Dry Season
What’s learned this way has been called

- Les techniques du corps or habitus (Mauss 1936);
- Praktognosia (Merleau-Ponty 1945);
- Knowing how” (vs. “knowing that;” Ryle 1949);
- Procedural knowledge, skills, habits;
- Embodied knowledge.
Learning does not require language
In industrial and post-industrial economies, however, many tasks cannot be learned purely by observation.

And the workplace becomes separated from the home, so children cannot observe occupational activities.

What then?
... and suppose that, in addition, to function in a certain kind of society, people need to learn concepts, abstract ideas, knowledge or theories, math, reading, history, geography? What then?
“This is cotton and this is corn.”
Teaching

Teacher tells & explains

Innate potentials

Listen & watch

Practice drill

Correction

Knowledge
Different ways of developing different types of competence

• **Explicit, declarative knowledge:**
  - Semantic: ideas, beliefs, facts, theories.
  - Episodic: events, experiences, narratives.

• **Implicit or automatic:**
  (more or less inaccessible to reflection)
  - Procedural skills and habits.
  - Perceptual skills: recognition.
  - Emotional conditioning.
  - Motives.
In most cultures, children develop most of their cultural competence by observation, imitation, play, and incremental participation. Hence most of what people ‘know’ about their culture is *not* explicit semantic ‘knowledge’; it’s implicit procedural competence.
People are competent practitioners of their culture.

They are generally not conceptualizers with developed theories of their culture:
Most people do not have clear, well-articulated theories of their culture;
Indeed, most people do not conceptualize their culture much.
Cultures vary considerably in this regard.
If people do have theories, these theories should not be assumed to meet the cannons of scientific theory – Ethnoanthropologies generally do not meet the criteria for good scientific theory.

In any case, just because people have a theory of their own culture doesn’t make it a good theory. It needs to be examined and verified.
Most people are not anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, political scientists, or philosophers.

The anthropological fieldworker should not expect her informants to do her work for her.

So, what does that mean for field methods?
Children develop most of their cultural competence through

- Observation,
- Imitation,
- Play,
- Incremental participation.
So, how should cultural anthropologists learn a culture?
Anthropologists need to learn a culture the way children do.