

An Activity-theoretical Study of Common Activity Formation in Educational Complex

Supervisors

Jaakko Virkkunen and Yrjö Engeström

Maria Safronova

Center for Research on Activity, Development and Learning,
University of Helsinki (Finland)/

Moscow State University of Psychology and Education (Russia) /

mariasaf@gmail.com

Outline

- Societal problem
- Research site: Educational complex development
- Methodology of the study
- Objective
- Research questions
- Results of two Change laboratory sessions
- Further steps

Societal problem

First way of changes is the **new rules implementation.**

Second way of changes is a process of **reorganization of educational institutions network.**

The aim of this reform is to provide to children the equal educational opportunities and increasing **quality of education.**

New requirements

Federal Government Education Standard (2012)
determines three kinds of outcomes:

- subject results (knowledge),
- development of metasubject competences,
(*learning agency*), and
- personal competences

**How to achieve this
outcome?**

Research site:

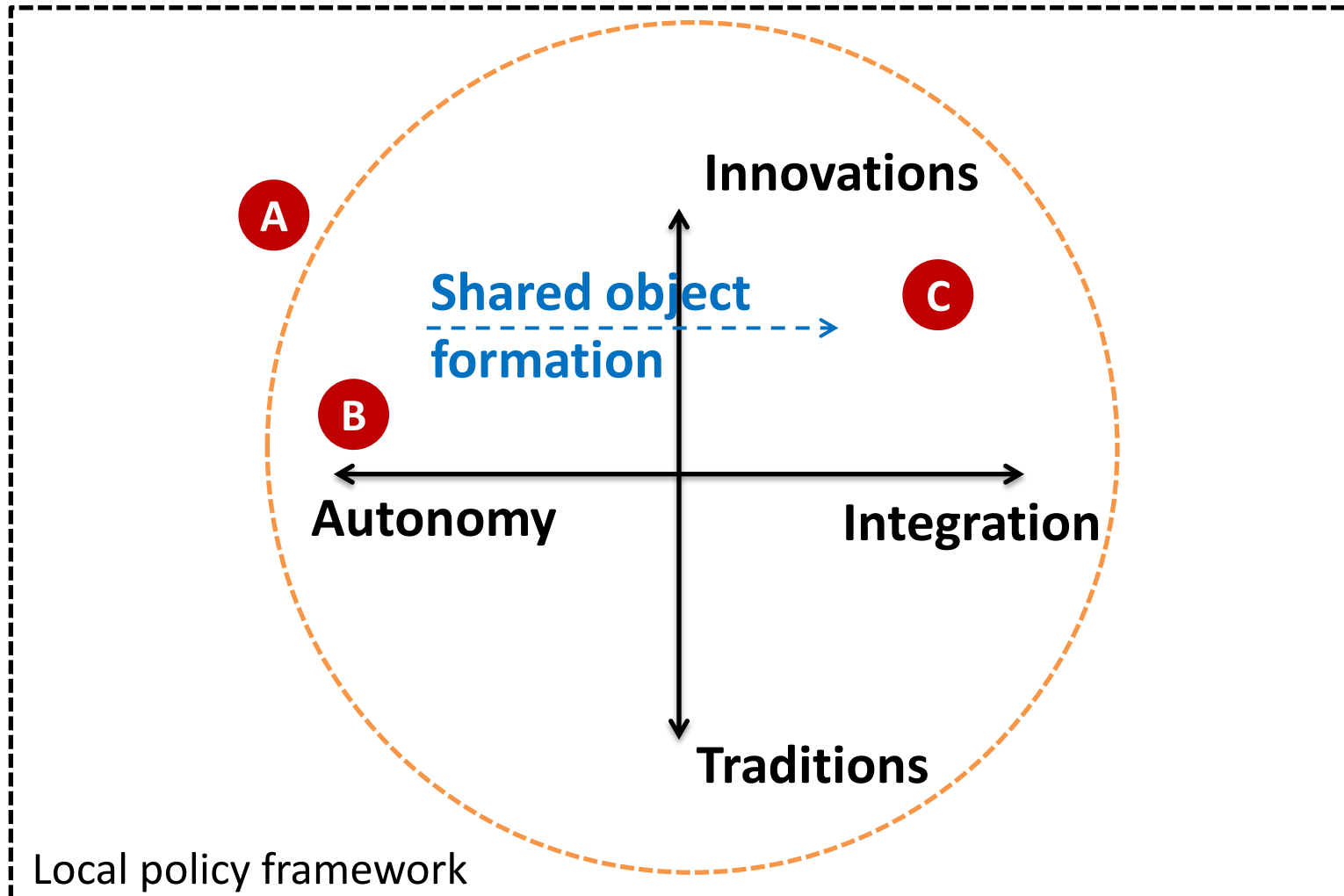
Educational complex development



What the educational complex is?

- Just an **economic and administrative structure** and context of individual teachers' actions (first generation activity theory interpretation)
- **Administrative structure of separate activity systems** (second generation activity theory interpretation)
- **Integration of activity systems with a potentially / partly shared object** (third generation activity theory interpretation)

Societal problem



Third generation of activity theory

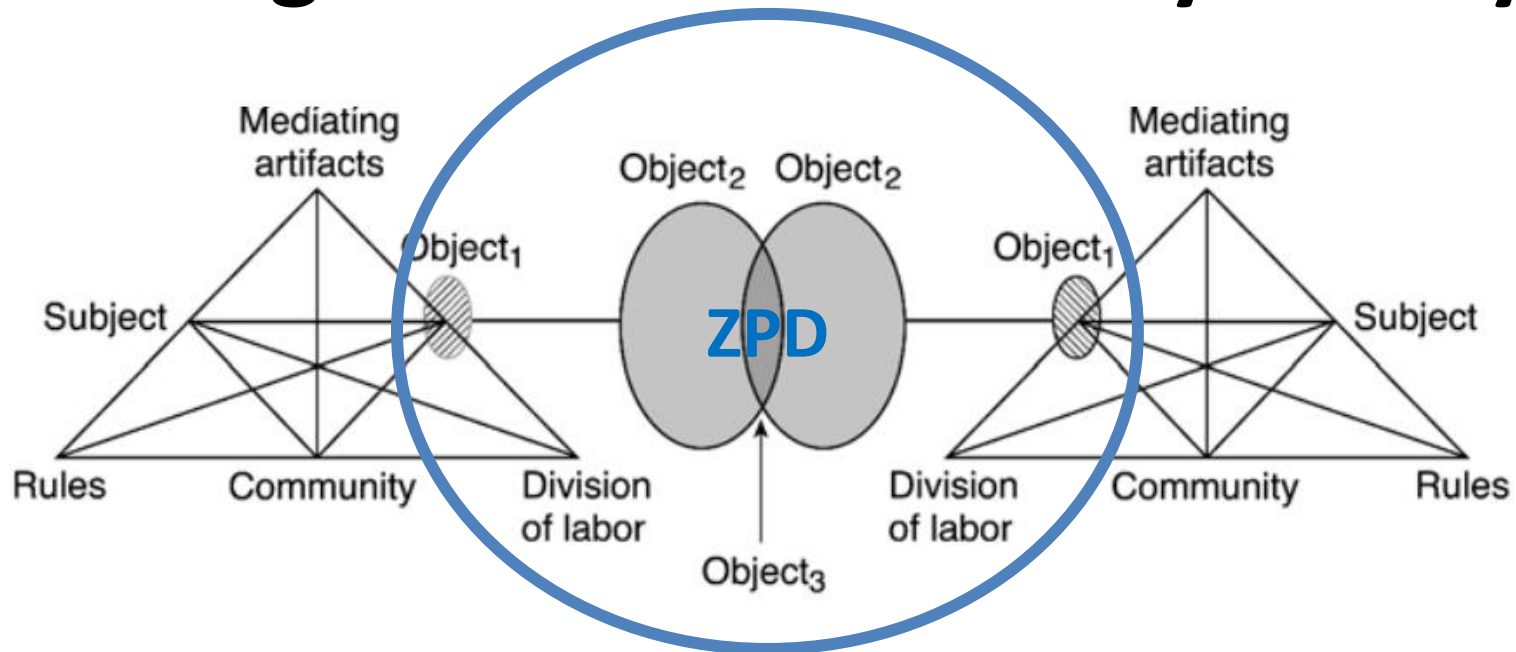


Figure 1. Two interacting activity systems as minimal model for the third generation of activity theory (Y. Engeström, 2001, p. 136).

The research aim is to evaluate this distance between the **present activities** and the **opportunity for historically new form of activity** in educational complex and support these changes.

Methodology of the study

- Cultural-historical activity theory (L.S.Vygotsky, A.N.Leontiev, Y. Engeström)
- Theory of developmental education (V.V.Davydov, D.B.Elkonin)
- Developmental work research methodology (Y. Engeström)

One of the principle of the study that **voices of participants will be heard.**

Objective

The **objective** of the activity-theoretical study is to investigate a **common activity system formation** by the practitioners through

- **shared object** of activity construction,
- **re-mediation** of activity by practitioners in collaboration and
- **collective agreement** achievement about the joint activity.

Research questions

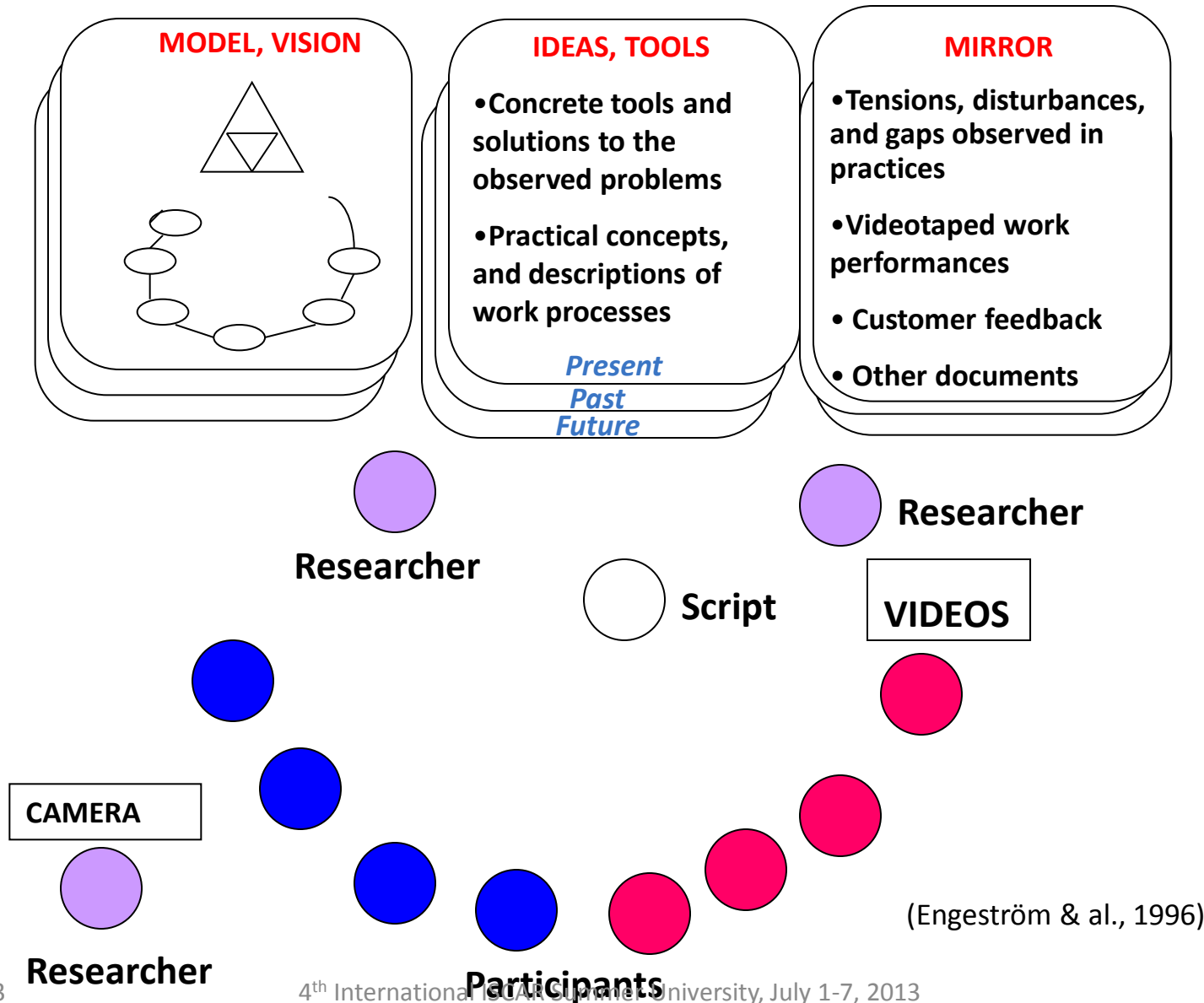
- What is a practical implementation of the method “Change Laboratory” in case of educational institutions integration?
 - Could the “Change laboratory” intervention in the Educational Complex lead to a new concept formation?
 - How does external rule become an internal tool?

Hypothesis

Interventions support (scaffold) the neoformation of common activity in the settings of several professional collectives integration in one structure.

Educational complex becomes a tool to overcome the contradictions.

Change Laboratory Setting



Main results of two sessions

1 session on April 2013 – problematization

- **advantages and disadvantages** from individual perspectives
- **two scenarios** of future development (positive and negative)

2 session on May 2013 – history of institutions development and current practice analysis

- **historical timeline** of the institutions' development
- **models** of the institutions' current educational activities
- **contradictions** in the systems of the institutions' activities

Historical timeline of the institutions' development

Data

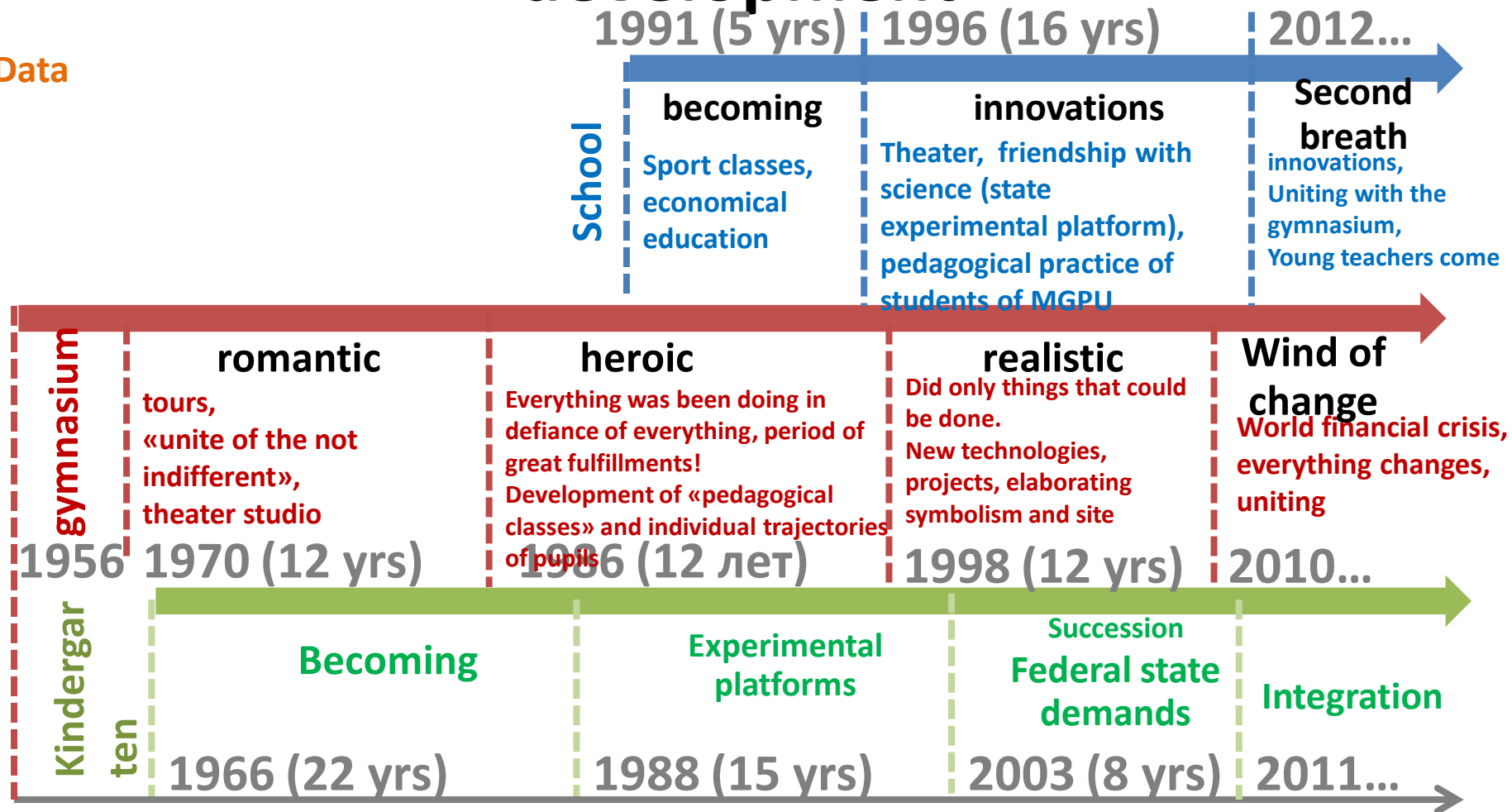
Flag created by children after an expedition during co-writing a fairy tale in a club in which it was also told about overcoming difficulties (1995)



A draw-splash screen of the kindergarten site created by an educator. There are children there, developing surrounding, the characters there mean the kindergarten groups' names («Sun», «Tower» etc. till 2011)

Historical timeline of the institutions' development

Data



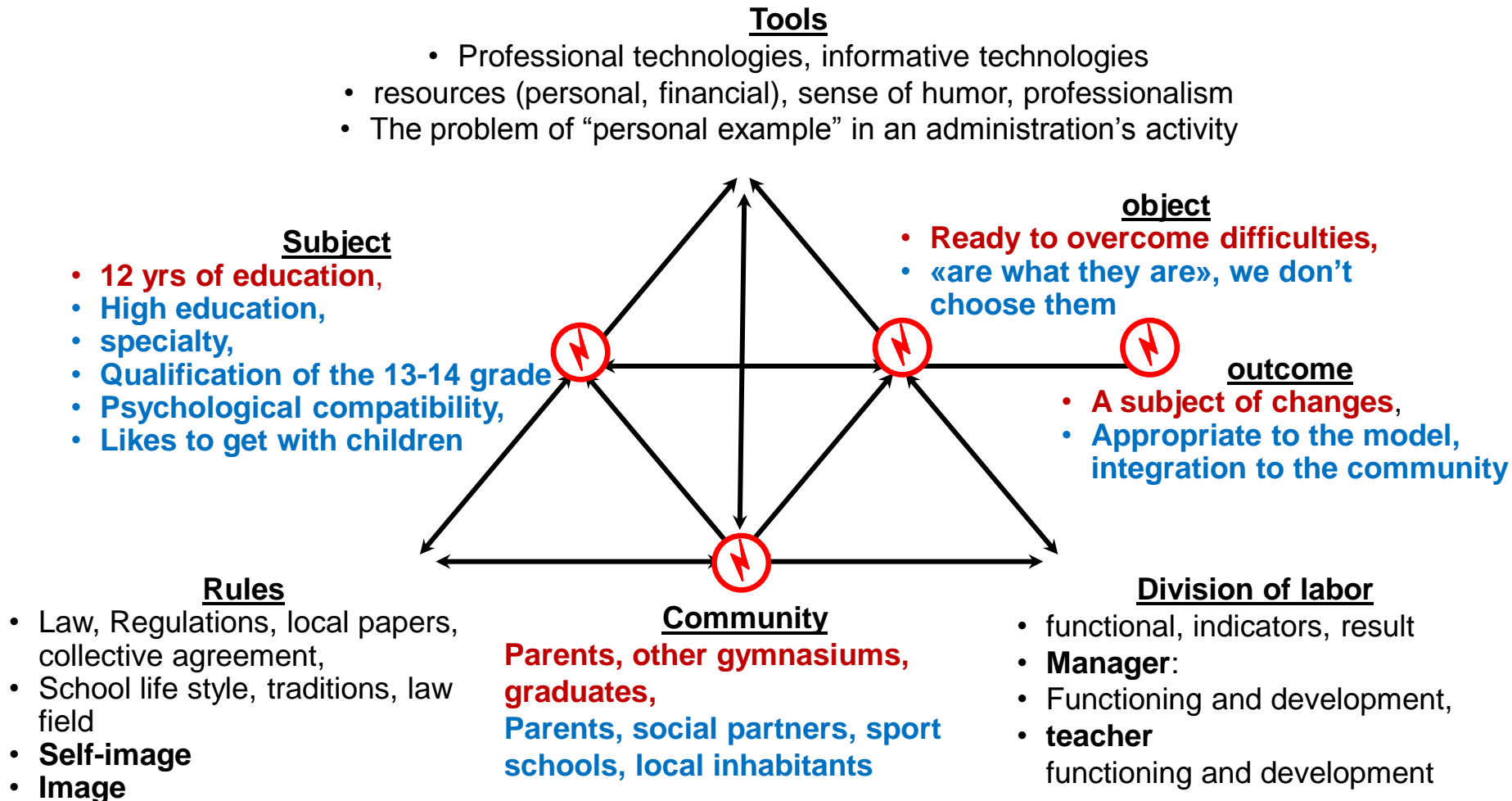
Models of educational activity

Models of educational activity in the kindergarten, school and gymnasium from the teachers' perspective, and also model of activity from the administrators' perspective in the Educational complex are below.

Legend:

 - contradiction **(driving force of development)**

Model of educational activity of the complex created by the headmasters



Contradictions in the Educational complex

Subject. Raising a school's own teachers – involvement of teachers from outside

Object. Selected children – different children

Outcome. A subject of changes (reformer of the world)
– appropriate to common norms (socialization)

Community. Parents oriented to high level of education
– parents oriented to reasonable load

Alexei Leontev , Lidiya Bozhovich, Alexander Zaporozhets



Early 1930's

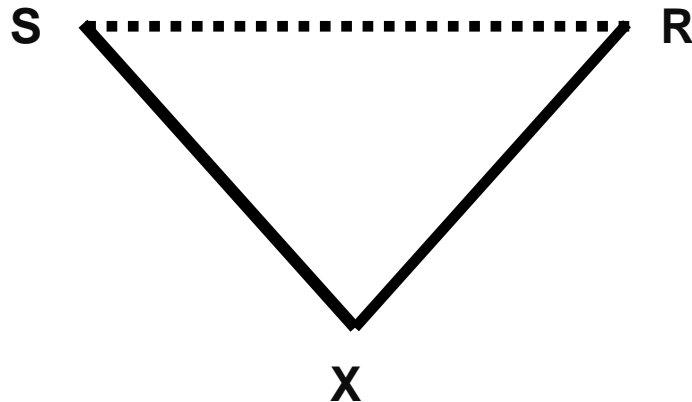
Pair technique

Pair technique allows us to investigate
“one child through another child”.

The main strategy of pair technique is to form a **new action** or function in terms of **interaction.**

The mediated action

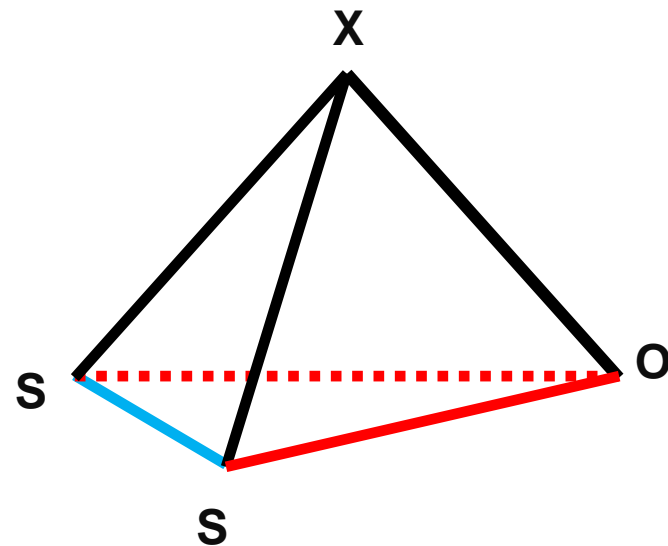
The mediated action



Vygotsky's model

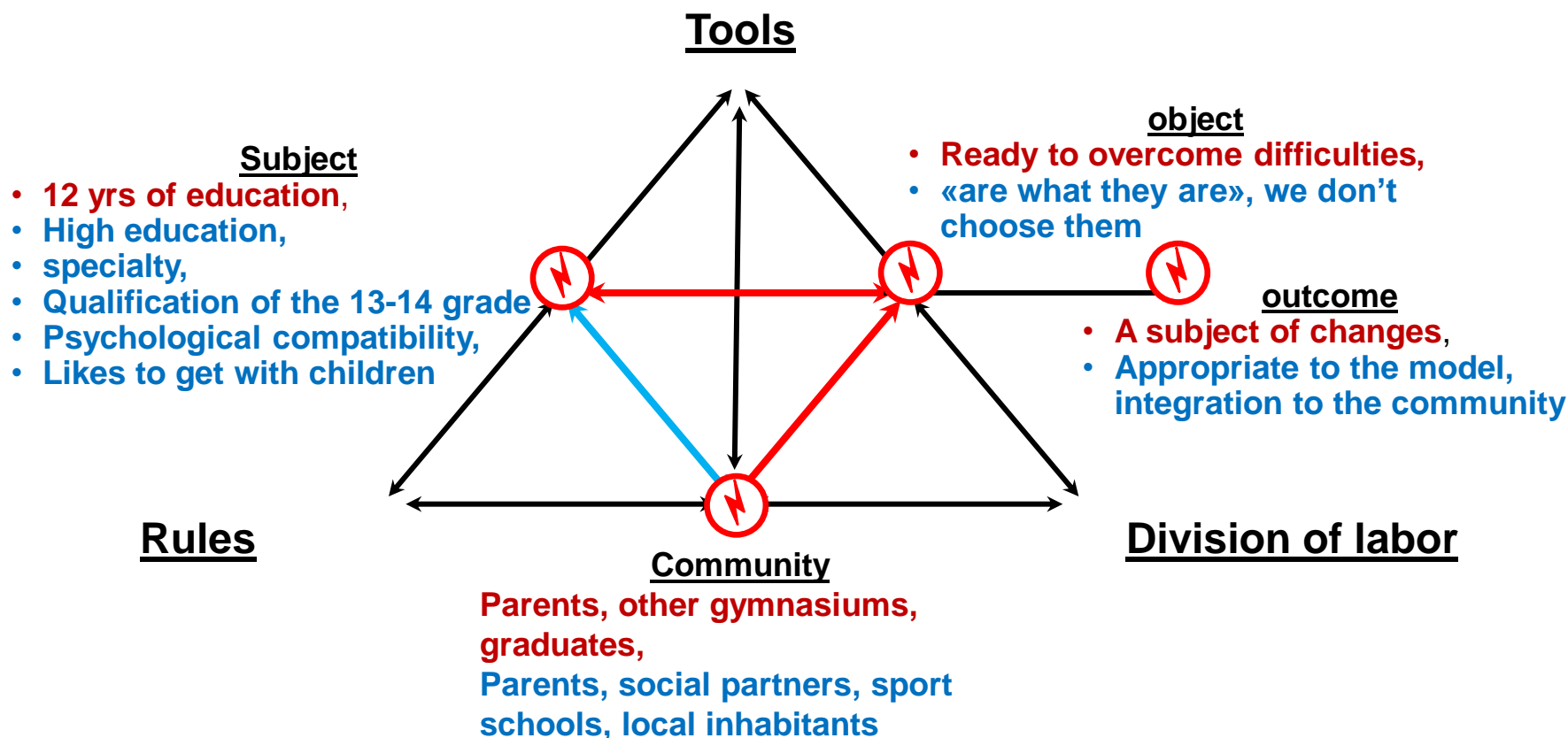
(Mind in society, 1978)

Joint mediated action



S – S – an agreement line

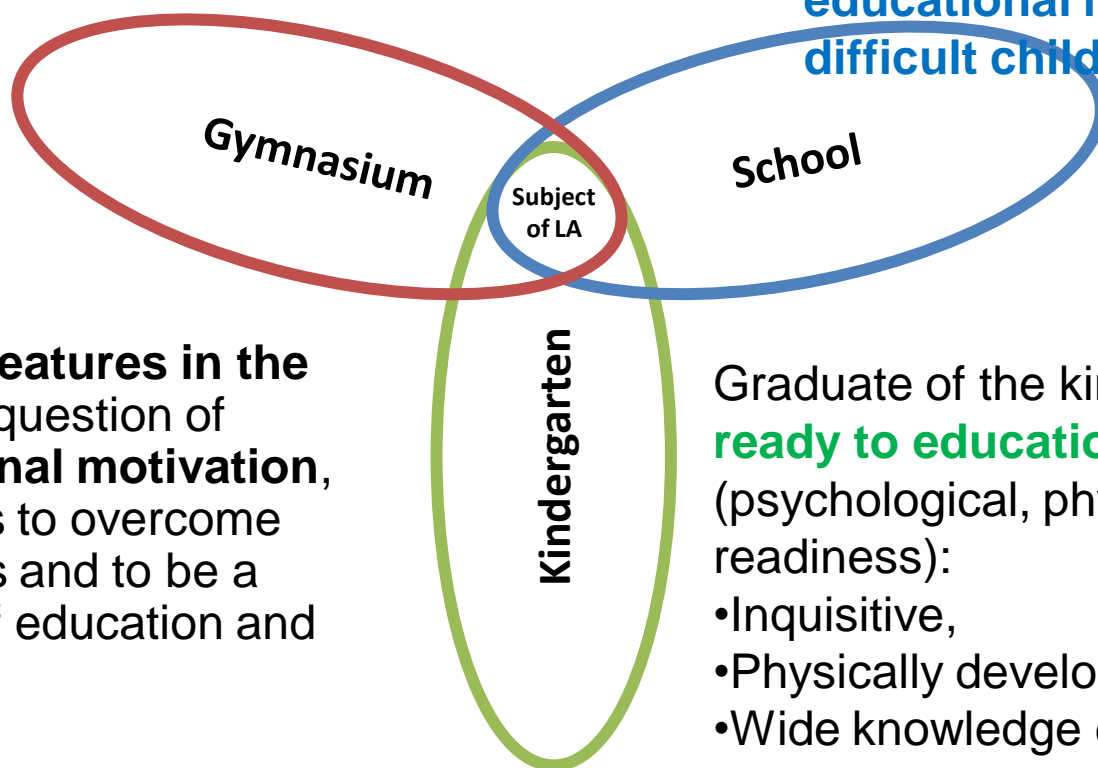
Model of educational activity of the complex created by the headmasters



Common object of activity as a basis of projecting new Complex

Motivated children, check through their activity,
Ready to overcome difficulties

All children,
children with low educational motivation, difficult children



Common features in the object – question of **educational motivation**, readiness to overcome difficulties and to be a subject of education and changes

Graduate of the kindergarten,
ready to education in a school
(psychological, physical, special readiness):

- Inquisitive,
- Physically developed
- Wide knowledge etc.

Subject of LA – subject of the learning activity

Next steps

- to overcome the contradictions with practitioners and create a new model of activity

Kiitos!
Thank you!
Obrigado!
Grazie!
Danke!
謝謝!
Спасибо!
Dziękuję!
Tack!