

*The concept of joint  
activity as a unit of  
activity theory.  
Joint learning activity*

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# ***1. The fundamentals of cultural-historical school***

**The foundations of cultural-historical theory were laid down by L.S. Vygotsky himself around 1927-28**

**His disciples are:**

**A.N. Leontiev,**

**A.R. Luriya,**

**L.I. Bozhovich,**

**A.V. Zaporozhets,**

**D.B. Elkonin,**

**P.Ya. Galperin**

**Cultural-historical theory was elaborated, clarified, extended, modified and refined to a large extent by disciples and followers of Lev Semyonovich, that is, by his scientific school.**

**Activity theory, in the opinion of Davydov, is the direct successor to those principal ideas which were put as a basis of cultural-historical theory by Vygotsky himself.**

**Vygotsky directly used the term “activity” as a concept and demonstrated that human life, as compared to one of animals, is aimed at the future and becomes free by virtue of tools and words.**

**Without distorting anything in the essence of Vygotsky's approach to conditions of human development, Leontiev replaced the term "social situation" with the notion of "development of activity".**

*First:*

***the basis for development of a human is a qualitative change in social situation, or, in terms of Leontiev, a change in person's activity.***



*Second:*

***learning and upbringing are universal points of human's mental development.***

*Third:*

***the primary form of activity is carrying it out explicitly in the outer, social or communal plane.***

*Fourth:*

***psychological neoformations which come into existence in a human are derivative from interiorization of the initial form of activity.***

*Fifth:*

***significant role in the process of interiorization belongs to different sign and symbol systems.***

*Sixth:*

***intellect and emotions being in an inner unity has an important value in the activity of the human consciousness.***

**The concept of collective activity and collective subject is also a new problem (though it has been raised long ago) which needs to be explored and elaborated on the modern level.**

**In views of Vygotsky and his followers interiorization is a process of turning of collective activity into individual activity, and of collective subject into individual subject.**

**The pattern of origin of the individual consciousness is this: collective-social activity -> culture, signs and symbols -> individual activity, individual consciousness.**



## ***2. Social situation of development "Zone of Proximal Development"***

**According to Vygotsky “any function in the cultural development of a child appears twice, in two aspects, first in a social plane and then in a psychological plane, first between two people as an inter-psychic category, and then inside of a child as an intra-psychic category”.**

(L. Vygotsky, 1983, vol. 3, p. 145).

**“All superior psychic functions and their inter-relations have at their back those genetically social relations, real relationships, homo duplex (the man doubled, lat.). Hence the principal and the method of personification in cultural development research, i.e. dividing functions between people, personification of functions. Take voluntary attention, for instance: one acquires, the other masters. It’s separating again of that which has been merged into one (compare to modern labor) ”.**

(Vygotsky L., 1986, p. 54 – as per publication of Puzyrei).

**The gap between that which a learner is able to do on his/her own (the actual level of development) and that which he/she is capable of with proper guidance is called “zone of proximal development”.**

# **3. Tools and signs in human activity.**

**The main difference of a sign from a tool is that a tool as per it's Hegelian formula is placed between human – subject of operation – and outer reformative object and mediates the person's impact on the object of activity, whereas a sign always mediates the relation of one person to another (particularly, one's relation to oneself as the other).**

# **4. Social interactions and education.**

**Social interactions and cognitive development are interdependent processes, for generation and development of one internally depends on development of the other.**



**The notion of Zone of Proximal Development suggests a new paradigm of development, and accordingly a new approach to teaching-learning psychology.**

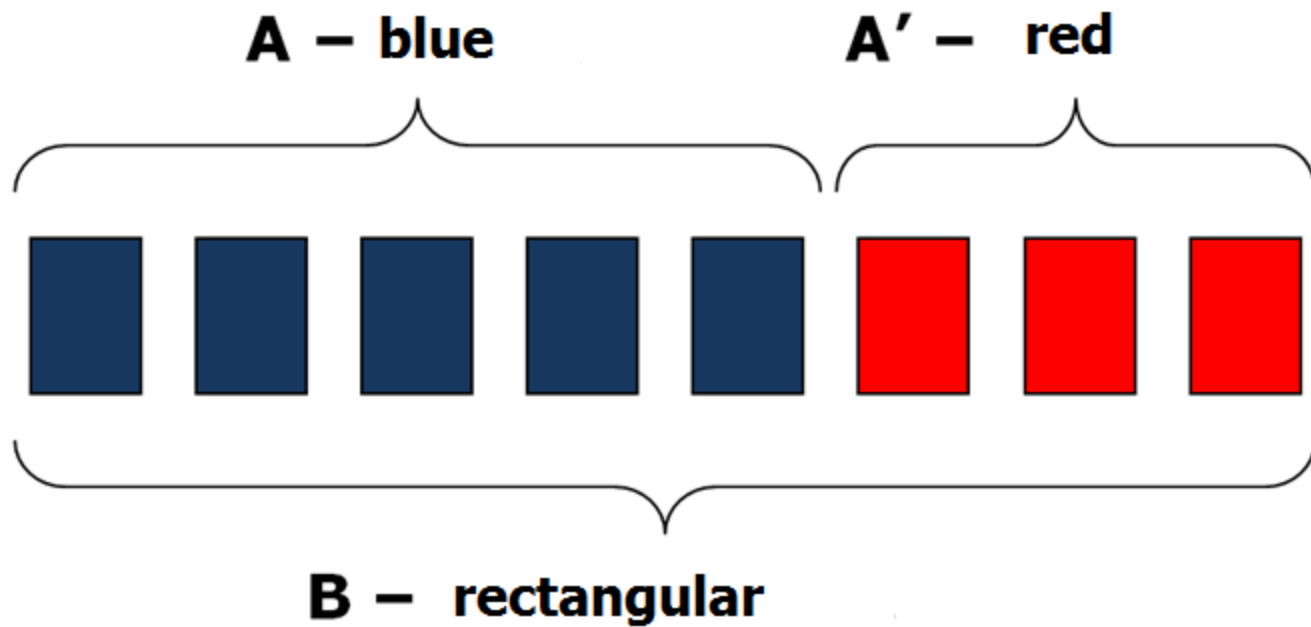
# **5. Organizing joint learning activity.**

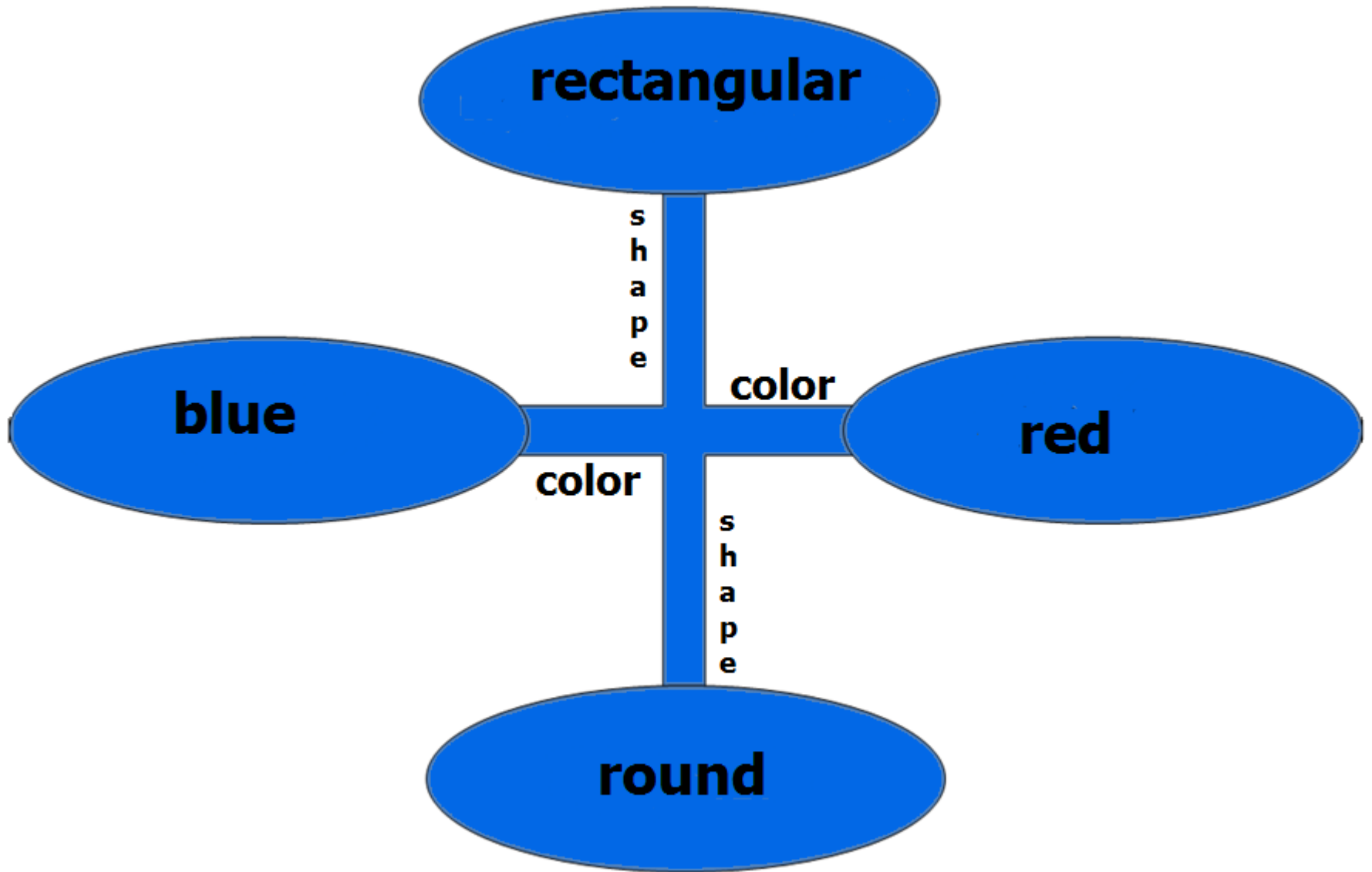
## **The concept of “organization of joint activity” which is characterized by:**

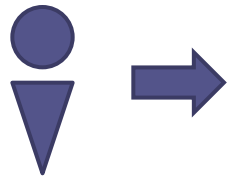
- distribution and exchange of actions;
- mutual understanding;
- communication;
- reflection as a special kind of operation with modes of cooperative work.

# **6. Experimental research of organizing joint actions and its role in children's intellectual development**

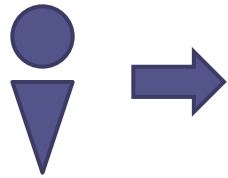
- $A + A' = B$



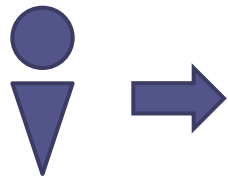




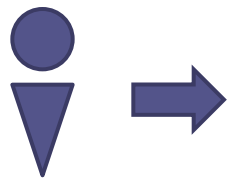
**Iron (1)**



**Round (2)**

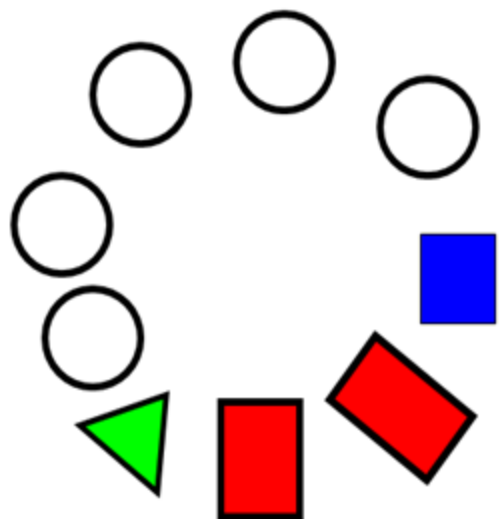
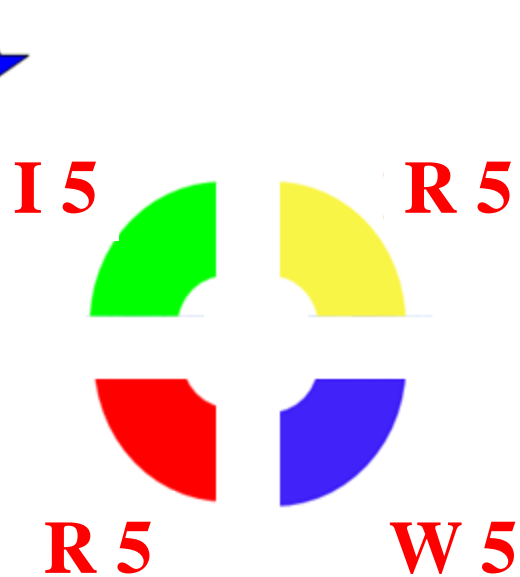


**Wooden (3)**



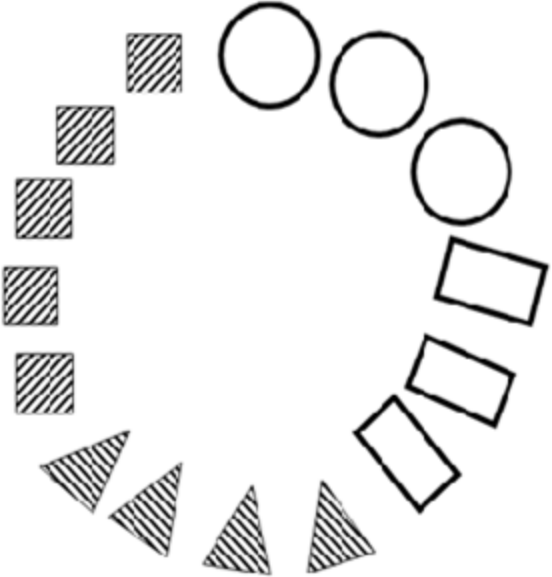
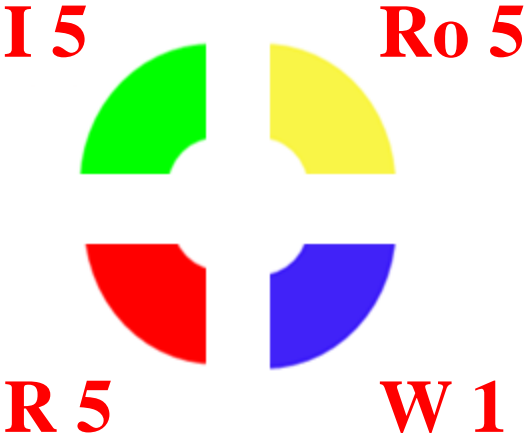
**Rectangular (4)**

# 1st series

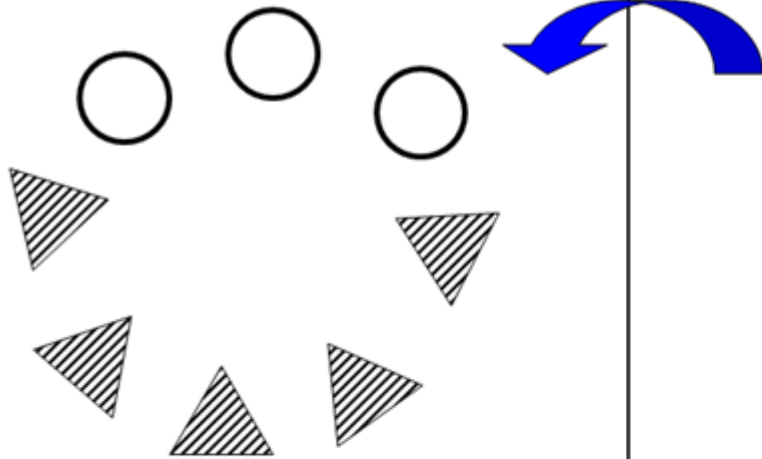
№	<b>"The ring" set of objects</b>	<b>"The map" a scheme of distribution and fixation of procedures</b>
a		 <p data-bbox="1506 856 1835 1056">The schematic corresponds to placement of 4 participants</p>



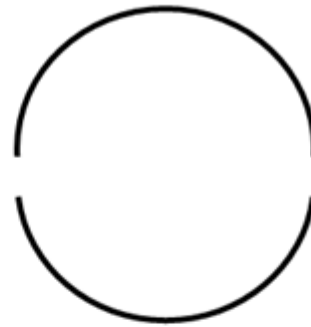
# 1st series

№	<b>"The ring" set of objects</b>	<b>"The map" a scheme of distribution and fixation of procedures</b>
a		 <p data-bbox="1508 868 1831 1058">The schematic corresponds to placement of 4 participants</p>

№

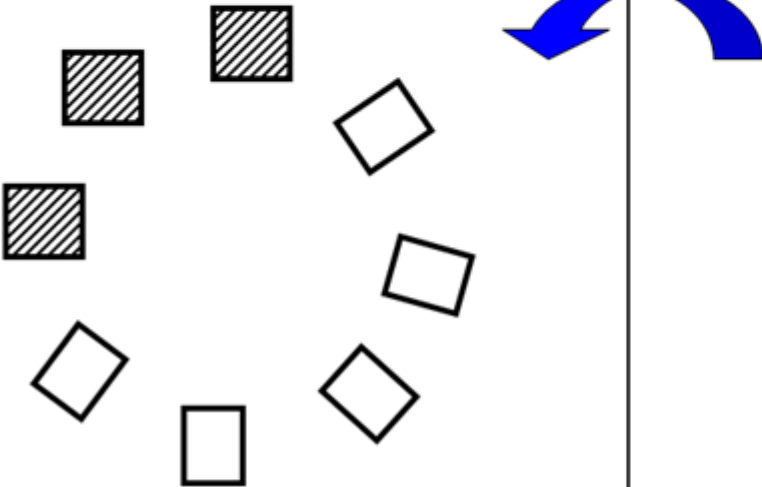


**Ro 3**

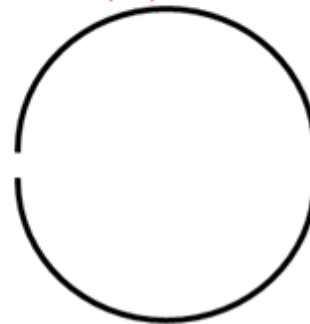


**Y 5**

**B**



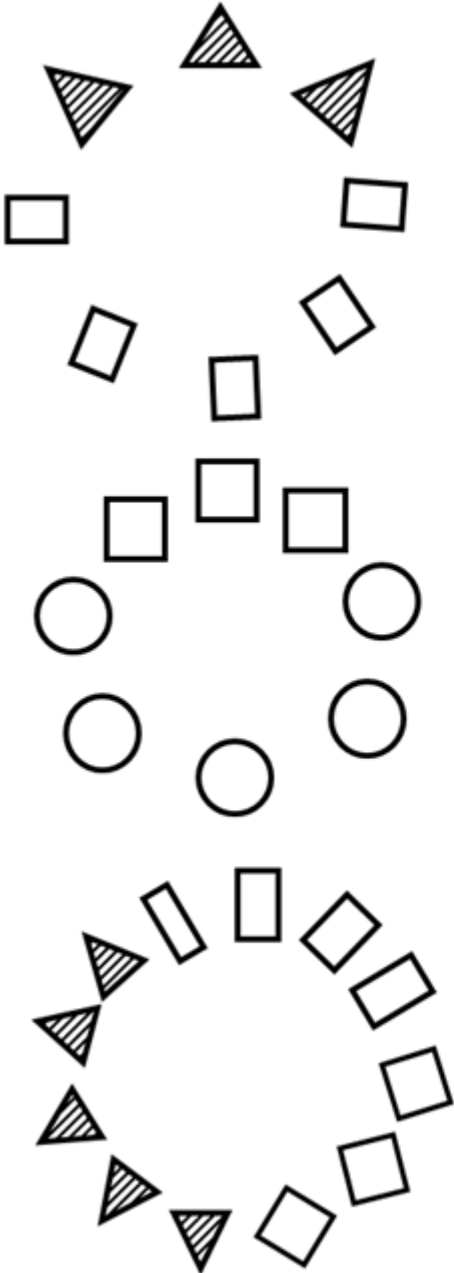
**W 3**



**R 5**

**In this task  
participants  
work in pairs  
[1 with 2] and  
[3 with 4]**

No



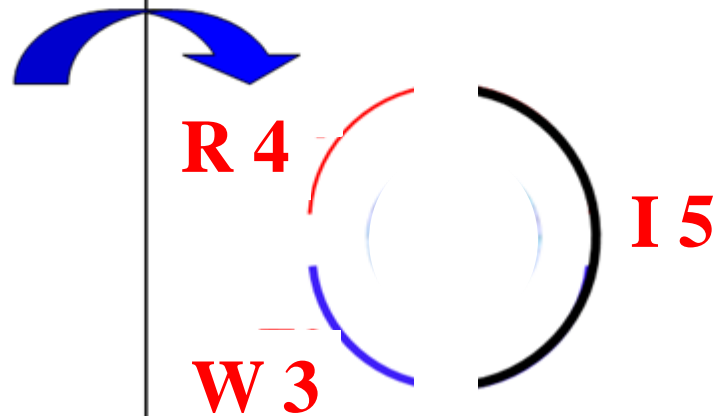
r



R 5



Ro 5



R 4

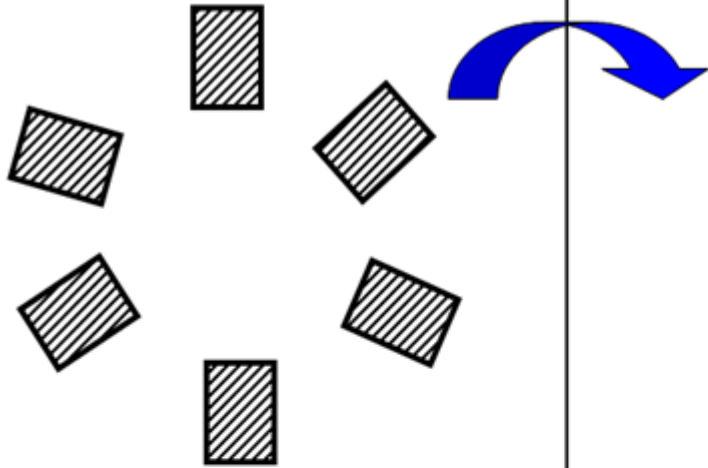
W 3

In this task  
participants  
work in pairs  
[1 with 4] and  
[2 with 3]

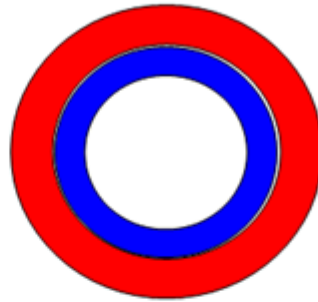
In this task  
participants 1,  
3 and 4 work  
together  
without  
participant 2

## Series 2

№



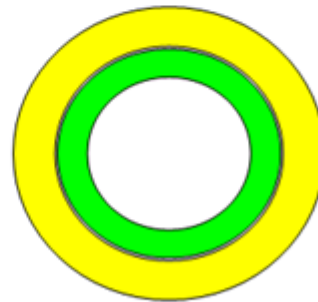
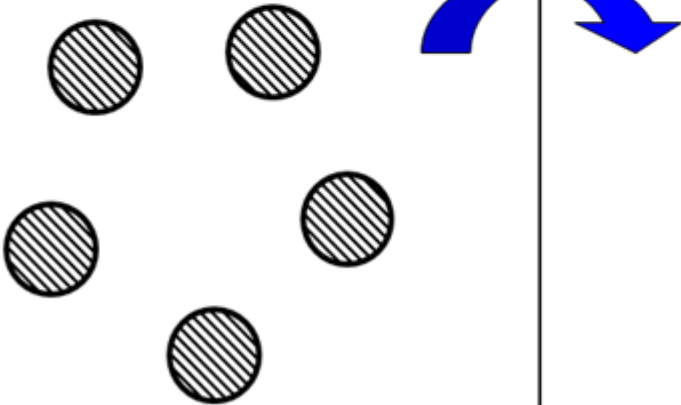
W 5



R 5

Ro 5

Д



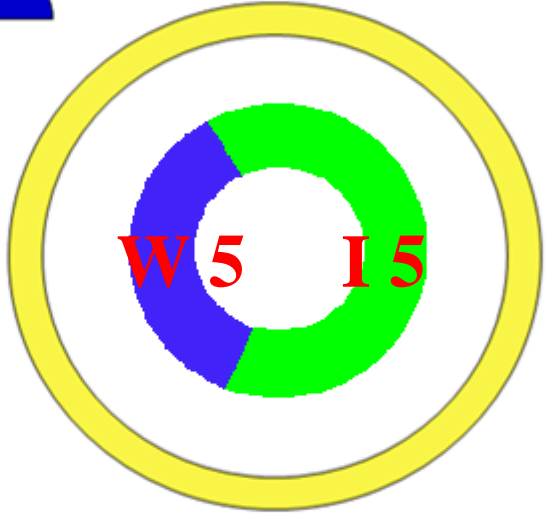
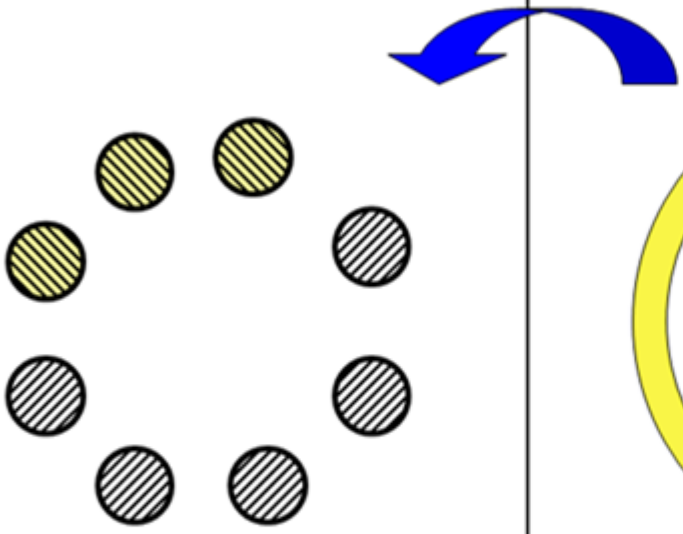
I 5

In this task  
participants  
work in pairs  
[3 with 4] and  
[1 with 2]

# Series 2

№

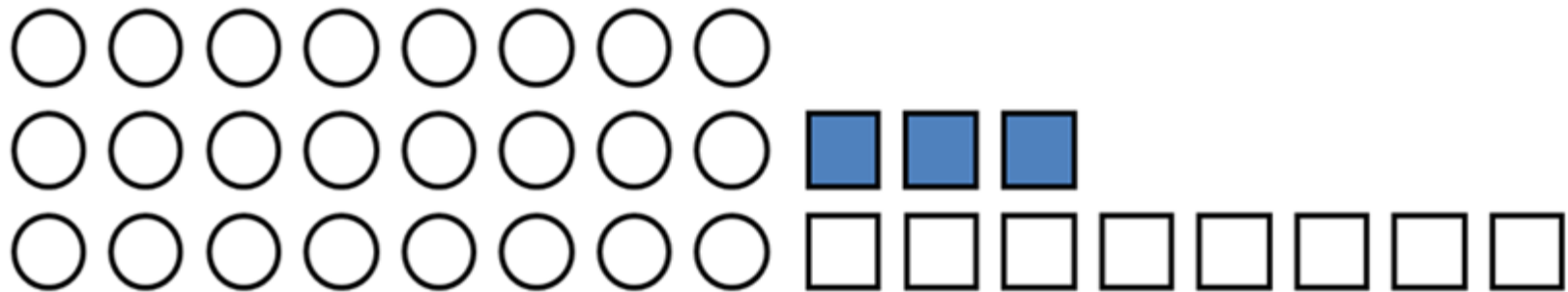
e



In this task participants [1, 2 and 3] work together without participant 4

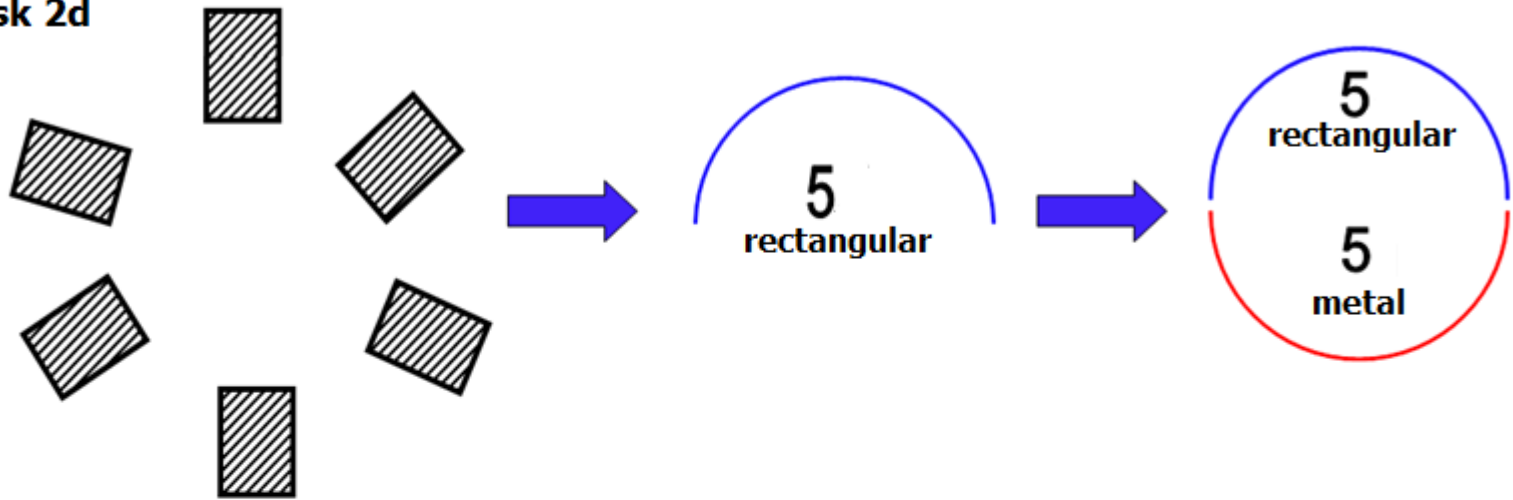
## Example of an error in building the set of objects according to the scheme

Pic. 2 Task 2 (8 square ∞ 3 wooden 5 metal)

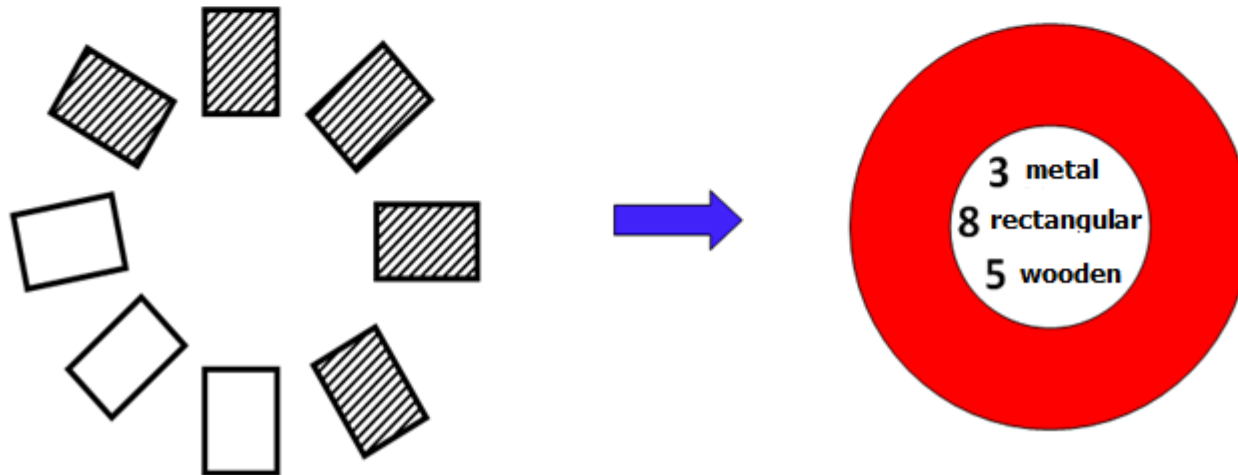


## An example of an erroneous scheme of actions

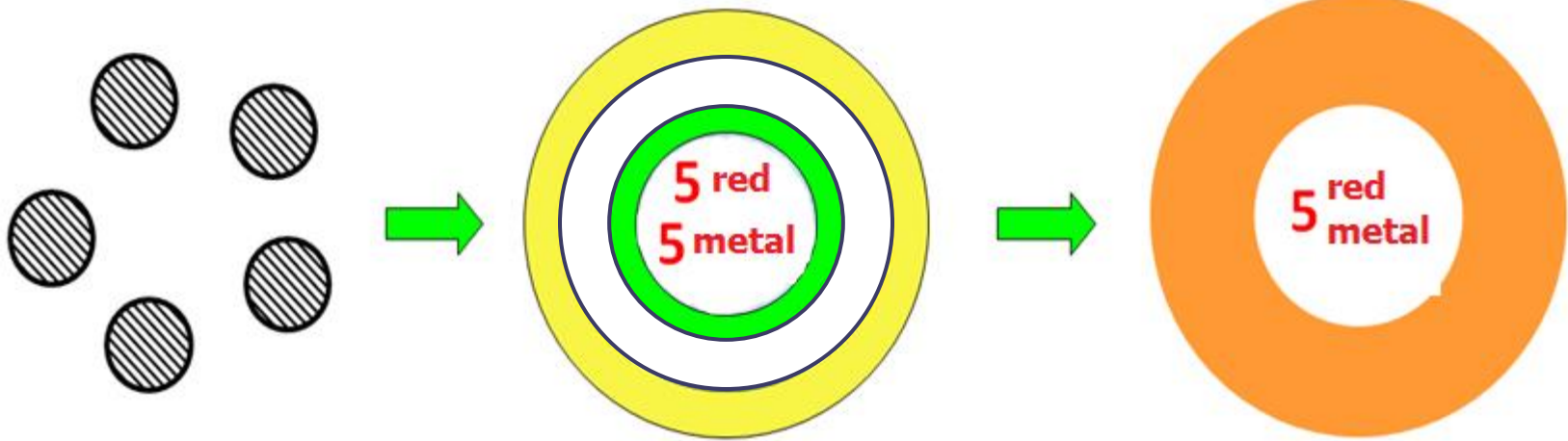
in the task 2d



in the task  
2ж



# An example of collectivization of action in the task 2d





<b>Correlation of organization mode and the task</b>	<b>Characteristics of the mode of collaborative work</b>
Problem is not solved.	Interaction without cooperation.
No connection between mode of group effort and the problem.	Problem solving is based on consistent association of participants of operations with objects without any distribution and exchange of operations. No relation to operations of the other as means of solving the problem.

**Correlation of organization mode and the task**

**Characteristics of the mode of collaborative work**

Problem is solved.

Interaction based on cooperation

Group effort and solving of the problem are parallel processes.  
Connection between mode of interaction and the problem is not subject to analysis by the participants.

The mode of operation of the group of children when solving a problem is based on combining operations with objects with their consistent substitution with one another. Relation to the other is expressed through regarding his operation as equal to one's own.

Correlation of organization mode and the task	Characteristics of the mode of collaborative work
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Problem is solved.	Cooperation based on organization
Group effort and solving of the problem are mediated processes. Connection between cooperation and the problem is subject to analysis by the participants.	The mode of joint action of children when solving a problem is based on mutual exchange of operations. Relation to the other participant is based on regarding his operation from the standpoint of organizing collective work of the group (the basis of the joint action itself).

***7. A problem of education based on a system of developing interactions and cooperation.***

**Activity organization of the first type is characterized by repetition, copying of modes of distribution of activity, which the adult suggests to children in the form of certain models and schemes. When put into a situation where this mode of interaction appears limited (cannot provide for correct solving of the problem) participants no longer can act according to dependent models of cooperation.**

**With organizing activity of the second type children are not only able to implement a mode of cooperation set by an adult, but also with certain engagement and help from the adult they are able to redevelop it. This demands analyzing means and modes of future activity, and most importantly, analyzing their very capability to perform their own action in co-action.**

## ***Among such actions are:***

- including different models of action and their mutual coordination into an activity,
- joint modeling of examples of organizing joint activity set by adults,
- communication and mutual understanding in the process of co-action and search for new ways to organize cooperation.