**??’s fromAndy Blunden**

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\* Do you take "activity setting" to be the optimal conception of "context"?

No. Activity settings are contextual, but not all contexts are activity settings. See the 5th paragraph of our article for references to other uses of context.

*\* What exactly do they understand by "activity setting"? You cite Vygotsky in a book edited by Wertsch, but I do not have that book. I associate "activity setting" with the current of CHAT around Mariane Hedegaard. It seems to me to be similar in meaning to "institution". Thus I quetion the efficacy of this concept for grasping social change, as opposed to just child development.*

We mean by ‘activity setting’ the concept drawn from Vygotsky and activity theorists, and most directly influenced by the writing and translations of James Wertsch and his students, all working closely and derivatively with the original translators of the Russian under the general aegis of the M. Cole group. Activity setting is the unified concept incorporating the *who*, the *where*, the *when*, the *why*, and *what* specific activity is being performed (see our references below).

As in Vygotsky, intersubjectivity flowing from shared activity depends on accompanying semiotics (ordinarily but not necessarily verbal). Because of the sharing of tasks and language, the activity setting is smaller rather than larger, such as ‘institutions’. Institutions typically have many activity settings.

*\* Is "mutual understanding" what you mean by "intersubjectivity"?*

Partly, certainly. It is the condition of like-minded interpretation and valuation of events. Intersubjectivity is created through shared activity with conversation, and intersubjectivity in turn fosters felt affinity.

*\* I agree that participation in shared activities is the necessary condition for people to achieve mutual understanding. But this is not necessarily the outcome, is it? It depends on the type of collaboration within the activity. EG White slave-owners and black slaves collaborated in the production of cotton in the Confederate States of America for many years, but this did not result in mutual understanding. So it seems that the notion of "shared activities" needs further specification. Yes?*

Yes, specific instances require close observation. In your example of slaves and owners, we would argue that such instances of shared activity were extremely rare and considered inappropriate. The giving and receiving of orders, or providing demonstrations, does not constitute joint activity. This distinction is quite clear in the papers of Thomas Jefferson, for example. Jefferson, however, did apparently violate the propriety with certain slaves, particularly some young females. The historical evidence seems to indicate some resultant intersubjectivity, but severely restricted. Overall, the activity settings of slaves and slave-owners were dramatically different. Thus we agree that the practical design of activity settings (and their evaluations) require full specification, as you suggest.

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