

Conceptions of Learning by Observing and Pitching in (LOPI) in Ancient and Current Nahuatl communities

M° Huauchinango, Naupan, Northern Puebla, Mexico

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Keen attention to events. Guidance from
community expectations. Share reference by
non-verbal and verbal conversations, by
moral narratives.

See facets 5 and 6 in Rogoff B. & allii (2015: 4):
"A Cultural Paradigm- Learning by Observing and
Pitching In", in *Advances in Child Development
and Behavior*, Vol. 49, december 2015, Elsevier

Method: Ethnography, History

Direct participant observation of a great
variety of educational situations in
natural context.

- Public and domestic spaces.
- Technical and ritual activities.
- Daily life and free time.

True Knowledge (embodied inside individual)

Embodied and psychological
phenomenon: consciousness, feeling,
attitudes, know-how, etc.

Not transferable knowledge.

It cannot be taught.

**It impacts the acquisition of the
Known.**

Educators and parents cannot enter in child's mind.

*"Who knows what will spring up or
emerge out of this child?"*

They have no opportunities to modify
the child's deep spirit (his/her soul or
tonalli). But they can

- draw his/her attention to
expectations of the community.
- indicate the way of learning:
observing with keen attention.

Facilitating "co-presence"

Children and toddlers are present and
can see daily adults' activities and
behaviors.

- Early and frequent "co-presence".
- Adults giving a model of attention,
caution, calmness, in ongoing work
activity.
- Little use of talk.

**What are the Indian
educational methods for
constructing shared
references about cognitive and
social knowledge and
technical know-how?**

**Nahuatl Conceptions of
Knowledge: two sorts**

**Learning by Observing and
Pitching In is considered to be
the best way to gain true
(embodied) knowledge**

Comparison with Aztecs practices,
known by ancient chronicles, shows a
strong permanence of educational
methods.

The acknowledged Known

Preexistent and common knowledge,
accepted wisdom in the community.

**Shared or shareable knowledge.
It can be taught.**

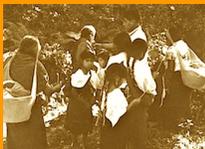
Aztec Birth Ritual



miniature tools for boy

miniature tools for girl

Ritual for a girl



In past and present



**Keen attention is the most valued
way for gaining know-how.**

How educators promote child's good will

Reinforcing knowledge and good will
. by rituals showing tools related to
labor.

- by observation of daily activities.
- by gender-based toys.
- by discourses:
"Become a man, become a woman"
- by verbal advice:
"Use your eyes for knowing"
- by narrative and moral tales:
"This is your labour"

Valuing care, perseverance and responsibility

- Playing with toys or real tools is NOT
considered sufficient to gain "true
knowledge": "*No más sabe jugar*".
- When an adolescent tries to work with
care and perseverance, parents say
that his/her "soul" [consciousness,
knowledge, responsibility] is coming.

Conclusion: NAHUATL EDUCATION FOCUSES ON KEEN ATTENTION

In Nahuatl families, to observe somebody working is considered the best way for gaining embodiment of knowledge. It requires sharp and keen attention:

- Keen attention needs no questions, few explanations, but it may be accompanied with non-verbal communication.
- It begins *a long time before pitching in*, through "co-presence", and goes on during it.
- It requires calmness for gaining preview, caution and care in doing something.
- It needs child's good will.
- It constructs someone's insight: "*This man is a Bright-Eye*".

