

CHAPTER 3

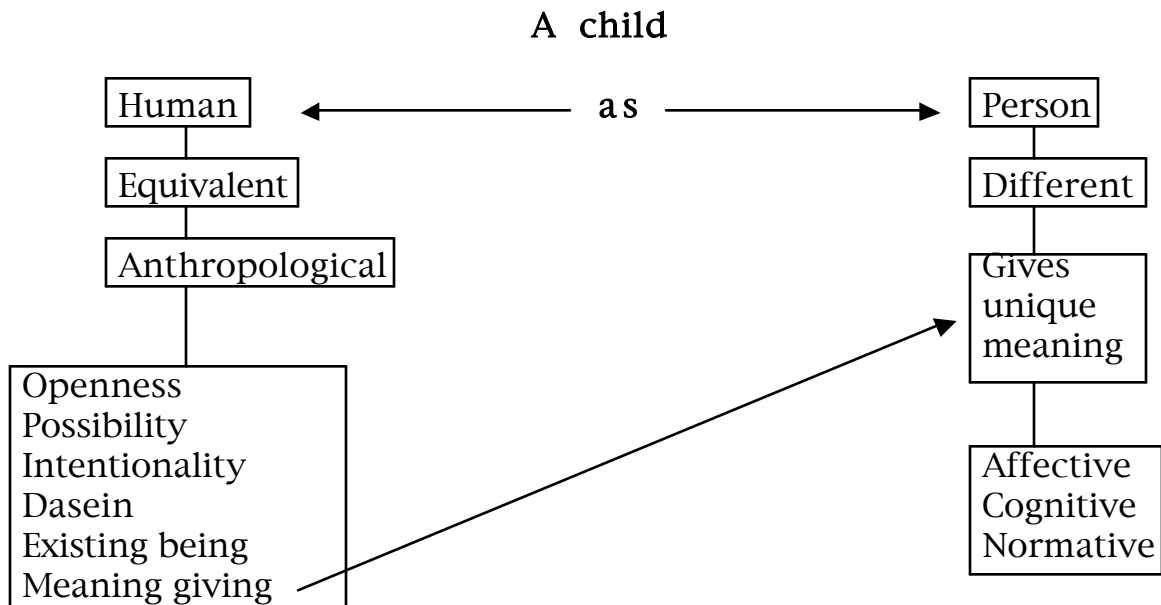
THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF A CHILD

1. INTRODUCTION

As a **person** and a **human being** a child is different from other beings, including animals. The most convincing argument in this regard certainly is that of Max Scheler (1947: 34) who already in 1928 had contrasted **being-a-person** with being an animal and showed that the former includes much more than merely intelligence and abilities to choose. What makes a human being a person lies not on a level of life as manifested by the psyche and all of its functions but on a spiritual level or dimension. According to Scheler, the distinction between human and animal is that, in contrast to an animal, a human has a **spiritual** dimension and thus is a **person**. As a person, he can "go outside of himself" into an open world and rise above himself as what Heidegger (1953) calls "Dasein" or "Being-in-the-world".

With reference to Scheler (1947), Nel (1968: 19) indicates that a person continually must answer the appeals from the world. His answers occur in accordance with his choices and decisions from his normed spirituality as an accountable answer in agreement with his sense of values, a sense of what ought to be and what shouldn't be, a sense of what is fine, beautiful and true. This world-constitution is nothing other than an emotion-laden constitution. He says, "Intentional directedness, choices, decisions, appeals of conscience, feelings of guilt, joy of living all are embedded in a primordial affective ground as an inseparable part of a person's existence" (Nel [in Afrikaans], 1968: 19).

The activity center of all human involvement, also of his development, is the **person**. As he changes, each person is continuous in that he grows physically, his emotional structure does not remain static, his insights are widened and his hierarchy of values is broadened. See the following schematic synthesis:



Thus, the affective, cognitive and normative figure very prominently in a person's development and views of each are briefly considered.

2. AFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT

A child's affective development always occurs in relation to the dynamics of educating and can never be explained apart from them. However, empirical research on affective development also has brought to light valuable insights and here one thinks of the work of Erikson (1959 and 1963). He divides the period of childhood into three categories: the first is from birth to 18 months and is called the period of trust versus mistrust; the second is from 1 1/2 to 3 years which he refers to as the period of autonomy versus shame and doubt; and the third is from 3 to 6 years, the period of initiative versus guilt.

During the period of trust versus mistrust, a child has a special need for loving physical contact and emphasized are feeding, the acts of sucking, biting and salivating, and according to him, a baby will develop feelings of trust or mistrust depending on the quality of caring and feelings associated with feeding, pampering, bathing and dressing him. According to Erikson by sensing motherly care and warmth, a child discovers that he can trust her and the world. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 194) indicate that a mother represents practically the entire world for a young child. Through her he learns that although sometimes she disappears, she continually reappears.

During the second period a child to some extent moves away from nearly complete dependency on mothering and literally and figuratively begins to stand on his own feet. This is a period of intense exploration. Over-protecting and over-controlling lay the foundation for a child's personal sense of shame. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 197) remark [in English] that "Parents who provide an interesting, stimulating environment, talk frequently to their children, give them some initiative, and do a great deal of indirect teaching by asking questions and drawing out their perceptions and ideas, have the most positive effect on their children's developing sense of competency. Their sense of being 'doers' and of being able to control and affect the environment receives a major boost during this time".

However, the importance of always taking into account how the structures of educating are implemented is suggested [very indirectly] by Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 198) when they refer to the "overwhelmed" and the "zoo-keeper mother".

The overwhelmed mother is tense and generally cannot manage the situation at all. Her disorganization creates a chaotic atmosphere that often results in authentic educational neglect. For example, she might permit other children or neighbors to raise her own children. She is actually the opposite of a mothering mother. The implementation of the structures of authority, trust and understanding are thus seriously restrained.

The "zoo-keeper" mother's painstaking execution of her scheduled program by continually going through all of its facets makes the adequate implementation of the structures of educating quite impossible. This also is the sort of mother who depends on psychology books and if toys are discussed, than an excessive number of toys are provided, etc. The stereotypic behavior of such a mother disturbs the dynamics of educating.

During the period of initiative versus guilt, a child's identity as a boy or a girl is influenced optimally. A boy or a girl now has high regard for the assurance by his or her parents that one day he or she will be just as good or even better than mom or dad; they long for sexual guidance, a little at a time, repeated at intervals (Erikson, 1959: 78).

Erikson refers to the period between 6 and 12 years as the **youth phase**. During this period children have a desire to master new challenges, and schoolmates and other peers have an important influence on their lives.

The best known of Erikson's phases certainly is **adolescence**, from 12 to 18 years. With reference to Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 208), the teenager's habitual involvement with the world is summed up as follows:

- * Differentiates one's own feelings and emotions from those of others;
- * Distinguishes between objective and subjective reality;
- * Accepts another person's views; and
- * Understands symbolic meaning and role playing in "as if" situations.

The fact that the dynamics of educating, as such, have to be considered as relevant in explaining child development is underlined by Erikson's view of developmental stages.

During the stage of trust versus mistrust, the quality of loving and caring largely will determine the degree of trust or mistrust that develops in a baby. During the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt it is of the utmost importance to allow children to freely explore their surroundings, which also includes their own bodies without awakening feelings of shame or guilt. During the youth stage, a child's personal dynamics also are tempered by moments of the dynamics of educating outside of the family when he spends much of his "waking" hours in school. Then the initial feelings of independence that arose in the previous periods are tested out and extended in social relationships outside of the family situation.

Emotional guidance in terms the dynamics of educating is precipitated by establishing and maintaining a pedagogic relationship of trust between a child and an adult from birth until his adulthood. The adults **offer** trust to a child by creating a warm and intimate atmosphere underlying the educative relationship. By an adult's loving and understanding care, he offers a child a safe space by which he is able to experience feelings of safety, security and being provided for which serve as the bases for his entire development.

3. COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Intelligence figures very prominently in views of cognitive development. Much has already been written on intelligence and views on its nature and structure have changed considerably over time. Here the aim is not in to give an overview of the wide variety of findings regarding intelligence, as such. For this, the relevant literature can be consulted (see Selz, 1935; Kohnstam, 1952; Prick and Calon, 1967; Guilford, 1969; Piaget, 1970; Cancro, 1971; Eysenck, 1972; Riegel, 1973; Vernon, 1979; De Corte, 1975 and 1981; Pyle, 1979; Prinsloo, 1982. However, a few works are noted.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1984: 469) refer to Sir Francis Galton who more than a century ago attempted to draw a relation between Darwin's theory of evolution and human intelligence. He purports that intelligence is the result of a person's sensory equipment that is the result of inheritance. In 1894, in a London museum, he set up a test laboratory where interested parties could pay to have their hearing, vision, reaction time and other sensory-motor skills "measured".

The majority of definitions refer to intelligence as a cognitive ability that has to do with **an organism adjusting to its environment**.

Stern (1914), who also had invented the concept "IQ", stressed that intelligence has to do with **solving new problems** that a person faces.

Vernon (1969) emphasized three basic meanings of intelligence, namely, a genetic capacity (completely and entirely inherited), perceived behavior (what a person does) and a test score (what a test measures).

Here it is accepted that **intelligence is a person's potentiality to establish new situations** which, as such, is a constituent of a child's personal structure. With reference to Prinsloo (1982: 150), the actualization of intelligence is the stratum on which the psychic life is actualized in terms of experiencing, willing, lived experiencing, knowing and behaving, which also are referred to as **modes of learning** (see Sonnekus, Van Niekerk, Ferreira, Van der Merwe and Botha, 1973: 67-93; Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1979: 104-133) by means of sensing, attending, perceiving, thinking, imagining and fantasizing as well as remembering. Intelligence is actualized by

means of various mutually interrelated, personal ways and by which intelligence becomes observable and knowable.

Fundamentally and essentially actualizing intelligence is an activity of attributing meaning to "unknown" contents, and is aimed at the foreign-ness of reality. In actualizing his intelligence, a child-in-education **will** via **experiencing** uncover the **sense** of reality and give **meaning** to it. Out of this meaningfully experienced content flows an ordered hierarchy of meanings as possessed experience or possessed **knowledge**.

Especially Piaget's (1970) theory about intellectual development is discussed widely and he is viewed as one of the main contributors regarding intellectual and cognitive development. He believes there is an analog between biological growth and the development of the intellect.

He has observed that the intellect develops through clearly distinguishable stages more or less in the same way as biological growth. Each phase is an important pre-stage for a following one and a following one points to meaningful differences and qualitatively more intellectual ability than the former.

He distinguishes four main stages (Van Rensburg, 1973; Piaget, 1970; Ginsberg and Opper, 1969; Kagan and Lang, 1978: 113-123; Mussen, Conger and Kagan, 1979: 449-455).

During the sensori-motor stage (0 - 1 1/2 years), cognitive activity mainly is based on immediate experience via the senses. This includes the period of language acquisition. A child's cognitive activity is practical and its development now goes through six relatively discrete stages.

During the intuitive or preoperational stage (1 1/2 - 7 years), the grammatical structure of language increases considerably. Characteristic of this stage is the development of symbolic thinking and play that contribute importantly to the memory of images and the development of language. According to Elkind (1975: 59), the average two year old child understands between 200 - 300 words and speaks in one or two word sentences. At three years, grammatically correct sentences of from eight to ten words are not unusual.

The average five year old understands approximately 2,000 words (see Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977: 127). During this period the dynamics of educating have to be directed to a child's joy in imitating and using sounds by giving him the opportunity to test out a large number of words. A child is not yet in a position to think logically and in his concrete reasoning he still moves from particulars to particulars since he does not see the relations among the parts and a whole.

During the concrete operational phase (7 - 11 years) a child develops the ability to think logically and objectively and to understand relationships. According to Vrey (1979: 164), an "operation" is an internalized activity that allows a child to form an idea of something for himself and that is reversible. A concrete operational child is able to classify things hierarchically into categories, what Piaget calls **classes**. The concepts **ordering** and **numbering** are part of this stage of the development of operational thinking.

During the formal operational phase (11 - 16 years), thinking is freed from concrete reality and a preoccupation with thinking, that now occurs systematically, is an important characteristic.

Each phase differs qualitatively from a previous one. There also is a quantum leap forward and a breakthrough [from one phase to another]. These results correspond to those of Bailey (Jones, Bailey, McFarlane and Honzik, 1971) who have found a considerable difference in the IQs of the same children over a long period; in other words, a person's IQ score is not permanently engraved in his brain at birth but rather is a human characteristic that ebbs and flows according to the dynamics of education. Kohnstam (1952) refers to this phenomenon as the **metastability** of intelligence. Also, beyond any doubt, along with Selz (1935), he has shown that educating contributes to the elevation of IQ scores.

The metastability of intelligence is connected with the fact that in his development a child, via differentiation (maturation), especially of his intellectual potentialities, makes **available** for himself those potentialities that previously were **latent**. Thus, when a lower IQ is measured than what a child has available, this has to be ascribed to the fact that his given latent potentialities have not yet become available to him and, at this stage, he indeed has **available** a more limited intelligence to **actualize**.

With respect to the dynamics of educating, it is important to take note that this metastability is highest during the early years of childhood. According to Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 95) nearly two-thirds* of a person's ultimate cognitive potentiality is available by the time he is six years old. In addition, Bloom (1964) finds that with increasing age there is a decrease in the favorable effect of educating.

Since there is sufficient empirical evidence indicating that with respect to his cognitive development a child does not skip any stage, it is necessary that the dynamics of educating provide for adequate experiencing during each.

Empirical research on development, in general, and on intelligence, in particular, also shows clear cultural differences that continually need to be considered.

With respect to the dynamics of educating, it is important to understand what the substance is of each main stage in order to try to insure the optimal implementation of the other essentials of educating.

Prinsloo (1982: 73) indicates that Piaget is the only psychologist who has established a comprehensive theory of intelligence (see Sigel and Hooper, 1968: 7) and has indicated that a child's ways of thinking differ from those of an adult and that children learn more easily if the new contents are connected with their previous experiences.

She (Prinsloo, 1982: 105) also refers to the fact that knowledge of the structure of intelligence has contributed to constructing a classification scheme of ways of actualizing intelligence. In addition, she concludes that the **relationships among actualizing intelligence, learning and development, in terms of personal actualization, flow into a child's behaviors** that, in their turn, are discernible in a child's actualization of learning and development (Prinsloo, 1982: 169).

* Doesn't such a statement assume that intelligence is a finite, definable "thing"? And how can one demonstrate the validity of such a claim?--G,D.Y.

Regarding the dynamics of educating, consideration also has to be given to critical periods in a child's development. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 93) mention three critical, optimal periods during which children are the most receptive and can be most easily taught to learn particular motor skills. For example, when a child is learning to walk is the most opportune time to master roller-skating. However, it also is true that the development of particular motor skills are restrained if there is an attempt to learn them too early.

Therefore, it has to be noted that (and what) earlier experiences impede the development of other skills; this, however, is an area in which much research is yet to be done. Scott (1968: 68) describes [in English] critical periods as "a time when a large effect can be produced by a smaller change in conditions than in any later or earlier period of life".

4. NORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Valuable contributions have already been made regarding a child's moral development. Although the stages do not correspond precisely to specific age-levels and especially with respect to overlapping each other, still there are clear distinctions among them. There is the **preconventional** level (phases 1 and 2: birth to 9 years), the **conventional** level (phases 3 and 4: 9 to 15 years) and the **postconventional** level (phases 5 and 6: 16 years to adulthood).

- * During the first phase obedience and making choices are based on simple physical and material power. Conduct is based on avoiding serious physical punishment from a stronger person. To the age of 10, 66 percent of children base their moral choices on this type of consideration, while this holds true for only 20 percent of 16 year olds.
- * During the second phase, a child's moral choices mainly are based on the gratification of his own personal needs. Physical punishment still continues to be avoided but there are continual attempts to make the best of it.
- * During the third phase a child is attuned to satisfying others and he tries to understand what others feel.
- * During the fourth phase, he takes into account rules, directives and codes for guiding himself when he finds himself in a problematic situation.

* During the fifth phase each situation is thoroughly studied with the aim of deducing general principles that hold for everyone.

* During the sixth phase the principles according to which choices are made are abstract, ethical and universally consistent. Essentially, he now allows himself to be guided by universal principles of justice and respect for the human dignity of others as individuals (Kohlberg, 1975: 71).

The fifth and sixth phases seldom arise in young children and only in approximately 16 percent of 16 year olds.

Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 250) indicate that an appreciable shift might arise within the broad stages with respect to age and gender. Thus, for example, females between 16 and 25 usually are at stage 3, while the moral behavior of males shows more choices based on considerations from phase 4. Both groups, however, remain on the level of conventional morality, but emphasize different aspects. A female is inclined to think about and act on moral matters with aim of pleasing others (level 3) while males are more inclined to think and act according to firm and arbitrary rules and regulations (phase 4).

From the above, however, it is inferred that moral development does not occur automatically and also is not merely a uniform phenomenon corresponding to a child's manifest choices. Moral development is determined by the mutual interactions among educators and children and among children. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 258) conclude, for example, that disciplinary problems cannot be understood and dealt with without taking into account the importance of the mutual relationship between a child and his teachers, a relationship that they consider to be just as important as that between a child and his parents.

Normative guidance by the educators always progresses in accordance with affective and cognitive guidance. The meaning that a norm holds for a child will be lived experienced on an affective and cognitive level and, correspondingly, ordered into his own hierarchy of values. A child has a need for such normative guidance because it especially provides normative security, stability and confidence (Crous, 1979: 156). The norm cannot merely be presented but by means of emotional and cognitive guidance it has to be presented to a child in terms of the affective, cognitive and

normative dynamics of educating in order to allow him to identify with it as meaningful-for-him.

6. SYNTHESIS

From the foregoing it is inferred that a child's development occurs adequately when a life aim and its fulfillment make appeals to him. Development is never brought to fulfillment only by his own initiative. The developmental potentialities that have become available to a child have to be actualized adequately and this is dependent on the total person, on safety and security, on appropriate guidance by adults, and all of this occurs in terms of the dynamics of educating.

The theories regarding a child's personal becoming thus have particular value because many factors -- biological structures and functions, heredity, cognitive and socio-economic status -- arise in a child's development in his situation that always is an educative one.

Each theory embraces a partial truth but there is no super-theory. Thus, e.g., the laws of conditioning also are relevant because there are a large number of reflexes that can be conditioned within the home and school situations, e.g., fear for the father, mother, arithmetic, spelling or any subject, and which undoubtedly have an important role in the origin of phobias*.

When the dynamics of educating are not taken into account, above all, the cliché status already acquired by pronouncements such as the following cannot be dispelled: Anderson (1981) says that a good parent is one who is sensitive to his child's needs and tries to provide for them (How?). The child has to be unconditionally accepted with his potentialities or limitations (How?). He says [in English], "Children need praise and encouragement. All of us who work with children are aware of the stress and distress caused by loss or separation to children in one parent, or reconstituted families. Schools have to cope with children whose emotional burdens overflow into their domain, making them less accessible to

* I (G.Y.) disagree with this view and I have argued against it in my chapter, "Psychopedagogics and learning: the questionable relevance of three psychological theories of learning" that appeared in Sonnekus, M. C. H., (Ed.) (1985). **Learning: a psychopedagogic perspective**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.

learning. Parents may react to a child in terms of a figure in their past, their own pathology, or as a substitute for a stillborn or dead sibling. We should all be working toward improving parenting skills, increasing the number of teaching-staff who will practice enlightened teaching methods, and channeling children for help to the appropriate agencies as soon as possible. Utopia" (Anderson, 1981).

Usually it is suggested that a child always has a need for an educator's guidance. "At each age and stage of development children and adolescents need continued assurance from adults in order to accommodate themselves to and assimilate the effects of constant change" (Sprinthall and Sprinthall [in English], 1977: 85). However, what this assurance really involves and how this affects a unique child in terms of the dynamics of educating, i.e., functional educative activities, is nowhere stipulated. Ordinarily, it remains nothing more than an afterthought such as, "For example, the late-maturing boy needs help in developing confidence, and assurance that before long he too will develop into full maturity" (Sprinthall and Sprinthall [in English], 1977: 85),

In accounts of success such as the Summerhill School of A. S. Neil (1969: 194-198) where reference is made to the encouragement of healthy emotional adjustment, nowhere is it indicated what the underlying dynamics of this are, or what constitutes the dynamics where each pupil participates in choosing the curriculum and where no classes, books or examinations are required.

In the following chapter the development of the **restrained child** is discussed.

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