encourages better work
- Following what is new
- Important
- Too little

2.5.2 How important are concepts QD and QA? Are they values for you school?

- We want more quality lessons
- Reduce the number of drop-outs
- Students and teachers should feel better in school
- Making improvements, making students, parents, companies and community more satisfied
- Make both concepts more important
- They are important since they reflect how community sees you and it can increase possibilities for employment
- Their importance is being seen in students' results at various activities, for example innovations at practical lessons

2.5.3 How would you grade the importance of QD and QA?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 4.1.

It is interesting that the principal of a school that has already done a lot in terms of quality thinks that quality is not emphasised enough on the level of state institutions (grade 3). On the other had the principal whose school has not yet had any quality projects thinks the state put enough emphasis on quality (grade 5).

2.5.4 What systems of QD and QA are most often mentioned/discussed during your meeting/discussions?

- Self-evaluation
- System of quality guaranty
- There are not enough discussions among students about quality
- Self-evaluation, team problem-solving
- External evaluation
- Standardisation of certain procedures

2.5.5 At what activities do you meet QD and QA?

- During lessons
- At teacher-parents meeting
- conferences
- class lessons
- in-class observations
- cooperation with community
- at all levels of teaching – learning process
- planning and implementing of curriculum
- ensuring that students and all employees feel well and safe in school
- organisation of certain activities, events

2.5.6 Which elements/segments of activities are most common and why?

- Students' motivation, which is a key for successful work
- Teaching, support of teachers in students' projects
- Self-evaluation
- Talks with students
- Analyses of success and implementation of activities
- Teaching and attending lessons
- Use of didactic aids
- Help provided to students
- School climate
- Material conditions and management of school

2.5.7 Are there any good examples that indicate how your QD and QA systems work when achieving goals?

- Inter-subject cooperation and joint evaluation of achieved goals
- Using new teaching methods taken from literature or colleagues' experiences
- Equipment of computer classroom, pneumatic classroom, laboratories
- Sharing experience
- Climate in 1st year classes
- ECO school
- Teachers' education and training
- Help provided to students with learning difficulties
- Students are more educated and thus companies are more satisfied with them as future employees
- Motivated students
- Work with talented students and their results
- Teams of teachers that are improving the quality on those areas where the results were not satisfactory

2.5.8 To what extent are QD and QA systems used at your school?

- Quite a lot
- The lecture quality and quality of didactic aids are improving
- Not so much

- There are some activities where they are always used to a great extent, there are some activities where they are used only occasionally, there are some people that never use them
- Good ideas but bad system with both criteria and standards globally undefined

2.5.9 Which goals related to QD and QA are emphasised at your school/institution ?

- Reducing the number of drop-outs
- Making students more active
- Increasing the quality of teaching and students' success
- Making conditions for professions and personal growth of students and teachers
- Encouraging students and teachers for education
- Cooperation with parents, community and companies
- Starting new educational programmes and courses
- Education of teenagers
- Making the school distinguished in community

2.5.10 How would you grade QD and QA at your school?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 3.2. It is interesting that no one chose grade 5 but there was grade 1.

2.5.11 What problems are there in terms of QD and QA on the following areas:

2.5.11.1 Learning, learning results, teaching processes:

The answers of employees (teachers) and students were different so they are shown separately:

-The opinion of employees:

- big classes
- lack of students' motivation
- lack of information technology
- bad equipment
- extensive curriculums
- limited teachers' autonomy
-

-Students' opinions

- not feeling well in school, equipment
- curriculum is too demanding
- not enough control over teachers
- too few new methods
- not enough inter-subjects cooperation
- bad learning habits, in some cases bad students-teacher relationships
- lack of pedagogic knowledge

- Employer's opinion

- programmes not being adjusted enough

-Principals' opinion

- some teachers still have not accepted the philosophy of quality improvement of their own work, some still see student results as being the results of students learning by themselves, most of the teachers follow the philosophy of quality and constantly reflect their work

2.5.11.2 Teachers' professional qualification

- No need for changes
- We are more professionally than methodologically qualified
- Teacher education and training is not enough adjusted to professional areas
- Pay more attention to students
- Not enough up-to-date teaching
- Students' motivation
- There are a lot of new methods and ways of teaching but not enough good lecturers in Slovenia who could teach teachers how to use them

-Students' opinions

- Two students emphasised that some, luckily very few, teachers at their school are not enough professionally qualified, not motivated and ignorant. They mostly emphasised the lack of pedagogic knowledge. They think students-teacher relationships are good.

2.5.11.3 Leadership and coordination of work at school/institution

- Not enough cooperation with students in student council
- Lack of space, not enough control and following agreements
- The system is too centralised
- good
- too much additional work, principal does not take into account what teachers want, teachers are not up-to-date with what is new
- since some teachers are members of more teachers' assembly, quality control can be very difficult-they do not feel the need for quality and share a vision, they do not have a sense of belonging – they are just guest teachers

2.5.11.4 Relationships in a classroom/teachers' assembly/among employees

- More mutual respect in a classroom
- Students' lack of values
- More team work
- In some classrooms relationships are good, in some not
- Students' intolerant communication
- I think they are good
- Depends on employees and problems they have
- At our school building relationships has taken many years to get on this level that enables us to adopt QD and QA. It started in 1996.

2.5.11.5 Relationships with outside partners (depends on the type of interviewee)

- Usually they see just their field of work
- Are good
- there is still not enough cooperation with some, companies do not see schools as long-term partners
- it depends on how much an individual is prepared to cooperate
- still not all are interested in good school. When partners are expected to express and argument or an opinion, define, evaluate, take part in any other way most of them do not respond saying they are too busy. Our school cooperates well with local community, which has been stated by the community itself.

2.5.12 What do you think would be the consequences if the problems of QD and QA were misinterpreted?

- We would not choose the right problems to deal with
- Consequences could be serious
- Long-term - catastrophe

2.5.13 How would you grade the importance of correct interpretation of QD and QA problems?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 4.25.

2.5.14 What has already been done in the past for improving QD and QA? Have you written these plans down, for examples in work plans, organisational documents, etc.?

- In annual work plan
- In work plan of professional staff meetings
- Final report of the project Blue Eye
- Conclusions of the projects Mirror and Network 1 and 2
- We started using new work methods
- In school's vision
- Teachers have already set minimal standards of knowledge and descriptive assessment criteria
- Paying special attention to talented students
- Taking part in various competitions

2.5.15 How would you connect the situation in school/institution with question type problems?

- repeating tests
- not attending lessons
- not bringing student's books and other study material to classes
- Lack of space,
- Too many students in a class
- We actively identify a problem and then try to solve it
- Destroying school inventory

- lack of students' motivation
- as compared to the society, problems in school are relatively minor
- teachers feel powerless when trying to establish discipline, respect of rules and agreements, school regulations

2.5.16 How would you grade a current status of QD and QA in your institution?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 3.1.

2.5.17 What from QD and QA was implemented in the past and turned out to be good and why?

- Participation in School Network because we shared experience and solved some problems
- Seminars and workshops for teachers' assembly
- Teachers are more connected
- Using new work methods
- New staff room which makes us feel well and reduces stress
- Situation has improved in the last years
- The teachers' interest for students' learning has increased
- Participation in projects (Blue Eye, Mirror)
- Gradually developing educational programmes satisfying concrete needs of economy
- School's vision
- Positive climate, reduction of stress

2.5.18 What could be improved in so-far activities of QD and QA implementation and why?

- Not all teachers took part in them
- We were not consistent when taking certain measures
- Because we are part of a big school centre
- Students do not cooperate enough and do not take part in projects.
- There is not always consistent monitoring, changes sometimes stop somewhere in the middle
- personal views of those participating in a learning process have not changed
- too slow and not thorough enough, probably also because students are not motivated for certain professions
- changes did not affect all teachers, there is not always consistent monitoring, changes sometimes stop somewhere in the middle

2.5.19 How would grade results and experiences so-far in QD and QA?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 3.25.

2.5.20 What measures (long-term and short-term) could have a positive effect on quality? Think about the measures on the following areas:

2.5.20.1 Learning, learning results and processes / also for employees/;

- Assessment of knowledge before a test
- Pre-agreed oral examination
- Active teaching methods
- Making students more active
- Teacher training and education
- More planned learning
- More motivated teacher for giving better explanations
- Improving classroom and workshop equipment

2.5.20.2 Professional qualification of teachers/lecturers carrying out education and training

- Seminars for working with children with special needs
- More didactics already at universities
- More professional education and training (up-to-date seminars) and teamwork
- Planning teamwork for lessons

2.5.20.3 Leadership and coordination of work at school/organisers of education and training

- Control and ensuring conditions for teamwork
- Positive attitude of current politics to vocational education, teachers

2.5.20.4 Relationships and climate in a classroom/at school

- More discussions with students at class lessons
- Doing away with divisions in vocational education
- More informal meetings with students, more social games
- More students-students and teachers-students help and support
- More mutual respect of students and teachers

2.5.20.5 Relationships with external partners (employers, institutions...)

- More field trips, school's presentations to companies
- Regular contacts with employers, regular contact of teachers of practical lessons and other teachers with practice in companies and more cooperation on professional field

2.5.20.6 Other

- Having a feeling for regional needs and knows how to motivate students for less popular professions

2.5.21 How would you grade your recommendations and opinions?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 3.9.

2.5.22 Describe at least one positive practical example.

2.5.22.1 How is it possible to identify a problem?

- Parents told that some students are bullying other students
- Non-homogeneous class- bad relationships between students
- Lack of space, inadequate paint on the walls so people did not feel well in that rooms and did not spend time together and talk about acute problems
- Students want further explanation
- Teachers' stress
- Discussions, class lessons
- Problems can partly be identified during theoretical lessons and partly during practical education at employers
- Good cooperation with companies, partnership, getting to know each other, needs, interests and cooperation of all involved

2.5.22.2 What measures have you taken and carried out to solve a problem? Who was included in a process of problem solving and in what ways were the measures carried out?

- Questionnaire
- Principal, class teacher, social worker and students – discussions
- Informal three-hour socialising
- Meeting of 1st year class teachers and management
- Sports activities
- Due to project Network 1 we came to the conclusion that renovation would reduce teachers' stress and thus improve teaching quality
 - Placing dustbins
 - Teacher-student meetings
 - Team for quality development at school
 - Talks, joint rules of school regulations
 - Mentor of practical education in school and in company
 - Communicating and being informed, looking for common interests

2.5.22.3 In ways have results of measures turned out to be good/bad?

- Bullying stopped
- Class became more united
- Class teacher gains students' confidence in informal contacts

- Substantial improvement of staff room climate and consequently more efficient problem solving
- Nicer classrooms and other rooms in school, students and teachers felt better in school
- Better students' results
- Teachers communicate more and are more satisfied
- Somewhere in the middle: depends on a problem
- Defining what is lacking quickly
- Better cooperation
- Better-good communication
- Students cooperate with each other more in a class
- Drawback – some did not adopt the activities and refused to take part in them (saying they know best what they want and what is good for them)

2.5.22.4 What were the criteria for coming to a conclusion that measures were either successful or unsuccessful?

- No more complaints
- sociogram
- teachers get together in a staff room discussing problems openly
- the number of plastic bottles sent, marketing, Eco machinist, discussion
- students' evaluation and knowledge
- teachers being satisfied
- questionnaire filled in by students and employees
- taking part and cooperating in the process of education
- precisely-defined per cent of how much success has improved
- quality, interest in cooperation, concrete ways of cooperation

2.5.22.5 What elements/measures have contributed to success?

- Talks with individual students
- Informal socialising
- teachers get together in a staff room discussing problems openly
- idea, cooperation of all school
- teachers are in a good mood, students' courage and willingness
- teamwork, project work
- talks, questionnaires, class lessons
- motivation and quick identification of a problem
- persistence, permanency, realistic arguments
- cooperation, systematically-run activities by a team leader

2. How would you grade your practical experience for further QD and QA?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 4.

2.5.23 What elements support QD and QA implementation?

- Good communication
- cooperation

- quality and efficiency of education
- teachers being ready for changes
- financial parameter
- orientation of school management
- teachers being prepared for changes
- being optimistic
- improved teaching conditions
- teamwork, good climate, guidance
- being aware of better education
- parents being satisfied with parent-school cooperation
- teachers' professional education and training
- teamwork, students' responsibility, being ready for making changes and innovative work, motivating and rewarding of teachers, certain standards becoming common

2.5.24 What has a negative effect and hinders the QD and QA implementation?

- Not everybody is willing to cooperate
- There is a lot of extra work
- There is too much paperwork, etc.
- Limited finances and lack of space
- The organisation is not flexible, not ready for changes
- Students' suggestions are not taken seriously
- Unwillingness to cooperate, not being ready for changes, not being autonomous
- conservatism
- resistance, lack of motives and inspiration, fear, not accepting the philosophy. A principal cannot force somebody to share a philosophy if he/she does not want to.
- Not being consistent when disciplining students, number of students in a class
- Problem with finances, financial problems of families

2.5.25 What needs to be done to ensure the implementation of QD and QA?

- More cooperation
- Motivate teachers and all other participants
- Continue with what we started in the same manner
- Taking part in different projects giving different perspectives of a problem
- financing
- school climate, believing in the philosophy of quality
- change of firm beliefs
- being systematic with defined criteria

2.5.25.1 Are the most influential members (in school/classroom/company) motivated for making changes?

- yes
- mostly yes, but not yet enough
- most of them but never everybody

5. How would you grade the influence of influential factors on implementation of QD and QA?

On the scale 1 to 5, interviewees' average grade was 4.75.

3 Conclusion

On the basis of the results analysed above some conclusions can be drawn:

1. We all have a vision of expectations that is also defined in documentation. School management is best acquainted with it.
2. Basic elements needed for reaching quality:
 - Improving quality of lessons
 - Improving relationships
 - Learning students to be successful in their profession and helping them with their personal growth (added value)
 - Student-oriented activities (lessons)
 - Better equipment of schools
 - Cooperation with local community and parents
3. Ways of reaching quality:
 - Setting up permanent quality teams – to make sure reaching quality becomes an ongoing process
 - Taking part in various projects
 - New work methods
 - Inter-subject cooperation
 - Joint agreements and contracts
4. Main problems hindering reaching quality
 - Deeply-rooted habits
 - Teachers having too much work (paperwork)
 - (too) big classes
 - Teaching technology
 - Students not being motivated enough
 - Teachers not being motivated enough – especially guest teachers

It was established that there are different interpretations of what the role of employers is. In Celje employers were asked about their quality systems, whereas in Novo mesto they were asked about how quality can be reached in schools. Both approaches are positive since both bring new ideas from economy to education. We all agree that employers are important partners to schools.

The participants explained how they see the problems and solutions.

Schools need to define clearly what quality is for them. Students and teachers have to be informed what measures have been taken to reach quality. A special problem is how to inform those students who are not members of quality teams and finish school before becoming acquainted with the philosophy of reaching quality. They do not develop a sense of belonging to their school (not even when they finish it).

The main problem of quality projects is that they finish in a phase of research current status and suggestions for improvements. No system for ongoing reaching quality is being established. Thus it is important to form quality groups that are active even after a project is finished. In this way reaching quality becomes an ongoing systematic process.

Example of Novo mesto:

There have already been involved in various quality projects. At the moment there is a permanent quality team (7 members) that organises and runs workshops. They deal with different subjects such as:

- Inter-subject cooperation
- lessons
- attitude to inventory
- motivation
- reducing the number of drop-outs
- increasing motivation for learning
- teaching styles
- active teaching methods

It is important to set minor, partial goals which we can achieve.

One of important goals for reaching quality is looking for ways to make students at the level of vocational education good students. In other words this means how to motivate them for reaching goals of educational programmes. The key is to make students feel well in school so they would like to attend classes. Parents expect from a school to make students feel well and safe whereas employers expect students to gain competences necessary for working in a certain profession and have a positive attitude to this profession.

There is also a problem of forming indicators for quality control. It is a fact that students entering school have different abilities. Thus empirical data (grades) cannot be an absolute criterion for quality control. Student's added value needs to be emphasised. How much progress a student has made, what kind of attitude to his/her profession he/she has formed, whether he/she feels a sense of belonging to his/her school, what kind of self-image he/she has.

Certain procedures for reaching quality can be standardized and included in legislation.

It would be wise for every school to have a leader of quality group whose task would be constant quality control and would also be an advisory body to a principal. At smaller schools one of the teachers would become such a leader and would consequently have less teaching time. A question whether such leaders already exist in schools abroad was raised.

On a basis of questionnaire prepared by Slava Pevec Grm, MSc and Metod Češarek, MSc, National Institute for VET

References

- Tkalec, V., Pevec Grm, S.. 2006. Quality Assurance with regard to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Slovenia. Unesco (fotcomming).
- Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji / White Book on Education in the Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of Education and Sport, Ljubljana 1995.
- Council Resolution on the promotion of the Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational education and Training, Official Journal of the European Communities.
- European Commission, DG for Education and Culture , First report of the Technical Working Group "Quality in VET". January 2003 – September 2003, Brussels.
- Izhodišča za pripravo izobraževalnih programov nižjega in srednjega poklicnega ter srednjega strokovnega izobraževanja, / Starting Points for the Preparation of Educational Programmes in Lower and Secondary Vocational and Secondary Technical Education, 2001, Centre of the RS for VET, Ljubljana, 2001.
- Modro oko: Ugotavljanje in zagotavljanje kakovosti v vzgoji in izobraževanju / Wise eye: Quality assessment and assurance in education in 2001/ 2002, Ministry for Education, Science and Sport, Ljubljana, 2001.
- POKI- Offering Quality Education to Adults (OQEA), Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Ljubljana, 2004.
- Poročilo o poteku poskusnega izvajanja izobraževalnega programa "avtoserviser", Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje, Oktober 2005. / Report on the Pilot Implementation of the Educational Programme "Car Mechatronic", Centre of the RS for VET, October 2005.
- Razvojni program za podporo implementaciji izhodišč za pripravo izobraževalnih programov 2002/03 / Development Programme for Supporting the Implementation of Starting Point for Preparation of Educational Programmes 2002/03, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
- The Phare – Mocca Programme, Concept of Quality assessment and Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training, Ministry for Education, Science and Sports, Ljubljana, Oktober 2000.
- The Phare Vocational Education and Training Reform Programme 1994, Assesment of the Phare Vocational Education and Training Programme, Center RS za poklicno izobraževanje, Ljubljana 1998
- Ways towards Quality in Education, International Conference Proceedings, 8.-10. April 2000, National Leadership School, Open Society Institute.
- Zakon o gimnazijah, Ur.l.RS št. 12/96, 59/01 / Gymnasium Act, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 12/96, 59/01.
- Zakon o izobraževanju odraslih, Ur.l. RS 12/96, 56/94 / Adult Education Act, Official Gazette of the RS 12/96, 56/94.
- Zakon o maturi, Ur.l., št. 15/03. / Matura Act, Official Gazette of the RS, 12/96, 15/ 03.

- Zakon o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah / National Occupational Qualification Act, 2000, Ur.l. RS, št.81/00, 55/03.
- Zakon o organizaciji in financiranju vzgoje in izobraževanja, Ur. L. RS,12/96, 115/ 03 / Organization and Financing of Education Act, Official Gazette of the RS, 12/96, 115/ 03.
- Zakon o poklicnem in strokovnem izobraževanju, Ur.l. št. 12/96, 86/04 / VET Act, 12/96, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 12/96, 86/04., 2006,