The ANGE project: ideas and experiments that are spreading !

Purpose of this report : synthesis of the interventions during the "Dissemination day of the results of the ANGE project (Anchoring the Digital in the Governance of Institutions)" on 19 November 2020.

Author of this synthesis : Jean-Marie De Ketele

Speakers :
Alsadag Alsadag
Alain Bouvier
Michael Bourgatte
Hervé Chomienne
Jean-Marie De Ketele
Christophe de la Chaise
Isabelle des Bourboux
Marie-Claude Deschênes
Viviane Devriésère
Jean Duchaine
Sébastien Gouleau
Azucena Hernandez Martin
Erich Hilger
Leena Hirvoen
Bernard Hugonnier
Radostina Kostadinova
Darina Kostava
Pierre Lacuelle
Hind Lahmani
Hannu Lathi
Alexandrine Lionel
Gabriela Motoi
François Muller
Augustin Mutuale
Audrey Mace-Rousseau
Olivier Perrenoud
Christian Plouznikov
Maha Salama
Marie-Jeanne Spiteri
Martina Theisen

Why and how this synthesis ?

The dissemination day of the ANGE project was very rich and it would have been a pity to lose the richness of the remarks. Thirty speakers delivered very strong words in the time allotted to them. They should not have been lost. It would have been a pity to leave them simply juxtaposed one after the other. They had to be articulated in order to form a system and a synthesis.

This is therefore a synthesis, among other possibilities. It is based on notes taken on the fly by Isabelle des Bourboux (coordinator of the Ange project) and the author of this synthesis. We hope that it will generate other links for the reader and that other richer syntheses will emerge.

The ANGE project aims to build a "learning network".

Faced with societal changes and their acceleration, schools, training and research institutions from different countries and contexts (Belgium, Bulgaria, Spain, Finland, France, Quebec, Romania) are networking and organising a partnership to learn from each other. Through the sharing of experiences, the network enables each institution to become more and more a "learning organisation", i.e. an ecosystem where actors learn from each other and where they learn from exchanges with actors from the other learning organisations in the network.

The ANGE Learning Network is characterised by "learning governance". Made up of distinct entities inserted in specific contexts, the network is characterised by a governance that is not hierarchical and vertical, but by a "horizontal governance" in which the mechanisms for decision-making and regulation of the network's activities are collective.

Made up of internal actors (students, teachers, support and management staff) in relation with external actors on whom they depend (parents, local community, including companies for vocational training, training or support institutions, ministerial officials), the ANGE project school also aims to establish a learning governance, an "agile" governance characterised by "shared leadership". Responsibilities are entrusted to people whose function is to exercise their leadership, their power of influence and to federate the actors involved in order to achieve certain objectives.

A certain vision of digital anchoring

We are witnessing an acceleration of digitalisation in all areas. Developing a digital culture does not simply mean for the ANGE project the technical mastery of digital tools, but the introduction of the human in their use.

The experience of distance learning during confinement has shown that some teachers have succeeded in generating more "presence" in their interactions with their pupils or parents than in their practices within the classroom, too often marked by a form of "distance".

It is therefore: to create a presence, a human presence, in the use of tools to learn and to make people learn, to train or to train professionally, to exchange and collaborate between peers, to exchange and collaborate with the other internal and external actors of the institution.

It is therefore : daring to get out of the comfort of routine and introduce new digital tools, not simply to introduce something new, but to make changes in the way one learns or makes others learn, to get out of the solitude in which the classic school form locks us up and create ways of working in solidarity, not to be content to wait for training courses planned by external bodies but to seize, thanks to digital tools, the opportunities present in the environment (not only on the net but also among colleagues and external partners) to continue to develop professionally, to face the problems encountered, to enter into new projects.

It is therefore a matter of securing the players in the face of the "arrogant digital" (generated by those who want to turn it into power by reserving their control) and reaching out to those who share their experience. It is therefore about creating support and accompaniment strategies within the establishment, and not simply making available an infrastructure and tools.

Digital anchoring is therefore an accelerator of change, a strategy to stimulate innovation and change, and ultimately to create "collaborative intelligence".

Three essential postures

The aim of the ANGE project is to develop "communities of practice and learning" within each institution and thus make it a "(co-)learning organisation", as well as to network these co-learning organisations in order to increase their learning power. Three essential postures are required to achieve this according to the testimonies.

A first is the **"co-" posture** : collaborate, i.e. working as a team; cooperating, carrying out operations with others; co-constructing, building systems or products (a reference system or reports, as in the ANGE project) with partners; forming communities of practice and learning; coordinate them in order to make the institution a co-learning organisation and an educational community or to constitute with external partners a learning network; produce collective intelligence by giving to the other and accepting to receive from the other something precious by relying on him or her and surrendering to his or her benevolence and good faith; and thus work for the common good. Both organisations (schools, training institutions, research centres, local organisations...) and individuals (the pupil in his class group or at home, the teacher alone in his class and isolated among colleagues, the leader taking refuge behind his hierarchical status, the parents staying outside the school walls, the trainer with theoretical knowledge...) work alone and not enough in solidarity (references to TALIS reports). Organising time and space to promote a "co" posture is an effect sought by the ANGE project.

Linked to the first, the second is a **posture of recognition**. Recognising the other means placing him/her in his/her history, context, status, not only with his/her own resources

and experience but also with his/her difficulties and needs. Recognising the other means accepting him/her as he/she is and as being in the process of becoming. Recognising the other person means valuing them and highlighting the value they bring to the common project. Recognising the other means showing signs of recognition, signs that are too little shown (especially by the institution) and yet it is a driving force for human commitment. As Paul Ricoeur points out, the posture of recognition makes the other "visible"; too many modes of organisation or communication make the other "invisible" despite physical proximity.

These two postures are characteristic of a third posture, if it is well understood : **the accompaniment posture**. Accompanying the other person means sharing bread (cum-pane) with him/her, i.e. his/her resources and experiences. Accompanying the other means sharing the path (cum-camino), that is to say, walking with them, doing with them a piece of the road. Putting oneself in the position of accompaniment means that the accompanier is aware that by accompanying the other, the person being accompanied becomes in turn his/her accompanier, in the sense that not only does the person being accompanied learn from the accompanier, but the latter learns just as much from the person being accompanied. The "class labs[1]" of the ANGE project are laboratories for supporting change in education in relation to digital technologies and the governance of action; the quality of the changes produced is largely the result of the support methods provided within the institution and between partner institutions.

Emerging professionalism at the heart of governance and change

Emerging professionalism" is not for a person or organisation to conform to a set of standards or norms. It is a narrow, closed and illusory vision: the reality of people and organisations is too complex, due to their environment, their history and their future.

Emerging professionalism" is for a person or an organisation to gradually transform itself by seizing the opportunities present in the internal or external environment. If any environment includes many internal or external constraints, it also includes many internal or external resources: those that are already there and those that can be put there, one of the aspects of governance; without forgetting, some constraints that can be transformed into resources by being drivers of creativity.

There are several interrelated conditions that underpin the emergence of new professions in an individual (and in an organisation):
(i) The opportunities present in the environment are perceived by the person; many opportunities are present, but many of them are ignored; if it is one of the missions of governance to create an environment rich in opportunities, it is one of the roles of coaching to make them aware of them.
(ii) The opportunities are present and sufficiently accessible for the person; they do not have the same degree of accessibility for different people (for example, technological tools); here again we can guess the role of governance and support in making them accessible.

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[1] http://classlab-ange.eu/le-classlab-ange/

(iii) The opportunities are present and sufficiently accessible, but it is still necessary to perceive their value in order to make new professionalism emerge and improve its practices; this often involves meeting other places or other people who have seized the opportunity and show its value (one of the interests of the ANGE project).

(iv) The opportunities are effectively seized and the person takes a reflexive look at how to mobilise them and at the effects observed; these two aspects are all the easier when they are part of collaborative work.

(v) The opportunities seized have been adequately mobilised, in the sense that they bring added value and are recognised by the beneficiary actors, by peers and by the institution.

(vi) The opportunities seized which have brought added value are put at the service of other actors by people who have experience of them; this comes under the "co", "recognition" and "support" posture. By developing professionalism in others, the coach develops new professions.

This last aspect is at the centre of John Dewey's thinking on the development of democracy: every person has a "*distinctive capacity*" (a capacity that distinguishes him or her from others and makes him or her "unique"; the aim of education and socialisation (and therefore of every educator or educational organisation) is to identify him or her and to enable him or her to develop it as much as possible and (an *indispensable condition*) to put it at the service of the group.

Developing a learning (co-)organisation and a European learning space (in which the ANGE project is embedded) is at this price.

Words are just words.

This synthesis, as personal as any synthesis, is based on a set of strong words. These are those of the ANGE project partners and the experts invited to the dissemination day. They are vibrations that they have projected to share the foundations of their experiences

If words can "kill", words make "live". They are then gifts, windows (not walls), values to be transmitted (not kept to oneself). It is up to each person to see how they liberate us and to know what to do with them.