

Quality of Human Resources and Education

Human resource is the major factor, which affects the development of a country. That is why the concern for the education, whether it is formal, non formal or informal, is to provide opportunities to the learner to acquire and improve continuously essential competencies i.e. the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes with human values.

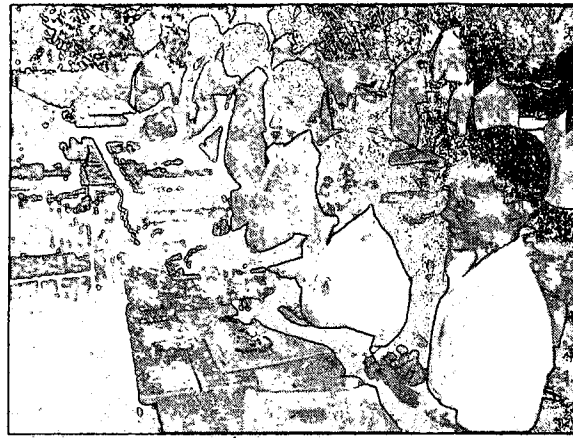
To develop essential basic competencies in students, Sri Lanka needs competent teachers. In many developed countries, there are national level institutions to identify competencies, indicators and criterions for evaluations or assessment, OFSTED of the United Kingdom, ASCD of USA, QAD of Australia, ERO of New Zealand are such institutions.

The Evaluation and Quality Assurance Unit of the Ministry is entrusted the responsibility to formulate with the support of the Secondary Education Modernization

Project consultant a national Policy Framework for quality assurance. The Project is funded by Asian Development Bank. Also a World Bank sponsored consultant worked in the Unit.

The Unit has prepared a proposal for Policy Framework work and now

the book contains also material, which helps the school to identify a high quality school and staff i.e. the competencies. The purpose is that the schools use the instruments included in the handbook for finding out their strengths and weaknesses. These findings will help the school to improve.



producing a Hand Book for Internal Evaluation. This book is written for schools, principals and teachers. It gives them practical help to introduce internal evaluations in their school. Besides a set of questionnaires, interview and observation schedules

Schools also get advice in how to report to the next level of authority or how to disseminate the findings to the parents.

Because the second objective of the evaluation is accountability, the Unit

has started to train 12 Ministry officers in modern methods of external evaluation. As the external evaluators also need help to carry out their task in a new way, a second handbook, Guide in External Evaluation, is under preparation. The future users will be Ministry, Provincial, Zonal and Divisional officers, which will function as external evaluator as soon as they are trained.

The Evaluation and Quality Assurance Unit has started training program for 240 pilot schools of the Secondary Education Modernization Project in internal evaluation. The school teams, which have participated by now, find the internal evaluation practices very useful for quality improvement. The Unit with the assistance of the NIE will provide training for zonal officer teams to conduct training programs for school teams consisting of principal, two deputies and a senior teacher to implement the internal evaluation.

"Every one in an organization must understand how quality is defined by organization, what orientation produces it, what performance standard applies, and what measurement should be used" Philip Crosby - The Absolutes Of Leadership

quality assurance. No outside body, but only the school can implement a comprehensive and continuous self-evaluation. But external evaluation can support the internal one by providing necessary guidance and resources.

QUALITY THROUGH SELF-EVALUATION

We can understand quality of our school system as standard of

competences acquired by the students through learning, as competences of teachers and principals to assist them in their learning process and as competences of master teachers and teacher educators who are needed as mentors, educators and evaluator

Since the quality is the totality, the management of education should be a total quality management, at any level.

"Quality Cannot Be Imposed From Outside - From Outside The Institution, Outside The Team, Out Side The Individual. You Cannot Inspect In Quality. You Can't Have Externally - Driven Efficiency And Accountability" John West Burnham, Principles of Education Management

Quality cannot be achieved through external evaluation, inspection or supervision only, neither by provision of all human and physical resources. It should be emerged within the person and institution, through personal and group efforts.

To assure expected quality essential competencies should be identified. We must also have relevant indicators and criteria to find out existing level of competencies. The revealed competency gaps or weaknesses must be minimized through Human Resource Development programs. Quality Assurance techniques support to prevent wastages and delays by strengthening managerial procedure.

Continuous improvement (KAIZEN) and evaluation is an integral part of

initiated to introduce national self evaluation framework, which means that schools collect data concerning their strengths and weaknesses: they identify competencies using various indicators and criterions. School are also trained to interpret the data and report the findings to parents and administrators responsible for external evaluations.

The Unit has prepared a handbook on Internal Evaluation for schools. The second handbook on external evaluation for those teams, which visit schools, is under preparation.

To introduce the practices of internal evaluation the Unit started a pre-pilot program involving 240 schools and gradually the training will be extended to cover all secondary schools under SEMP. Zonal officer teams will be trained to train school core teams, that consists of school principal, two deputies and a senior teacher

Traditional, bureaucratic inspectorial concepts of management, which instigate in effective outside interventions, and reluctance to change may be obstacles to convert schools in to self-improving firms (SIF) through self-evaluation and self-effort

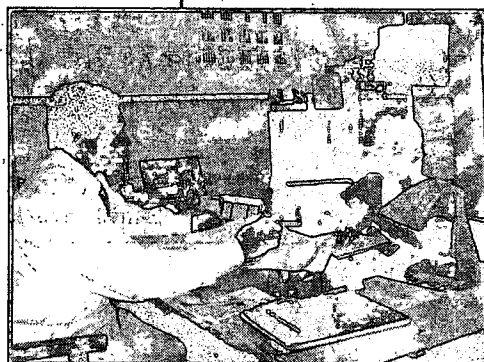
There is nothing new in this concept, which is originally introduced by Japan and U.S.A. The essence of Buddhist philosophy Nibbana or liberation could be attained by self-evaluation, with a correct vision, correct concepts, correct effort and correct living.

No more inspections



Starting in Secondary Education Modernization Project in Sri Lanka, Marja Liisa Toivanen, the veteran principal and education administrator in Finland, found the situation in Lanka schools somehow familiar. Finnish schools in the eighties had to face among other things a change in the evaluation procedure.

A stream of strong decentralisation had given the schools a lot more room to visualize their goals and change their working practices. The olden type of inspection was no more considered rewarding.



The gist of the matter was the attitude. Earlier an inspector would visit the school inadvertently and, having looked around leave without proper discussion with the school staff. Instead of lists of negative matters in school practice there had to be a new way of development - that of constructive cooperation.

School inspection in the new form emphasized support to the school and improvement in learning practises. The top down attitudes and position authority had to give way to collegial support.

The schedules of the visits were altered

so that the inspector would stay 2-3 days at a time and at the end of the visit the school would be given feedback of its educational practise. A written report would enhance the message.

The new attitude also materialized in the new terminology. The old terms "inspection" or "supervision" were abandoned and replaced by counselling visit.

The schools could contact the external evaluators or the counsellors, ask them to visit at a certain date in order to get help for instance in the development of the school's own evaluation.

A lot of work was needed to train the inspectors to external evaluators of modern times.

At present there is no school inspection of any sort. In stead, it is an obligation in the law to have internal evaluation in schools. It is the duty of the school's owner, that is, the county/municipality, to arrange external evaluation and most often it is carried out so that the school sends its self-evaluation report to the Education Office of the municipality. The schools inform the parents on the evaluation findings either by arranging meetings for them or publishing the results in bulletins delivered to the parents at the end of school term.

One reason for the splendid attainments of Finnish schools in international comparative studies must be the ownership developed in this new type of self-evaluation.

What is the difference between SBA and Internal Evaluation???

We have noticed that people sometimes mix the above terms. This might help you to avoid confusion.

Internal evaluation is a comprehensive, continuous process to monitor the various aspects of the school (like management culture, teaching learning process, parental relations etc).

SBA, School Based Assessment, means assessing the students in the school by the teachers using various assessment methods. It is one of the many components of internal evaluation.

Development Discussions

A Powerful Evaluation Instrument For Quality Improvement

One of the powerful instruments of quality improvement in schools is Development Discussion. For schools, which are becoming more and more autonomous, it provides an excellent opportunity for improvement through internal evaluation.

Development Discussion is a professional dialogue between the principal and the teacher. The objective of the discussion is not to find faults, but to facilitate better learning in the school.

Principals may have frequent contacts with the teachers, but Development Discussion is not an informal chat. It is a pre-planned and well-structured discussion. Teachers should be informed of the date, time and topics to be discussed in advance. The Evaluation and Quality Assurance Unit of the Ministry of Education has prepared discussion templates for schools. These can be modified according to needs of the schools. At a later stage, the schools could develop their own ones to suit their situation.

In small schools Development Discussions are easy to implement successfully.

In big secondary schools the principal may find it difficult to hold Development Discussions with all the teachers. In this case, he/she discusses only with the deputies to whom he/she can delegate the dialogues to be held with the rest of the staff. The outcome of the discussions lead to professional development of the individual teacher and the total school itself.

Development Discussions are an excellent forum for principals to share the goals of the school with the staff and create a genuine and trustful atmosphere, where staff extend their fullest cooperation towards the common goal. To the teachers it gives an opportunity to highlight their professional needs and aspirations. The prerequisite for successful Discussion is that both parties develop appropriate listening and negotiation skills.

The principal or the deputy should observe a lesson of the teacher before the discussion begins to get circumstantial evidence so that he can base his opinions on real-life situations.

The discussion should start in a friendly manner to minimize the possible stress and encourage the teacher to talk. It would then be possible to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school community and proceed to the experiences of the teacher. Fair distribution of resources, teacher's subject knowledge, assessment procedures and possible training needs can be discussed. The teacher should be the one who uses at least 60 % of the discussion time.

At the end of the discussion both principal and teacher should agree on the improvement needs and make a plan, as to how to monitor the process.



Development Discussion is an excellent tool for principals and teachers to improve their school.

Awards Ceremony
1st March 2003



The All Island Dance Competition for schools organised by the Ministry of Human Resource Development Education & Cultural Affairs, Aesthetic Unit, will present awards to the winners on 1st March 2003, at the John de Silva Theatre at 10.00 am under the distinguished patronage of Dr Karunasena Kodithuwakku.



SCHOOL PEACE DAY

Schools in the whole island celebrated Schools Peace Day on 21st February 2003. Hon. Suranimal Rajapaksha, Minister of School Education visited Sirimavo Bandaranaike Vidyalaya in Colombo to observe the celebrations, and took part in lighting the oil lamp.

Media Unit

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Everyday is a new beginning for us, every moment.