

Summary

Debate as a basic mode of co-operative learning of teachers and associates in kindergartens

Edita Slunjski
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia
Department of Pedagogy

The work shows disadvantages of traditional forms of teacher (kindergarten teacher) professional development and stresses the value of a continuous research of one's own educational practice, training teachers to be reflective practitioners. Such an approach to professional development, opening a path to independence and professional autonomy of teachers, mostly relies on their professional mutual connection, unity and co-operation. Teachers' connection and co-operation with their associates leads to a development of a professional learning association, where teachers' own educational practice is researched and discussed and they continually learn together. Practical ethnographic research carried out in four kindergartens aimed at gradual increase of the quality of educational practice and achieving a culture of the dialogue and learning together through a debate. The research showed how a quality of debate in which all kindergarten employees participate encourages a development of educational practice, but the debate develops through a development of practice at the same time. Since it represents the cause, but also an outcome of achieving a higher quality of educational practice, a debate can be regarded as a basic mode of the learning process of kindergarten teachers and associates, as well as an instrument of a development of the kindergarten in whole.

Key words: professional development of teachers (kindergarten teaches), reflective practice, practical ethnographic research, debate, culture of dialogue.