

CHAPTER 2

THE MANY SIDES OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY (PSYCHOPEDAGOGICS)

1. INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature on the development of a child as a person leaves no doubt that a variety of "disciplines" each claim that this really is its area of study. In this regard, there is reference to "child psychology" or "developmental psychology", "pedagogic psychology", "psychopedagogics", "empirical education", "social psychology" and others. The point of contention between education and psychology about which one of the two really is the "mother science" with respect to child development (Nel, Sonnekus and Garbers, 1965; Langeveld, 1952, 1960, 1964; Nel, 1967) has only intensified the inadequacy of a monolithic approach to the matter. To get an indication of the shifting emphasis between psychology and education regarding the study of a child's development, each is considered briefly.

2. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT

According to Mussen (Mussen, Conger and Kagan, 1963: 14-16) the systematic study of children began during the 20th century and expanded to several areas and spread in many directions. The early research on conditioning and learning had led to formulating theories of a child's habit formation and his broadening of knowledge. Freud's psychoanalytic theory led to provocative ideas about personality development.

Since the beginning of the 20th century norms of physical, intellectual, emotional and social development have been carefully evaluated and techniques for measuring a person's potentialities have been refined and standardized. The relations among heredity and personality deficiencies, physical growth and development of specific motor aspects were studied by observing and experimenting.

A great deal of information was established about the factors determining the rate and adequacy of learning and remembering. Environmental influences as well as the effects of early deprivation, parental absence and the inadequate stimulation of cognitive functions, for example, were popular themes for empirical research.

To this day the main emphasis in child psychology is on the collection of empirical data on the child's behaviors with reference to learning, general behavioral tendencies by age, the development of psycho-motor and other skills and intelligence, differences in ways of behaving, etc. rather than on the child's personal dynamics as such.

With the above, the impression should not be created that this aspect is ignored by "child psychology" but rather it is to emphasize that there is mostly concentration on the **processes** or **mechanisms** that underlie development. The attempts in this respect are theoretical explanations of these changes.

Mussen and others (1963: 19, 20) indicate that the problems studied today are, in general, derived from particular theoretical explanations. Research projects are usually designed to test one or another theoretical matter or explanatory hypothesis without incorporating all aspects that are related to the developing child as a **person, as a totality in his situation.**

This fact is effectively illustrated by exploring the main themes that figure in contemporary textbooks, For example:

The prenatal period: genetic factors and development, prenatal development; **the first two years:** learning and development; biological changes in the first year of life; **development in the second year:** general physical development; motor development; intelligence and its measurement; socialization; **the toddler years:** motor and cognitive development, physical growth; language development; circumstances that influence language development and cognitive functioning; **the preschool years:** socialization in the family, sexual motivations and curiosity, aggression, fear and anxiety, external influences; **puberty:** intellectual-cognitive development; personality development and problems of adjustment; broadening of social environment; **adolescence:** physical changes, sexual

and social development; ego identity, values and alienation (see Mussen et al., 1963); or

Development before and after birth; injuries; development of personal identity; self image; play, aggression and domination; cognitive aspects of play; the development of altruism; parental influence on age group behavior; Piaget's theory of cognitive development; the development of concentration and memory; social cognition; intelligence and language of apes; human language development; reading and reading problems; mathematical understanding; socialization by the school; socialization by the family; socialization by television (See Fishbein, 1984).

The above examples of current topics of educational psychology are decidedly of importance for understanding child development in so far as they represent isolated matters of the child's development. The particular significance of authentic "child psychological" research is in the fact that, in harmony with progress in other branches of psychology, it is a refinement of research techniques, experimentation and the optimal use of statistical methods to investigate particular aspects of child development.

In general, psychology views educational psychology as that discipline that especially is directed to the developing child in a school framework. The assumption is that educational psychology, with reference to learning theory, has to provide a platform of knowledge to a teacher regarding the child's physical, physiological, intellectual, personality, moral and ethical growth so that he will know how to direct the "learning process", and optimally motivate and help him "develop" (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977: xiii). Therefore, it is clearly evident that contemporary textbooks on child psychology, as "educational psychology", will concentrate on themes of development such as (see Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977):

- * The influence of development on behavior
- * Physical growth and development
- * Early experiences
- * Cognitive growth
- * Language development
- * Personality development
- * Teaching and discipline
- * Moral education

- * The learning process
- * Contemporary learning theories
- * Learning in the classroom
- * Individual differences
- * Intelligence

Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977: xii) indicate that educational psychology is viewed by many as a thorough course in learning theory, by others as a course in measurement procedures where students learn a command of sophisticated statistical procedures, or it might also merely be anecdotal discussions of a series of representations of classroom situations. Educational psychology is viewed as a "full-fledged discipline" in which the primary contributions of general psychology are offered in broad strokes and in such a way that they can be "understood" and "used" by a teacher. The following statement [in English] by Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 117) also has an entirely valid ring: "By understanding why and how cognitive systems develop, we can avoid, on the one hand, teaching children something before they are ready to learn it, on the other hand, missing a golden opportunity by waiting to well past the most sensitive moment".

In almost all textbooks on educational psychology there are merely indirect references to a child's educative situatedness without, however, integrating this fact into a description of the development of both the child and the adult. In this regard, Langeveld says "Psychology has to describe a phenomenon that depends on particular conditions for its existence, among which is educating, however sketchy it might appear. The anthropological analysis of child life, to which the insight belongs that a child is an 'animal educandum', a being who is essentially committed to education, creates the first possibility for psychology to begin its work" (Langeveld [in Dutch], 1959: 19-20).

With this point of departure, development also is viewed from an educational perspective in the belief that "For a psychology to have lasting value for pedagogics, it has to be built up from an anthropological perspective, the basic structure of which is determined by a pedagogical axiomatic" (Langeveld [in German], 1964: 8) [i.e., the axiom that a person starts as a small being and that without educating him, he cannot become a full-fledged human being].

Already in 1918 Aloys Fischer had stated clearly that "pedagogic psychology is the scientific investigation of the psychological aspects of education" (Hillebrand [in German], 1959: 54).

Because the "educational" component is more or less absent from current works in child development, next this will be given more detailed attention.

3. THE EDUCATIONAL/PEDAGOGICAL STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT

Nel (1968: 31-32) indicates that already in 1921 Litt had rejected the notion that "educational psychology" is applied psychology and stated clearly that pedagogics has as its object a definite range of established facts of reality and it is precisely the reality of those events and achievements that form the contents of educating. Consequently, pedagogics is a **theory of a practice**. In addition, he showed clearly that the relationship between technology and application, which follows the model of the natural sciences, clearly does not exist in the pedagogic.

In addition, Nel (1968: 32) refers to Langeveld (1952: 231) who clearly states that in the natural sciences a direct line can be drawn between cause and effect and that this can be brought about with a particular technique. In educating such a technical means-end relationship does not arise because, on the one hand, the educator stands before a subject who possesses a particular freedom of behaving, a characteristic which is not peculiar to the "material" of a technique, so that the subject is a co-determinant of the educative event and its results, while, on the other hand, the educating is directed to a particular ideal image [of adulthood] to which the educand has to be led. This means that the technical relationship of application cannot exist in the entire domain of the objects [persons] studied by the human sciences.

In developmental psychology there usually is reference in general terms to the environment and developmental psychologists more or less are in agreement that a person's inherited potential develops or is restrained depending on the type, amount and quality of environmental influences and the stage of development when these influences affect him (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1977: 61). As long as a person is a **child** this "environment" remains an educative situation (Van Niekerk, 1982: 2). It is a fundamental [philosophical]

anthropological fact that a person is a being who educates, is educated and is committed to education (Langeveld, 1952: 165).

To be educatively situated means to give sense and meaning to life contents. A child gives meaning to reality precisely because he wants to be someone himself (Langeveld, 1952: 17, 142). However, this does not mean that he knows **how** he will become and in this regard he has to be supported and guided because without the support of his educators (parents, teachers) he can never become what he ought to be as a person. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1977: 45) say [in English] "Of all the species that inhabit the earth, the one whose growth and development is slowest is **Homo Sapiens**. The human being spends many long years in a state of physical immaturity, depending on the care and protection of others in order to survive".

In this the educator helps a child on the basis of the latter's helplessness, seeking help and support. The adult cannot eliminate a child from his life and he also **feels** himself to be **obligated** to give help and support to a child on the basis of his profound being bonded with, parental love for and feeling of responsibility for him. Just as a child cannot choose his parents, he cannot choose to have rich or poor parents, etc. or to have no parents at all, his being dependent on educators also is an onticity [a fact of being].

However, in his relationship with his parents a child is not passive but actively collaborates in establishing an authentic educative relationship in terms of which he forms value-judgments that he continually has to make about things, situations and circumstances which he encounters in life (see Nel, 1968: 26).

In light of the above, an educative situation is described as the entirety of meanings with which the adult and child have to deal. During the dynamics of educating, possibilities for acting become momentary realities when the adult and the child participate **together** in the event by actualizing the educative relationship, sequence, aim and activity structures which are continually interpreted by a child affectively, cognitively and normatively (Van Niekerk, 1986).

Because human existence is openness, one's primordially given developmental potentialities, however, remain only potentialities which are subject to intentional actualization. Personal

development, as becoming an adult, is actualized universally by means of education.

The educative event consists of two intertwined components. From a child's side there is development. From an adult's side there is guidance by an educator who creates an optimal opportunity for the child's development, and this codetermines the dialogue entered because development is realized in relation to the world as meant and which continually presents itself to a child as structured. A child encounters all sorts of structures: spatial, temporal, formal, social and language. In his interpretation of this multiply structured world, he broadens his experiential world in terms of contents but the world also acquires a formal-functional meaning for him. This broadening of contents is connected with acquired knowledge and it is on this basis that a child formally forms himself. Gradually he learns to feel "effective", to perceive, to think, to imagine, to fantasize, to memorize and to remember which again promote the effective expansion of his knowledge and emotional disposition. Therefore, the formal aspect is simultaneously also functional: it is the possibility of being dynamically involved in a constantly changing world, and as a child develops and knows more he becomes better equipped and he "functions" better (see Kok, 1982: 194).

Kok (1982: 194) says for a child to be able to develop in his world he has to be in a position to analyze it. He has to be able to analyze the given structures such that he can understand them: the analyzed material has to be synthesized again so it can be assimilated. Development of the self-concept, creativity and freedom are possible if a person understands and accepts the already existing structures of the subjectively experienced world (see Kok, 1982, 194).

Educating is primarily a matter of a personal relationship that acquires concrete form in affective and cognitive ways. A child experiences this relationship emotionally in an educative climate that is created by the educator(s). He thrives in this climate and he feels ready to develop his being a self. At the same time he has the opportunity especially to understand cognitively the educator's activities as a handling of situations by analyzing their structures in the concreteness of their relationship.

By means of **activities** an educator and child stand with each other in an educative relationship by which the adult's own way of being adult is presented by his personal manifestation and a climate is created that can promote or dampen a child's personal actualization. However, a child himself also contributes to this climate and to handling the situation. Thus, this is a **functional** event that, in particular, refers to the effect of both adult and child dealing with the latter's giving affective, cognitive and normative meanings and after which it also is referred to as **educative functionality**. The functionality of the educative activities is in their effect on the **meanings** they have for the educator and the child while they are engaged in them but then especially in the precipitation of these momentary meanings into the child's possessed experience which co-defines his personality structure and give form to, initiates and supports his behaviors.

When a child is guided to personality change (development), and indeed in terms of particular meanings or contents as conversational aids, this means a total personal involvement of the participants with each other and with the contents. Also, the educative relationship can only be meaningful if there is a clearly indicated and overarching educational aim--also a manifestation of an anticipated personality by the child. Thus, a child's personality development includes an elevation in meaning because of its cumulative nature. Original affective, cognitive and normative meanings always influence subsequent meanings (Van Niekerk, 1981).

In each educative situation all of its structures are implemented and they always appear as intertwined with and never separate from each other. However, there are no educative events or moments of personal actualization during which the essentials of educating and the essentials of a person are not equally actualized even though each occurrence of educating is unique during which the adult and child participate in it in particular ways and **act** in personal ways.

Actualizing educative essentials is qualified as the "dynamics of educating" which, as such, refers to the interaction between a child's and an educator's personal actualization, which also includes their physical environment. It has to be stressed that **all** educative essentials (thus, also a child's personal essentials) in a particular educative (personality developmental) situation are going to be

implemented and their actualization, inter-relations and qualities are of decisive importance for a child's development.

The educator's feelings, thoughts and hierarchy of values, as embodied in his guiding activities, directly influence a child's momentary personal actualization and touch him especially emotionally and often not as the educator had intended.

The effect of educating on a child's emotionality is obvious. The affective and with this the entire emotional life is of such fundamental importance for his sense of security and his exploration of the world that it has to be given an important place in developmental psychology and in psychological pedagogics (see Nel, 1968: 52). Thus, the effect of educative actions can be "read" in the affective, cognitive and normative meanings of a child as they influence his behaviors.

From the above, the complexity of the phenomenon of educating and a child's personality development are very clear. This complexity has obliged researchers to study the educative reality from different points of view. This has gradually resulted in establishing a number of pedagogic [part-] perspectives each of which discloses and categorically describes a particular slice of the reality of educating.

In general, pedagogics is viewed as the science or the theory of educating [teaching-learning] which is the result of continually reflecting on and analyzing the educative reality that encompasses the development of a child. It is a system of knowing that is not derived from other sciences such as biology, psychology, sociology (Nel, 1968: 42).

"For pedagogics the terrain of research is the phenomenon of educating. The pedagogic deals with a universal experiential fact between persons, namely that there is such an event as educating. For the pedagogician this involves describing and grounding the educative phenomenon, or better, the educative event as it shows itself or as it appears in an educative situation" (Van Rensburg and Landman [in Afrikaans], 1984, 179).

However, this system of knowing was built up by distinguishable [part-] perspectives such as fundamental pedagogics, didactic pedagogics, psychopedagogics, comparative and historical

pedagogics, sociopedagogics, orthopedagogics and others. The right for these various perspectives to exist has without any doubt already been corroborated as scientific (see Langeveld, 1952; Oberholzer, 1968; Landman and Roos, 1973; Van der Stoep, 1968; Sonnekus, 1970, 1973; Van Niekerk, 1980; Van Rensburg and Landman, 1984: 134-135) and their **macrostructural** descriptions of **educating** leave no doubt with anyone who understands the essentials of scientific practice knows what the essential constituents of educating are. Indeed, this is in contrast to psychology that has not yet described its terrain categorically and, therefore, in all of its activities it is not involved with **studying persons** [as persons].

From a macrostructural approach to a developing child as situated educatively, educationists have brought great clarity in terms of relationship, sequence, aim and activity structures especially in recent decades (see Langeveld, 1952; Perquin, 1962, Landman and Roos, 1973; Van Rensburg and Landman, 1984: 136, 138, 145).

In addition, the ground structure of a child's personal actualization also is described comprehensively from a combined **educational** and **psychological** perspective where the accent is not always equal.

4. A DIVERSITY OF ACCENTS

It is not the aim here to extensively discuss the various educationally and psychologically oriented perspectives on a child's development and there is only brief reference to a few.

For Nel (1968: 20) this amounts to a psychology that springs from the pedagogic situation and he refers to this as "psychological pedagogics". He says there is no question that an educator in an educative situation necessarily is confronted with psychological phenomena but that this does not have to do with psychology, as such, and also not with a psychology that is "applied" to educating a child, but to those moments that spring from the educative situation. This has to do with psychological knowledge in order to know how to act with the aim of a child's future development (Nel, 1968) and, therefore, this involves a psychology of becoming, developmental psychology or child psychology. Thus, this has to do with a child's personal becoming, with the continual broadening of his possessed meanings. The intentionalities or ways of going out to the world are looked at (e.g., the affective and cognitive ways of

being) and his perceptions, thoughts, intelligence and more are considered, also as intentionalities. In addition, these are related to his level of becoming and the degree of educating he receives. Thus, included in psychological pedagogics is the study of these distinguishable but inseparable intentionalities as they appear longitudinally, i.e., from birth through adolescence and into adulthood.

The following are examples of contemporary educationally oriented disciplines that all concentrate on understanding a child's personality development as an area of study: Pedagogic psychology, psychological pedagogics, empirical education, psychopedagogics and developmental (becoming) psychology. The main themes addressed in textbooks include the following, for example (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1979): psychopedagogics as a science; child learning; child becoming; a child's actualizing his psychic life on the way to adulthood; the lesson practice; actualizing the psychic life of a child from a philosophy of life perspective; the teacher. The "psychological" figures continually with respect to a child's person structure with reference to the affective, cognitive and normative meanings he attributes to things under the guidance of his educators.

In addition, there is didactic pedagogics that focuses on a child's development with respect to the school. Its aim is to answer a teacher's questions about how to deal with a child's learning, how to optimally motivate him and how to help each individual child develop (Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1984: 14).

Didactic pedagogics also has to provide a basis for the teacher to implement what Van Gelder (1964: 46) calls the three axioms for drawing up didactic principles, namely:

- * the principle of forming (aimed at a child's harmonious development);
- * the principle of development (aimed at developing a child's personal abilities); and
- * the principle of activity (making the didactic activities serviceable for:
 - * forming learning situations;
 - * ordering the learning material; and
 - * guiding the learning event of each individual child).

The emphasis is on specific moments of personal development that arise in the school situation such as language development, school readiness, beginning reading, language teaching, and actualizing intelligence.

In addition, there is social psychology and sociopedagogics that are concerned with a child's development in relation to his groups, family, school and society.

Nowadays it clearly is generally accepted that the earlier distinction between the role of heredity and environment is of limited significance; a child's development has to be considered as a totality which includes the interaction between heredity and a child's educative situatedness as well as the duration within which the dynamics of educating occur.

Psychopedagogics aims at providing the fundamental insights about a child's developing and learning and proposes how to incorporate these insights in terms of the dynamics of teaching in the framework of the home and the school with the aim of optimal learning and development so that the child and parent or teacher are real partners in the events of teaching and educating.

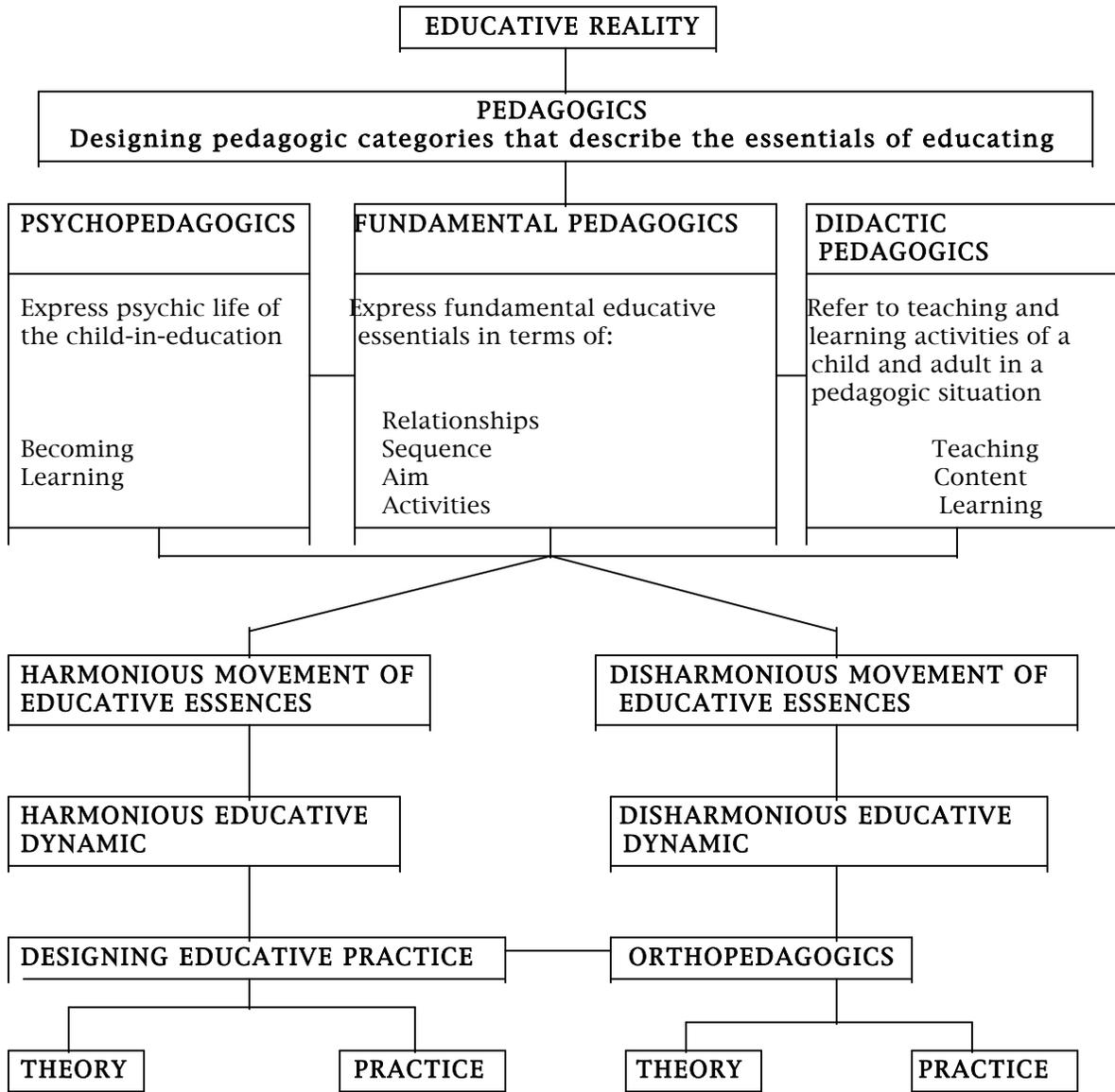
The following is an overview regarding the significance of educational-psychological insights regarding a child's development.

*** The significance of educational-psychological insights regarding a child's development**

The daily behaviors of children provide sufficient indication that various aspects of their development have to be simultaneously taken into account. For example, personality development is closely correlated with cognitive and physical development but the interaction among them and the dynamics of educating always have to be of greater importance than studying each separately. There has to be thorough acquaintance with research findings in this regard, although the separate components of the dynamics of educating should also be represented. However, these results have to continually be reinterpreted within the context of these dynamics. Because a child's personal development involves continual change, it is necessary to always acquire more clarity regarding the essentials of personality as it manifests itself during

the various phases of development. In this regard, there are a variety of theories about a child's affective, cognitive and normative development (see Piaget, 1948, 1963, 1966, 1970; Piaget and Inhelder, 1964; Erikson, 1959, 1963; Bloom, 1964; Nel, 1968; Scott, 1968; Kohlberg, 1969, 1975; Kagan et al., 1970; Jones et al., 1971; Fishbein, 1984).

*** Synthesis**



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