

# Organizational change and student empowerment



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A project of change is said to be “organisational” and “empowering” if it aims

- to implement change in the organisation of an institution (university, college, organisations...),
- to give an active role to all the stakeholders, including staff members and students,
- to resolve problems or discrepancies between what is planned to be done and what is really done.

It is also an opportunity for developing a common learning community, if

- the change process is managed and monitored all through
- it forms a subject of a large internal and external communication
- it is related to the future of the institution and to its history.

**Organisational change and learning**

- The concept of EMPOWERMENT integrate **several notions**, not only accountability or involvement, but also autonomy, self-consciousness, and power on his/her own life context.
- The student empowerment has **three dimensions**
  - The individual dimension concerning the student's wellbeing and personal projects
  - The socio-relational dimension concerning the student in relation to his/her peers, teaching/non teaching staff, work trainers, family...
  - The institutional dimension concerning the student's life and work conditions during training sessions, work experience placements, extra-curricular activities...
- Related to the 3 dimensions of empowerment, the student can develop a **better understanding** of his/her potential, also of the strategies and skills needed to play an active and responsible role, pursuing aims and not being discouraged by obstacles

## Student empowerment

The participation of students in an organisational process of change requires some essential conditions

- a **global strategy** that aims to develop room for initiative through a certain number of activities and innovative projects,
- **curricular and extracurricular situations** in which the students can experience the importance of technics and methodologies of self-evaluation, action planning, communication,
- a climate of **cooperation** among peers and with staff members
- "**a strong leadership system of internal interactions**" to monitor and support the whole process of change.

**Developing an empowering organisation**

- It is essential to organise the staff-student collaboration in an efficient mode, for example by implementing a **focus group** across generations. It creates a great educational resource if the group is empowered and trained not only to realise a **participative change** but also to draw **lessons** from it on a personal, methodological, relational and institutional level.
- Some **conditions** facilitate the process.
  - Designing the change process in the daily organisation, even if on a very limited scale
  - Making clear distinction in the degree of involvement between information, consultation and participation
  - Time, trust and mutual respect, ethical and methodological rules
  - Projects and action plans have to be presented, discussed and supported by governing body.
  - Better to take advice from an external person to drive complex processes

« Staff- student » collaboration in an organisational change

## **7 steps to make a successful organisational change**

- Having an overall vision of the organisation before examining a sector of activity
- Making an objective diagnosis of one dimension of the organisation (ie. Cafeteria, computer room, Leisure time, sporting club. ...) in order to understand its functioning and its problems or needs
- Interpreting the data collected together, within a general assembly, an organisational committee, a focus group...
- Defining precisely the problems or needs before developing alternative scenarios for change
- Elaborating an action plan for change in relation with the initial diagnosis
- Being careful not to drift. Monitor and evaluate the new system regularly
- Communicating about each step of the process of change

**Seven indispensable steps for change**

The overall project of AgroSupDijon in LaManche project is the improvement of the students' involvement in the daily life of the Institute during this academic year.

After the meeting in Dobrich and a preliminary survey about the whole Students' life , it was decided together with the « study board » to solícite the Student association called BDE, Bureau Des Eleves for implementing a process of change for the Student life.

After further inquiries, a feed back took place to arouse more proposals and involvement, with a technic called, « le mur des murmures », the « whispering walls ».

Finally, it was decided during a General Assembly of the association that the annual project should focus on the management of the Student association called BDE, Bureau Des Eleves, because it plays an essential role to unit the students' life and to support students' initiatives.

As a result of the first 3 months of information, survey and discussion, a large number of students have mobilized, taking part in a second General assembly.

**The BDE Project in 2015**

3 main objectives have been fixed during the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly to improve the BDE organisation:

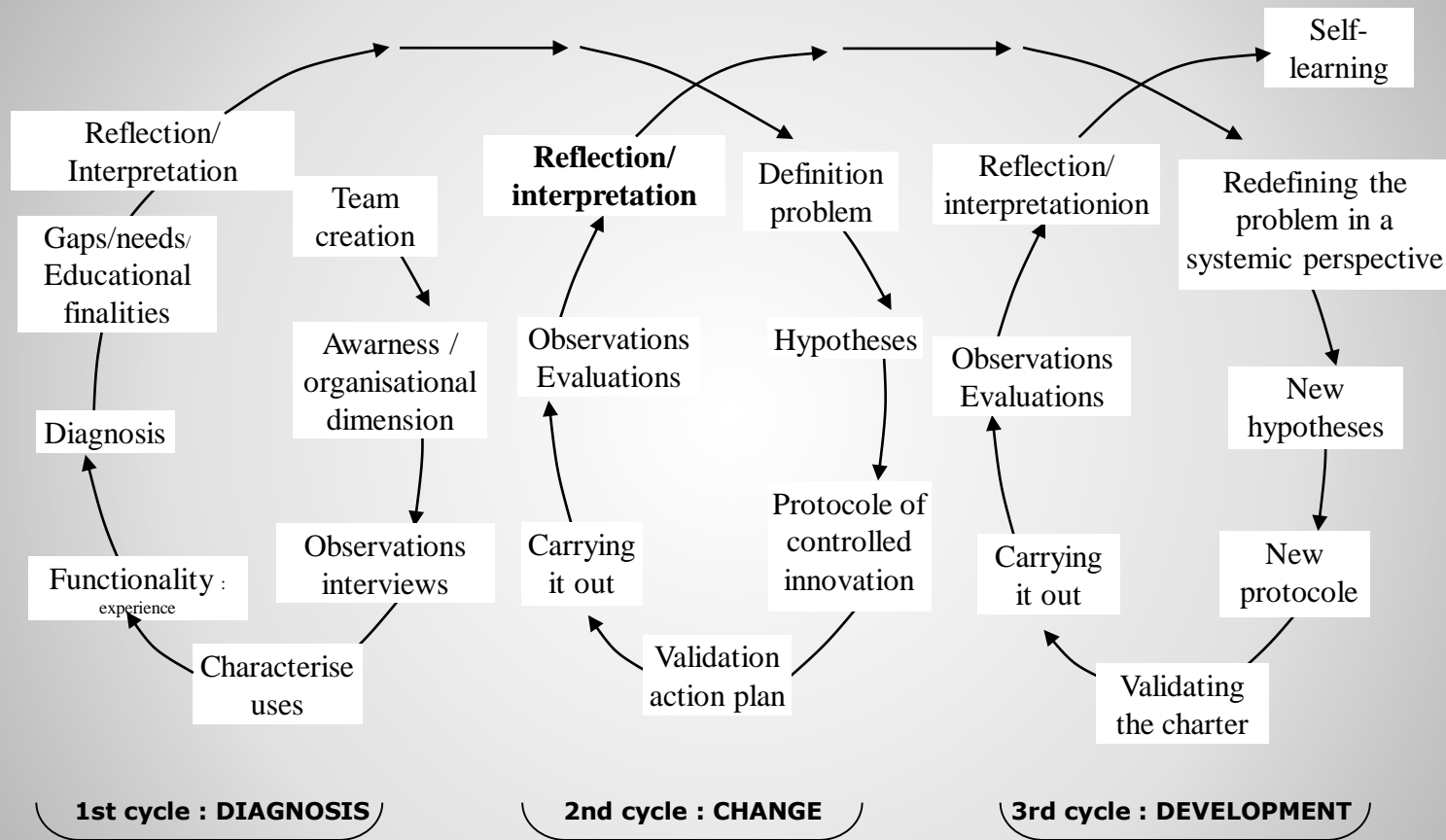
1. Formalizing better processes and procedures of the BDE management in order to facilitate the organizational transition every other year and the daily functioning (role and task sharing, activity planning, monitoring and support ...) through action plans and sheets in order to produce guidelines for the future
2. Valorizing the BDE involvement in the organization of the student's life and integrating better the BDE activities in the institute by implementing new tools and methods to develop more participation and involvement among students and better cooperation with the College staff and boards
3. Facilitating the students' induction process in AgroSupDijon and the relations among the students of different levels, by involving more students for welcoming new students in September during the 2 "weeks of integration"..

**The 3 main objectives for 3 action plan**



- Presentation ACTION :xxx
  - Title
  - Proceedings (Reports of the meetings for example)
  - Coordinators
  - Partnership and institutional validation
  - Dates of beginning/ending
  - Working time envisaged
  - Objectives
  - Provisional budget
  - Expected results, indicators, performance in terms of :  
Learning, social relationship, organization  
management.
  - Financing

**Presentation of an action plan and sheet**



## Action learning and reflective process



**The BDE 2015 wish you the best for your project of empowerment !**

**For more information, about EPIDORGE project**

see EPIDORGE handbook on [www.epic.educagri.fr](http://www.epic.educagri.fr)

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**Thank you for your attention**