



The collective subjectness of activity of the innovative school in the situation of reform.

The research plan.

Yuri Lapshin,

Laboratory of Activity Research,
Moscow State University of Psychology and Education

Developmental Work Research and Adult Education

Doctoral Class 2012,

University of Helsinki, Finland

Supervisors: **Arkady Margolis** (MSUPE)

Yrjö Engeström , **Annalisa Sannino** (UH)

Research background

The reform of national education
is challenge and pressure for schools:

- New educational standard (personality and meta-competence levels are appeared)
- New evaluation approach (Unified State Exam)
- New financial situation (“money goes to child”)

But the question is:

How to implement the reform?

Traditional our way of reforming “from above” can cause distrust, resistance and imitating response amongst teachers.



The tradition of innovative schools in Russia



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Inside the regular educational system there is a movement of innovative “author’s schools”, based on the tradition of “Enlightenment of the People”
Intellectuals went to the ordinary people and tried to teach and develop them.





Innovative “author’s schools”...



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

- are the real subjects of their educational activity, consciously developing their own conceptions of education and development of children
- usually called by the name of the leader as author of school conception
- became widely known since the late 80s due to liberalization of Perestroika
- their ideas formed the basis of the nowadays national reform
- their experience could be useful for other schools to implement the reform and transform their position from reactive to real active subjectness.



The School of Self-Determination



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

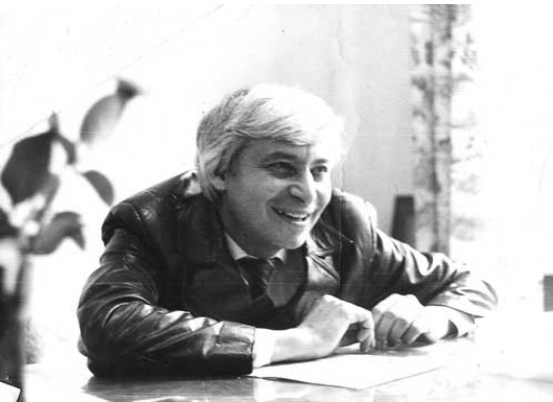
- Public school in “sleeping district” at the edge of Moscow
- Was founded more than 40 years ago
- Focused on developing pupils as ‘self-determining persons’
- Strong tradition of democracy and collaborative alliance between adults and children.
- Various spaces for development: Labor Studios, Educational Parks, Theater...
- Now after the death 5 years ago of the leader of the school Alexander Tubelsky the collective went in serious crisis of their collective work
- Teachers and administration feel loosing of efficiency of their methods and pressure of the reform requirements, tension and misunderstandings inside the collective



The object of the research: the School of Self-Determination



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI





Research questions



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

- To understand the processes of forming and developing of the collective subjectness in the school collective
- To describe relations between the evolution of the collective subject development and formation of the concept of shared object of its activity system
- To find a way of assisting the professional activity team to reorganize their collective activity in crisis situation
- To understand generally how to rise the subjectness of a school teams to implement the reform requirements



Hypothesis 1



The relation between the forming of conception of education as the object of activity and the development of collective subject **has the form of a positive feedback cycle:**

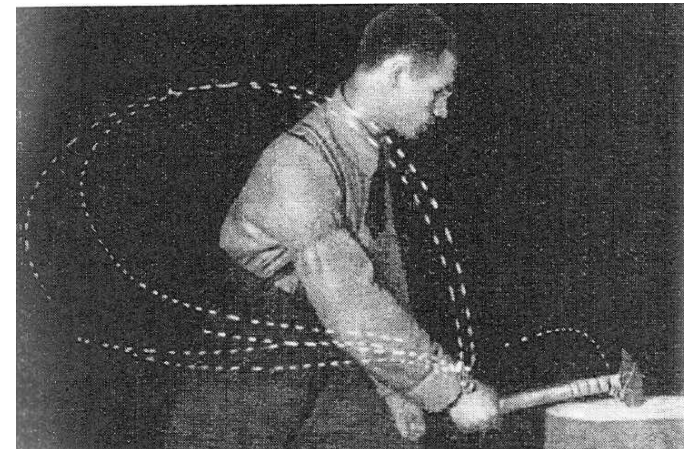
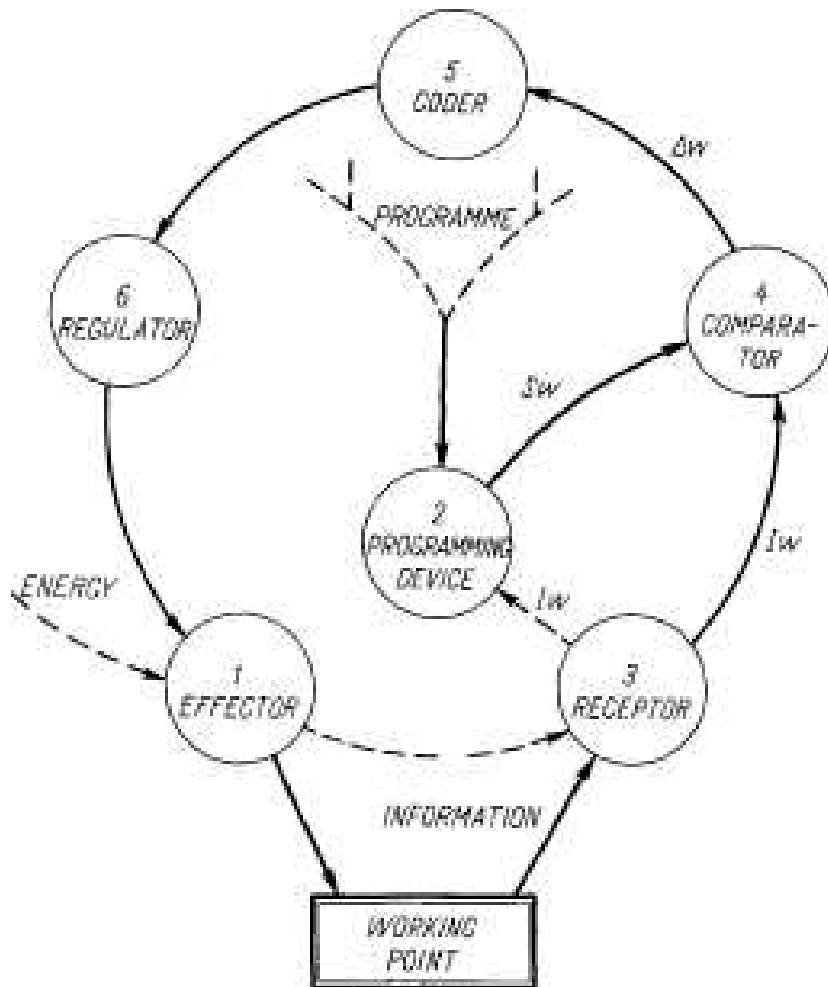
the development of one side increasing the development of another side,
and the opposite – the weakening or desintegration in one side weakens or decay the other side



Hypothesis 2

- The quality of subjectness of collective subject of activity corresponds with the quality of structure of shared object as concept (in Vygotsky's sense of concept formation in double-stimulation method)

Nikolai Bernstein's cycle of biomechanical movements





Hypothesis 3



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

- Well formed collective subjectness creates the collective ZPD, in which people can do, understand and feel something new related with their personal needs of development and self-actualizing.



Methodology Sources



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

- CHAT: Collective ZPD, Concept Formation, Triangle Model of Collective Activity, Double-Stimulation Method
- DWR Methodology (Expansive learning Cycle, Change Laboratory Method)
- Social network theory (especially community of practice ideas)
- Comparative historical analysis.

Data collection methods



- Historical Research: interviews with members (nowadays and former) of the school collective, former pupils, partners, officials, documentary research (printed texts and videos)
- Field research: Interviews with teachers, pupils and parents, observation and videotaping of the main processes
- Formative intervention: Change Laboratory method with the school collective representatives and administration

What we have done already



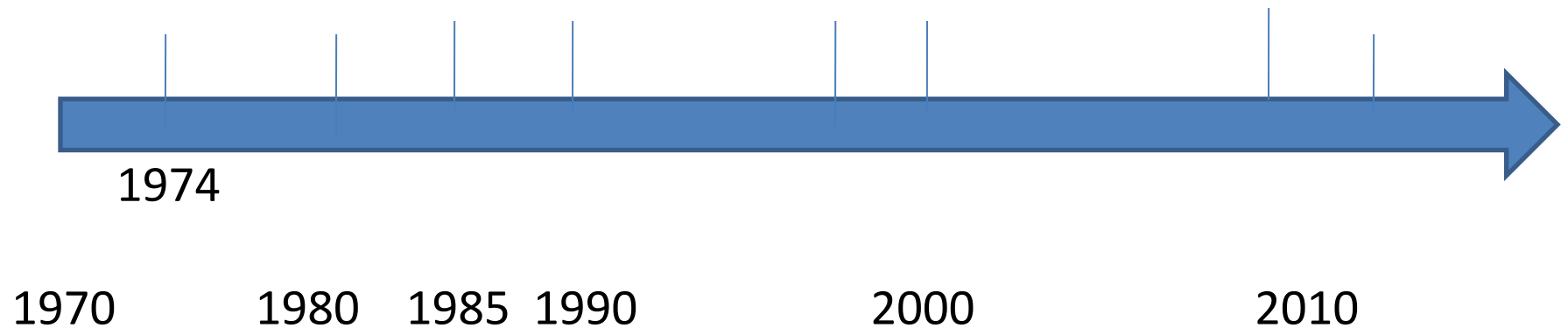
- 20 narrative interviews with teachers who work or used to work at school
- 8 interviews with parents (5 of them are former pupils of this school)
- 7 focused group interviews with pupils of the school (18 children of different age asked)
- Protocols and videotapes of observations of various work processes (team and group meetings, school life, educational activities, school board, project conference etc.)
- The collection of conceptual documents (papers, brochures and videos) of the school's different periods.

Data analysis methods

- Constructing the chronological timeline, distinguishing main periods and cycles of school development, comparing inner history of the school with the history of country
- Gathering the data of historical research in the table of historical evolution of activity system (object, subject, tools, rules, labor division, community).
- Constructing the triangle models of activity in each period and finding the contradictions (**just started**)

Comparative History of the School and Country

- School History



- Russian History



The example of model: 1970-1981, director Iskra Tandit



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

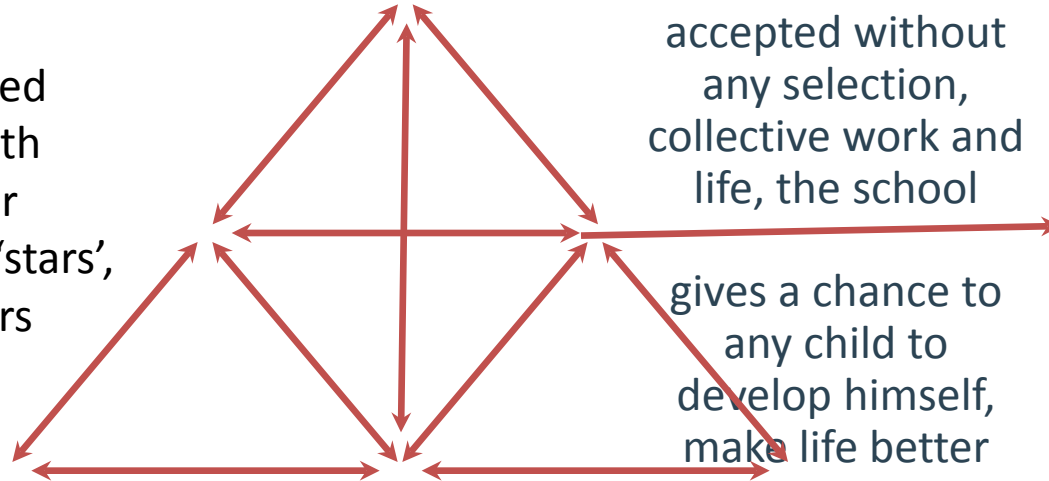
High quality lessons,
revolutionary romantics,
altruistic labor for others,
subculture of school life,
culture development

Well organized
collective with
strong leader
and several 'stars',
uniting others

Children are
accepted without
any selection,
collective work and
life, the school

The product:
Active honest
citizens with good
culture and altruistic
state

gives a chance to
any child to
develop himself,
make life better



Local people
with different
background

Strong leader as
covering 'wall of
stone',
several 'stars',
responsible teachers

Inner rules: Honest sincere work,
pedagogical creativeness
collectivism, responsibility,
living in the school

Ext. rules: school for all, prevent
deviants, ideologically correctness

The preliminary results

The school always had their own conception and subject position in its activity. In different historical periods it fit into historical situation differently (easier or harder) and changes in the country related to changes in the school's inner state.

In different periods the basic ideas of the school's conception were implemented in different concepts, methods, forms of work and organizational structures – sometimes the opposite to previous ones. New methods, forms and concepts emerged, developed and died away with the development of the school and country.

The basic features of the school concept throughout times:

- The school always has a mission of making the world better and assisting the children to be more active and developed
- High personal involvement of teachers, respect for teachers as creative persons
- Aspiration to work with different children without selection, especially “difficult” and “disabled” ones
- Respect for the personality of child and importance of working and social alliance with children
- Prevalence of value of personality development of child above the educational result itself
- The collaboration with the community (parents, colleagues, local inhabitants) always was the important part of work



The preliminary conclusion



HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
HELSINGFORS UNIVERSITET
UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Nowadays crisis of the collective subject of the school activity related not only with the death of strong leader but with the loosing of the shared object of activity – their own conception of education, which responds on nowadays needs of society.

To solve the problem the collective need to consciously rebuild the shared object of their activity. The solving of this key problem will causes to solving the other problems of activity.

They really need an assistance in organizing and conducting the process of collective work on this task.

Further plans

- Interview of person from the educational authorities – nowadays and from the past
- Interview some local inhabitant
- Prepare mirror materials for Change Laboratory process
- Make strict plan with tight timing for Change Laboratory sessions
- Run the Changing Laboratory process – 8-12 sessions one per week – from Autumn 2012 to Spring 2013

Further plans

- Analyze the material of Change Lab sessions
- Verification of the hypotheses
- Monitor the changing in their activity
- Compare the data with Masha's of the Davydov's school or (and) some another one