Knowing in Contexts

and

Knowing about Concepts

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concepts

contexts
Knowing about children

Knowing a child
‘3<sup>rd</sup> Person’ and ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Person’ observations of infant imitation: Reddy and Kugiumutzakis
Young children’s knowing and thinking is distributed in and across familiar contexts and people.

Judy Dunn (1988) showed how a two-year-old at home is a very different person from the same child outside her familiar context.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal:</th>
<th>Reach hilltop</th>
<th>Obtain object</th>
<th>Obtain object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem:</td>
<td>Too steep</td>
<td>Someone else has it</td>
<td>In box, can’t lift lid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful Act:</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Image" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unhelpful Act:</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Image" /></td>
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</tbody>
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Tomasello and Warneken: infant altruism
Understanding
‘Sharing the meaning of experience appears to be a unique motivation of human cognition incorporating the intertwined motivations of making sense and making relationships’

(Nelson, 2007: 17)
What we do

What we did
Children want to be invited/helped to ‘pitch in’
Traditional (formal) schooling is very different from non-formal education. The diagram below illustrates the characteristics of assembly-line instruction in formal schooling:

1. **Community organization of learning:** Bureaucratically controlled instruction in segregated setting.
2. **Motive:** Learner seeks extrinsic rewards, avoids threats. Expert's motive is to instruct and sort learners.
3. **Social organization of endeavors:**
   - **Unilateral.** Expert controls learner's pace, attention, motivation.
   - Expert 'transmits' info, divides labor, **Not collaborating** in endeavor.
4. **Goal of learning:** Transmission and receipt of isolated information and skills. For certification, as prerequisite for inclusion in society.
5. **Learning is by means of:** Receiving lessons, exercises, tests, **out of the context** of productive activity.
6. **Communication is based on:** A limited range of formats — often explanations **out of context;** quiz questions.
7. **Assessment:** To **sort and test** learners. Separate from learning, feedback comes from extrinsic rewards/threats and ranking.
Metaphorical Forest School

How can children experience the ‘forest’ of the adult world, beyond the safe confines of their ‘children’s garden’?
‘Do not teach and do not “bring up”, but live an interesting life together with children’.

L.S. Vygotsky (cited in Kravtsov and Kravtsova, 2009: 207)
Bringing the wide world in:

Play

• Thinking with things

• Re-membering

• Transactional calibration (watchplay)
Bringing the wide world in:

Conversation and Stories

• Anecdotes - learning about wider worlds of people we know
• Negotiation of shared meanings (situating self among others)
• Stories - about worlds beyond personal experience - long ago and far away and playing with (im)possibilities
• Constructing shared culture (knowing what other people know)
• Getting to know others by noticing HOW they tell their stories.