SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EVALUATION AND THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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ABSTRACT

The evaluation becomes a space of assessment, of location, a tool to know ourselves, to see our reality, but in addition to that knowledge, it also becomes an opportunity for improvement, every time we evaluate it is possible that we restart, that we make a reengineering or feedback of our processes or of what was previously developed, since to correct or improve it is sometimes necessary to look back, to review, to transform, to correct, etc. This evaluation process must be integral, and it is optimal that it integrates or includes different elements or actors that have incidence or participation in this scenario, in our case the environment of the Educational Institution. This paper wants to show the importance and relevance of the evaluation for an educational entity or an institution, we want to show the details of this; its characteristics, fundamentals, components, tools, members or people who participate, its advantages, possible disadvantages and the algorithms or procedures required for its application, we also want to show what an entity can progress if it applies the evaluation to its processes periodically and with an optimal or efficient execution. Since the evaluation cannot be taken as a final process, since it must be progressive and of constant application, we must take it as the beginning of a new phase or a feedback that provides us with qualitative and quantitative results, which are the main input to know our reality, improve, optimize processes, propose strategies and make decisions.

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INTRODUCTION

When we talk about evaluation, we are talking about a vital process for institutions or establishments. According to Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (1987) "*The process of identifying, obtaining and providing useful and descriptive information about the value and merit of the goals, planning, realization and impact of a given object, in order to guide decision-making, solve accountability problems and promote understanding of the phenomena involved*".

For Cruz (1999), "institutional evaluation is assumed as the process that accounts for the state of development of the object of evaluation, its successes, shortcomings and deficiencies". Hence the importance of this document that seeks through research, with the knowledge and experiences acquired in our daily work, to delve into the subject of evaluation and provide terms and concepts for the reader to understand it, know its particular characteristics, types, tools, advantages, possible disadvantages, and if appropriate apply it, but also with the intention of deepening and improving our knowledge on the subject, and apply it in a better way in our academic and work context.

The purpose of this paper is to show the characteristics, components and tools of the Institutional Evaluation, in addition to its benefits and usefulness within an institution, as well as the improvement plan, which is also very important for us, since it is the culmination of the institutional evaluation process, and in which the strategies, proposals and actions for improvement, correction and progress in the institution are proposed. In order to carry it out, we start from our previous knowledge on these topics, which we reinforce with recommended readings and those found through a research process. We hope that it fulfills the objectives we set out to achieve and that all our readers are clear about the importance of evaluation, in our case institutional evaluation and the improvement plan.

JUSTIFICATION

The importance of this topic lies in the fact that institutional evaluation is a process that is linked to education, and in a country like ours, with such a deficit in the education offered to our children, young people and adolescents in public educational institutions, this process tends to be an ally, or a pertinent and significant tool for the search of educational quality, to improve processes and to attack in an integral way all those problems that at institutional level do not allow the achievement of many of the objectives set out in a school year, in a classroom plan, in an area plan, or in the Institutional Educational Project -PEI. Another important factor of institutional evaluation is that although it deals with different fields, its priority is the academic field, and its main beneficiaries are, or in its absence, should be our students.

We must keep in mind that this evaluation is one of the main inputs for decision making and is the primary basis of the institutional improvement plan, this duo of activities are of vital importance to the institution, but it is even more important the implementation or execution of the same in a serious, committed and effective way, because if we fail in the implementation of one, we would harm the other, which would not be positive for the educational institution and much less for its members, especially for the students who are the priority in all the actions carried out.

All this marks the justification and importance of these topics, but we also add that in our role as teachers, it is good to know more about these topics and thus become motivators, permeate what we have learned through these investigations to our colleagues and other members of the educational community, contribute to the good realization and implementation of the same. In the same way, to learn from our colleagues, directors and other members of the educational community that participate in the processes, and thus achieve an optimal and significant execution and application that contributes to the quality of education and the integral wellbeing of the educational community.

THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process in educational institutions is based on a normative criterion framed in Law 115 of 1994, article 84; "In all educational institutions, at the end of each school year, an evaluation of all teaching and administrative staff, their pedagogical resources and physical infrastructure will be carried out in order to promote the improvement of the educational quality provided. Said evaluation will be carried out by the institution's Board of Directors, following criteria and objectives pre-established by the Ministry of National Education".

Law 715 of 2001, Article 10, which speaks of the functions of the Rectors of Public Institutions, and especially numeral 10.4; they must *"formulate annual action and quality improvement plans and direct their execution"*; in these laws we can find the legal and organizational context of education in Colombia. A first principle of evaluation is to rule that all these legal precepts are fulfilled.

In order to understand the term and its subject matter, we will consider the meaning of the words that compose it; Evaluation - Institutional. For many, evaluation is the assessment made to a process during its execution, this must be integral and continuous, in addition the assessment can be qualitative, quantitative or both, this can be taken as a general definition, next, we will raise more complex definitions raised by experts on the subject. Egg (2000) defines evaluation as a form of applied, systematic, planned and directed social research; aimed at identifying, obtaining and providing in a valid and reliable manner, sufficient and relevant data and information to support a judgment about the merit and value of the different components of a program (either in the diagnostic, programming or execution phase), or of a set of specific activities that are, have been or will be carried out, with the purpose of producing concrete effects and results; verifying the extent and degree to which these achievements have occurred, so as to serve as a basis or guide for rational and intelligent decision making between courses of action, or to solve problems and promote knowledge and understanding of the factors associated with the success or failure of their results.

For Fernandez (2005), he defines evaluation as: "A contextualized and systematized process, intentionally designed and technically grounded, of gathering relevant, reliable and valid information, which allows the issuance of an evaluative judgment based on previously determined criteria as a basis for decision-making". For Diaz and Hernandez (2000), who propose a constructivist meaning of evaluation, more focused on its importance and its function: ... Evaluation is a project under permanent construction with a view to the future, so that it may contribute to improving the students' training processes.

Another definition we can provide is that of Perez (1986), "The act of assessing a reality, forming part of a process whose previous moments are those of establishing the characteristics of the reality to be assessed and gathering information about them, and whose subsequent stages are information and decision making based on the value judgment issued".

These previous concepts show us a more diverse and complex vision of the term evaluation, its function, and characteristics, in addition to its significance and relevance for processes of various kinds, our second step should be to raise the second sentence of our theme; institutional, an institution is an organization, in the school context we can say that it is a space where different actors converge, with various functions that aim in unison to the comprehensive education of a population, applying academic, administrative, managerial and community processes, ensuring

a healthy coexistence, inclusion, and educational quality. For Fernandez (1994), institutions can be defined as cultural constructions produced with the purpose of expressing certain control and power at the social level; they are the ones who establish the norms and values that define a society, which determine what is right and what is wrong, what is allowed and what is forbidden, what can and what cannot or should not be done. They regulate the individual behavior of the subjects from the group, from the collective, because the human subject is composed as such, in the web of relationships and links that he builds with others.

On the other hand, Kaes (1993) mentions that the institution can be considered as a "system of linkage in which the subject is an intervening and constituent part. Thinking about the institution requires then the abandonment of the mono-centrist illusion, the acceptance that a part of us does not belong to us in property..." (p. 17). Starting from the national normative, the law 715 of 2001, article 9. It gives the following definition; educational institution is the set of persons and goods promoted by public or private authorities whose purpose is to provide one year of preschool education and at least nine grades of basic education, and high school; which in order to provide the educational service must have an operating license or official recognition, have the administrative infrastructure, pedagogical supports, physical plant and adequate educational means; must combine the resources to provide quality education, ongoing evaluation, continuous improvement of the educational service and learning outcomes within the framework of its Institutional Educational Program. State educational institutions are departmental, district and municipal.

Finally, we pose this question and answer by Barba (2015): Is it possible to say that educational institutions are buildings? Of course not, the reality in which we live shows us that education is not limited to physical structures or geographical aspects. Rather, it is an entity of cultural heritage that is accompanied by the key words: "EXCHANGE", "LEARNING", "TEACHING", "PRINCIPLES", "KNOWLEDGE", "VALUES" and "COMMITMENT". The ostensive term limits the term "educational institution" to the expression "educational center".

Something worth noting is that the term "*educational institution*" in our country is relatively new, and was born with the law 715 of 2001, since previously different terms were used to frame these training spaces, some used were Teaching Center, College, School, Educational Nucleus, High School, Normal, Institute, Technical Institute, among others, the law 715 unified all these terms and all these educational spaces were named Educational Institutions, retaining their old names, Examples; Gerardo Valencia Cano Industrial Technical Institute, was renamed Gerardo Valencia Cano Technical Industrial Educational Institution, Pascual de Andagoya School, was renamed Pascual de Andagoya Educational Institution, Francisco Jose de Caldas Teaching Center, was renamed IFrancisco Jose de Caldas Educational Institution. With this new concept, several of these educational centers were unified through a policy that sought to reduce personnel and save administrative costs, since the Educational Institution is composed of several sites or former schools, but operates with a single administrative body or group; Rector, Secretary, Librarian, Treasurer, Psychologist, etc.

After talking about educational institutions and their characteristics, let's talk about education and its reality in our country; education in Colombia, as in many underdeveloped or third world countries, has a series of problems and factors that prevent it from flowing or being applied optimally, for example in our country; The social gaps, coverage, especially in rural areas, the precariousness of infrastructure, the low budget and even the armed conflict in its different expressions contribute negatively to the fact that education does not fulfill its purposes or objectives, to this we add the problems of the institutional context; teacher training, lack of accompaniment and support from parents, lack of interest from students, social phenomena: delinquency, drug addiction, gangs, invisible borders, child abuse, prostitution, micro-trafficking, consumption of psychoactive substances, school bullying, school dropout, etc. This is where the institutional evaluation takes on great significance for educational institutions and their members, since it allows visualizing all these negative factors that affect education, but also allows from consensus and participation to propose solutions or strategies to attack these problems, mitigate them or eliminate them from the school context.

According to Pose (2008), Institutional Evaluation can be approached in different ways, among which the following stand out: Evaluation as a synonym of measurement; evaluation as a synonym of professional judgment; evaluation as the process of comparing data about performances with clearly specified objectives; evaluation as the process of identifying and gathering information to assist decision makers. From this appreciation we can visualize the integrality of institutional evaluation, in addition to its scope and coverage, since it must be a complex process that not only has the functionality of giving a qualitative or quantitative measurement, it must become a support tool for decision making and the approach of strategies that tend to improve all the processes that are executed in the Educational Institution. In addition to integrating all the actors of the educational community, linking them in a meaningful process that seeks to improve all the processes and actions carried out in the institutional context.

According to Casanova (2004), he states that evaluation involves a set of actions that are directed, planned and organized in an integral manner that requires the participation of all the actors of the institution itself, with the objective of contributing to its permanent renewal and transformation, to know everything that has been done and improved, in order to make decisions based on the elaboration and execution of strengthening plans. For CONEAU (1997), institutional evaluation is an instrument that allows the transformation of institutions, for whose practice it is essential to carry out a constructive, participatory, consensual, systematic and permanent process to detect weaknesses and strengths, both in qualitative and quantitative aspects that include inputs, processes, products and the impact they have on society.

For UNESCO (2005) evaluation should not be understood as just another activity of the institution, because it has a supreme purpose which is to improve educational quality, which being an abstract and relative concept, has a comparative character with which it must be confronted, both from its own nature, its institutional educational project, its objectives, etc., which in sum allows to know the weaknesses and strengths of the educational institution and project its actions to improve services in a planned manner for the fulfillment of its mission and, in turn, meet the demands of society.

In our case; evaluation of public institutions, we can say that this is parameterized by the guide number 34 of the Ministry of National Education. *"The realization of the diagnosis constitutes a learning process for all the actors of the educational community, since it contributes to the critical analysis of their processes and how they directly affect the achievement of learning of all students"* This guides us in the planning and execution of evaluation activities. For our institution, which is a public institution, this process is led by the rector, who makes the call and together with other managers supervises and contributes to the creation of the groups or management; these groups must be well represented and have people who have relevant functionalities to management, in order to provide a more grounded picture and provide the reality that they live firsthand, this is something of vital importance in the process of institutional evaluation.

There are four working groups or management groups: directive, academic, administrative and community. All of them have the same level of importance for the evaluation. It should be taken into account that each of these working groups should have representatives of the different actors of the educational community: teachers, directors, administrators, parents and students. Something to be mentioned is that each one of them should be given the option to choose or select the working group to which he/she wants to belong, taking into account his/her interest in the subject, his/ her relevance to it or the knowledge and possible expertise he/she may have in it. We must also say that in order to carry out this evaluation, technical, technological and human resources must be available, in addition to guaranteeing the pertinent time and space for the execution of the evaluation and guaranteeing an optimal environment based on tolerance and respect for all and among all.

As stated by Perez (2015), evaluation is an element associated, among others, to the improvement of quality in the educational system; therefore, all members and components must be included in this event, without forgetting that evaluation must be formative and carried out as a process, not as a punitive evaluation (test). Based on this concept, we propose the importance of inclusiveness in the institutional evaluation; it cannot be a process only for teachers and directors, it is important that the administrative staff, parents or guardians and of course the students of the institution participate in it. This achieves comprehensiveness, makes the evaluation more effective and assertive, since concepts and visions of different actors are taken, and sometimes, some will be more immersed in this reality than others.

Casanova (2004), affirms that in evaluation a set of directed, planned and organized actions are developed in an integral manner that requires the participation of all the actors of the institution itself, with the objective of contributing to its permanent renovation and transformation, to know everything that has been done and improved, in order to make decisions based on the elaboration and execution of strengthening plans.

On the other hand, in addition to the involvement and participation of all the actors of the educational community, there must also be results, which may be qualitative and/or quantitative, as stated by the cited authors, results that are not the end of the process, on the contrary they are the beginning or starting point for planning, decision making or the creation of strategies to correct or improve the problems found or revealed by the process, in educational institutions this process is known as Institutional Improvement Plan - PMI. This plan can be established for a determined period of time. In general, its application is proposed for two years, which is how long its implementation will last, and this is how we propose it in our IE; It is worth noting that the evaluation will not always provide us with progressive results, with positive or upward trend, in some cases the score of an item may change negatively with reference to the previous year, this can occur for many factors, and we saw it especially during the pandemic, home work and alternation,

for this reason our PMI is more robust and aims to the four managements being the most affected the academic and community.

It is worth noting that, just as all members of the educational community contribute and participate in the institutional evaluation, which is the one that shows us the possible failures, shortcomings or errors in the processes, it is relevant and significant that everyone also helps or participates in the construction of strategies and the implementation of the processes that are part of the improvement plan, each one contributing from the relevance of their context. Hence the importance of carrying out an optimal institutional evaluation, since this is the main input for the creation and approach of the institutional improvement plan, which must be adjusted to the realities of the institution and its context, as well as to the needs of the same.

In the magazine Altablero, of the Ministry of National Education, we can find the following definition of institutional improvement plan and its characteristics; An Improvement Plan is the result of a set of procedures, actions and goals designed and oriented in a planned, organized and systematic way from the institutions. Improvement Plans are led by the rector, accompanied by a management team, and must involve teachers, parents and students. Each one, with his or her role and responsibility, and all of them making up the team, analyze the situation, the results of internal and external evaluations, the academic and social conditions of their students, and define where they need and want to go, and how to do it. Here it is important to know the institutional horizon (mission-vision), the context of the institution, the reality of the students, the families and of course our Institutional Educational Project, since as mentioned by the Ministry of National Education; although there are four management and all are evaluated and improvement is proposed for all, the pedagogical management should be the essential objective in the improvement plans, in addition it also says that the main beneficiaries of the institutional improvement plans should be our students; children, youth and teenagers.

The Institutional Improvement Plan becomes a tool that helps the institution, as its name indicates, to improve, but this improvement or strategies that are proposed for it must be well defined and based on a reality, a reality that is established by taking several inputs, including the Institutional Educational Project - IEP and the Institutional Performance Evaluation. For the first one, it must be taken into account that this must be a dynamic document, with periodic updates and that it must also be adjusted to the new needs of the context, to the reality of its students and the educational community, the second one must have an optimal execution in which the debate,

the conversation, the contributions and the different visions of the participants let see the reality of the institution and the possible errors or faults that present the processes that are executed in the four managements that are analyzed and evaluated; Administrative, Directive, Academic and community.

This improvement plan is not an immediate solution to the problems encountered, but it does mark a horizon to solve them, therefore, it must be composed of different strategies and proposals that have a different chronology; long, medium and short term. Of course, each and every one of them must have a supervision and follow-up depending on its implementation time. With the above mentioned we could encrypt the improvement plan with the following sequence; the evaluation or diagnosis, which is what is done during the institutional evaluation, where through collaborative work and in teams, the members of the educational community evaluate and qualify qualitatively and quantitatively the processes of the institution in its four managements, let us not forget that although all are important the norm indicates that the academic one should be prioritized, which is more directly related to the students, and thus in this way to seek in first measure the benefit of them.

After evaluating we would do the planning process, moment or activity in which the strategies, proposals, alternatives and all the solution options that are raised by the working group are codified, the above must be discussed, look at the feasibility and relevance of each of them, and of course give them a weight or possible results, such as objectives to be achieved, execution time, responsible for implementation, budget for implementation, actions to be taken, results to be achieved, etc. Another action or component within this process is the follow-up and monitoring process; It must be ensured that the rules of the game are respected, the times, the commitments acquired, and all those functionalities and components mentioned in the previous processes, in order to improve or correct them during their implementation or execution. Let us not forget the importance of follow-up and monitoring, since these processes are the ones that allow or help to ensure that everything that is proposed is carried out within the established time frame, but also that such implementation has a relevant quality that favors the achievement of the objectives and goals set out by the work team.

Finally, we mention the evaluation process, which is a relevant and vital process for any organization; to evaluate means to know the reality, to identify the processes, to have an integral vision of what is being done and to be able to see what errors or mistakes are being made, but this

evaluation not only seeks to find possible errors, it also seeks to show the strengths, what is being done well, and thus correct possible errors, maintain what is being done well, but if it is possible to improve it. The evaluation is not the end, it is the beginning of a new process; since this evaluation will be the beginning or will determine the scopes, goals and proposals of our next improvement plan.

In our particular case; the Industrial Technical Educational Institution Donald Rodrigo Tafur, located in the city of Cali, the institutional evaluation is carried out between the months of January and December of the following year, taking as space for the execution of this one the weeks of planning that are according to the academic calendar in those dates, this we do it to count on the optimal time and not to cross us with other own activities of the academic context. The first thing that is done is the call through the institutional agenda for the development or planning weeks. This call is also sent to parents and students, prioritizing those who are part of the school government; student council and parent council, since they are more immersed in the institutional reality thanks to their participation in the school government, from which they propose solutions to institutional problems, make comments and contributions to different situations of the context, but the call is also directed to all parents or guardians and all students of the institution.

The call will be sent with a reasonable amount of time, since parents must plan their time and if required must request permission from their employers, as well as our students who mostly do not work, but are on vacation and must plan their time to attend these meetings and do not cross with sports, cultural, labor or academic activities.

A second step is to hold a general meeting with all those invited, where external or internal staff, knowledgeable about the subject give an explanation of what is going to be done, how it will be done and why it will be done, it is worth noting that in some cases there is previous training on the subject, only that they are based on the availability of the members of the educational community. After this introduction and motivation, the groups are formed. We believe it is important that each group or management has or includes personnel who work in that area, and that membership in the groups is voluntary, based on the empathy felt for the management and the motivation or desire to contribute to it. Prior to this, there is a logistic group that is in charge of organizing the work spaces, creating an optimal environment that has the furniture, lighting, ventilation and relevant or necessary technical and technological resources to have an ideal work space. The final part of this process is the debate, the conversation, the consensus, the contributions, the ideas and

perceptions that the members of the group have of the items that are proposed. All this results in a rating or the establishment of the item in a level or range, but also in a series of observations and recommendations that serve as support and argument to the debate held and the score obtained.

After having worked and completed the process in each one of the groups or management, a space for socialization is generated, in which each management or group appoints a rapporteur or rapporteurs who can make a synthesis of what was done and show the results obtained to their peers, in this space there is also a debate, In this space there is also a debate, since there are points or items that are similar or have a relationship and are found in different management, in this space it is through debates, arguments and consensus to try to reach a point of balance that is assertive and raises the reality of this item in the different groups in which it is formulated. The results of this group are shown, the different contents are unified, changes of form can also be made, and the final file is recorded or stored, to be delivered to the relevant external entity, as evidence of the work done.

The last thing is to take these results as input for decision making and the creation of strategies and processes that can improve situations and solve problems. This is the improvement plan, which is also created in a collaborative manner, and it is intended that all stakeholders of the educational community participate in this process, but also in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the same.

CONCLUSIONS

- Institutional evaluation is the process that allows visualizing the reality of the institution and its results are the basis for decision making and the creation of strategies that allow correcting or improving institutional processes.
- No member of the educational community should be excluded from participating in the evaluation; on the contrary, strategies should be proposed to motivate their participation by linking them more closely to the institution and its processes, so that they have a clear vision of the institution and all that is involved in its operation.
- The end of the application of the institutional evaluation is the beginning of the creation of the institutional improvement plan, which should aim at attacking all the problems detected during the evaluation, it is significant that the actors who participated in the first process also contribute to it from their relevance or knowledge.
- Although the evaluation is progressive and presents a scale from 1 to 4, which in some

cases and due to complex situations may decrease (e.g. Pandemic), it is important that the institution always has a progressive process where it can advance and improve its score, so that its improvement plan is not so complex and thus easier to apply and achieve the goals and objectives set.

- The improvement plan should include all the strategies and processes that help to solve institutional problems and should be aimed at solving pedagogical management problems as a priority.
- The different activities that make up the improvement plan must be carried out in an optimal manner and with a great degree of commitment, since the achievement of the objectives and goals set depends on their success.
- The Rector is an actor of great importance and relevance in both processes; Institutional Evaluation, Institutional Improvement Plan, the success and significance of each of these depends on his management and capacity.
- Collaborative work, respect, tolerance and inclusion are aspects to be taken into account during both processes, since heterogeneous groups are formed with people with different capacities and knowledge, which calls for tolerance, participation and respect for the opinions and contributions of others.
- The Institutional Educational Project cannot be a static document, on the contrary, it must be a dynamic document, and this dynamism is given by the reality of the context, the changes in the institutional reality, the Institutional Evaluation and the proposals or strategies proposed in the Improvement Plan.

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