

Two Approaches to Documenting and Evaluating Preschool Quality

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Abstract

The article presents preschool quality evaluation which is established in the Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach and which rejects evaluation on the basis of empirical data gathered through methodologically adequately prepared instruments. Such evaluation is supposed to be founded on universal norms formulated by experts, with quality being understood as the harmony of the services and practices measured by the norms. Through interpretations which use abstractions, categorizations and schemes, such quality evaluation is thought predominantly to classify and normalize (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). By contrast, preschool quality evaluation ought to build on the analyses and subjective interpretations of the documents that preschool teachers gather through their everyday documentation of the educational process and children's activities in preschools. It coherently follows the consideration which rejects a curriculum planned and structured in advance, as it is thought to follow goals, not children, thereby preventing children from being in the centre of the educational process. In the article we show that the evaluation of preschool quality which is based only on the presented subjective interpretation opens up a space for selective and partial considerations; quality evaluation – at least as far as the widespread network of public preschools in Slovenia is concerned – thus also needs to be implemented through suitably methodologically designed tools.

Key words: *documentation; evaluation; preschool education; quality; Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach; Slovenia.*

Introduction

The article presents two concepts of preschool quality evaluation. The first is based on a number of data collecting procedures which enable good control over what happens in an educational institution and its evaluation from the aspect of the set

educational goals. It employs various research instruments: for instance, instruments for systematic observation, interviews, questionnaires, instruments for the assessment of children's products, etc. The collected data are numerically and descriptively evaluated (for more on that, see Vogrinc & Valenčič Zuljan, 2009). This is the concept that preschool quality evaluation in Slovenia is founded on. The second concept, used in Reggio Emilia preschools (hereafter referred to as RE preschools), evaluates preschool quality through regular and everyday documentation of the educational process and children's activities as well as through the subjective interpretations of the documented materials that the participants in the educational process make (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 16). This concept logically and coherently follows the consideration which rejects a curriculum planned and structured in advance, as the latter is thought to follow goals, not children, thereby preventing children from being in the centre of the educational process. It relies on the view (Edwards, 1998; Malaguzzi, 1998; Špoljar, 1999) that the quality of the educational process is higher if the "curriculum" is the result of the continuous negotiation between children and their teachers as well as among the teachers themselves. The issue of planning the educational process likewise remains open (Kantor & Eldas, 1986, as cited in Kantor & Whaley, 1998, p. 315). Malaguzzi put this guideline of the RE pedagogical approach in the following words: "[T]he teachers follow the children, not plans" (1998, p. 88). This, however, is a thesis requiring further support. Although planned and structured goal-oriented curriculum does predetermine the objectives of the educational work, it does not mean that preschool teachers cannot follow the child during the educational process. To be able to defend such an interpretation, one would first have to prove that the child within a programme following a planned curriculum is not placed "into the centre" of curriculum considerations. The goals of the curriculum would likewise have to be demonstrated to be deficient in the function of the child's development and learning, just as achieving the goals would have to be shown to be independent of each individual child, his/her interests, cooperation and participation in the activities that lead to the achievement of the goals set by the curriculum. The thesis on "following the children" should be more carefully conceptualized. It is thus more than appropriate to enquire about what we actually follow when believing we follow children. The following question requires an analytical answer: what happens to the preschool teacher's projections, transfer and the expectations that the child inscribes in it? The proponents of the Reggio Emilia pedagogical approach do not provide enough sufficiently convincing answers (for more on that see Hočevar, Kovač Šebart, & Štefanc, 2013).

To return to preschool quality evaluation: in the present article the authors argue that if it is based merely on subjective interpretation, it opens up a space for selective and partial considerations. Therefore, at least as far as the widespread network of public preschools in Slovenia is concerned, quality evaluation needs to be carried out also on the basis of the data obtained through suitably methodologically designed instruments.

The Postmodern Paradigm of Preschool Quality Evaluation

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2007, p. VIII) maintain that the concept of quality, that was presented as the first concept, "... is one particular discourse – or language – of evaluation, produced from within a particular paradigm (modernity) and inscribed with the values and assumptions of that paradigm, including the importance of universality, objectivity, certainty, stability and closure."

According to those authors, such a concept of quality assessment is based on the "universal expert-derived norms and of criteria for measuring the achievement of these norms, quality being a measurement (often expressed as a number) of the extent to which services or practices conform to these norms" (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007, p. VIII). They see it as "a technology of regulation, providing a powerful tool for management to govern at a distance through the setting and measurement of norms or performance." (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007, p. IX). In order to avoid "governing at a distance" in preschools, they promote a different paradigm of evaluating the quality of preschools, that is, the so-called postmodern paradigm within the language of meaning making welcomes conceptuality, values, subjectivity, uncertainty, and provisionality (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). That is, the authors believe that the child's development should not be interpreted in relation to the already existing categories formulated by, say, developmental psychology, since in this case childhood and education are socially constructed (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2005). Nonetheless, there is a lack of convincing theorizing of how betting on subjective meaning making, on the democratic process of interpretation, etc. can avoid the social construction of the meanings of childhood and education. To be precise, we should not forget that subjective insight, that is, the way in which adults understand and reflect upon education by necessity depends on education and can never elude the social construction of meanings. Generations of children have objectively acquired the symbolic net through significant Others. This occurs through the process of education (it begins with the entrance into language), and so the subjective interpretations of significant Others, the construction of meaning through different perspectives, including various professions, cannot avoid it. To paraphrase Haydon (1987), meanings are always embodied in the practice, customs and expectations of the people who live in a society, not in the choices and considerations of the individuals separated from the rest of the world. This means that the belief in the subjective construction of interpretations can only originate in "a tradition of thought and practice within which the thinker has learnt to think" (Haydon, 1987, p. 3). That is why education, evaluation and childhood are always socially constructed.

Dahlberg, Moss and Pence thus understand the evaluation of preschool quality to be "a democratic process of [the] interpretation" (2007, p. IX) of everyday preschool activities as "[A]ll stages of meaning making are done in the context of constant democratic debate about a range of critical ethical and political questions ..."

(Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 89). That is why they do not centre evaluation on empirical data obtained with the help of specifically prepared tools for assessing quality which would be methodologically suitably designed and which could help preschool teachers to evaluate the quality of educational work themselves, and which researchers could use to carry out external evaluation.

Furthermore, according to relevant sources (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg & Moss, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007), any specifically designed quality evaluation tools are rejected. Quality evaluation is made through the analysis of the documents written during the daily documentation of educational processes and children's activities in preschools. Documentation "... offers a true experience of democracy ..." (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 130) and it has "... the central role in the discourse of meaning making. Rather than rely on some standardised measures of quality, as in the discourse of quality, pedagogical documentation enables us to take responsibility for making our meanings and coming to our own decisions about what is going on" (Dahlberg & Moss, 1999 as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 154).

Documenting the Educational Process as a Basis for Preschool Quality Evaluation

The RE pedagogical approach sees documentation as "... a process for making pedagogical (or other) work visible and subject to interpretation, dialogue, confrontation (argumentation) and understanding. It embodies the value of subjectivity, that there is no objective point of view that makes observation neutral ..." (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 16). Practice is evaluated through the analysis of the functioning of preschool institutions, projects and the educational work done in them. With the analysis done together, preschool teachers create meanings (for more on that see Edwards et al., 1998; Dahlberg & Moss, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006).

This approach allows teachers to understand what goes on in preschools, while not relying on one interpretation only; rather, they remain open to various interpretations, which they think is possible precisely because they do not evaluate practice on the basis of any goals, norms or expected results set down in advance (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). It is important that 'meaning making' happens through relationships with others, and that a democratic dialogue on a variety of philosophical, ethical and political issues, that does not always lead to consensus, is established. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2007) emphasize that pedagogical approach Reggio Emilia promotes a dialogue which is founded on the critical reflection of the educational process and children's activities and which draws on concrete human experience and does not employ abstracting, categorizing and mapping.

Documenting the educational process and children's activities is understood as a systematic monitoring of the child's activities in the preschool and is employed to "... study and assess the development of the individual, but also the development of the group" (Forman & Fyfe, 1998, p. 252). Such monitoring, according to Edwards,

allows preschool teachers "... to interpret what is happening with the children and to make predictions and projections about how to go forward ..." (Edwards, 1998, p. 185). Documentation is a tool which "... visualises children's learning processes, their search for meaning and their ways of constructing knowledge. ... It is also a method for assessment and evaluation" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 16). Using documentation enables teachers to monitor the educational process as well as children's activities and development. Preschool teachers also use collected documents to evaluate the quality of preschool education and on that bases the whole educational work in the preschool.

Documenting children's activities is not intended for the preschool teachers "... to assess children's psychological development in relation to already predetermined categories produced from developmental psychology" (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007, p. 146). That is, the authors assume the following: "[T]he scientific discourse of developmental psychology provides a way of understanding children, teachers and their work by representing, classifying and normalising them through its concepts." (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007, p. 146).

In order to avoid this, the authors emphasise that preschool teachers have to analyse documentation and 'meaning making' together. They have to establish a new and deeper understanding of the (educational) process and the child's development (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007, p. 88). Such an approach allows assuming responsibility for meaning making and making decisions about what happens to children in the educational process. In this respect, documentation allows reflection to be done not only by preschool teachers, but also by other pedagogues, the children themselves, their parents and politicians. The authors also emphasise the need for rigorous insistence on subjectivity. Subjective view is seen as the value that prevents an individual from hiding behind an assumed scientific objectivity or criteria offered by experts (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). However, Dahlberg, Moss and Pence do call attention to the shortcomings of subjective assessments and meanings that can indeed be "selective and partial" (2007, p. 147). This, nonetheless, is not a sufficient reason to complement subjective meanings with objectively acquired data, and plan and evaluate the educational process (i.e. the whole educational work) in that manner as well.

Dewey's thesis, claiming that pedagogical considerations should never be founded on the logic of exclusion (*Either-Or*) – as they will miss the very goal they are striving for, is also an important message to those following such logic in their own considerations on preschool education.

It is thus sensible to ask whether the consequences pointed to by Dewey do not affect those following such logic in their own considerations on preschool education, as well: "... all principles by themselves are abstract. They become concrete only in the consequences which result from their application. Just because the principles set forth are so fundamental and far-reaching, everything depends upon the interpretation given them as they are put into practice It is at this point that the reference made earlier to *Either-Or* philosophies becomes peculiarly pertinent." (Dewey, 1997 [1938], p. 20).

The general paradigm of the new or different educational considerations “may be sound, and yet the difference in abstract principles will not decide the way in which the moral and intellectual preference involved shall be worked out in practice. There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clew in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy.” (Dewey, 1997 [1938], p. 20).

If a certain theory proceeds on the basis of the *either-or* logic, it is unlikely to pose the questions about the subject-matter, that is, the very questions that should be raised. A philosophy which proceeds on the basis of rejection, in sheer opposition to another paradigm, will inevitably neglect these questions. Each educational philosophy, including those which profess to be based on the idea of freedom, may become dogmatic (Dewey, 1997 [1938]).

Therefore, it is important not to ignore the fact that subjective assessments and meanings are likely to be “selective and partial”, especially if quality is to be guaranteed for the widespread network of public preschools in the whole country. Why is that? Firstly, it is because this could open up a space for arbitrariness and the interpretations which, if realised in the educational practice, could affect preschool quality in the exactly opposite ways from the ones we intend. Then, it is also because we should not overlook the crucial importance of the consensus among all the participants in the educational process in preschools for the paradigmatic shift promoted by RE preschools to occur. Subsequently, realising the findings of various theories and concepts (i.e. the “rational foundations”) depends on the continual “agreements” and “negotiations” among the participants in the educational process and on their reinterpretations of the meanings. It is the very fulfilment of this requirement that is a prerequisite for the quality educational process to take place. However, the required consensus among the participants in the educational process that the RE approach relies on is objectively impossible to achieve in practice due to the considerable size of the public preschool network (the great number of institutions and parents who would have to accept the values and participate in planning, conducting and evaluating the educational process).

The reasons originate in different views expressed by the experts, beliefs and expertise of preschool teachers, as well as different expectations, willingness and objective abilities of parents to cooperate with preschools in the educational process. That is why a widespread network of public preschools should guarantee evaluation to be also based on adequately methodologically designed instruments. Without that, it is impossible to assure a comparable quality of all public preschools in the country.

Instead of a Conclusion – Documenting and Evaluating Preschool Quality in Slovenia

In Slovenia, the beginning of systematic preschool quality assessment and assurance dates back to the year 2000. The development and research project “Preschool education

quality assessment and assurance” (Marjanovič Umek et al., 2002) articulated the concept that Marjanovič Umek describes as “one of the possible concepts of (self-) evaluation” (2011, p. 76). It is meant to encourage preschools for further internal development and improvement based on intentionally and systematically obtained feedback on the work of preschools.

In the framework of the model designed within the project for the purpose of quality assessment the following were specified: three levels of quality assessment (the structural, indirect and process levels), the area of quality assessment (e.g. the organization of the life and work in preschool, the cooperation between preschool and family, the child in the process of following the curriculum), and a range of indicators in a number of areas. Furthermore, quality assessment measurement instruments were also prepared (questionnaires, assessment scales, semi-structured interviews with children), which can be used for the (self-) evaluation of educational work in preschool institutions (Marjanovič Umek et al., 2002). Some of the instruments were subsequently tested in preschools during the research project “The self-evaluation of preschool education: quality assessment” (Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja Peklaj, & Bajc, 2005). The listed measurement instruments for preschool quality self-evaluation are also suitable for external evaluation. They have already been used in several research studies, particularly in relation to examining the effects of preschool on children’s language. It has been shown that the preschool quality assessed in this way – in the interaction with the quality of children’s family life and the age of children when they first start attending preschool – is a strong predictor of toddlers’ and preschool children’s language development (Marjanovič Umek et al., 2006; Marjanovič Umek et al., 2008). Research findings show that these measurement instruments can reliably differentiate between better- and worse-quality preschools and preschool classes.

In the research project “The self-evaluation of preschool education: quality assessment” (Marjanovič Umek, Fekonja Peklaj, & Bajc, 2005) the authors included 17 preschools in the research, covering different geographical areas (big and small towns, rural areas), big and small preschools, independent preschools and those attached to primary schools. All the preschools applied for the research in order to carry out the self-evaluation of their preschool in cooperation with the preschool’s project group, including the preschool teachers, counsellors, the parents of the children attending the preschool, local community representatives, two external experts (researchers from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana) and an expert from the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, who was responsible for the individual preschool. The project took place in the preschools from spring 2003 to autumn 2004. The preschool’s project group first identified the topic or topics of self-evaluation. In view of the above, appropriate measurement instruments were selected for different target groups, e.g. preschool teachers, parents, managers, etc., and appropriate data and responses were acquired in accordance with instructions and taking into account the fundamental principles of self-evaluation and evaluation. At the level of each preschool, the project group selected suitable instruments for data collection in

collaboration with the researchers from the Faculty of Arts (hereafter referred to as the researchers). Data collection was followed by data processing, analysis and interpretation. The data gathered were also interpreted separately by the researchers participating in the project groups, who reviewed the analyses made by preschools together with them, looked for additional possibilities of interpreting the gathered data, and made their conclusions known to all the participants in the preschool's self-evaluation. Together they proceeded to make a plan for preschool quality assurance, which recognized the areas in which the preschool had to maintain the achieved quality level as well as the areas which required distinct improvements, either at the level of ensuring conditions for work or at the level of direct work in preschool classes or the preschool as a whole. In addition, preschools opted for the monitoring of the effects of the quality assurance measures introduced and, following their own judgement, they decided to repeat the process of self-evaluation in a chosen area.

Let us proceed with an illustration: a participating preschool dealt with the issues of the space, toys and other materials. They were going to find out how these structural factors were reflected at the process level of preschool work (Marjanovič Umek et al., 2005). In another preschool the project group decided on aiming to obtain a more detailed insight into the process of providing preschool activities in their preschool, and the third preschool selected the assessment of space and materials, but also of the professional development and work satisfaction of the employees. Additionally, they were interested in how parents assess the work of the preschool employees, space, toys and other materials provided for the children by the preschool, the relationships among the preschool teachers and the cooperation between the preschool and parents.

What has just been said, however, does not mean that the RE pedagogical approach is not interesting from the aspect of assessing and assuring the quality of public preschools. It is interesting because it strongly emphasises the educational process. Furthermore, this approach draws our attention to the importance of constantly bearing in mind the principles of the active child, his/her interests, developmental closeness, individualization, participation, etc. when planning, conducting and evaluating preschool education. It also underlines the need for the achievement of curriculum goals to be based on the reflection of all those participating in the educational process.

In conclusion, let us mention briefly the documentation of the child's activities: the analysis of project work in public preschools in Slovenia (demonstrates that documenting the child's activities in preschool is one of the established forms of monitoring the child's progress (as well as of evaluating the educational process). As opposed to RE preschools, it is children themselves who document activities (recording and photographing them) in public preschools in Slovenia. Parents and – provided that parents agree – other people can also have access to these documents during public presentations (Turnšek, Hodnik Čadež, & Krnel, 2009).

Another established practice in preschools is creating the child's personal portfolio which, in accordance with the principle of critical preschool evaluation stipulated in

the Preschool Curriculum (1999, hereafter referred to as the Curriculum), includes monitoring the individual progress of each individual child. The child's personal portfolio is made up of documents (pictures, notes, photographs, etc.) and is intended for the child, preschool teachers and parents, who can follow the child's individual progress in carrying out activities and achieving the Curriculum goals.

The portfolio is the child's possession; with the help of the teacher, the child collects his/her products, photographs, audio and video recordings, etc. They are accompanied with various comments (made by the child, his/her peers, preschool teachers or parents), anecdotal notes as well as the child's notes or the notes made during conversations with the child (Stritar & Sentočnik, 2007).

As opposed to documenting the educational process and children's activities in the RE pedagogical approach, the child's personal portfolio in Slovenian public preschools is an adequate basis for judging the child's individual progress in carrying out activities and achieving the Curriculum goals, but not for assessing the child's development. The child's development is assessed with appropriate development tests, standardized tests and standardized questionnaires, which are normally completed for preschool children by their parents and teachers. The interpretation of the collected data requires expertise, which preschool teachers, trained for pedagogical work with children, generally lack. Pedagogical documentation or a personal portfolio allow for the monitoring of the effects of educational work or the child's progress that he/she demonstrates in one way or another (e.g. by drawing, making, telling, etc.). This enables the preschool teacher to monitor concrete achievements and thus the child's individual progress, but not the child's development – for instance, his/her thinking, language, etc., for which the teacher has no professional expertise.

Furthermore, monitoring the child's individual progress and educational work in public preschool needs to consider and respect the privacy and intimacy of children. The key document stipulating the rights, obligations, principles and measures which prevent unconstitutional, illegal and unjustified infringements of the individual's privacy and dignity when collecting, processing and protecting personal data in Slovenia is the Personal data protection act (2004). Additionally, in accordance with Article 51 of the Preschool education act (1996), the Ministry of Education and Sport has introduced the Rules on the collection and protection of personal data in preschool education (hereafter referred to as Rules), specifying the manner of personal data collection in more detail with the intention of preventing illegal and unjustified invasion of privacy of the individual to whom the data refer (Rules ..., 2004, Article 1). Article 16 of the Rules stipulates that "for the personal data about which children's parents agree to be publicly accessible, since they do not infringe the individual's privacy in their nature, contents or intention (e.g. exhibitions of children's products, children's group photographs, video recordings or films of children's public performances, etc.), the preschool shall obtain the parents' written agreement for

the entire school year. The agreement must clearly specify the kinds of photographs, recordings and interviews, the ways in which they shall be used and the length of time that they shall be preserved.” (Rules ..., 2004, Article 16). When introducing the elements of the RE pedagogical approach into preschool, we should not overlook this dimension, that is, the respect for the child’s privacy and intimacy.

When raising the question about how to increase the quality of educational work in preschools, it is sensible and desired to study and learn about the legal and content solutions implemented elsewhere. Understanding the solutions and experiences may be a good foundation for a more thorough investigation and consideration of the possible advantages and disadvantages of the professional work in the preschool practice under examination or evaluation. But the solutions which conceptually differ should undergo rational expert scrutiny and the analysis of possible drawbacks and theoretical (in)consistencies just as carefully as the already established concepts and legal solutions. In the end, it is important to determine which of the solutions could formally be introduced within the formal framework that defines preschools’ functioning at all, and what should be done at the systemic level if we wished to do so. We should also examine what the solutions, which might be inspiring in one environment or preschool(s), can bring with regard to the objective circumstances and system of the preschool education in which we desire to introduce them.

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Dva pristupa dokumentiranju i vrednovanju kvalitete predškolskih ustanova

Sažetak

U članku je prikazano vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova koje je utemeljeno unutar pedagoškog pristupa Reggio Emilia, a koje odbacuje vrednovanje na temelju empirijskih podataka prikupljenih s pomoću metodološki adekvatno pripremljenih instrumenata. Taj bi oblik vrednovanja trebao biti utemeljen na univerzalnim normama koje su oblikovali stručnjaci, pri čemu se pod kvalitetom podrazumijeva sklad usluga i prakse izmjerene prema određenim normama. Tumačenjem putem apstrakcija, kategorizacija i shema, od tog se oblika vrednovanja kvalitete ponajprije očekuje klasifikacija i normalizacija (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007). Suprotno tomu, vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova treba graditi na analizama i subjektivnim tumačenjima dokumenata koje odgojitelji prikupljaju u svakodnevnom dokumentiranju odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti u predškolskim ustanovama. Time se dosljedno prate razmišljanja koja odbacuju planirani i unaprijed strukturirani kurikulum, budući da se smatra kako se na taj način prate ciljevi, a ne djeca, čime se djeci onemogućuje da budu u središtu odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. U članku ćemo pokazati da vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova koje se temelji isključivo na iznesenim subjektivnim interpretacijama otvara prostor za selektivna i parcijalna razmatranja; vrednovanje kvalitete – barem što se tiče raširene mreže javnih predškolskih ustanova u Sloveniji – se stoga također treba provoditi uz pomoć odgovarajućih metodološki dizajniranih instrumenata.

Ključne riječi: dokumentacija; kvaliteta; pedagoški pristup Reggio Emilia; predškolski odgoj i obrazovanje; Slovenija; vrednovanje.

Uvod

Članak predstavlja dva koncepta vrednovanja kvalitete predškolskih ustanova. Prvi se temelji na nizu postupaka za prikupljanje podataka koji omogućuju dobru kontrolu nad onim što se događa u odgojno-obrazovnoj ustanovi i njezino vrednovanje s aspekta definiranih odgojno-obrazovnih ciljeva. Pri tome se primjenjuju različiti istraživački instrumenti: na primjer instrumenti za sustavno promatranje, intervjui,

upitnici, instrumenti za ocjenu dječjih radova itd. Prikupljeni se podatci brojačano i opisno ocjenjuju (više o tome u Vogrinc i Valenčič Zuljan, 2009). Na opisanome se konceptu temelji vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova u Sloveniji. Prema drugom konceptu, koji se koristi u Reggio Emilia predškolskim ustanovama (u daljnjem tekstu RE predškolske ustanove), kvaliteta ustanove vrednuje se u redovitom, svakodnevnom dokumentiranju odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti, kao i subjektivnom interpretacijom dokumentiranih materijala koje izrađuju sudionici odgojno-obrazovnog procesa (Dahlberg i Moss, 2006, str. 16). Taj koncept logično i koherentno slijedi razmatranje koje odbacuje planirani i unaprijed strukturirani kurikulum, budući da se za potonji smatra kako slijedi ciljeve, a ne djecu, čime se djeci onemogućuje da budu u središtu odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Koncept se oslanja na stajalište (Edwards, 1998; Malaguzzi, 1998; Špoljar, 1999) prema kojemu je kvaliteta odgojno-obrazovnog procesa bolja ako je „kurikul” rezultat kontinuirane komunikacije i dogovora između djece i njihovih nastavnika, kao i između nastavnika. Pitanje planiranja odgojno-obrazovnog procesa također ostaje otvoreno (Kantor i Eldas, 1986, u Kantor i Whaley, 1998, str. 315). Malaguzzi objašnjava tu smjernicu RE pedagoškog pristupa sljedećim riječima: „Učitelji prate djecu, a ne planove” (1998, str. 88). Međutim, u pitanju je pretpostavka koja zahtijeva daljnja potkrjepljenja. Iako planirani i strukturirani, ciljno orijentirani kurikulum predodređuje ciljeve odgojno-obrazovnog rada, to ne znači da odgojitelji ne mogu pratiti dijete tijekom odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Da bi se takvo tumačenje moglo braniti, ponajprije je nužno dokazati da dijete uključeno u program koji prati planirani kurikulum nije „u središtu” razmatranja kurikula. Također će biti nužno utvrditi nedostatke u ciljevima kurikula s obzirom na njegovu ulogu u djetetovu razvoju i učenju, baš kao što će postizanje ciljeva trebati prikazati kao neovisno o svakom pojedinom djetetu, njegovu/njezinu interesu, suradnji i sudjelovanju u aktivnostima koje vode ostvarenju ciljeva postavljenih kurikulumom. Postavku o „praćenju djece” potrebno je pažljivije koncipirati. Stoga je više nego prikladno istražiti što mi zapravo promatramo kada vjerujemo da promatramo djecu. Sljedeća pitanja zahtijevaju analitičke odgovore: što se događa s projekcijama odgojitelja, transferom i očekivanjima koja djeca imaju od njih? Zagovornici Reggio Emilia pedagoškog pristupa ne pružaju dovoljno uvjerljivih odgovora (više o tome u Hočevar, Kovač Šebart i Štefanc, 2013).

Vratimo se vrednovanju kvalitete predškolskih ustanova: u ovome članku autori tvrde da, ako se vrednovanje temelji isključivo na subjektivnom tumačenju, ono otvara prostor selektivnim i djelomičnim razmatranjima. Dakle, barem što se tiče razgranate mreže javnih vrtića u Sloveniji, vrednovanje kvalitete trebalo bi provesti i na temelju podataka dobivenih s pomoću prikladno metodološki dizajniranih instrumenata.

Postmoderna paradigma vrednovanja kvalitete predškolskih ustanova

Dahlberg, Moss i Pence (2007, str. VIII) smatraju da je pojam kvalitete, koji je predstavljen kao prvi koncept, zapravo „... određeni diskurs – ili jezik – vrednovanja

koji je nastao unutar određene paradigme (moderna), a u koji su upisane vrijednosti i pretpostavke te paradigme, uključujući važnost univerzalnosti, objektivnosti, sigurnosti, stabilnosti i zaključenja.”

Prema spomenutim autorima, takav koncept vrednovanja kvalitete temelji se na „univerzalnim stručno izvedenim normama i kriterijima za mjerenje ostvarenja tih normi, pri čemu je kvaliteta zapravo mjera (često izražena kao broj) granice do koje su usluge ili praksa u skladu s navedenim normama” (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. VIII). Autori dalje naglašavaju da se radi o „tehnologiji regulacije koja pruža snažan alat za upravljanje kojim bi se omogućilo vođenje iz daljine posredstvom definiranja i mjerenja normi ili izvedbe” (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. IX). Da bi se izbjeglo „vođenje iz daljine” u predškolskim ustanovama, oni promiču drugačiju paradigmu vrednovanja kvalitete predškolske ustanove, odnosno tzv. postmoderna paradigma unutar jezika koja se odnosi na određivanje značenja pozdravlja konceptualnost, vrijednost, subjektivnost, nesigurnost i privremenost (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007). Navedeni autori, naime, vjeruju da razvoj djeteta ne bi trebalo tumačiti u odnosu prema već postojećim kategorijama koje su oblikovane, recimo, u sklopu razvojne psihologije, budući da su u ovom slučaju djetinjstvo i odgoj i obrazovanje društveno konstruirani (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2005). Ipak, javlja se nedostatak uvjerljivog teoretiziranja o tome kako se klađenjem na subjektivno kreiranje značenja, na demokratski proces interpretacije, itd. može izbjeći društveno konstruiranje značenja djetinjstva i odgoja i obrazovanja. Točnije, ne smijemo zaboraviti da subjektivni uvid, to jest način na koji odrasli razumiju i razmišljaju o odgoju i obrazovanju nužno ovisi o samom odgoju i obrazovanju i nikada ne može izmaknuti društvenom oblikovanju značenja. Generacije djece objektivno usvajaju simboličku mrežu uz pomoć značajnih osoba u svom životu. To se događa u procesu odgoja i obrazovanja (počinje upoznavanjem s jezikom). Te se subjektivne interpretacije značajnih osoba, izgradnja značenja iz različitih perspektiva, uključujući razne struke, ne mogu izbjeći. Parafraziramo li Haydona (1987), možemo reći da su značenja uvijek utjelovljena u praksi, običajima i očekivanjima ljudi koji žive u društvu, a ne u izborima i razmišljanjima pojedinaca koji su odvojeni od ostatka svijeta. To znači da vjerovanja u subjektivno oblikovanje tumačenja mogu nastati samo u „tradiciji misli i prakse unutar koje je mislilac naučio razmišljati” (Haydon, 1987, str. 3). Zbog toga su odgoj i obrazovanje, vrednovanje i djetinjstvo uvijek društveno oblikovani.

Dahlberg, Moss i Pence stoga drže da je vrednovanje kvalitete predškolske ustanove „demokratski proces tumačenja” (2007, str. IX) svakodnevnih aktivnosti u predškolskoj instituciji na način da se „sve faze kreiranja značenja odvijaju u kontekstu stalne demokratske rasprave o nizu kritičkih etičkih i političkih pitanja...” (Dahlberg i Moss, 2005, str. 89). To je razlog zbog kojega oni ne temelje vrednovanje na empirijskim podacima dobivenim uz pomoć posebno pripremljenih instrumenata za vrednovanje kvalitete koji bi bili metodološki prihvatljivi i koji bi mogli pomoći odgajateljima da sami procijene kvalitetu odgojno-obrazovnog rada, a koje bi istraživači mogli koristiti u vanjskom vrednovanju.

Nadalje, u skladu s relevantnim izvorima (Dahlberg i Moss, 2005; Dahlberg i Moss, 2006; Rinaldi, 2006; Dahlberg, Moss i Pence, 2007), odbacuje se bilo koji posebno dizajnirani instrument za vrednovanje kvalitete. Vrednovanje kvalitete provodi se analizom dokumenata nastalih svakodnevnim dokumentiranjem odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti u predškolskim ustanovama. Dokumentiranje „... pruža pravi doživljaj demokracije ...” (Rinaldi, 2006, str. 130) i ima „... središnju ulogu u diskursu stvaranja značenja. Umjesto oslanjanja na neke standardizirane mjere kvalitete, kao u diskursu kvalitete, pedagoška dokumentacija omogućuje nam da preuzmemo odgovornost za stvaranje vlastitih značenja i donošenje odluka o tome što se događa” (Dahlberg i Moss, 1999 u Dahlberg i Moss, 2005, str. 154).

Dokumentiranje odgojno-obrazovnog procesa kao osnova za vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova

U pedagoškom se pristupu RE dokumentiranje promatra kao „...proces s pomoću kojega pedagoški (ili neki drugi) rad postaje vidljiv i podložan tumačenju, dijalogu, sukobu (argumentaciji) i razumijevanju. Ono utjelovljuje vrijednost subjektivnosti, odnosno ne postoji objektivni stav koji promatranje čini neutralnim...” (Dahlberg i Moss, 2006, str. 16). Praksa se vrednuje analizom funkcioniranja predškolskih ustanova, projekata i odgojno-obrazovnog rada u njima. Kada analizu provode zajedno, odgojitelji stvaraju značenja (više o tome u Edwards i sur., 1998; Dahlberg i Moss, 2006; Rinaldi 2006).

Taj pristup omogućuje odgojiteljima da razumiju što se događa u predškolskim ustanovama, ne oslanjajući se na samo jedno tumačenje. Umjesto toga, oni ostaju otvoreni za različite interpretacije, za koje vjeruju da su moguće upravo stoga što ne vrednuju praksu na temelju bilo kakvih ciljeva, normi ili unaprijed definiranih očekivanih rezultata (Dahlberg i Moss, 2006; Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007). Važno je da do ‘stvaranja značenja’ dođe preko odnosa s drugima i da se uspostavi demokratski dijalog o različitim filozofskim, etičkim i političkim pitanjima, koji ne mora uvijek dovesti do konsenzusa. Dahlberg, Moss i Pence (2007) naglašavaju da Reggio Emilia pedagoški pristup promiče dijalog koji se temelji na kritičkom promišljanju odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti, koji se oslanja na konkretna ljudska iskustva, a ne služi se apstrahiranjem, kategoriziranjem i mapiranjem (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. 107).

Dokumentiranje odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti podrazumijeva sustavno praćenje djetetovih aktivnosti u predškolskom razdoblju i koristi se za „... proučavanje i vrednovanje razvoja pojedinca, ali i razvoja skupine” (Forman i Fyfe, 1998, str. 252). Takav nadzor, prema Edwardsu, omogućuje odgojiteljima „... da interpretiraju što se događa s djecom i da predviđaju i rade projekcije o tome kako ići dalje...” (Edwards, 1998, str. 185). Dokumentiranje je instrument koji „...vizualizira procese učenja kod djece, njihovo traženje značenja i njihove načine konstruiranja

znanja. ... Ono je također i metoda procjene i vrednovanja” (Dahlberg i Moss, 2006, str. 16). Primjena dokumentiranja omogućuje odgojiteljima praćenje odgojno-obrazovnog procesa, kao i dječjih aktivnosti i razvoja. Odgojitelji se također koriste prikupljenim dokumentima za vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskog odgoja, a na temelju toga i cjelokupnog odgojno-obrazovnog rada u predškolskoj ustanovi.

Dokumentiranje dječjih aktivnosti nije namijenjeno odgojiteljima „...kako bi procjenjivali dječji psihološki razvoj u odnosu na već utvrđene kategorije definirane unutar razvojne psihologije” (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. 146). Autori su, naime, pretpostavili sljedeće: „Znanstveni diskurs razvojne psihologije omogućuje razumijevanje djece, nastavnika i njihova rada putem njihova predstavljanja, klasificiranja i normaliziranja uz pomoć svojih koncepata” (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. 146).

Da bi se to izbjeglo, autori naglašavaju da odgojitelji moraju zajedno analizirati dokumentaciju i ‘stvaranje značenja’. Oni moraju uspostaviti novo i dublje razumijevanje (odgojno-obrazovnog) procesa i razvoja djeteta (Dahlberg, Moss, i Pence, 2007, str. 88). Takav pristup omogućuje preuzimanje odgovornosti za stvaranje značenja i donošenje odluka o tome što se događa s djecom u odgojno-obrazovnom procesu. U tom pogledu, dokumentiranje omogućuje refleksiju ne samo od odgojitelja, već i od drugih nastavnika, same djece, njihovih roditelja i političara. Autori također naglašavaju potrebu za rigoroznim ustrajanjem na subjektivnosti. Subjektivni pogled promatra se kao vrijednost koja sprečava pojedinca da se sakrije iza pretpostavljene znanstvene objektivnosti ili kriterija koje nude stručnjaci (Dahlberg, Moss i Pence, 2007). Međutim, autori ukazuju na nedostatke subjektivnog vrednovanja i značenja koji doista mogu biti ‘selektivni i djelomični’ (2007, str. 147). To ipak nije dovoljan razlog zbog kojega bi se subjektivna značenja nadopunjavala s objektivno prikupljenim podacima i zbog kojega bi se i nastavni proces (tj. odgojno-obrazovni rad u cijelosti) na taj način planirao i vrednovao.

Deweyeva teza prema kojoj pedagoška promišljanja nikako ne bi smjela biti utemeljena na logici isključivanja (ili-ili) – jer će im tada promaknuti cilj kojemu teže, također je važna poruka onima koji slijede tu logiku u svom sagledavanju predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja.

Dakle, razumno je pitati utječu li posljedice na koje ukazuje Dewey također i na sve koji slijede navedenu logiku u svojim razmišljanjima o predškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju: „... svi su principi sami po sebi apstraktni. Oni postaju konkretni samo preko posljedica koje proizlaze iz njihove primjene. Samo zato što su navedeni principi toliko temeljni i dalekosežni, sve ovisi o njihovoj interpretaciji prilikom njihove primjene u praksi Upravo zbog toga prethodno spomenuta *ili-ili* filozofija postaje posebno značajna” (Dewey, 1997 [1938], str. 20).

Opća paradigma novih ili različitih odgojno-obrazovnih razmatranja „može biti utemeljena, a opet razlika u apstraktnim principima neće biti presudna kod odluke o načinu na koji će uključena moralna i intelektualna sklonost biti razrađena u praksi.

Uvijek postoji opasnost kada je u pitanju novi pokret da prilikom odbacivanja ciljeva i metoda pokreta koji se zamjenjuje razvije svoja načela na negativan prije nego pozitivan i konstruktivan način. Tada pronalazi rješenja u praksi, u pokretu koji je odbačen, umjesto u konstruktivnom razvoju vlastite filozofije“ (Dewey, 1997 [1938], str. 20).

Ako se neka teorija nastavlja razvijati na temelju *ili-ili* logike, malo je vjerojatno da će postavljati pitanja o samom predmetu, odnosno pitanja koja bi trebalo postaviti. Filozofija koja se nastavlja na temelju odbacivanja, u potpunoj suprotnosti prema drugoj paradigmi, neminovno će zanemariti ta pitanja. Svaka odgojno-obrazovna filozofija, uključujući i one koje tvrde da se temelje na ideji slobode, može postati dogmatska (Dewey, 1997 [1938]).

Dakle, važno je ne zanemariti činjenicu da bi subjektivno vrednovanje i značenja mogli biti „selektivni i djelomični“, pogotovo ako je kvaliteta zajamčena za raširenu mrežu javnih vrtića u cijeloj zemlji. Zašto je tomu tako? Kao prvo, to je stoga što bi se time mogao otvoriti prostor za samovolju i tumačenja koja, ako se ostvare u odgojno-obrazovnoj praksi, mogu utjecati na kvalitetu predškolskih ustanova upravo na potpuno suprotan način od planiranoga. Zatim, to je i stoga što ne bismo trebali zanemariti presudnu važnost konsenzusa među svim sudionicima odgojno-obrazovnog procesa u predškolskim ustanovama želimo li da se dogodi paradigmatički pomak koji promiču RE vrtići. Kao posljedica toga, ostvarenje rezultata raznih teorija i koncepata (tj. „racionalni temelji“) ovisi o kontinuiranim „dogovorima“ i „pregovorima“ među sudionicima odgojno-obrazovnog procesa, kao i o njihovoj reinterpetaciji značenja. Upravo ispunjavanje navedenog zahtjeva predstavlja preduvjet kvalitetnog odgojno-obrazovnog procesa. Međutim, neophodan konsenzus među sudionicima odgojno-obrazovnoga procesa, na koji se RE pristup oslanja, objektivno je nemoguće ostvariti u praksi s obzirom na znatnu rasprostranjenost mreže javnih predškolskih ustanova (velik broj institucija i roditelja koji bi morali prihvatiti vrijednosti i sudjelovati u planiranju, provedbi i vrednovanju odgojno-obrazovnog procesa).

Razlozi potječu iz različitih pogleda stručnjaka, uvjerenja i kompetencija odgojitelja, kao i različitih očekivanja, spremnosti i objektivnih mogućnosti roditelja da surađuju s vrtićima u odgojno-obrazovnom procesu. Zbog toga, razgranata mreža javnih predškolskih ustanova treba jamčiti vrednovanje koje se također temelji na odgovarajućim metodološki osmišljenim instrumentima. Bez toga je nemoguće osigurati usporedivu kvalitetu svih javnih predškolskih ustanova u zemlji.

Umjesto zaključka - dokumentiranje i vrednovanje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova u Sloveniji

Početak sustavnog vrednovanja i osiguranja kvalitete predškolskih ustanova u Sloveniji je 2000. godine. Razvojni i istraživački projekt „Vrednovanje i osiguranje kvalitete predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja“ (Marjanović Umek i sur., 2002) artikulirao je koncept koji Marjanović Umek opisuje kao „jedan od mogućih pojmova

(samo) vrednovanja” (2011, str. 76). Cilj mu je poticati predškolske ustanove na daljnji unutarnji razvoj i unapređenje na temelju hotimično i sustavno dobivenih povratnih informacija o radu predškolskih ustanova.

U okviru modela koji je napravljen u sklopu projekta kojemu je cilj vrednovanje kvalitete određene su tri razine vrednovanja kvalitete (strukturalna, neizravna i procesna razina), područje vrednovanja kvalitete (npr. organizacija života i rada u predškolskoj ustanovi, suradnja predškolske ustanove i obitelji, dijete u procesu praćenja nastavnog plana i programa) i niz pokazatelja u različitim područjima. Nadalje, također su pripremljeni mjerni instrumenti za vrednovanje kvalitete (upitnici, skale procjene, polustrukturirani intervjui s djecom) koji se mogu koristiti za (samo-) vrednovanje odgojno-obrazovnog rada predškolske ustanove (Marjanović Umek i sur., 2002). Neki od instrumenata naknadno su testirani u predškolskim ustanovama tijekom provedbe istraživačkog projekta „Samovrednovanje predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja: vrednovanje kvalitete” (Marjanović Umek, Fekonja Peklaj, i Bajc, 2005). Navedeni mjerni instrumenti za samovrednovanje kvalitete vrtića također su pogodni i za vanjsko vrednovanje. Već su korišteni u nekoliko istraživanja (npr. Marjanović Umek i sur., 2006; Marjanović Umek i sur., 2008), osobito s obzirom na ispitivanje učinka vrtića na dječji jezik. U interakciji s kvalitetom dječjeg obiteljskog života i dobi djece kada su počela pohađati vrtić – snažan prediktor razvoja jezika djece jasličke i predškolske dobi (usp. Marjanović Umek i sur., 2006; Marjanović Umek i sur., 2008). Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da navedeni mjerni instrumenti mogu pouzdano potvrditi razlike između kvalitetnih i manje kvalitetnih vrtića i vrtićkih skupina.

Autori istraživačkog projekta „Samovrednovanje predškolskog odgoja i obrazovanja: vrednovanje kvalitete” (Marjanović Umek, Fekonja Peklaj i Bajc, 2005) uključili su u istraživanje 17 vrtića koji pokrivaju različita geografska područja (velike i male gradove, ruralna područja), velike i male vrtiće, neovisne vrtiće i one vezane uz osnovne škole. Svi vrtići prijavili su se za istraživanje kako bi proveli samovrednovanje svoje ustanove u suradnji s vrtićkom projektnom skupinom, uključujući i odgojitelje, savjetnike, roditelje djece koja pohađaju vrtić, predstavnike lokalne zajednice, dva vanjska stručnjaka (istraživači s Filozofskog fakulteta, Sveučilišta u Ljubljani) i stručnjaka iz Nacionalnog instituta za odgoj i obrazovanje Republike Slovenije, koji je bio odgovoran za pojedini vrtić. Projekt je proveden u vrtićima od proljeća 2003. do jeseni 2004. godine. Vrtićka projektna skupina najprije je identificirala temu ili teme samovrednovanja. S obzirom na navedeno, odabrani su odgovarajući mjerni instrumenti za različite ciljne skupine, npr. odgojitelje, roditelje, ravnatelje itd., prikupljeni su odgovarajući podatci i odgovori u skladu s uputama i uzimajući u obzir temeljna načela samovrednovanja i vrednovanja. Na razini svake predškolske ustanove projektna skupina odabrala je odgovarajuće instrumente za prikupljanje podataka u suradnji s istraživačima s Filozofskog fakulteta (u daljnjem tekstu: istraživači). Nakon prikupljanja podataka slijedila je obrada podataka, analiza i tumačenje. Prikupljene su podatke individualno protumačili i istraživači – članovi projektnih skupina, koji

su zajedno s vrtićima pregledali analize koje su vrtići proveli. Također su tražili dodatne mogućnosti tumačenja prikupljenih podataka, a svoje su zaključke objavili svim sudionicima postupka samovrednovanja predškolskih ustanova. Zajedno su nastavili s izradom plana za osiguranje kvalitete predškolskih ustanova, kojim su prepoznata područja u kojima predškolske ustanove moraju zadržati dostignutu razinu kvalitete, kao i područja koja zahtijevaju određena poboljšanja, bilo na razini osiguranja uvjeta za rad bilo na razini izravnog rada u predškolskim skupinama ili u predškolskoj ustanovi u cjelini. Nadalje, predškolske ustanove opredijelile su se za praćenje učinaka uvedenih mjera osiguranja kvalitete i, prema vlastitoj procjeni, odlučile se za ponavljanje postupka samovrednovanja u odabranom području.

Nastavimo uz ilustraciju: vrtići koji su sudjelovali u samovrednovanju bavili su se pitanjima prostora, igračaka i drugih materijala. Cilj im je bio saznati kako su se ti strukturni čimbenici odrazili na procesnu razinu rada u vrtiću (Marjanović Umek i sur., 2005, str. 35). U drugom je vrtiću projektna skupina odlučila postići detaljniji uvid u proces organiziranja predškolskih aktivnosti u njihovoj ustanovi, dok je treći vrtić izabran za vrednovanje prostora i materijala, ali i profesionalni razvoj i radno zadovoljstvo zaposlenika. Osim toga, zanimalo ih je kako roditelji vrednuju rad djelatnika u vrtićima, prostor, igračke i druge materijale koje djeci osiguravaju vrtići, zanimali su ih odnosi između odgajatelja i suradnja između vrtića i roditelja.

Ono što je upravo rečeno, međutim, ne znači da RE pedagoški pristup nije zanimljiv s aspekta vrednovanja i osiguranja kvalitete javnih vrtića. Naprotiv, zanimljiv je jer stavlja poseban naglasak na odgojno-obrazovni proces. Nadalje, taj pristup usmjerava našu pozornost na važnost stalnog prisjećanja načela aktivnog djeteta, njegovih/njezinih interesa, razvojne bliskosti, individualizacije, sudjelovanja, itd. pri planiranju, provedbi i vrednovanju predškolskog obrazovanja. Također naglašava potrebu da se postizanje ciljeva kurikula temelji na refleksiji svih sudionika odgojno-obrazovnog procesa.

U zaključku, spomenimo ukratko dokumentiranje aktivnosti djeteta: analiza rada na projektima u javnim predškolskim ustanovama u Sloveniji pokazuje da je dokumentiranje aktivnosti djeteta u vrtiću jedan od etabliranih oblika praćenja djetetova napretka (kao i vrednovanja odgojno-obrazovnog procesa). Za razliku od RE vrtića, djeca su ta koja sama dokumentiraju aktivnosti (snimanje i fotografiranje aktivnosti) u javnim predškolskim ustanovama u Sloveniji. Roditelji i – pod uvjetom da se roditelji slažu – drugi ljudi također mogu imati pristup tim dokumentima tijekom javnih prezentacija (Turnšek, Hodnik Čadež, i Krnel, 2009).

Još jedna uobičajena praksa u predškolskim ustanovama je stvaranje djetetova osobnog portfolija koji, u skladu s načelom kritičkog vrednovanja predškolske ustanove koje je propisano u Predškolskom kurikulu (1999; u daljnjem tekstu Kurikul), uključuje praćenje individualnog napretka svakog djeteta. Djetetov osobni portfolio sastoji se od dokumenata (slika, bilježaka, fotografija, itd.), a namijenjen je djetetu, odgojiteljima i roditeljima, koji mogu pratiti djetetov individualni napredak

u provođenju aktivnosti i postizanju ciljeva predviđenih Kurikulom. Portfolio je djetetova imovina; uz pomoć nastavnika dijete prikuplja svoje radove, fotografije, audio i video snimke itd. Oni su popraćeni raznim komentarima (od djeteta, njegovih/njezinih vršnjaka, odgajatelja ili roditelja), zabilježenim anegdotama, kao i bilješkama koje su nastale tijekom razgovora s djetetom (Stritar i Sentočnik, 2007).

Za razliku od dokumentiranja odgojno-obrazovnog procesa i dječjih aktivnosti u RE pedagoškom pristupu, djetetov osobni portfolio u slovenskim javnim predškolskim ustanovama adekvatna je osnova za ocjenjivanje djetetova individualnog napretka u provođenju aktivnosti i ostvarivanju ciljeva predviđenih Kurikulom, ali ne i za vrednovanje djetetova razvoja. Djetetov se razvoj ocjenjuje s pomoću odgovarajućih razvojnih testova, standardiziranih testova i standardiziranih upitnika, koje u pravilu za djecu predškolske dobi ispunjavaju njihovi roditelji i odgojitelji. Interpretacija prikupljenih podataka zahtijeva stručnost, koja odgojiteljima, osposobljenima za pedagoški rad s djecom, općenito nedostaje. Pedagoška dokumentacija ili osobni portfolio omogućuju praćenje učinaka odgojno-obrazovnog rada ili djetetov napredak koji on/ona pokazuje na ovaj ili onaj način (npr. crtanjem, izradom, pripovijedanjem i sl.). Na taj način odgojitelj može pratiti konkretna postignuća, a time i djetetov individualni napredak, ali ne i djetetov razvoj – primjerice, njegovo/njezino razmišljanje, jezik itd., za što odgojitelj nije dovoljno stručan.

Nadalje, praćenje djetetova individualnog napretka i odgojno-obrazovnog rada u javnoj predškolskoj ustanovi treba uzeti u obzir i poštovati privatnost i intimu djece. Ključni dokument koji uređuje prava, obveze, načela i mjere kojima bi se spriječila neustavna, nezakonita i neopravdana kršenja privatnosti i dostojanstva pojedinca prilikom prikupljanja, obrade i čuvanja osobnih podataka u Sloveniji je Zakon o zaštiti osobnih podataka (2004). Osim toga, u skladu s člankom 51. Zakona o predškolskom odgoju (1996), Ministarstvo obrazovanja i sporta izdalo je Pravilnik o prikupljanju i zaštiti osobnih podataka u predškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju (u daljnjem tekstu: Pravilnik), koji detaljno definira načine prikupljanja osobnih podataka s ciljem sprečavanja nezakonitog i neopravdanog narušavanja privatnosti pojedinca na kojeg se podatci odnose (Pravilnik..., 2004, Članak 1.). Članak 16. Pravilnika propisuje da „za osobne podatke za koje roditelji djece daju dopuštenje da budu javno dostupni, jer ne krše privatnost pojedinca u svojoj prirodi, sadržaju ili namjeri (npr. izložbe dječjih radova, grupne fotografije djece, video snimke ili filmovi dječjih javnih nastupa itd.), predškolska ustanova mora dobiti i pismenu suglasnost roditelja za cijelu školsku godinu. U tekstu suglasnosti nužno je jasno odrediti vrste fotografija, snimki i intervjuja, načine na koji će se koristiti i razdoblje do kojega se moraju čuvati.” (Pravilnik..., 2004, članak 16.). Kada se elementi RE pedagoškog pristupa uvode u predškolske ustanove, ne bismo smjeli previdjeti ovu dimenziju, to jest poštivanje djetetove privatnosti i intimnosti.

Kada se postavlja pitanje o načinima povećanja kvalitete odgojno-obrazovnog rada u predškolskim ustanovama, razborito je i poželjno učiti i naučiti o pravnim i sadržajnim

rješenjima provedenima drugdje. Razumijevanje rješenja i iskustava može biti dobar temelj za temeljitije istraživanje i razmatranje mogućih prednosti i nedostataka u stručnom radu u predškolskoj praksi koja se istražuje i vrednuje. No, rješenja koja se konceptualno razlikuju trebala bi proći racionalno stručno promatranje i analizu mogućih nedostataka i teorijskih (ne)dosljednosti jednako pažljivo kao već etablirani pojmovi i pravna rješenja. Na kraju, važno je odrediti koja bi se rješenja formalno mogla uvesti u formalni okvir koji definira funkcioniranje vrtića i što bi trebalo učiniti na razini sustava, ako odlučimo provesti promjene. Također bismo trebali ispitati što određena rješenja, koja mogu biti inspirativna u jednom okruženju ili vrtiću/vrtićima, mogu donijeti s obzirom na objektivne okolnosti i sustav predškolskog odgoja u koji želimo uvesti navedene promjene.