

## CHAPTER VII

### PERSONAL ACTUALIZATION DURING DIFFERENT PERIODS OF LIFE

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous discussions, and especially in Chapters II, II, and IV, personal actualization is described **categorically**. That is, a description is given of personal actualization as it appears with all children, and within all age groups, and periods of life. For the aim of this study, and especially for the sake of a student teacher, it is helpful to refine and particularize the description of personal actualization as it appears over the entire range of becoming adult. For this reason, attention is given to several **periods of life**, or "phases" through which a child moves on his/her way to adulthood. However, to avoid unnecessary repetition, each period is seen against the background of what is said earlier about personal actualization. It must be continually kept in mind that personal actualization occurs in terms of **educative content**, as well as an adult's **accompanying** (educating), on the one hand, and a child's own participation, or **self-actualizing**, on the other.

To acquire a more complete image, a child's progression to adulthood is divided longitudinally into several periods of life. However, these divisions should not be viewed as absolute. In the first place, age differences should not be viewed rigidly, since not all children are in each phase at precisely the same age. In addition, these phases are not separate or independent. Also, the so-called "**characteristics**" of a phase are not precisely the same for all children. A variety of authors point out that, although certain "**characteristics**" predominate each of the phases, this does not imply that everyone going through such a phase shows them. However, it also is true that persons of approximately the same age struggle with common problems, and experiences; thus, in each period of life, there is "**homogeneity in heterogeneity**" (Wiechers,

1977, p 50). Because of each child's uniqueness, there are **individual differences** within each of these periods. Thus, the so-called "**characteristics**" manifested by a child should be seen as his/her **behaviors** resulting from the **meanings he/she gives to his/her being educated**. A child's behaviors are not merely his/her **reactions to stimuli** from his/her surroundings, but they are his/her **answering to**, or his/her **attributing meaning** to his/her being educated.

From this longitudinal view of a child's personal actualization, he/she is continually **changing**. Hence, the demands he/she places on his/her parents and teachers, as educators, also continually change. For this reason, it is relevant to not only attend to his/her behaviors, but also to the role of educating in each phase.

Because of each child's uniqueness, and since so many individual differences exist within each period of life, it is difficult to divide children into different phases, or periods. However, considering that, in school and in a classroom, children are related to collectively, or in groups, such a classification into phases can lead to understanding them better and, thus, it is of value to a teacher. Also, there is not just one classification. Several authors have their own, and each establishes their own age limits to describe the different phases, or periods.

For further discussion, in this study personal actualization is divided into three broad phases, each of which has sub-divisions:

**\*A preschool period**

- \*\*A baby or suckling:** This period extends from birth until a child can walk, i.e., until approximately the end of the first year of life;
- \*\*A toddler:** This period is from approximately the end of the first to the third year of life;
- \*\*A preschooler:** This period stretches from approximately the third year until school entry.

**\*A primary school period:**

- \*\*A junior primary school child:** This period is roughly from school entry until the end of standard I (Third grade in the U.S.A.);
- \*\*A senior primary school child (puerile period)**

extends from standard II through standard V, i.e., from approximately nine- to twelve-years of age (or Fourth through Seventh grade).

**\*A secondary school period:**

**\*\*Puberty and adolescence:** This phase includes children between 12- and 18-years of age, and, in some cases, can even

extend to 22-years. A secondary school period is also known as adolescence, and it includes puberty.

Thus, extreme caution should be exercised with any description of becoming adult based on divisions into periods, or phases of life. Typical characteristics of each of these phases should not be seen as necessarily applicable to each individual child, but as a manifestation of the ways he/she actualizes his/her potentialities.

## 2. A PRESCHOOL PERIOD

### 2.1 A baby, or suckling

A child's first year of life is widely known as a baby or suckling period, and the latter refers mainly to the way he/she takes in his/her food. In Langeveld's terminology (1957, p 42), a child enters the world as a biological being. Initially, the **biological** is in the foreground, and it is a baby's **physical development** which is conspicuous. Rapid **bodily growth, sensory development, and movement** are salient characteristics. During the first year of life, most babies learn to **smile, sit, crawl, walk, and say** a few words. Viewed as a whole, quick development and a differentiation of physical potentialities are of great importance in this period. In this early phase of becoming adult, a baby cannot yet openly explore his/her world; he/she is mainly limited to his/her own body. His/her first interest is directed mostly to him/herself, and from an early age he/she discovers and learns to know his/her own body. Although this learning occurs **haphazardly** in that he/she "**plays**" with his/her own body, it is very important for his/her becoming adult. Since his/her physical development is so prominent, most of a parent's intervention is directed to feeding and physically caring for him/her. However, during this phase, concern is not only with physical development, since becoming is already taking place over the whole range of being a person.

Physical milestones, such as sitting, crawling, and walking are clear and concrete evidence of a child's progression toward adulthood. According to Sonnekus (1976, p 39), a baby's first smile is important in his/her becoming adult. It indicates that he/she has actualized his/her potentiality to contact someone else. In this way, he/she shows a strong need for bodily and emotional contact with others. In addition, when he/she begins to sit, he/she has arrived at a very important period in his/her life, since this gives him/her another perspective on his/her surroundings. When he/she can sit, it is conspicuous that he/she looks around endlessly to attentively perceive his/her surroundings. Engelbrecht et al. (1982, p 46) indicate that a child who crawls experiences his/her world differently than a child who is still limited to a cradle. Initially, a child's world is limited to his/her "**skin space**", i.e., to what he/she immediately senses and perceives with his/her skin. In time, this expands to a "**grasping space**", and "**visual space**". Some also conquer a "**crawling space**", or even a "**walking space**" in their first year of life. By achieving these physical milestones, a baby continually enlarges and expands his/her perspective on and grasp of the world and gradually progresses toward adulthood.

**Helplessness** is a salient characteristic of a little baby. According to Langeveld (1957, p 42), he/she is more helpless than any other being. For him/her, the world is a "**big, blooming, buzzing confusion**" (James, 1890, p 488) of light, sound, color, movement, smell, and taste, within which he/she must gradually create order by giving sense and meaning. This helplessness directs an appeal to his/her parents to create, through loving care, a safe place for him/her which awakens feelings of being safe and secure. Also, a baby is completely dependent on his/her parents, and usually on his/her mother, for feeding and physical care. Hence, the first few weeks of life center mainly on establishing a satisfactory pattern of eating and sleeping. Thus, it is extremely important that a baby learns early to know regularity. This provides him/her with safety and security, and, in this way, the first principle of discipline [regulation] is also laid down (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 41).

Although a baby's physical care is very important, he/she is dependent on much more than this for his/her becoming adult. Equally as important as his/her need for food, is his/her need for security. His/her mother's presence, her gentle voice, her protective arms, her warm body are as important to him/her as is food. A child who lacks these things feels rejected from the beginning. Or,

in the words of Kuypers (no date, p 115), "Without the loving nearness of a caring mother, he feels like a little bird who has fallen out of the nest".

Thus, from the beginning, the involvement with a child is not only with feeding (voeding), but with **educating** (op-voeding). Nonetheless, it is true that, just by providing for his/her physical needs, his/her primary need for **safety** also is met. Establishing a daily routine by deciding on the times he/she is fed, goes to bed, goes to sleep, etc. also makes him/her feel secure. Loving care gives rise to mutual acceptance, and to a relationship of trust between educator (parent) and child and, thus, to an unbreakable affective or emotional bond (Nel, 1970, p 97). This emotional bond arises from a child's trust that his/her needs will be provided for, and this is the foundation for his/her entire personal actualization.

Despite a baby's or suckling's initial helplessness, there are already tasks, or skills [for becoming humanized—GDY], which he/she must master in his/her first year (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, pp 46-47):

- \*He/she must be weaned and learn to eat solid foods;
- \*he/she must gain sensori-motor coordination, i.e., a coordination among muscles and among the different parts of his/her body;
- \*he/she must learn to sit and stand erect, learn to crawl. And, in time, to walk;
- \*he/she must learn to control bodily excretions;
- \*he/she must build up an emotional relationship with family members and other persons;
- \*he/she must acquire language.

In summary, a baby or suckling period is characterized by fast physical growth, and the related motor development (sitting, crawling, walking), and by helplessness which is gradually overcome by establishing feelings of safety and security.

## 2.2 A toddler

This period of life extends from approximately the end of the first year to roughly the first half of the third year of life, i.e., from one to two-and-a-half years of age. The name **toddler** is very descriptive of this phase of life. As the name indicates, in his/her voyages of discovery, a child is continually toddling [walking unsteadily], and

this phase also is often described as the "**terrible two's**" because he/she leaves **nothing** alone. Physically, a child is now much stronger, and his/her motor development is so advanced that he/she begins to walk. This period also is widely known as the "**period of learning to walk and talk**" (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 42) and, thus, **activity** is also a salient characteristic.

A child's coordination, as well as his/her motor and physical development change considerably, and since he/she now handles things more easily, he/she increasingly directs him/herself to the world around him/her. Unlike a baby, he/she pays less attention to him/herself. This is a period of **exploration** in which he/she learns to know the things around him/her. Since he/she can walk everywhere, he/she can investigate a very expansive world with curiosity and abandon (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 48). At this point, he/she enters a new phase of exploring his/her world because now he/she walks **upright**. He/she begins to explore "**distant**" space, and since he/she moves him/herself unaided, he/she explores a wider world which attracts him/her (Nel, 1968, p 176). His/her attention has shifted from him/herself to the world around him/her and, hence, a toddler is well prepared to direct him/herself to the outer world.

**Language** is now **acquired**. This is probably one of the most important milestones in a child's becoming. Now he/she can **name** things and **communicate** with others. Language is a **system of sounds**, as well as of **symbols**. The discovery of the symbolic value of language, relating objects and activities to the sounds of language, the realization that each thing has a name, and the use of language allows a toddler to progress by leaps and bounds in his/her emotional, cognitive, social, religious life, in his/her play, etc. (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 49). The greatest worth of language is in its **value for communicating**. Language allows a child to express his/her own feelings and thoughts and elicit responses from others. Thus, language is fundamentally a **means of discourse** (Sonnekus, 1976, p 43). In the case of a young child, along with language, **child-questions** arise, which often can drive his/her parents almost crazy. However, they are an important milestone and should be viewed as his/her tendency to want to know, discover, and learn more. Although it can sometimes be tedious, his/her parents should try to answer these questions as meaningfully and correctly as possible (Sonnekus, 1976, p 45).

Since acquiring language plays such an important role in a child's becoming adult, this matter is returned to in more detail.

One of a toddler's most important activities is **playing**. Through playing, he/she learns to know his/her own potentialities, and the possibilities of his/her world. In accordance with his/her nature, the content of a toddler's play is social-emotional, senso-pathic, functional, imitative, and formal (see Englebrecht et al., 1982, pp 49-50). With respect to a preschool child, Vermeer distinguishes four forms of play, i.e., playful bodily movements, playfully handling objects, esthetic, or constructive play, and illusive or fantasy play.

Yet another phenomenon which arises during this period is a child gradually becomes aware of his/her own **individuality** (Sonnekus, 1984, p 35). This is expressed in his/her wanting to do everything for him/herself. For example, he/she wants to feed and dress him/herself, and learns various activities and skills, increases his/her self-confidence, and gradually becomes more independent.

Since a toddler is strongly directed to learning to know and, thus, actively explores his/her world, **cognitive educating** largely acquires its flavor in this period. A child also learns to know the difference between "**right**" and "**wrong**" and, thus, **normative educating** comes into the foreground (Sonnekus, 1984, p 35). However, the undertone of educating in this period continues to be emotional (Sonnekus, 1976, p 46). He/she is still primarily an emotional child and, thus, he/she needs and presses his/her parents for protection.

### 2.3 A preschool child

Chronologically, this period extends from approximately two and a half or three years of age to roughly six. It is the last phase before a child formally enters school and, thus, it is viewed as a period of preparing and readying him/her for school entry. Without going into this any further at this point, it is noted that preparation for school takes its course from birth and extends across a child's entire school career. Even so, it clearly reaches its apex during a preschool period. Later, explicit attention is given to school readiness and preparing a child for school.

Regarding a preschooler's physical development, his/her rate of growth slows slightly, but bodily relations change in that arms and legs become longer in proportion to the rest of the body (Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 232). Large muscles develop more during this period than fine muscles, so a child becomes more dexterous in large movements than in fine coordination. This allows him/her to run, climb, jump, balance, push, and shove (see Vrey, 1979, pp 72-73). Toward the end of this period, fine muscle coordination also is relatively differentiated.

A young preschooler's behaviors are often characterized as egocentric, selfish, stubborn, and strongheaded. These can be attributed to his/her wanting to assert his/her own **will and** show his/her own **identity**. He/she is inclined to appropriate someone else's property for him/herself, while not being willing to share his/her property with others. Also, **stubbornness** appears in most preschoolers between the ages of four and six. This should not be viewed only in a negative light, but as a symptom of a child's uncertainty, and indecisiveness, as well as of his/her transition to freely accept parental authority, or their normative educating (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 50). Thus, it is not necessarily the case that a child is unwilling to subordinate him/herself to his/her parents, but that he/she does not yet grasp this. The less understanding, and loving care in this period, the more insecure he/she feels, and the longer his/her stubbornness lasts (see Nel, 1968, p 182). Indeed, his/her stubbornness is evidence that he/she needs emotional support and accompaniment until he/she progresses (from mere docility) to true obedience (Sonnekus, 1976, p 50).

Here, a child's play also occupies an important place, and he/she plays with seriousness and abandon. Play is not games for him/her, and it dominates his/her whole life. Play occurs against the background of the reality in which he/she lives, and often he/she makes no distinction between play and reality. Through play, he/she learns to know his/her own potentialities as well as the possibilities his/her world offers him/her. A preschooler engages mainly in **constructive**, and **fantasy play**, and although he/she is not yet always able to verbalize his/her feelings, he/she can express them in his/her play. In doing so, he/she eases his/her fear, anxiety, and aggression. In his/her play, gradually he/she can maintain him/herself better in a group, although initially such a group exists as individual children who are not a real group. This doing things **by** each other without doing things **with** each other



(e.g., parallel play) also is prominent in their speech. In such a group, each preschooler "**does his/her own thing**" while carrying on a monologue in which he/she comments on what he/she is doing. From approximately four-years of age, preschoolers begin to play more **with** each other (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 52).

Also, a preschooler's language develops on a higher level than a toddler. A toddler's pronunciation and sentence construction are often poor. In contrast, a preschooler has a larger vocabulary, and sentences are longer and more complex. With his/her greater language proficiency, a preschooler's thinking is on a higher level and is expressed in an almost continuous stream of questions. In this regard, there is a clear difference between a toddler and a preschooler. As far as a toddler is concerned, the questions he/she asks are often merely a way of practicing a newly acquired linguistic proficiency, and he/she doesn't always really expect an answer. In contrast, a preschooler's questions reflect his/her yearning to know and learn and, therefore, they must be handled with the necessary caution and answered as meaningfully and correctly as possible. He/she also increasingly enjoys listening to stories and can repeat them him/herself, and his/her fantasies often arise in his/her narration. He/she is also disposed to tell horrible "**lies**" which are nothing more than expressions of his/her fantasies. By providing appropriate toys, books, and answers to questions, parents can contribute significantly to their child's becoming.

Also, in the preschool years, for the first time, there is actual **identity formation**. In his/her play and language and, e.g., by putting on dad's shoes or mom's hat, he/she imitates their behaviors and, thus, identifies with them. By "**trying on**" different roles in this way, he/she is forming a clearly defined **self-identity**. A preschooler knows him/herself, his/her name, his/her gender, appearance, etc. He/she knows **who** he/she is even though he/she cannot yet clearly articulate this. His/her identity formation is dynamic, and through further identification, it continually changes (see Vrey, 1979, p 84).

Thus, a preschool phase is a dynamic period during which dramatic changes arise on all levels of a child's becoming adult. Although this is not a period of formal teaching, it is a period which puts high demands on and offers great challenges to an educator.

## 2.4 Acquiring language during a preschool period

An important reason for a newborn baby's helplessness is his/her inability to communicate properly. He/she is unable to convey his/her thoughts and needs to others, and he/she also cannot understand someone's words and gestures. Thus, language acquisition, and more explicitly, the **acquisition of speech**, is an important milestone in a child's life, which considerably promotes his/her personal actualization.

#### 2.4.1 The difference between language and speech

The concepts "**language**" and "**speech**" are often used as synonyms, and in everyday discourse there is seldom any distinction made between them. Even in the literature, the difference is not always indicated.

According to Hurlock (1978, p 162), **language** includes all forms of communication which can be used to convey meaning to another (e.g., writing, talking, gesturing, facial expressions, drawing, mimicking, and art). In contrast, **speech** is a form of language where only articulated sounds or words are used to convey a meaning.

For Stander (1967, p 14), language is an enduring potential possessed by a person or nation, while speech is the actual use of this potential. Through speech, language is transformed into a **sound-structure** by which a person can put into **words** what goes on in him/herself.

Kwant (1963, pp 53-56) says language has a historical development, and its structure can be scientifically analyzed and clarified. Speech makes use of an existing language and, therefore, language should never be separated from a speaking person. When it is, language loses all meaning, and it even stops being language. Apart from a speaking person, language is nothing more than dead, meaningless sounds.

Since language and a speaking person are so closely related, it is not strange that the concepts "**language**" and "**speech**" are used interchangeably, and that they are always involved in the same reality (Kwant, 1963, p 57).

Without going any further into this, for a child, language is a medium for communication, affectivity, expression, thinking, intelligence, and development (Langeveld). Since language acquisition is closely related to so many facets of a child's life, it is not surprising that it profoundly influences personal actualization.

#### 2.4.2 Early forms of communication

Since learning to talk is a long and complicated course before a child can really talk, he/she must use other forms of communication. If he/she did not do this, his/her helplessness would last even longer than it does.

A young child uses four primary forms of communication to make him/herself understood. These are **crying**, **gesturing**, **expressing emotions**, and **babbling** (Hurlock, 1978, p 163). Babbling is the most important because it is the basis for real speech later. Also, babbling is the only form which disappears completely when it changes into speech. The other three continue to exist, although no longer as substitutes for, but as supplements to speech.

##### \*Crying

At first, crying is the only way a baby communicates with his/her world. By crying, he/she calls to his/her parents to relieve his/her hunger, pain, fatigue, and other unpleasant bodily states, and to attend to satisfying his/her needs. Pitch, as well as intensity of his/her cries can indicate specific needs. There are many ways in which a baby cries, and some parents allege that they can distinguish among them. In fact, there is evidence that they can (Yussen and Santrock, 1978, p 265). However, crying can be easily misinterpreted, and this can diminish its communicative value.

##### \*Gesturing

According to Hurlock (1978, p 168), gesturing **substitutes** for, or **supplements** speech. As a substitute, gestures take the **place** of words and thoughts which are conveyed to others by meaningful movements or gestures (for example, a child sticks his/her hands out when he/she wants to be picked up). As a supplement to speech, gestures **stress** or **emphasize** the meaning of the spoken word.

A baby's gestures are usually easily understood and, thus, are a satisfactory substitute for speech until he/she can communicate in words. For as long as his/her vocabulary is inadequate, he/she uses gestures to make his/her incomplete sentences meaningful. Thus, the sentences of young children are usually a combination of words and gestures. Before a child enters primary school, his/her vocabulary ought to be large enough for him/her to make him/herself understood without gesturing.

### **\*Expressing emotions**

An additional form of early communication is facial and bodily expressions of emotions. Since babies have not yet learned to control their emotions, others can easily interpret and infer how they feel about persons and situations. To a lesser degree, a baby also can interpret the feelings of others in the same way. For example, he/she is very quick to notice changes in his/her parents' facial expression, or tone of voice. As with gesturing, expressing emotions is a useful and supplementary form of communication until he/she learns to talk.

### **\*Babbling**

Above and beyond crying, during the first months of life, a baby also utters clear sounds. These sounds, also known as babbling, are not learned, and appear universally in babies, even the deaf (Hurlock, 1978, p 167). A child "discovers" his/her voice and initially uses it not so much as a way of communicating but as a way of "**playing**" with the sounds he/she is able to produce. Only when he/she realizes that a sound or a series of sounds can symbolize something does his/her discovery and development of language begin (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 135). Language is truly discovered only when he/she knows that sounds and things belong together (Langeveld).

Initially, this babbling is a way of practicing sounds which convey no meaning. Gradually, it multiplies, and a greater variety of sounds are produced. Although unintelligible, still they enrich a child's wealth of sounds, combinations of sounds, rhythm, etc., which are the basis for his/her later speech. How much he/she babbles is greatly influenced by the amount of attention and encouragement he/she receives for doing it. The more attention a baby receives in this regard, the greater the variation of babbling

sounds he/she learns. This is the foundation for speech and promotes and facilitates his/her later pronunciation of words. As soon as he/she begins to say words, babbling gradually decreases.

Although babbling is largely unintelligible to others, this does not mean that a babbler cannot understand others. Before he/she can speak, he/she already has at his/her disposal a **passive vocabulary** (see Vrey, 1979, p 138) which allows him/her to understand what others say. Gradually, his/her understanding of language increases and his/her own babbling becomes more intelligible to others. Thus, a child learns a great deal about language before he/she says his/her first words. Everything with which he/she comes into contact has **meaning** for him/her, and then becomes linked with his/her naming persons, objects, events, etc. Initially, this speech begins with pronouncing a few words, but these words contain whole thoughts and refer to more comprehensive meanings. With a few words, a child expresses a "whole sentence", and the meaning of what he/she wants to convey lies in his/her entire behavior, facial expression, and gestures. Indeed, here there are **one-word sentences** (see Vrey, 1979, p 139).

Gradually, his/her vocabulary increases. According to Engelbrecht et al. (1982, p 136), from 12- to 18-months, a child's vocabulary increases from approximately 10 to 250 words, and the average child of five years has a vocabulary of roughly 2000 words. This leads him/her to gradually use more than one word at a time, and he/she begins to form sentences. At first, the pronunciation, and ordering words into sentences are weak. Later, his/her sentence construction improves and, along with an increased vocabulary, he/she forms more complex and intricate sentences.

Vrey (1979, p 141) indicates that, in early language development, words are not first learned separately and then joined together into sentences. According to him, from the beginning, it is usual that whole sentences are learned in relation to specific situations. A differentiation of a sentence into its constituent words occurs only after a great deal of experience. These whole sentences are viewed as a unity of meaning, which indicates that language is a meaningful medium of communication for a child, which makes educating him/her possible.

### 2.4.3 Factors which influence acquiring speech

Since the acquisition of language and speech are important components of personal actualization, they are matters which command a great deal of interest. They especially deserve attention because of the apparent ease with which a preschool child learns them, despite their complexity. From this interest, there are many theories about how a child eventually **learns** to speak. Without going into them here, it is noted that acquiring language is also a matter of **attributing meaning**. From this perspective, there are several factors which greatly influence learning to speak (see Sonnekus, 1984, pp 39-40).

### **\*Physical readiness**

Before a child can speak, he/she must have the necessary **physical equipment** at his/her disposal. Although their role is not always precisely clear, certain areas of the brain (e.g., the areas of Van Broca and Wernicke) are highly related to learning to speak. At birth, these areas are not yet fully functional, and it is only between 12 and 18 months that they are developed enough for speech to begin. At birth, the speech canal (windpipes, mouth cavity, etc.) is small and the tongue is large compared to the mouth cavity. Also, initially, a child is not in full control of these organs of speech (see Hurlock, 1978, p 170). Although this speech equipment is extremely important, the acquisition of speech is much too complex a matter to be viewed merely as a process of physical maturation.

### **\*Educating**

Educating is perhaps the greatest single factor contributing to acquiring speech. At birth, a child has the **potentiality** to be able to speak one day. However, this potentiality must be actualized gradually, and it is here that educating plays a large role. A child cannot learn to speak if he/she is not spoken to. Research (see Hurlock, 1978, p 169 and Vrey, 1979, p 144) indicates that children who are often in the company of adults, and who are encouraged by them, learn to speak more quickly, have better pronunciation, talk more often, and express themselves better than children for whom this is not the case.

Parents primarily have a three-fold task in accompanying [i.e., educating] their child to actualize his/her linguistic potentialities. First, they are responsible for creating the right climate for letting him/her feel at ease, encouraged, and supported. By really

listening, they allow him/her to feel important, and this gives him/her the self-confidence to venture with his/her language. When the atmosphere makes a child feel anxious, and tense, his/her acquisition of speech is seriously impeded. Thus, **affective accompaniment** is also indispensable for acquiring speech.

Second, parents should purposefully guide their child to **learn** words, name objects, correctly pronounce words, and construct sentences. It also is important that they exemplify the correct use of language. However, in this regard, imitation alone is not sufficient, and it is necessary that they guide their child in the use of language by their **cognitive accompaniment**.

Third, parents should educate, or guide their child (formatively) to use language **properly and elegantly**, and to **give sense and meaning** to and by speech. Speech only comes to full growth if a child attributes the correct meaning to words, and him/herself can convey to others, via the spoken word, his/her own experience of the meaning of things, matters, etc. Thus, **normative, meaning-giving accompaniment** plays an important role in acquiring speech.

#### **\*Self-actualization**

The role taken by a child him/herself in acquiring speech should not be underestimated. It is a child who has the potentiality to be able to speak, and he/she is the one who must actualize it (self-actualization). This occurs by him/her attributing **sense and meaning** to language and especially by his/her parents' accompaniment in this connection. In acquiring speech, he/she uses his/her psychic life and learning potentialities to eventually master his/her language.

Because there is a close connection among language, thinking, learning, feeling, intelligence, etc., a child's personal actualization is given tremendous impetus when he/she acquires speech.

### **2.5 School readiness in a preschool child**

Since school entry is a particularly important milestone in a child's becoming, **school readiness** is a matter which receives a great deal of attention during the toddler years. School readiness is a precondition to effectively engage in schooling, and to be able to achieve optimally. This implies that a child should be school ready

physically, as well as psycho-spiritually, i.e., in his/her total involvement with reality.

For many years, physical "maturity" has been overemphasized in determining a child's readiness for school. Its importance cannot be denied, but it should not be the only **criterion** of school readiness. If his/her physical development has progressed adequately, he/she will be physically ready at school entry to try almost anything he/she sees others do (see Pikunas, 1976, p 208). This implies that his/her gross and fine motor skills, and eye-hand coordination, laterality, and dominance, perception, spatial orientation, balance, etc. should be largely differentiated. In addition to his/her physical **dexterity**, he/she should also be physically **healthy**, since this is necessary for him/her to be able to purposefully direct him/herself to schoolwork. There is a high correlation between school achievement and the physical condition of children during the first three years of school (see Nel, 1968, p 180). A child's physical condition codetermines his/her readiness and preparation for school, not only at school entry but throughout his/her school career.

In addition, **age** is often a yardstick for school readiness. Thus, for example, a child is required to go to school at the beginning of the year in which he/she turns seven. This also is not necessarily a reliable yardstick. According to Engelbrecht et al. (1982, pp 57-58), a child must first attain a certain **level of readiness** before he/she is able to master skills, or ways of behaving successfully. To try to introduce something to a child before he/she is ready for it, noticeably hinders teaching because greater resistance is awakened in a child and, thus, more repetitions are required. The situation also becomes worse because of tension, which is built up in an adult, as well as a child, in the absence of the desired progress (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, pp 57-58). Physical development often serves as a basis for this readiness, but it really involves much more than mere physical "maturity".

School readiness implies an optimal readiness to begin to learn scholastic material, and especially cultural skills, such as reading, calculating, writing, and spelling (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 58). To be able to learn these skills adequately requires that, by school entry, a child can actualize his/her cognitive potentialities on a relatively high level. This implies that certain concepts are already part of his/her possessed experience. For example, he/she must be



able to analyze, classify, compare, order, evaluate, and synthesize. His/her knowledge of language, and ability to express him/herself must be qualitatively good, and he/she must possess basic number concepts, and an understanding of time and space (see Le Roux, 1981). A child is expected to understand and carry out a teacher's instructions, and assignments. Thus, he/she must be able to maintain a measure of objectivity in his/her thinking, be able to understand elementary relationships, have a relatively reliable memory, and be able to maintain a relatively intellectual pace (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, pp 58-59).

As mentioned, a young toddler is still very egotistical. Since educating and teaching in school take place in **groups**, to be able to work together in groups is very prominent. Thus, school readiness requires that a child has reached a level of **socialization** where he/she is able to work together with others. He/she must be generous, share a teacher's attention with the rest of the class, take other children into consideration, wait his/her turn, etc. (Le Roux, 1981). A child who has difficulty working and playing together with others will not find it easy to direct him/herself effectively to learning tasks in school.

Also, a certain level of **normative** readiness is required for school entry. Acceptance of and respect for authority is a very important qualification which a child must possess before he/she can turn to schooling (Sonnekus, 1976, p 59). Obedience, and the acceptance of authority and discipline are preconditions for an orderly course of learning in school and, therefore, they also are important requirements for school readiness. Normative readiness, and the acceptance and imitation of what is proper imply that a child also is ready to actualize his/her potentialities, to become what he/she can and ought to be.

Against the above background, school readiness involves the total person, and that a child is **educated (helped)** to be school ready. Thus, it really refers to a **level of becoming** and not only to physical "maturity" or readiness (Crous, 1979, p 58). It also refers to the fact that a **change** has taken place in a child's **attunement**, i.e., in his/her directedness to the world. Where a preschool child is primarily directed to play, which also is a means of learning to know his/her world, a school beginner is attuned to knowing, knowledge, or cognitive learning, which also makes **formal** teaching possible (Sonnekus, 1984, p 41). In summary, he/she must be able to

periodically leave his/her parental home, take a more objective attitude toward his/her parents, accept authority and discipline, show responsibility and obedience, consider other children, respect their property, etc. One could continue listing such qualities which must be at a child's disposal for him/her to be considered as being ready for school. Lastly, and connected with the above, school readiness requires a high degree of **emotional stability**. This assumes that a child feels safe and secure, and that he/she has a favorable **self-concept** and sufficient **self-confidence**. Through his/her parents' adequate emotional accompaniment, he/she acquires a favorable self-concept and emotional stability, and the self-confidence springing from this is one of the most precious assets which disposes him/her to venture on his/her school career in the right way (Olivier, 1976, p 87).

Although a complete discussion has not been given, the above provides a clear image of the demands which schooling places on a child and, thus, indicate the qualities he/she should have at his/her disposal by at the time he/she enters school.

The entire matter of school readiness would be incomplete if there were not brief reference to the preschool. However, the main aim of a preschool is not to make a child ready for school. As in the primary educative situation at home, the aim is always to **educate** a child to a proper involvement in his/her lifeworld (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 62). Even so, it cannot be denied that a preschool contributes importantly to school readiness. According to Le Roux (1981), a child's **potentialities** should be the point of departure for teaching in a preschool. She divides these potentialities into five categories, i.e., bodily, social, cognitive, normative, and affective. If a child is taught with the aim of adequately actualizing these potentialities, a toddler with normal intelligence, and no deficiencies which can restrain his/her personal actualization ought to be ready by the age he/she enters school (see Le Roux, 1981).

Thus, school readiness is a matter of educating. Additionally, school readiness, and making a child ready are not limited directly to the years **preceding** school entry. Since schooling continually places higher demands on a child in all areas, this implies that he/she must **remain** ready throughout his/her changing school career. School readiness, as a matter of educating (accompanying) and adequate personal actualization, thus, begins at birth and extends over the entire period of school attendance.

## 2.6 Personal actualization of a preschool child

As explained especially in chapter III, personal actualization occurs by actualizing one's psychic life and learning. It involves a child **giving meaning** to reality. Thus, when there is reference to a preschool child's personal actualization, this means the **level**, and the **way** he/she actualizes his/her psychic life and learning potentialities are noted.

The **tempo** of a child's becoming is relatively faster during the first five or six years of life than at any later period and, thus, it extends over a very broad area. However, it is impossible to fully take note of all nuances of becoming adult occurring during this and each of the other periods of life; thus, only some of the more important aspects are referred to.

The psychic life of a preschool child is still actualized mostly on an **emotional** level. For a baby, this actualization occurs mostly on a **senso-pathic** level and gradually proceeds to a more **pathic** level of a toddler. Indeed, a preschool child already explores his/her world in a very cognitive or **knowing** way, and **normative** lived experiencing arises during the preschool years. However, these cognitive and normative orientations are strongly supported by his/her emotional lived experiences. His/her knowing and normative lived experiences, thus, are still emotionally and subjectively colored. Thus, during this period, he/she is very dependent on his/her parents for emotional support. Indeed, Olivier (1981, p 83) points out that he/she is not yet able to distance him/herself from his/her parents and to attribute meaning to them on an emotionally distanced level.

Tjus, as far as a preschool child's **learning** is concerned, it is still emotionally saturated. The modes of learning appear in this period but, for the most part, on an emotional and concrete level. Because of the emotional nature of **sensing**, it is clearly in the foreground. His/her **wondering** can easily be stimulated, but because of his/her impulsive emotional life, his/her sensing easily becomes **labilized**. Also, **attending** is very much supported by a child's emotionality, and a preschooler has an attention span of from seven to twenty minutes, depending on his/her degree of maturity and the complexity of what he/she is involved with (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 219). Regarding **perceiving**, a preschooler is

predominantly inclined to **globalizing**, although he/she is already strongly attuned to **analyzing**. However, **synthesizing** and **identifying relationships** are still difficult. **Thinking** arises when a **problem** is encountered. From the many questions a child asks, he/she is already thinking in his/her involvement with his/her world. However, the course of thinking is still relatively concrete, and is limited to specific objects and situations (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 225).

To acquire a better understanding of a child's cognitive development, it is worth noting some of Piaget's findings (see Piaget, 1950 and Piaget and Inhelder, 1969). According to him, intellectual or cognitive development occurs during two main periods which are divided into four stages. These four stages of intellectual development are: the **sensorimotor** (from birth to two years); the **preoperational** (from two to six years); the **concrete operations** (from six to 11 or 12 years) and the stage of **formal operations** (from 12 years and older). The first main period is known as the "**Period of Sensorimotor Intelligence**", and it covers the first stage. The second main period is known as the "**Period of Conceptual Intelligence**" and it includes the other three stages.

A preschool child functions mainly on the first two levels. During this period, thinking is largely dominated by **sensorimotor activities**, i.e., sensory perception, and physical activities. Much emphasis is on sensory, as well as motor development. Through this development, a child forms concepts by him/herself, and discovers that he/she is detached from his/her physical surroundings. Gradually, he/she forms the concept of causality, as well as of time and space. In the second stage, i.e., the preoperational, he/she already uses language and symbols in solving problems. This is especially evident in his/her fantasy play, and egocentrism. He/she is not yet able to understand someone else's point of view, and he/she is unable to solve problems requiring an understanding of numbers or classifications (see Hurlock, 1978, p 355).

Against the above background, Vrey (1979, pp 74-75) lists the following "**characteristics**" of this stage:

- \* He/she is still mainly involved with his/her **immediate surroundings**;

- \* his/her thinking, to a great extent, is still coupled with activities;

\* he/she probably thinks in **images which are representations of specific persons, objects, or situations**;

\* his/her thought is **transductive**, i.e., he/she thinks from one particular to another. He/she cannot yet think inductively or especially deductively;

\* his/her perceiving is extremely **centered**. Only one characteristic, little area, or sound remains at the center of perceiving;

\* because he/she has difficulty attending to one thing only, he/she cannot yet hold his/her own opinions;

\* there is little direction or logical course to his/her thinking;

\* his/her thinking is very **animistic**, since lifeless objects easily become personified;

\* in thinking, he/she cannot compare different relationships with each other.

**Imagining and fantasizing** play a very important role in a preschool child's learning, especially during the toddler period. These modes of learning enable him/her to direct him/herself to a world which doesn't really exist. He/she breaks through reality and enters an imaginative world of fantasy (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 226). In his/her fantasy play, a child often does not distinguish between play or fantasy, and reality. He/she doesn't understand that persons and things have fixed identities. For example, he/she believes that if he/she has a cape, he/she really can become a king or "**Superman**". According to Karmel (Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 214), this is not an appropriate way for a child to orient him/herself to the world, since "**chairs are not automobiles, mud pies are not food, blankets are not royal robes**". However, this is the basis for **creativity**, and its value is that, in this way, he/she establishes the genuine **meaning** of things in the world.

**Remembering** is also an important mode of learning during a toddler's learning. As such, it refers to the mode of learning by which the results [e.g., possessed experience] of a preschooler's actualization of his/her psychic life, once again, are made present (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 229).

In summary, a preschool child's personal actualization occurs through his/her **attributing sense and meaning** to the content of reality. Also of importance is that this attribution of meaning is primarily emotionally colored and is very concrete. In educating

him/her, this must be thoroughly considered. This implies that he/she does not benefit if he/she is related to on a strictly cognitive, or abstract level at too early a stage. Educating must be attuned to a child's needs and level of becoming.

### 3. A PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD

This is a period which extends from approximately six to 12 or 13 years. As the name indicates, during this time, a child finds him/herself in a primary school. This is a relatively long period during which many things happen to him/her and, thus, large changes occur in his/her level of becoming. Also, there is a large difference between a school beginner and a seventh grader, who is at the point of leaving primary school. Thus, something such as a **typical** primary school child does not exist. Since the timespan of this period is so long, it is helpful to refine it further and, thus, a distinction is made between a junior and a senior primary period.

#### 3.1 A junior primary school child

A junior primary period extends from the first to the third grade (in the U.S.A.). At school entry, and especially during the first couple of years in school, the horizon of a child's lifeworld expands enormously. In this period, educating also acquires a new dimension in that, now he/she is no longer only dependent on the primordial (i.e., home) educative situation, but he/she now enters a more formal second order (i.e., school) educative situation. Although school has a more formal character, it is viewed as an *extension* and *expansion* of the primordial educative situation encountered at home.

According to Van der Stoep (1973, p 24), teaching in school is an offshoot of educating at home. The school can only continue and complete what for many years has and is being done in a family household. Also, the content introduced at school is **life content**, in that it is encountered in a person's **lifeworld**. For convenience, a school divides the lifeworld into different areas of knowledge, which then are introduced to children by a teacher in systematic and ordered ways in the form of school subjects (see Van der Stoep, 1973, p 11). Although the structure of a school is different from a family household, the aim of both is a child's **proper adulthood**.

To attain proper adulthood, a child must be educated such that eventually he/she is able to independently master an adult lifeworld. Thus, in school, he/she must learn the skills and proficiencies of a complex adult lifeworld. Within this large and overarching educative goal, the main task of a primary school is to teach children to read, write, and calculate, to expand their linguistic abilities, to provide basic Bible instruction [in South Africa], and to give them their first orientation to the human and natural sciences (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 56). Upon entering school, a child is in an entirely new and strange situation, and the question is how he/she manifests him/herself in it, what does his/her "**equipment**" look like, and what "**characteristics**" does he/she show?

Again, readiness is a precondition for adequately linking up with and progressing in school. This implies a readiness across the entire range of being a person. The role of physical development and health in school readiness is mentioned above. During the primary school years, physical development continually plays an important role, and there is further differentiation among physical potentialities.

According to Karmel (Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 321), physical growth now occurs more slowly, although it proceeds at a uniform rate. A junior primary school child gradually acquires better control of his/her body, and since he/she is very active, he/she continually tests his/her physical potentialities to the limit. Since he/she grows more slowly, he/she has an opportunity to improve his/her coordination. By school entry, most children can ride bikes, jump rope, climb trees, etc. Thus, a child's gross motor skills are greatly differentiated. Along with gross motor development, there is an improvement in controlling and coordinating finger and hand muscles, as well as coordinating fine muscle control and vision (see Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 328). Increases in height and weight are paired with the appearance of typical sex characteristics. With respect to behavior and body, a boy appears increasingly masculine and a girl increasingly feminine until secondary sex characteristics appear with the onset of puberty (Vrey, 1979, p 95).

As far as a school situation is concerned, it adds a new dimension to a child's educating, since it now has a more formal character, and a parent is replaced by a teacher. This requires a child to adopt a different attitude toward his/her educative situation. First, he/she

must accept and identify with his/her teachers. Often, teachers become idealized and identified with to such a degree that everything they say is always correct (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 63). Also, a child's directedness to the world changes. Where a preschool child is mainly directed at playing, a school beginner is attuned to knowing, knowledge, or cognitive learning (Sonnekus, 1984, p 41), and he/she can even become impatient or dissatisfied if his/her expectations in this regard are not met quickly enough. This wanting to learn is the basis for the main activities of a junior primary period, i.e., **to learn to read, write, and calculate**. During these first few years in school, a mastery of these basic skills and proficiencies is itself an aim. It is only later that these activities become the **means** for learning more advanced material. Learning to read, write, and calculate require that a child is emotionally stable, otherwise he/she will not be able to distance him/herself from concrete reality to a world of symbols. Even though teaching these skills usually makes use of concrete visual examples, they demand that a child make abstractions, and venture with symbols on a cognitive or knowing level (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 64). In addition to "**subject teaching**", a school fosters specific and concrete expectations of a child regarding his/her behavior, achievement, work relations, relationships, potential, and progress. Indeed, a child is expected to identify him/herself with the teaching ideals (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 57). By way of summary, school entry requires that a child learn to **work**.

At school entry, a child's **social** horizon also is broadened because his/her first real peer group is formed in school. He/she must work and play with the group and is continually compared with them. Individuality and sociality are continually interacting in and out of a classroom (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 60). Usually, a child will gladly join a group, and it is very important for personal actualization that this goes well. The role of a peer group in the life of a child is considered in more detail later.

From the above, a great deal of change occurs in a child's life during the first few years in school. This implies that he/she is continually confronted with other demands in his/her educating, and its nature also changes gradually. Although emotional educating remains the ground for adequate personal actualization, cognitive educating becomes more important, and it plays a continually increasing role in his/her life.



### 3.2 A senior primary school child

The senior primary period, also called the puerile period by some, extends from approximately nine to 12-13 years of age. The beginning years of learning to read, write, and calculate are now behind a child, and he/she can use these skills in his/her search for new knowledge. A school situation also changes, in that during this period, there is a move to subject teaching and changing classes. Also, homework and examinations become more prominent, and he/she is expected to work alone in a more independent way.

Regarding physical development, strength, and suppleness increase. A senior primary school child is full of life and very energetic. His/her play is characterized by movement and activity involving his/her entire body. Although, in many respects, the puerile phase is known as a **boy phase** (Latin: *puer* = a boy), bodily activity, and motor skills are very important for both boys and girls. During this period, some girls enter the so-called "**tomboy**", or rough and tumble phase and, although seemingly boys and girls will have nothing to do with each other, often there is fierce competition between the two genders (Sonnekus, 1984, p 42). According to Nel (1968, p 199), a child experiences his/her physical strength and vitality more strongly than in any other period, because physical growth and vitality reach their peak in these years. He also indicates that the mortality rate is at its lowest point at approximately ten years. Additionally, as far as behavioral, and other problems are concerned, children between eight and twelve years show the fewest difficulties (Nel, 1968, p 201). Because of a puerile child's vitality, he/she is particularly active and enthusiastically learns all kinds of skills in sports. Activities such as bicycle riding, tree climbing, and field trips are the order of the day.

Although a senior primary school child is still very dependent on his/her parents for his/her physical care, a great deal of independence is also noticed. Linked to this, his/her relationship to his/her world changes. Now he/she shows a more **matter of fact** attitude toward, and relationship with his/her parents and teachers. He/she is strongly directed to business and is disposed to want to know and to investigate. His/her orientation to the cognitive intensifies and his/her total personal actualization is more attuned to knowing. Thus, this phase also is known as a **realistic phase** and, to an increasing degree, he/she encounters harsh reality (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 66). Along with this more matter-of-fact attitude,

a greater degree of objectivity also arises, and he/she becomes more **critically** concerned about him/herself, his/her educators, and reality in general. Where a junior primary school child is disposed to accept his/her teacher's word as law, a puerile child does not accept everything so readily. As a person, his/her teacher becomes less important, and because of his/her attunement to reality, he/she is directed to the essentials and to the objective factual nature of reality. From about nine years, a child clearly moves to realism and self-criticism. He/she becomes more dissatisfied with his/her own achievements, and he/she begins to view especially his/her scholastic achievements as an evaluation of him/herself (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 64). **Homework** also is a matter which increasingly comes into the foreground during this period. A child's interest, earnestness, and responsibility regarding schoolwork and homework usually increase, and it is expected that he/she gradually show greater independence in these areas. According to Sonnekus (1976, p 67), as far as homework is concerned, this phase should be viewed as training or preparing for a secondary school. It is important that children do their homework regularly, and, in doing so, learn an appropriate work disposition. His/her parents should gradually withdraw from assisting with homework and, as far as possible, their child should carry out his/her assignments independently.

Social development is one of the most conspicuous characteristics of a puerile child. As mentioned, his/her educating acquires a new dimension, since it now begins to have a more formal character. This new dimension also involves his/her socialization, in that now he/she is expected to socialize with teachers and children from his/her peer group. A decrease in a senior primary school child's dependence on his/her parents, especially because of his/her greater physical skill, and ability to begin to care for him/herself, enable him/her to become more involved with children of his/her own age. A peer group is now a serious matter for him/her and joining such a group is of utmost importance. A peer group is an intimate, selected group of children, and entry into such a group is a result of mutual choice. According to Vrey (1979, pp 110-112), intelligence, family background, social class, appearance, physical dexterity, personality characteristics, and sex role are some of the determinants of inclusion in a group. In a case where, for some reason, a child is not admitted into a group, this is an extremely painful and even traumatic experience; indeed, his/her personal actualization can become seriously damaged by this.

Initially, a child links up with children of the same age and gender. Later, there is also a linking up with members of the opposite gender, first in groups, and still later individually. His/her identification and socialization are viewed as extensions of his/her exploratory journey through his/her world. Where a younger child is directed to learning about his/her physical world, a puerile child is directed to exploring interpersonal **relationships**, first with his/her own gender, and later also with the opposite gender. This gradually leads to greater self-understanding.

Forming a peer group should not be viewed only as a way in which a child keeps him/herself busy and happy. According to Mussen, et al. (1969, p 573), a peer group gives a child an opportunity to learn how to establish relationships with age-mates, how to deal with adversity, and domination, how to accept leaders, and even how to lead others. A group also has a therapeutic function, since it helps him/her deal with social problems. By conversing with other members of his/her group, he/she learns that they have the same problems and feelings he/she has. A group also helps in forming his/her self-concept. The ways a group opposes him/her, and the reasons why they accept or reject him/her gradually give a clearer and more realistic image of him/herself (see Mussen et al., 1969, p 573).

At first, identification with a peer group is strongly gender bound. The two genders are now aware of and move away from each other. During this period, they perhaps are farther apart from each other than at any other period of their becoming adult (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 66). With preschool children, the two genders freely interact, and the nature of their play might be more "**masculine**" or more "**feminine**". From about seven or eight years of age, a child primarily mixes with gender mates. Now boys and girls chase and tease each other rather than playing together. From nine to eleven years of age, interacting with the opposite gender is alarming (see Mussen, et al., 1969, pp 576-577), and sometimes there is even mutual contempt and disdain (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 70).

As noted, a senior primary school period often is known as a boy phase. A boy will detach himself as far as possible from his parents and especially from his mother. He is happiest among his peers and his relationship with his parents, and other adults, is much more matter of fact. He lives outside a great deal, forms **gangs** with their

own rules, codes of behavior, and symbols, and they do not tolerate any meddling by parents, other adults, and especially girls (see Sonnekus, 1984, p 42). Usually, these gangs are harmless, and they allow children to explore and have experiences in groups which would be difficult or impossible for an individual (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 69). Youth organizations, such as the Scouts are now very popular because they satisfy his need for adventure. According to Sonnekus (see 1976, pp 68-69) these boys pay very little attention to themselves, and often appear untidy and disheveled; shirts hang out, hair is unkempt, pants knees are worn out, and they want to create the impression that they are tough. They like to exceed limits and, thus, are often in difficulty. Because physical strength and achievement symbolize masculinity to them, they especially want to physically conquer the world (see Sonnekus, 1976, pp 68-69). Beets describes a boy in this stage as typically untidy, who "forgets" or passes over his body to such an extent that he is primarily attuned to trying to physically conquer the world (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 262). For a boy of this age, encountering the opposite gender is a big problem. His interest in a girl discredits his being a boy, and he dreads the ridicule of his peers in this regard. For this reason, he feels very insecure in the presence of a girl. Still, he sometimes tries to attract a girl's attention by peculiar or even childish behaviors. Often, there are even mutual fantasies of being sweetheart and beau without each knowing it (Sonnekus, 1976, p 66).

As far as a girl is concerned, during this period, her personal actualization progresses more uniformly and tranquilly than that of a boy. She is disposed to be calm and turned within herself; also, in some cases signs of puberty already appear (See Sonnekus, 1976, p 71). The differences between boys and girls in the puerile period are clearly expressed in the following quotation: "**Boys are attuned more to physical exploration, romping, and measures of strength of all types. In addition, they are interested in typically masculine activities. They participate in gang activities and adventurous experience and readily read such stories. Again, girls are more interested in authentic feminine activities and skills. They are more tranquil than boys, and interpersonal relationships particularly interest them. They gossip freely. They choose to read stories about girls, and especially those with themes of love**" (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 70).

### 3.3 Personal actualization of a primary school child

Even though this phase extends over almost nine years during which large and important changes appear, as far as personal actualization is concerned, this period is treated as a unity to show the gradual changes and elevations in a child's level of becoming which occur.

Regarding a child's own **participation** in his/her personal actualization, from an early age, **all** facets of his/her psychic life and learning are involved. That is, from birth onward, all modes of learning, and all ways of actualizing the psychic life are in the service of personal actualization. However, the level on which they are actualized gradually changes. It is indicated that a preschooler actualizes his/her psychic life, for the most part, on an emotional (senso-pathic and pathic) level. Together with an elevation in level of actualization, a change in emphasis also occurs. That is, a primary school child gradually progresses from a more emotional to a more cognitive attunement, or attitude toward his/her world. In other words, a junior primary school child's participation in his/her personal actualization is, for the most part, pathic-gnostic, while that of a senior primary school child is more gnostic-pathic (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, pp 241-242). As far as adult **accompaniment** during this phase is concerned, it also involves a greater emphasis on the **cognitive**, as well as a gradually increasing emphasis on the **normative**. This is necessary to keep in step with a changing child.

Because, by school entry, a child is no longer so strongly attuned to play, but now is more eager to learn, and is directed to knowing, he/she has a strong **realistic attunement**, and **wants to experience** reality as what it is. Learning basic skills is very **meaningful**, and he/she is full of wonder about the strange new world of schooling. Along with a greater quest for objective knowledge, there is a move to teaching him/her subject matter in a primary school. He/she no longer accepts everything a teacher says. He/she now shows a more **critical** attitude, and **experiences** reality more **thoughtfully**. Calculating mathematically, solving concrete problems, classifying, systematizing, and schematizing are lived experiences which are very **meaningful**. Even though a senior primary school child is not very focused on his/her own body, still reality is strongly experienced by means of it. Also, **group activities**, such as working and playing together are highly respected. In this regard, physical activities, socializing, and competing are lived experienced as **meaningful**, and can contribute greatly to personal actualization.

Thus, changes during a primary school occur over a wide spectrum. Now, the psychic life is actualized primarily on a **gnostic-pathic** level (and less often on a senso-pathic and senso-gnostic level), and his/her attunement, as well as his/her accompaniment are more **cognitive**. As far as **content is concerned**, during this period it should continue to be concrete, and he/she should have an opportunity to deal with it by means of physical activities, and in groups.

Also, to an increasing degree, a primary school child learns on a cognitive level. At first, especially with a junior primary school child, learning is still mostly emotional, pre-cognitive, and very subjective. Gradually, this becomes more cognitive, but even then, learning is still actualized, for the most part, on a **concrete-visual** level. Below, attention is given to actualizing the different modes of learning during this period (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, pp 241-268).

Because of the strong emotionality of a school beginner, his/her **sensing** easily can become **labile**, and this can impede further learning. Thus, in this case, an atmosphere of safety and security is necessary. As he/she becomes older and attains a greater distance from his/her emotional life, the stability of sensing becomes less dependent on safety and security, although they always remain preconditions for effective learning. This implies that a senior primary school child's sensing will not so easily become labilized, mainly because his/her feelings are already largely under cognitive control.

**Attending** is an extremely important mode of learning in a school situation. Where the attention span of a preschool child is relatively short, it is expected that a school beginner can attend for long periods of time. As an accompanying and sustaining mode of learning, adequate attending is a precondition for effective learning. Owing to its **selective** nature, a child can focus on one matter and, in doing so, to use his/her modes of learning to come to know it. According to Sonnekus (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 245), perhaps attending has the most important place during the learning of a junior primary school child. He indicates that an integration of the new content with existing possessed experience depends on the degree to which he/she can **select** such content from the world around him/her by attending to it. In the case of a senior primary school child, attention span is much greater, and he/she can more

easily proceed from sensing, via willing, to attending, which is a **sharpened intention (and willingness) to learn**. In all cases, it is extremely difficult to focus on more than one object or matter at the same time. In this connection, a large difference between younger and older children is that younger ones are not yet able to **shift** their attention as quickly as can older ones (Mussen et al., 1969, p 433).

**Perceiving** plays an extremely important role in a school beginner's learning. In addition to its prominent place in learning to read and write, a child also is strongly directed to things in the world around him/her. For a young child, perceiving is primarily **global identifying** in nature, but **analyzing** also occurs and, to a lesser degree, so does **synthesizing**. As he/she becomes older and increasingly directs him/herself to reality, perceiving becomes even more important. During this period, he/she is strongly **attuned to reality**, and, by perceiving, he/she explores **objective** reality. Thus, in comparison with earlier years, these pupils are more strongly attuned to perceiving reality, or the learning object, as it appears to them (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 264).

During a primary school period, perceiving and **thinking** progressively function as a **unity**. Because of his/her realistic attunement, and increasing cognitive demands of schooling, he/she is increasingly confronted with the problematic in his/her world. Thus, thinking is continually actualized on higher levels during this period. Following Piaget's classification of intellectual development, a child from six to twelve is in the stage of **concrete operations**. The vague and fuzzy pre-conceptual thought of a preschool child now makes room for **concrete** and specific **conceptual thought**. This enables him/her to begin to think **deductively**, which leads to understanding reality better (see Hurlock, 1978, p 355). Now he/she can think **logically**, on condition that this thinking is focused on problems of a **concrete** nature. Near the end of this period, he/she can deal with more **abstract** problems (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 265). Vrey (1979, pp 116-117) indicates that forming schemas, or representational images by ordering and classifying are the most distinctive characteristic of logical operations. A child's concepts of causality (cause-effect), space, time, volume, speed, etc. gradually improve. Near the end of a primary school period, he/she can handle these concepts, especially when used in concrete ways.

As a result of a strong attunement to reality, **imagining** and **fantasizing** have a less important role during a senior primary period. For a junior primary child, and especially during the first two grades, they still play a relatively important role. This is seen in a child's play (i.e., fantasy, make-believe), in the questions asked, in drawings, and in the stories he/she tells. A senior primary school child is much more attuned to a **concrete** reality than to an "**irreal**" or **fantasy** one. Although **relatively** less prominent, imagining and fantasizing continue to be important for a senior primary school child to learn adequately. For example, they play an important role in writing essays, and in carrying out art assignments, and other projects.

The importance of **remembering** also gradually increases during primary school years. In a junior primary period, remembering is still at its beginning stage of actualization in the context of schooling and here "**memory work**" amounts to forming associations, and drill-work. It is also during this period that a child's **short-term** and **long-term** memories largely settle in, and his/her memory gradually improves. For a senior primary child, remembering no longer is supported only by drill-work because a higher degree of **giving meaning** is now required. In other words, remembering is no longer equated with memorizing, as "memory work", since he/she must now assimilate the content being taught and, via remembering, **integrate** it with his/her existing possessed experience. Also, he/she must be able to **make the content present again**, i.e., to **lived experience** the past in the present again (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 266).

From the above, a child's actualization of learning and, hence, his/her personal actualization, gradually occur on increasingly higher levels. Thus, for a teacher to contribute effectively to his/her adequate personal actualization during the primary school years, he/she must be thoroughly acquainted with the above insights. Not only is **what** a teacher presents important, but so is the **way** it is presented.

#### 4. A SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILD

##### 4.1 Puberty and adolescence



A secondary school period extends over approximately five years, and it includes children from 12- or 13-years to 17- or 18-years. **Puberty** and **adolescence** are two concepts which are generally used to indicate this phase. This period is also viewed everywhere as a move from being a child to being an adult. However, it also is true that immediately after finishing his/her school career, a "child" is not always viewed as an adult. The theme "**secondary school child**" should be seen as a broad classification, or category and, for this reason, it is sometimes confusing. This is a very important phase in a child's becoming adult and is looked at more closely.

The concepts "**puberty**" and "**adolescence**" have several meanings. Some authors hold the opinion that puberty precedes adolescence, while others view adolescence as an overarching period which includes puberty. In some cases, they are even used as synonyms. However, there is a relative degree of agreement regarding "**puberty**". In general, it is viewed as a period of sexual maturation, caused by biological growth and hormonal changes. In contrast, adolescence has a broader meaning and refers to more than sexual maturation. Indeed, it embraces the entire scope of personal actualization during this period.

Without considering the merits of any of these notions, Hurlock's (1973, p 3) view suffices. She indicates that adolescence is an overarching period which points to all aspects of becoming adult during this last phase before adulthood. According to her, sexual maturation (puberty) is part of adolescence, but the first half overlaps the end of a primary school period and the second half the beginning of adolescence. Also, a further refinement of this classification is worth mentioning (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 73 and Vrey, 1979, p 175):

\* **Early adolescence** (12- to 15-years-old). This period is characterized mainly by physical and sexual maturation, and corresponds to puberty;

\* **middle adolescence** (15- to 18-years). Now a child is involved in becoming independent from his/her parents, and learning about heterosexual relationships;

\* **late adolescence** (18- to 22-years). This period usually lasts until a youth has attained a relatively clear personal identity with his/her own system of values, social roles, and life goals. Now he/she can

function totally independently of his/her parents, and to fully take his/her place in adult life.

From this classification, a period of adolescence is not limited to a secondary school child. With the onset of puberty, in many cases, adolescence begins during the primary school years and extends into the early twenties. In earlier civilization, and still currently in more "primitive" societies, sexual maturity is almost the only criterion for full-fledged adulthood. In the framework of Western Culture, the period of adolescence is extended because adult life is more complex and, thus, the demands for inclusion are so much greater. Within the cultural framework, and highly developed technology of the West, physical puberty only defines the lower limit of adolescence, while the upper limit is determined by cultural demands (Vrey, 1979, p 176). Thus, the criteria for adulthood in Western Culture are much more than physical and sexual maturity. To illustrate the complex nature of the adult society which an adolescent must eventually enter, reference is made to what Landman views as some of the essentials of adulthood. These essentials are also used as criteria for adulthood:

- \* Understanding the meaningfulness of existence
- \* Self-judgment and self-understanding
- \* Respect for human dignity
- \* Morally independent choosing and acting
- \* Responsibility
- \* Norm identification
- \* Outlook on life (philosophy of life)

With reference to the work of Ausubel, and of Corey, Engelbrecht et al. (1982, pp 73-74) point to several "**developmental tasks**" an adolescent must complete on the way to adulthood:

- \* He/she must become less dependent on parental consent;
- \* to a greater degree, he/she must actively participate in his/her own  
aims and decisions;
- \* he/she must persevere in striving for goals;
- \* he/she must be disposed to delay immediate hedonistic (pleasure seeking) gratification for the sake of long-term goals;
- \* he/she must increasingly show more initiative, care,

independent actions, responsibility, self-criticism, and respect for the demands of life and reality.

In addition

- \* He/she must learn to accept his/her body;
- \* acquire an appropriate sex role;
- \* become increasingly more independent of adult domination;
- \* attain adult economic status; and
- \* appropriate a system of values for him/herself.

Papalia and Olds (1975, p 539) distinguish the following tasks confronting an adolescent (some duplication of the above):

- \* He/she must discover his/her own identity;
- \* become independent of his/her parents;
- \* construct own system of values;
- \* be able to establish interdependent friendships and loving relationships with adults.

This is a cursory overview of the comprehensive demands placed on an adolescent. The following discussion shows how, through personal actualization, an adolescent gradually masters, or completes these tasks and, thus, fulfills the demands of adulthood.

As mentioned, puberty arises in many cases toward the end of primary school, and it is accompanied by a great deal of physical change. Except for the early years of childhood, a person does not grow faster than during this period. Although there are large individual differences, and no specific age limits can be established, still it seems that puberty begins at approximately 13-years for boys and a year or two earlier for girls. This period is introduced by accelerated growth in height in both boys and girls. However, the different limbs do not grow equally, and even the left and right sides of the body do not grow at the same rate. Calon describes the appearance of boys and girls in puberty as tall and thin, long armed and legged, small chested, large handed, with clumsy feet, and a face which is out of proportion (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 76). Together with the increase in height and weight, almost every part of the body undergoes some change. Also, internal organs, such as the heart grow fast, and all aspects of the reproductive organs increase in size (see Mussen, et al., 1969, p 610). Gradually, the

rate of growth decreases so that by approximately 19-years, girls are full-grown. Boys grow slower than girls but continue until about 22-years-of-age (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 76). Before the onset of puberty, boys and girls are of approximately the same size and strength, but during puberty, because of the secretion of testosterone, boys develop more muscle fiber, and become stronger than girls (see Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 429). Without going any further into this matter, it is obvious that a child also lived experiences his/her new body, and **how** he/she attributes sense and meaning to it will determine the degree to which he/she will accept and assimilate these changes.

Even given a child's bodily changes, **sexual maturation** is certainly the main component of puberty. In general, this sexual maturation spans a period of approximately four years. The first four to six months of this period are known as pre-puberty. For both genders, but especially for girls, this is characterized by intense introspectiveness, during which a child strongly lives from within, and is very restless. Pre-puberty is also sometimes known as a "**negative phase**", or as the "**calm before the storm**" (Jackson, 1967, p 25). With respect to puberty, Sonnekus (see 1976, p 72 and Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 270), following Rumke, makes a distinction between **physical** and **psychic puberty**: physical puberty is sexual maturation, which is paired with the development of **primary** and **secondary** sex characteristics. Primary sex characteristics include the development of the sexual parts, such as the functioning of the reproductive organs, as well as breast development, and the onset of the menstrual cycle in girls. Secondary sex characteristics include hair growth on the face, chest, arms and legs, a crackling voice, skin problems, etc. (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, pp 76-77). Physical puberty is especially connected with a boy becoming more masculine, and a girl more feminine. By psychic puberty, Sonnekus means a child's **erotic awakening**, by which is meant infatuation with, or also psychic admiration of one gender for the other. This involves admiration of the handsome, the utterly beautiful, the pure, and borders on fantasy, where there is admiration and infatuation from a distance (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 270).

The course of the development of physical and psychic puberty is different for boys and girls. In both genders, these two forms of puberty, initially, are separate from each other. For girls, their admiration for the opposite gender is not sexually colored. A girl

lived experiences her sexual puberty entirely from within. In contrast, during this time, boys are more sexually aware, and their admiration for girls is also inclined to be sexual in nature (see Sonnekus, 1976, p 74).

Problems which arise when entering puberty too early or too late are well known. In general, early maturation has a relatively positive effect on a boy, while for a girl it can be more detrimental. Gradually, individual differences become smoothed over, and toward the end of puberty, a child becomes more tranquil and stable. The changes mentioned give rise to a different relationship between the two genders, and a child is now ready to enter adult, interdependent, heterosexual relationships. This matter is discussed more fully later.

In contrast to puberty, which refers mainly to the biological-physical, according to Wiechers (1977, p 61), adolescence is a psycho-socially differentiated period and ends when an individual can actualize and maintain him/herself as an adult within his/her culture. To be able to maintain him/herself within a given society requires that he/she have at his/her disposal satisfactory knowledge of that society, and thorough self-knowledge. This implies that an adolescent is confronted with the extremely important task of achieving his/her own **identity**. Since acquiring a self-concept is discussed fully in chapter IV, the following only refers to some of the main points in this connection.

Although acquiring a personal identity during the adolescent years is in the foreground, it is a matter which began during early childhood. It is rooted in a child's first becoming aware of him/herself as an individual, as this is shown in a desire to begin doing things for him/herself.

Toward the end of primary school years, a child has a relatively good idea of who he/she is, what his/her potentialities are, and what he/she is capable of. However, entering puberty dramatically changes almost everything. In addition to the changes occurring in him/her, the demands which society places on him/her also change. Thus, he/she enters a new world which he/she scarcely understands, with a new body he/she is still learning to know (see Papalia and Olds, 1975, pp 572-573). Once again, a child must find and establish for him/herself an identity, or self-concept. Thus,

once again, he/she must obtain answers to questions such as: Who am I?, Who will I be?, Where am I going?

As mentioned, adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. An adolescent fluctuates between the world of a child and that of an adult. He/she seemingly rides a "seesaw" between being a child and being an adult (see Papalia and Olds, 1975, p 573). Thus, acquiring his/her own identity is largely establishing him/herself as an adult. This requires, among other things, that an adolescent make peace with his/her new body, identify with a sex role, discover what he/she must be able to do, establish intimate relationships, and build up his/her own system of values.

Since an adolescent gradually moves into an adult community, he/she must establish him/herself within a group. However, he/she wants not only to be part of a group, but also to be an individual. He/she wants to be someone him/herself. To this end, he/she must gradually acquire a **sex-role identity**, and an **occupational identity** (see Wiechers, 1977, p 67). According to Engelbrecht et al. (1982, pp 101 and 104), an adolescent first tries out a large variety of roles and ideologies before his/her identity acquires a relative consistency. He/she is seemingly groping among lifestyles and beliefs which he/she possibly will adopt. Eventually, his/her own identity, or self-concept is the result of everything he/she has learned and come to know about him/herself. An adolescent now, for the most part, knows who he/she is, where he/she comes from, and what potentialities he/she can rely on for his/her future. Briefly, this comes down to the fact that he/she, once again, gives **sense** and **meaning** to him/herself in his/her new totality.

Also, a child's relationships change considerably during adolescence. As his/her relationship with him/herself changes, and he/she gradually establishes his/her own identity, this influences his/her relationships with his/her parents, other adults, peer group, and the opposite gender. Gradually, he/she becomes involved with the world outside the parental home, and this brings about a new relationship with his/her parents. He/she now obtains a more realistic view of his/her parents because he/she no longer is overshadowed by them, and more issues of equality arise. Subsequently, an adolescent yearns to increasingly make his/her own decisions, to be self-reliant, and to be independent of his/her parents. This dawning **emancipation** reaches a high point during adolescence, and Vrey (1979, p 187) indicates that there are two

sides to it. There is an **adolescent's readiness** to decide independently and to accept responsibility; in addition, there is the **parents' readiness** to allow him/her to do this. In this period, during which he/she wants to become increasingly autonomous (independent), and to show his/her newly formed identity, it can be expected that differences will arise between him/her and his/her parents. Clothing, hairstyle, music listened to, how late he/she can stay out, and friends are a few things which can cause friction. However, in general, adolescents have a relatively good relationship with their parents, respect them, and even want to be like them (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 89). Essentially, a child's emancipation from his/her parents is an aim of educating. Of course, in this context, his/her movement away from his/her parents has nothing to do with mutual rejection.

As an adolescent distance him/herself from his/her parents, his/her relationships with children of his/her own age become more important. The role which friends of the same gender begin to play from the end of the primary school years has been indicated. Authentic friendships, both individual and group, are formed within which an adolescent has an opportunity to talk about matters which would be difficult with his/her parents, or other adults. The studies of Douvan and Adelson (1966) indicate that the nature of these friendships during adolescence gradually change. For example, during early adolescence, friendship is mainly directed to jointly participating in activities. During middle adolescence, friendships are chosen for the sake of the security they offer. There is especially a need for a friend who is loyal and reliable. Fear of group rejection is highest during this period. During late adolescence, more emphasis is placed on a friend's personality and interests, as well as on the quality of the relationship itself.

Since an adolescent wants so much to be accepted, he/she conforms to a group with clothing, hairstyle, customs, manner of speech, music listened to, etc. In his/her eagerness to conform and, thus, be accepted, he/she sometimes engages in practices which even he/she does not approve of (e.g., smoking and drinking). Adolescents often are ready to conform even though their actions conflict with the customs and wishes of their parents. However, a peer group gives them an opportunity to experiment with new social situations, and to explore the adult lifeworld (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 91). From the above, it is inferred that peer group acceptance or

rejection has a big influence on an adolescent's personal actualization.

Where, initially a child was involved with and chose friends from members of the same gender, during adolescence he/she becomes aware of the opposite gender, and this leads him/her to explore heterosexual relationships. At first, the mingling of the two genders occurs in groups. In the beginning, individual mingling is very difficult, and for both genders, it is a big problem. Along with an erotic awakening, an admiration for the opposite gender arises, but encounters occur "from a distance". When a closer relationship between a boy and a girl arises (usually between 14- and 15-years-of-age), such a relationship is maintained more by an erotic than by a sexual attractiveness. Relationships of a truly sexual nature during adolescence occur less than what is generally assumed. However, there are indications of an increasing tendency toward the sexual (see Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 461 and Mussen et al., 1969, p 646). At this stage, a girl is mainly interested in a social relationship with a boy, and it is based on a psychic admiration. A boy is inclined toward a mixed physical-psychic relationship. He experiences this relationship much more tempestuously than a girl, and the initiation of sexual intercourse is entirely possible from his side (Sonnekus, 1976, pp 74 and 82). In time, youths become more accomplished in the art of courtship, and they become ready for a relationship which rests not only on the erotic, but on adult love (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 93). Successful heterosexual relationships are extremely important for an adolescent's adequate personal actualization and, thus, they even can contribute to the success of a future marriage.

Already during the primary school years, a child is strongly directed to reality. This continues during the secondary school years, but now he/she is directed to **question** that reality. In general, a younger child easily accepts what his/her parents or adults present to him/her. In contrast, an adolescent no longer accepts everything. He/she gives him/herself the right to criticize everything which **he/she views** as incorrect and, therefore, some of the norms set by his/her parents, and other adults come under critical scrutiny. He/she is very quick to point out any double standards, although he/she is prone to overlook his/her own mistakes. It is not only norms and values which come under fire but, e.g., his/her parents' personality, clothing, and behavior also are often judged harshly. Despite his/her own critical attitude, an adolescent is extremely



**sensitive to criticism**, especially with matters regarding his/her changing body. Although his/her critical attitude often leads to a confrontation with his/her parents, and is often seen in a negative light, it really points to a search for, discovery of, and even a testing of his/her own norms, i.e., those norms which eventually will give direction to his/her own adulthood (Sonnekus, 1976, p 43).

Often an adolescent's critical attitude is an attempt to disguise his/her own **insecurity**, and **lack of self-confidence**. Along with his/her "new" body, changing social relationships, and higher academic demands, the intensity of his/her emotional lived experiences also increases. Where formerly they were more concrete, his/her emotions now are centered on the ethical, moral, esthetic, social, etc. In addition, religion now becomes important in his/her life.

For example, there is a growing awareness of and a need for God and faith (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 97), and he/she is also compelled to search for the sense and meaning of his/her own life. An unsympathetic handling of an adolescent's problems in this connection can lead to his/her becoming completely alienated from his/her religion. Thus, even though, for the most part, he/she is on the highest emotional level (affectively stable), his/her emotional life is not as stable and uniform as it was in the primary school. Also, his/her own feelings now are much more complex, and not always clearly identifiable to him/herself. Thus, since in many areas, high demands are placed on him/her, and he/she is often uncertain about how he/she should behave, emotional lability can easily arise.

Although the above are only a few of the most salient characteristics, adolescence, is a period of distinct problems. Many changes occur during this stage and touch every aspect of being a person. The demands placed on him/her from all facets of the adult world are high, and very often put him/her under great stress. Because of the complexity of this period of life, an educator also is confronted with high demands, difficult challenges, and great responsibilities.

#### **4.2 Personal actualization of a secondary school child**

A secondary school child is in a period which is viewed everywhere as a transition from childhood to adulthood, and especially a senior secondary child is on the threshold of adulthood. This implies that

he/she already has attained a relatively high level in his/her becoming, and he/she resembles an adult in the **ways** he/she actualizes his/her learning and psychic life.

Regarding his/her own participation in his/her becoming adult, now he/she gradually actualizes his/her psychic life on the highest level. Also, during this period, clear **gender differences** arise with respect to actualizing the psychic life. During a junior primary phase, boys are still very much attuned to **physically exploring**, and live very much outwardly. In contrast, girls are often already in puberty and the course of actualizing their psychic lives is more uniform and is turned within. However, both genders are relatively strongly attuned to reality and, thus, are cognitively oriented to it. That is, their involvement with reality is mainly cognitive, and is attuned to **reasoning** and **problem solving**. Now the cognitive is actualized on a high level and, thus, in a more ordered way, and a large degree of cognitive refinement occurs when learning (see Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 279). However, in some cases, because of puberty problems, such as **bodily changes** and **relationship difficulties** at home as well as between the two genders, there is a propensity toward **emotional lability**, which can interfere with the course of cognitive learning. The affective is actualized on a higher level and, thus, a greater degree of **sensibility** and **sensitivity** are present in a secondary school child. As he/she succeeds in accepting his/her new body, as well as his/her other circumstances, there again arises a greater degree of stability, and a higher degree of order in his/her psychic life. Toward the end of puberty, a new balance is reached between affective and cognitive lived experience, and they function in greater **support** of each other. An increased degree of tranquility sets in, and an adolescent “finds” him/herself, and can proceed in freedom, and with responsibility to enter the life of an adult (Sonnekus, 1976, p 95).

Regarding a secondary school child's learning, it proceeds hand in hand with the previous description of the actualization of his/her psychic life during this period. Concerning the adequate actualization of the accompanying and sustaining modes of learning (**sensing** and **attending**), in general, there are no problems experienced with them. However, in some cases, especially because of bodily lived experiences, emotional lability arises which can restrain the further course of learning. Fortunately, this lability is usually temporary and, near the end of puberty is no longer a real problem.

The cognitive modes of learning, especially **perceiving** and **thinking**, are attuned to reasoning and problem solving. With respect to **remembering**, Engelbrecht et al. (1982, p 83) indicate that, by forming **memory schemas**, an adolescent can classify and organize information and, thus, more quickly master difficult learning content. Also, **imagining** and **fantasizing**, once again, have a prominent place among the modes of learning, after being slightly in the background during the primary school years. Generally, a secondary school child questions many things, argues about them, and gradually forms his/her own independent opinions. Also, he/she accepts fewer things as obvious, and becomes much more aware of hidden problems within them. He/she also tries to clarify his/her own inner world, and on this journey of discovery, he/she is increasingly better able to handle abstract concepts (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 80).

Following Piaget's classification of intellectual development, a secondary school child is in the stage of **formal operations**. Formal operations differ from concrete operations (as in the case of the primary school child) in that **all** potentialities are brought to bear to solve a problem (Hurlock, 1978, p 355). A child who can think in terms of formal operations can take into consideration many variables and their relationships to solve a problem (Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 433). In contrast to a younger child, a secondary school child can function on an **abstract** level of thought. His/her quality of thinking has deepened, and symbols and abstract concepts are used to solve problems. According to Wiechers (1977, p 82), in this period, he/she broadens his/her grasp of reality, since he/she can now be more objective about the outer world and can better understand implications. He/she can now see meaningfully interconnected relationships and can understand how a simple phenomenon links up with the broader whole of reality. Characteristic of formal operational thought is the fact that a child can think in terms of **abstract concepts** and can differentiate between what is **real** and what is **possible** (Wiechers, 1977, p 80). By way of summary, there is a qualitative difference between a young child's concrete thought, and an adolescent's ability to think abstractly. An adolescent can systematically explore many possible ways of solving a problem, can state and test hypotheses, can think about, and even philosophize about other abstract ideas (Karmel and Karmel, 1984, p 439).

As mentioned, gender differences in actualizing the psychic life come to the fore during the secondary school phase. These differences are also observed in the development of thought and, thus, in the learning of boys and girls. In general, boys are better than girls in computational, technical, and three-dimensional thinking while girls' verbal fluency and memory often surpass that of boys (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 81). The new level of thinking on which a secondary school child functions, and the differences between the two genders, have important implications for educating them. Indeed, a school has an important task, and it can make a significant contribution to the intellectual development of a child in this period of life. A study done in the U.S.A. (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 83) shows that a **school climate** which motivates pupils, and makes them eager to learn, promotes their cognitive development. Even so, a school's greatest contribution to intellectual becoming does not lie as much in **what** it does, as in **how** it does it. This implies that educating in school is not only faced with a large teaching task, but also with an extremely important task of curriculum development.

## 5. SUMMARY

As the title indicates, **personal actualization** is the central theme of this work. The **preconditions** for personal actualization, the **ways** it occurs through actualizing the psychic life, and learning, as well as the **results** of this actualization are thoroughly discussed in the previous chapters. The ways a child gives **sense** and **meaning** to his/her educating, and to the world around him/her greatly influence the ways his/her personal actualization takes place.

Because this is a textbook for student teachers, emphasis is on the **phenomenon of learning**, and its implications for the **practice of teaching**. Also, a teacher's final aim is a child's adequate personal actualization. Therefore, he/she faces the task of designing and presenting his/her lessons such that a child can lived experience the content as **meaningful**.

Since, in school, teachers relate to children as unique individuals, as well as in the context of classes and groups **over a span of many years**, knowledge of a child (and children) as he/she manifests him/herself in each **period of life** is indispensable for a teacher. Thus, in this last chapter, special attention is given to the ways

personal actualization occurs in each period of life from infancy to adulthood. Only if a teacher has this knowledge at his/her disposal is he/she able to accompany a child confidently so that he/she can lived experience his/her schooling and educating as meaningful and, thus, on this basis, his/her personal actualization can occur optimally.

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