

## CHAPTER 2 EXPERIENCING AS A CATEGORY OF LEARNING

In the first chapter it became clear that the acts of teaching and learning are integral moments of human becoming and of all existential interventions. One can understand this if it is taken into account that they involve the categorical unlocking of reality and world. Thus there is no human becoming without opportunities being created for acquiring one's own experiences, for independent acquisitions and for increasing one's field of vision on reality.

In the contemporary views of the concept of forming, its actualization cannot be thought of as apart from the accumulation of experiences. Unfolding and evolving that are made possible by acquiring cultural contents from outside (forming) point to the fact that learning is an inner event that is realized by each person only within particular boundaries of potentialities. Hence, all persons will not attain the same quality of formedness or of learning achievements. One person also learns better than another because he is more confident about what he is involved in doing.<sup>(10, 12)</sup> The totality of experiencing, with its coherent structures of mindful observing (aanskouing), lived experiencing and encountering, constitutes the core of our deliberations in this chapter. In this respect, the task of a didactician lies confined in the question: how can a learning situation be designed such that it will awaken the maximum readiness and participation in a child to want to learn on his own initiative, but at the same time also will present the opportunity in which he can venture, i.e., proceed to constitute his own lifeworld.

Prohaska<sup>(46, 77)</sup> also states correctly: "Deshalb ist Erziehung zugleich ein Wagnis und ein Abenteuer".

### 2.1 HUMAN LEARNING

A person's does and don'ts, actions and thoughts cannot be interpreted and understood on the basis of results such as those

obtained with animal experiments. We also cannot distinguish human from animal learning only on the basis of a higher degree of insightfulness, awareness and planfulness as does Hehlmann.<sup>(25, 343)</sup> A person learns in ways that are totally “different” from the ways an animal does. For the purpose of this study, the concept “learning”, as a personal acquiring and spiritual unfolding, is reserved and only applied by a person for humanly intervening with reality and the world, for his assimilating the demands of each situation and for improving his achievement.

Learning manifests itself as a category of being human in the form of spontaneous learning. From birth each person already possesses a comprehensive range of potentialities and talents that emerge with the needed motivation (learning readiness, i.e., skills). Views about this matter are diverse. Aarts<sup>(1, 17)</sup> says a child learns when he is pushed by an interior or external motive. On the basis of the intensity of the demand and quality of address from the object encountered (its formative value), one will go to meet it, give meaning to it or learn to know it. Langeveld<sup>(38, 45)</sup> indicates that behind the principle of exploration and the acquisition of experience lies the existential principle of emancipation – that “a child wants to be someone himself”. Because each human being wants to be a “person” himself, he is going to learn irrespective of whether he receives instruction (education/upbringing). A young child, but also an adult, continually is involved in acquiring experiences, structuring acts of thinking, developing convenient skills and using techniques. The meaning and value that one attributes to the different life contents change gradually with one’s schooling and learning experiences. In a narrower sense, then, learning means the broadening of experience and the deepening of insights (concepts), the acquisition of knowledge through practicing, inculcating, remembering and finally growing into society.<sup>(25, 342)</sup>

With respect to the **thematization** of learning, Buck<sup>(10, 11)</sup> expresses himself as follows: Of all human achievements, learning appears to be the most obscure. Here learning without awareness is distinguished as providing the only evidence for the execution of a series of events in which the actualization of the outcomes of such learning can be carried out at a later stage. As an example he mentions the ways in which a child, from the very beginning, learns

to speak. On the other hand, learning must also be seen as one of a human being's most trustworthy achievements. Under this fall the acquisition of knowledge, lore and skills in a conscious way. A person learns not only because he works, but also in terms of the ways in which he has worked and thus also about himself as a worker (self-disclosure). Each experience assumes the presence of a subject and an object. Thus, as a category of learning, experiencing always implies someone experiencing someone or something. Although learning shows a close affinity to the concept of experiencing it is not identical to it. Learning is something more. In addition, for acquiring experiential content in a learning event, this entails ordering and integrating, practicing and applying it. Thus, the formative-, work- and observational-aids that an educator (didactician) must implement do not exclude the life involvement necessary for acquiring experience with a matter, but especially for reflecting on and disclosing coherences.<sup>(47, 174)</sup> In terms of simple and fundamental learning forms, there must be an attempt to illuminate and clarify the essentials of the concepts of concern. In acquiring superficial and disordered experiential knowledge, these insights usually remain concealed. Hence, a visit to a famous museum without the necessary preparation and follow-up work will be of little value in the sense of a learning event as acquiring knowledge by independently solving a life problematic and a "felt" problem. From the above it is clear that to try to give a formal definition to a problem of such a complex nature as "learning" cannot serve as an aim. Therefore, there is a search for particular characteristics that are visible in different forms of learning.

Keilhacker<sup>(5, 96)</sup> distinguishes, in rank order from lowest to highest, four forms of learning when it involves learning new contents:

- (i) He views learning that occurs on the basis of **associated reflexes** as the simplest form. These learning activities are not limited to reactions to "stimuli" from the outside, but possibilities exist such that a later "stimulus" can be associated with an earlier one and can bring the same reaction into motion. This form of learning is realized on a biological level.
- (ii) As a second form of learning on a higher level, he mentions **imitation** that constitutes a great deal of the

- learning activities of a child's first school years. Doing with and imitating (doing after), as forms of learning, then manifest themselves mainly on a categorical level.
- (iii) A third form of learning is that of **“trying”** to learn that usually is stimulated by confusion+ and surprise in a person that has arisen from a particular problem, such that now, on his own initiative, he seeks a solution. In struggling with the resisting and separate insights one now becomes aware of a variety of new possibilities and related contributing factors. New questions continually arise that indicate to an adult what help can be of particular significance. At the same time, it occurs that particular skills and certain movements are perfected.
  - (iv) As the highest form of learning, he mentions **“insightful”** learning, implying that the correct ordering, reciprocal relationships and structural coherences are unlocked for a learning person. Earlier experiences and knowledge are related to the new acquisitions (insights) in order to disclose a greater unity or essentiality of the topic. Depending on the possessed experiences on hand, the formedness and talents of a person, this form of learning offers numerous possibilities for further structuring and re-structuring.

After all of these considerations we still cannot arrive at an acceptable theory of the phenomenon of learning, unless an ontological-anthropological status can be taken as ground for a point of departure. On the one hand, for some there is an anchorage in the pragmatic where for the event of learning too much emphasis is given to the entwining of its moments and structures in the practical coherence from which it has arisen. On the other hand, the contributions of Keilhacker especially show a “stratified” structure similar to that of Kohnstamm's interpretation of the (German) psychology of thinking.

A phenomenological look at the phenomenon of learning in its ontological-anthropological grounding, however, cannot accept such a stratified structure because the objects of the surrounding world of a child address not only his life of knowing but also his emotional life and thus a child is required to respond in his totality. Hence it

is so important that the results of a learning event always are lived experienced by a child as his “own achievement”. The choice and presentation of the learning content and not merely a theme forced upon a child. In the last mentioned case, learning a “particular achievement” is emphasized as an aim, because of its objective nature, will have less impact.

Therefore, it is necessary to describe the phenomenon of learning more closely in a pedagogical field. A child must learn so that he can choose later. The directedness to mastering topics must not be seen here as the primary task, much rather the task is to form a means for unlocking (forming) that makes possible the ordering of a greater unity. In this greater unity, made possible by categorical forming, there does not remain a multiplicity of separate learning results, objective and subjective possessed experiences, existing as examples as was believed by faculty psychology.

Learning, thus, must be viewed as a basic potentiality for each person that gives his activities a character of “openness”. Then, it is the task of the school to help increase a pupil’s learning readiness by offering not only formative contents but also by implementing learning aids that can provide for better motivation to learn and for a more confident way of learning.

If one now turns back to the school situation, it seems very clear that only a part of the total act of learning usually is done justice. Our stated aims of educating cannot be attained only by a mechanical transfer of factualities. Only when a pupil masters realistic categories and orienting information in a meaningful way can the aims be accomplished. Any apparent teaching of knowledge and formal memory drills, in themselves, only are formative for a pupil to a small degree, although one cannot completely exclude them from a learning event.

Consequently, perspectives other than the above also must be considered. For example, Van der Stoep<sup>(61)</sup> sees learning as a constituting event that is much more than the mere conscious activity in the light of which activities are brought about by intentionality. Because each act of learning emanates from a total person and is awakened by a meaning-intention, learning and

constituting never can be equated with activities on a physical or psychic level, e.g., with mere intellectualizing.

According to Buck<sup>(10, 9)</sup> an act of learning always takes its course when an appeal is made to a person's knowledge already on hand or his foreknowledge. Each reaching back and conscious or non-conscious connecting with possessed experiences (also such knowledge as mere thought structures and fantasy constructions that have arisen also must be grounded in earlier observations for their understanding) mean that "something" new is made explicit. This gives to learning the meaning that in the act of learning greater certainty (meaningfulness) is given to an already "known" topic.

Buck indicates further that fruitful use can be made of a good "example" for introducing and explaining a topic. Besides additional knowledge of the particulars [e.g., examples] contributing to allowing the essences of the general to become visible, with each act of learning there also is the possibility that additional characteristics of the general can be clarified in terms of the individual case. Learning, then, always has the double meaning of: On the one hand, the unlocking of new and supplemental knowledge, and, on the other hand, a deepened insight into the meaning and coherence of on hand knowledge (possessed experiences).

An important didactic-pedagogical conclusion that can be made at this stage is that learning is an "event in becoming" that a teacher must steer in the right direction and help realize such that there is greater certainty about the value of the learning outcomes.

The design of a learning situation should be such that it creates possibilities for learning in its working for breadth (new acquisitions) as well as its working for depth (comprehension of meaning). By proceeding from the exemplary with a simple and known example one can be led to an insightful mastery and appropriation of the **essence** of the new, yet unknown, general concept. The exemplary principle offers possibilities for an inverse approach that are just as good as the inductive; i.e., beginning with a good general example (type) one proceeds via deductive thinking to pointing out certain individual cases as typical.

What now is brought about from such more graphic experiencing, by active structuring in thinking, forms the first pre-understanding via systematizing and ordering that later can be pushed through to scientific concept forming. This brings us to an important didactic-pedagogical truth: Mindfully observing (experiencing) a matter always must precede all concept forming (structuring in language). This implies the following: A child learns not so much on the basis of what he already actually and explicitly knows, but out of a “latent” knowing that awakens in him a particular anticipation that is manifested in the form of a question. Therefore, it is so important that the event of learning is actualized in a space within which each pre-understanding can be reevaluated anew on the basis of experiencing it as near to reality.

For such a purer concept forming and greater certainty about the learning results, the exemplary principle of learning and teaching can be applied fruitfully. The value of exemplary learning, therefore, is not only in a conscious or non-conscious uniting of a child’s possessed experiences but also in the fact that “something” from the at hand [knowledge] that is still concealed and not yet made explicit. From such a meaningful grasping of a simple though fundamental example it is possible for a pupil, in terms of the particulars, to understand the essences of a larger or smaller slice of reality as a general matter. This method and form of learning shows a close affinity to the demands required for the categorical unlocking of reality. However, besides learning also making an appeal to a pupil’s foreknowledge, this also implies a “confrontation” with it.

### **2.1.1 The fields of tension of the learning activity**

Drechsler<sup>(15, 11)</sup> indicates that in his becoming, a person always finds himself at a point of intersection of world as well as reality and the place he assumes in life on this basis will shift with his acquisitions.

From the foregoing it also has become clear that the learning event also is presumed to work in breadth and acquire experience, it especially is its going into depth that requires particular attention and determines its forms of approach and forms of content. Forms

of teaching and modes of learning that solely remain directed to training and the memorization of large quantities of factual knowledge at the cost of thoroughness and originality largely miss their formative aim. One then can do nothing other than notice the ontological moments of the field of tension within which the event of a person learning occurs. This ontological anchorage of the act of learning provides a person not only the possibility of acquiring large parts of reality and the world, but also the possibility of evaluating his experiences as a double unlocking [of reality and the world]. When the situation presents itself, he surpasses a given or experienced reality in establishing the new because in the course of the learning event he has discovered the sense of his experiencing.

Thus, the validity of the categories of learning do not rest on particular forms of learning that they might represent but on the fact that learning is a way of being and therefore is given with being human. Thus, it is unnecessary and impossible to try to find the phenomenon of learning and the relationship of tension that prevails among its different aspects on any other theoretical foundation or pronouncement (psychological, methodological).

According to Prohaska<sup>(46, 75)</sup> a learning person always finds himself in an alternating game: on the one hand with his Umwelt, but at the same time with his educator and those aims that ought to be realized. In this field of tension all aspects always must be seen as in a dynamic, harmonious interaction with each other. A didactic question that ought to receive primary attention is: in what does this field of tension **constitute** itself? An unprejudiced look at this reality shows clearly that, in a pedagogic-didactic event, there are two moments that bring about the dynamic and harmony of its course:

- (i) the presence of person to reality, and
- (ii) the presence of person to person.

Although participation in reality necessarily implies knowledge of it, this knowledge is not always obvious in so far as it concerns persons. Human becoming, as it manifest itself in educating, always enters a field of contents in which reality itself is represented. There is tension in the fact that a child does not know but that he

ought to know. Therefore, reality, person and things form the playing field of the tension that arises in the act of learning. Reality itself is not a participant in this play on the playing field, i.e., the only participants are the educator and the educand. The terrain of intervention is reality. **Consequently, the structure is bipolar.**

**a) Polar field of tension between person (pupil) and reality (Umwelt)**

For the possible unfolding of human personality, human becoming must take its course in a space within which harmony remains preserved between subjective and objective, between pathic [affective] and gnostic [cognitive] moments. This harmony proclaims the possibility of a blending of person and world and thus also the possibility of categorical forming. Any entry of a person into his Umwelt is a dynamic action that is realized in terms of his intentional attunement to mastering an area of reality as well as the demanding character of an opposing object that a learning person is forced to give an answer to this appeal in his attitude and actions.

Van Parreren<sup>(64, 17)</sup> states that learning is a process with lasting results in which a person is involved in acquiring experience by reacting to situations. A learning person must, anew in each situation, take a position toward the contents (matters, standpoints, problems) with which he is confronted. Schulze<sup>(51, 9)</sup> also calls this involvement of a person with things (a person entering a relationship with his Umwelt of things, persons and situations) “encounters”. With this there is the question of the essence of learning compared with the event of experiencing. In a learning event, we cannot separate experiencing and thinking because in thinking there always is a search for the sense of experiencing (actualizing existence). Similarly, there also cannot be mention of thinking without an experiential bedrock because thinking always implies “thinking of something” or “thinking about something” that thereby refers back to possessed experiences or original (primordial) experiencing in terms of which the first thought structures had arisen. With this it is postulated that learning activity, as it is in the original search for the sense of experiencing, also is primary for the course and quality of thinking. These facets

merely are **distinguished** and unraveled but they are necessarily manifested as a unity when actualized in life. In its initial forms pure experiencing will have the greatest emphasis in the life of a child. According to the degree that he proceed to emphasize the sense of his experiences this emphasis will transfer to his thought structures. For this study attention is given to the first emphasis as explained above.

However, we also cannot again neglect to mention the pronouncements of Buck<sup>(10, 9)</sup> regarding this matter. With the entry of a person into a matter with the aim of mastering it, Buck says pre-scientific experiencing and “pre-knowing” have an important task: “Den nicht nur beruht das Lernen auf einem Vorwissen, sondern es implizien auch eine Konfrontation met diesem Vorwissen: sei es als das Wechselspeil zwischen den in jeder Erfahrung wirksamen Antizipationen und ihrer Bewahrung vor allem ihrer Widerlegung, sei es als die aneigende Vergegenwartigung derjenigen zu aller Erfahrung gehorenden Voraussetzungen, die in der Sprache der neuzeitlichen Philosophie a priori heissen”.

The onset of the learning event, as one pole of its course, always flows from establishing relationships. And because a person always finds himself in a field of tension, powers are dispenced and dispositions are sought that carry the act of learning further. The push to learn, thus, often is determined by the strength of the feeling of affinity or alienation that the object awakens in a person’s landscape.

In the search for the sense of a person’s going out to his Umwelt, the following two aspects always must be taken into account:

- (i) What does the demand character of the things in the immediate vicinity of a person include, and
- (ii) what does this require and mean for entering into a relationship with them.

When a child’s first enters the world and steps into reality his doing and thinking activities still are bonded to each other and most learning still occurs on the basis of a spontaneous participation in reality. Therefore, at home and later in school opportunities must

be allowed for realizing such didactic principles in the fundamental forms of learning such as play, doing something oneself, doing something with, etc. Here learning and experiencing still are closely related to each other because most acquisitions still proceed on a concrete-visible level. At the beginning a child still learns differences non-consciously and later arrives at the knowledge of certain things without being able to show the events in terms of which this had become possible. Thus, e.g, an earlier focusing on a postulated aim can disturb the spontaneous learning via early childlike play. Buck<sup>(10, 9)</sup> indicates to us that learning activities directed to the further disclosure of the meaning of a matter necessarily will precede all refined concept forming. Therefore, one cannot suffice with a theoretical clarification or explanation when insightful learning is striven for. In order to disengage any inferring and fantasizing with respect to the essences of an area of concern, all purely rational structures and descriptions must rather be evaluated in terms of an illustrative example or demonstration.

When in this way one is led to a greater certainty and a more differentiated knowledge structure, the tension between pupil and reality will be decreased to the extent that his experiencing of the matter is broadened and deepened. With additional information and orientation the tension resulting from the alienation of the object and the confusion resulting from lack of order also can be diminished further. In practice, one notices particularly well the significance of the allegation in the actual problem of learning material overload that in our schools includes the danger of “diluting” and superficializing contents. As a result of such an overloading, it is very difficult for a pupil to see the structure that reality shows in its larger categorical context. What is essential and fundamental are made invisible by the abundance [of contents]. Because the learning material appears to be more difficult than it really is, unnecessarily tension and sometimes discouragement are awakened in a child.

However, an essential earmark of teaching always is to lead a child to a state where he is in a position to respond to the appeal of reality in a distinctively knowing way. He must be put in a position to be able to choose on the basis of what he knows. Thus, situations must be created for pupils to more closely “associate” (experiences)

for longer or shorter periods to master areas of reality as one finds them in “unprepared” encounters and lived experiences. Such greater concerned involvement (with unprepared encounters and lived experiences) always help to place the relationship between pupil and learning contents on a firmer foundation and can take the form of an independent wrestling with a problem, visiting a poor residential area or a personal achievement (one’s own summary of a circuit that allows a small light to burn).

In this way, each conquest becomes one’s own possession with genuine results that put a child in a position to construct his own hierarchy of values. Although such a ranking of values always remains a relative matter, it still is important since it is going to be a determining factor for the quality of the relationship that will be taken up in the field of tension between adult and child. The concept “value” indicates that a person always is involved in trying to determine the weight of the aim regarding its generation of tension (content). The evaluation a child arrives at therefore is the last personal disclosure of the quality of an area of reality as he sees it himself. Thus, the objectivity of the values cannot be “transferred” or “passed on” by any previously methodically compiled designations.

On the other hand, an unreal (false) “safe” space that educating a child creates not only makes him more vulnerable to and unprepared for evaluating the genuine world with which he has to cope later outside of the parental home or school, i.e., in his vocational life.

In the last chapter an attempt is made to use the characteristics of the exemplary principle and thus try to eliminate some of these aspects that contribute to increasing the tension between pupil and reality.

In this regard we can suffice with Wegmann’s<sup>(68, 121)</sup> explanation of possibilities of the exemplary: “Das dabei entburdet, aber nicht entbehrt, elementarisiert, aber nicht atomisiert, fundamentalisiert, aber nicht systematisiert, interessiert, aber nicht spezialisiert, verschlichtet, aber nicht simplifiziert, akzentuiert, aber nicht fragmentiert wird, ...”

Because exemplary teaching perhaps requires yet a higher degree of skillfulness but also more pedagogical patience and goodwill than another form of teaching, a lessening of tension cannot be realized only by the correct choice and mastery of meaningful contents but also on the basis of a good relationship that must be built up between child and educator that always will remain coupled with each one's sense of values. This brings us to a second moment that is definitive for the good course of the learning event:

**b) Polar field of tension between person (pupil) and person (educator)**

The mere being with and physical "being by each other" of child and adult in a situation of association does not yet constitute a didactic-pedagogical situation. Also, a confrontation with learning contents themselves is not always sufficient for a pupil to become aim-directed with regard to penetrating them. The level, form and way of communication between a child and his educator manifest themselves as continually changing. As initiator of the event, usually an adult chooses what the contents, tempo and level of presentation will be. The help and accompaniment by an adult insures that the cultural contents move in front of a pupil more quickly and with more understanding than what would be the case with a more spontaneous course of becoming.

The trust that a child places in an adult is determined by the degree to which he actualizes the aims as presented by an adult in his comportment, attitudes and actions. However, we always have to do with good as well as poor adults, but also with different types of pupils that bring about the possibility that there will be successes, but also failures, original disclosures and mistakes. A healthy relationship of a pupil to a teacher, especially on an emotional level, definitely will influence his intentional participation in the learning event. Identification with an educator carries over to having an intentional stake in the learning material (subject matter area) that he/she represents and by which directedness to the aim striven for becomes visible. If the aim is too remote or too demanding for a pupil or shows too complex a structure to have formative sense, the

presentations must provide the pupil with problems in intermediate exercises that, as events that are nearer-to-reality, will contribute to the weaker students not becoming discouraged so quickly.

A teacher also must try to bring about change by substituting familiar forms of teaching with newer ones. In doing so interest and attention-span will be preserved.

By providing the opportunity for mutual competition among the pupils, but also by giving differentiated assignments, a pupil always can be confronted with the challenge to throw himself into the learning event. Therefore, a pupil first must have the opportunity, on the basis of his own anticipations and intuitive feeling, to search for a solution to a problem before a didactician intervenes and offers help.

Practice shows itself such that in the primary classes an educator moves about in front of a small child so that he can learn from the examples an adult presents. The initial learning activities of a child largely are attuned to imitating. As time passes, a child leaves this state of imitating and shifts to taking a position alongside an adult. With puberty, it is necessary that an educator accompany a pupil in order to help create a safe space within which a pupil can venture. On the basis of a stronger rationality that is characteristic of the life form of one in puberty, it is necessary for him to create the opportunity to participate independently in the event, i.e., to work together with an adult, especially with the aim that his lack in independence and his helplessness, that stand out sharply from the formedness and skillfulness of an adult, can be eliminated. Only a good relationship of trust and sympathetic authoritative guidance can insure that the tension that surfaces with this does not exercise restraint and rather is transformed into a mobilization of power for greater exertion and better learning achievements.

But with the onset of puberty one also finds an awakened awareness in a child of himself being a person. With an increase in forming a pupil feels more up to taking greater responsibility. Thus, he is more up to learning (studying) on his own initiative. For the latter to do justice to his emancipation, an adult now must withdraw to a position behind a pupil by which he still can keep an eye on him,

teach and provide help. Out of regard for the educator as a person and on the basis of a relationship of authority that exists, the presence of an adult still should have an indirect influence on the attitude and activities of a pupil and thus also should encourage him to achieve. Hence, we see that the person of the educator, his engagement and forms of teaching play a motivating and inspiring role since they continually summons a pupil to greater mobility and liveliness. Such a favorable learning climate only can develop in a classroom if there is a safe and protected learning space in which a harmony is maintained between receptivity (objective values) and subjectivity (subjective values).

The degree to which and the way in which formative and teaching aims are going to be realized also depends on the initiative and planning of an adult. However, in its essence this is a matter of tension that must to some extent be described more closely.

Because the mindfulness, interest and directedness of a pupil to the aims presented by an adult show a close affinity to attention-span, the moment of tension remains an important factor in the learning event that never can be entirely left out of consideration. The matter is such: a didactic beginning emanates from stating a problem or connecting with a genuine questioning attitude, a concern for better and more insightful learning experiences. Along with formulating a question and the embodiment of an aim in a problem, from the beginning a pupil is required to search for a solution in a motivated and knowing-researching way. Tension is heightened yet further if there is good progress and harmony of the event by the appropriateness of a pupil's (as someone who "does not know" and thus still cannot choose) interaction that is brought about with a teacher (as someone who already has mastered values and norms and is unconditionally obedient to them). The comfort and self-confidence with which a teacher orders and evaluates the learning contents stand out in sharp contrast with an uncertain and awkwardness of a pupil's attempts. In light of all of the problems mentioned above, a teacher certainly must now be able to answer the question: What is learning? That is, if he in any sense wants to constitute a synthesis (i.e., meaningfulness) in his work.

Because it is impossible to summarize such a complex phenomenon as learning in a particular definition, we will try to go back to reality and search there for the unchangeable (structures) [of learning]. This brings us to the concept “category” (categories of learning) that the phenomenologist, Husserl, so effectively describes as the simplest, irrefutable, fundamental meaning of a phenomenon.

The only way in which the concept “learning” can be known is by questioning its categories in terms of which learning criteria and ground forms of the activity of learning can become visible and from which additional forms and ways of learning can acquire form.

## 2.2 EXPERIENCING

When human becoming also is seen as the continual acquisition of experience, didactics is compelled to view this acquisition as its primary task. These considerations require that the close connection between learning and experiencing is noticed and that, irrespective of the formal school situations in which a child necessarily participates, linkages also will be sought in the practical life of a child outside of school in order to expand a his field of experiencing as widely as possible. There must be an awareness that there is a great correspondence between a person’s everyday experiencing (that which remains is retained knowledge) and that which is embraced by the concept “spontaneous learning”. From experiencing something always appears to a person as learnable. Conversely, the acquisition of experience is not limited to learning that is impelled by the presentation (representation) of an adult (teacher), but it also includes one’s own spontaneous impetus to learn on the basis of the appeal of a confronted person, object or matter. A good example of such a parallel course between the act of learning and the event of experiencing can be seen in a case where a child acquires experience directly with a simple, concrete object. This way of involvement in reality can be characterized as a pure act of learning because here there is an appropriation of the new, still unfamiliar. While such direct, purposeful experiencing is not always possible, all kinds of teaching aids must be implemented in an attempt to fill the gaps. In practice, today it already is known that there must be a great reliance on secondary sources of experiencing in most of our schools. Consequently, it is

understandable that didacticians such as Hehlmann<sup>(25, 130)</sup> view experiencing as a basic matter for most learning activities that lead to insight and true knowledge. Learning, as he asserts, is a form of acquiring experience.

In order to be able to state the problem better, the following considerations are quoted with respect to experiencing as an intervening with reality. From the etymological meaning of the word “experiencing” (traveling through, reconnoitering), Wilfried Hartmann points out three important divisions that can be made regarding the coherence of learning and experiencing, namely:

- a) Experiencing arises from a lived experience in so far as there is a lasting conquest.
- b) Experiencing is a way of acquiring knowledge in which especially the appearance is brought forth and emphasized.
- c) Experiencing is an event-in-becoming that also is brought about by exercising natural skills.

Also known are the opinions of Herbart who speaks of “experiencing” as the “Urquellen des geistigen Lebens” and also “zeitlich wie auch sachlich das erste Von-Woher des Lernens, so wie ein Lehrmeister derjenige ist, der das lernnen in Gang bringt”.<sup>(10, 15)</sup> We also mention a few pronouncements of Kant<sup>(10, 15)</sup> “Der Erfhrung gibt uns die erste **Kunde** von der Welt”. He also says that a person learns to know his world on the basis of the “Kenntnissen” that is collected by experiencing. Further on we find: “Erfahrung sie ohne Zweifel das erste Produkt, welches unser Verstand hervorbring indem er den rohen Stoff sinnlicher Empfindungen bearbeitet”. In support, Bonsch<sup>(5, 59)</sup> mentions an additional three stages of personal interventions of a person with reality:

- (i) As the highest stage he mentions the beautiful work and sometimes despairing wrestling with problems from reality itself.
- (ii) The strong succinctness of perceiving reality constitutes the second form.
- (iii) As the weakest form he mentions that of submissive resignation in what you have communicated (represented) or what you have read. What conclusions

can a didactician make from such views that make the following possible?

- a) Each person must acquire his own experiences – thus experiencing always is a unique acquisition.
- b) Self-involvement of a person in an event of experiencing is an important fundamental principle that also influences the certainty about what reality gives to him.
- c) Therefore, interest and greater mindfulness are foundational moments for a push through to acquiring experience.
- d) Experiencing provides the foundation for all forms of learning because in direct mindful observing [aanskouing] (lived experiencing) a first foundational pre-concept of a matter is acquired about which later there can be reflection. Experiencing that remains without results, i.e., from which something is not learned, never is experiencing.
- e) Experiencing not only leads to a “possible” but also to a “necessary” learning result. It makes the course of learning an imminent consequence of the event of experiencing.<sup>(10, 17)</sup>
- f) Any additional, supplementary information that is given about the particular area of reality, e.g., by an example, only can assist in orienting foreknowledge from earlier experiencing and make it more understandable.
- g) Experiencing cannot be equated with a mere acquisition of knowledge but essentially is a transforming (Umlernen) by which attitudes and actions become changed. All acquisitions, from the start, already were ways understood in a particular way.
- h) There is no possibility for the acquisition of “false” (bogus) experiences. This especially is important because so many things that are presented in school are historical or abstract and that cannot be made directly observable. Thus, in school we have the danger that because of the “minority status”

(inexperience [Kant<sup>10, 19</sup>]) of a child, initially many things must be acquired on the basis of mere communication by which an insight into the essences of a matter is lacking as a consequence of this lack of experience. Although on this basis, indeed, he makes acquisitions, here one notices little evidence of maneuverable insights that push the essence of the problem to the surface.

In summary we can conclude that the phenomenon of experiencing refers to a complex structure that lies wedged between a thoughtless “being-busy” or a passive “thinking-with” (acquisition) on the one hand and a knowing-distinguishing rationality, on the other hand, with a constant interaction between reflections and actions.

### **2.2.1 An explanatory introduction to acquiring experience**

Here it must be stated clearly that the only possible, valid point of departure to an understanding and judgment of the category of experiencing is rooted in the spontaneous, unarticulated pre-scientific experiential totality that can be noticed in a person. In this pre-scientific experiential totality (first, primary acquaintance with reality) a person is not influenced by any prejudgments or possessed experiences. Thus, these original, global viewings of reality form the bedrock for all further interventions. Thus, a child can learn to know particular objects from his experiential totality and later by recognition proceed to a designating (identifying). This identifying of things, however, also implies an affective involvement with them, i.e., identifying objects also involves a decisive appreciation for the things. As an adult later purposefully involves himself with things in the form of a presentation(s) of them, his interpretation for a child is meaningful since experiencing them has brought them closer, and the presentation becomes anchored in a trusted (known) reality. Should a child then acquire experience in such a presentation, this means that he has undergone a change, become stirred up and acquired new “knowledge”. Thus, there is mention of what Bonsch<sup>(5, 58)</sup> calls “Erfahrung machen und Erfahrenworden-sein”, i.e., a progression from a spontaneous to a more intentional acquisition of reality. The event of experiencing can

actualize itself in a two-fold way and makes possible the following dual perspective on it:

- a) As a way of being human, as an existential necessity, by which a person follows the way to or the event of world mastery. Hence, experiencing is an event-in-becoming that is given for each person and shows a correspondence with spontaneous learning. In such a case, experiencing also refers in logical ways to possessed experiences that as “knowledge” held in memory later can again be made explicit.
- b) Proceeding from the concept of Dasein one always finds oneself in a particular space with a surrounding horizon. The opposing objects direct an appeal to a person, they address him and he must answer. His learning intentionality often is determined by this being addressed by the learning contents. The acquisition of experience in this case finds its beginning in this impetus and in one’s dynamic stepping up to his Umwelt on the basis of an awakened intentionality. Guyer<sup>(12)</sup> says correctly :”Erfahrung ist in der Tat Seinsneigung durch Aktivitat”.

Therefore, it is a task of didactics to design situations and provide opportunities within which a pupil, on the basis of his own interests but also under the pressure of the appealing character of the learning material offered, can acquire experience that will influence his attitudes and actions later. If this learning content can be acquired in concrete situations there is the possibility that it can be life content and thus a means by which reality becomes more differentiated for a person, i.e., from a multiplicity of sub-parts (experiences) a larger and more comprehensive unity (lifeworld) is constructed (categorical view). This restoration and construction of a general category(ies) of reality from its elementals does not always proceed along a pre-determinable, purely didactic way. Therefore, so that there is sense and meaning to the wished for breakthrough of insight in a fruitful moment, the non-rational and lived experiences that cannot be planned and events of encounter, as ways of acquiring experience, must not be lost sight of by a teacher. With a young child his thinking and practical activities still are

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<sup>(12)</sup>Guyer, W.: *Wie wir lernen* – Stuttgart, 1960, p. 23.

inseparably bound to each other and most learning activities occur on the basis of external inducements and motivations.

It also is interesting to indicate how Bijl<sup>(3, 52)</sup> differentiates among these primordially bound human activities. Under the concept “theoretical activities” he includes thinking as a more dynamic matter and he distinguishes this from a knowing that is a more static moment for acquiring experience. He also places the theoretical against the more practical or “activities of doing”. Depending on the degree of difficulty and complexity of the concept with which a child is involved, the theoretical and practical moments are alternated. There are, therefore, (as a sorting out of knowledge and skillfulness) times of pure reflecting needed to bring order and system to a series of vivid experiences. It is a widely known fact that a person, especially one willing and ready to learn, quickly becomes worried if he cannot work constructively or creatively and must be content only with secondary experiences. This also shows the deficiencies in the forms of teaching in a traditional classroom where a pupil is required to remain passive and merely adopt what a teacher explains. With an eye to a meaningful organization of experiencing, opportunity must be provided for inverse learning activities, the way from inside to outside, from an observable image (aanskouingsbeeld, forms of lived-experiencing, thoughts about encountering to concept formation and language formulation, from experiencing to applying. A person is satisfied only if his experiences can be integrated with existing knowledge in order to acquire order.

The lifeworld of a person is not merely a simple reflection of an experienced area of reality. His viewing of reality only has formative value if it also assists in disclosing the vital powers by which the categories of reality can be unlocked. His own experiences and relevant views are going to touch his interiority and make him flexible in making further use of his insights in the sense that he increasingly opens himself for reality. Understandably, this increase in one’s own involvement in reality differs from person to person.

In practice one often finds that for years a person is linked to a particular matter or occupation without his experiences being able

to qualify as ripe. Just as there are persons who have relatively little opportunity for “practical” experiences rather quickly showing a wealth of flexibility and skillfulness in achieving. This certainly can be related to the fact that the quality of experiencing, such as by intentional or receptive-passive learning, also is directly dependent on the potentialities (talents) of a pupil. A person with a greater quality of talent can formulate/assimilate his conceptions more quickly and rapidly and integrate them with his already possessed knowledge. A person with a special talent in one or another direction very quickly will attain a high level of deftness in achieving in that direction. Understandably, at this stage it has become necessary to interpret more closely the concept of experiencing within the didactic structure.

### 2.2.2 The concept experiencing

Not everything that is or that surrounds a person need be transparent to him. The insights a person has into things often coheres with his stage of becoming or with the way in which he intentionally turns himself to things. As a person he also continually is confronted with the fact that his possibilities have limits and that he moves in a temporal-spatial field of imprisonment and freedom, of self-determinations and fate-determinations, of mercy and sin. Thus, experiencing is a matter of a person’s thrownness, his being-there in reality.

For example, Van der Stoep<sup>(13)</sup> says the experience that a person acquires does not occur haphazardly but testifies to a being bound to reality and world, a person’s being lost in matters and persons as they show themselves to him. Each object with which a person is confronted is part of a larger whole of possible experiential contents. Hence, all educating (teaching) only remains an adventure. On the one hand, an adult tries to bring up a child even though he will never arrive at a state where he can know himself completely or really gauge his potentialities. On the other hand, an adult often must present things for a pupil and offer contents of which he cannot guarantee its unconditional truth and significance for the future. Much of the experiential knowledge a person thus

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<sup>(13)</sup> Van der Stoep, F.: Inaugural address, University of Pretoria, 1966, p. 7.

possesses must be a burden for him, the meaning of which on reconsideration must be accepted. It already has been indicated that within the framework of the idea of constitutive experiencing, as a category of learning, it has to do with an activity that shows that a person himself is going to create and change in venturing in a particular area of reality. What here is retained as experience and thus determines future activities has changed the total person and not merely a facet of him.

In a literal sense “to experience” means “to enter”, “to reach”, “to endure”. For a better understanding of this, one can show the close coherence to which Bonsch<sup>(5, 58)</sup> also points in his explanation of the affinity between the concept of experience and the Greek word “Emperia” (empiricism). By implication, in his explanation there is a coupling between the event of experiencing and the activities in practical life. Thus, experience also forms the counter-pole of any view of reality that can be qualified as theoretical reflection and flows from a pure thought-structure or mere image of fantasy.

For the purpose of this study the concept of experiencing is limited to the reality-views of persons regarding what is concrete that surrounds them, i.e., with persons, matters and things. Hence, all fantasy-creations, pure thought-structures, acquaintances through conversations, narrations or written explanations and representations of reality in any other way, all are considered to be “theory”. Thus, a teacher always must look to avoid experiential variations that merely are conversational, figurative or symbolic explanations. Such explanations and representations have little value for the degree of closeness of a view of reality. Therefore, in the learning activities of a small child this leads to inadequate insightful learning results.

However, it is important to indicate that verbal clarification by a teacher has even greater acceptance and value than merely offering a written symbol or image. But the presentation of a teacher cannot constitute this totality alone.

Mursell<sup>(43, 71)</sup> correctly emphasizes the dynamic, concerned involvement and personal participation of a child in concrete learning situations that are directed at creating this dynamic

harmony. Further, he distinguished between authentic and non-authentic learning results that are manifested in them such that a learning activity has resulted in insightful learning and refined concept formation with maneuverability. He indicates further that it only is a highly schooled and formed person who can work with abstract ideas and symbolic representations. Therefore, in his design a didactician cannot concern himself primarily with such visible abstractions. At the same time there is a clear distinction noticeable between an original hedonism and unflagging zeal shown in a child's play (a didactic ground form) and work as a way of building up experiences by an adult. An adult who teaches already has acquired and assimilated the basic experience to follow abstract thought-concepts and general rules and therefore his stepping up to reality, on the basis of his own stake in it, will be more focused on learning in terms of linguistic formulations, reduced symbolic formulations and conceptual images. Although the thinking of an adult still can support available experiences, differing essentially from the above since he operates mainly with abstract concepts. In thinking concrete visible experiences are replaced by larger categorical structures on a higher conceptual level. Thus the preservation of the multiplicity of elemental possessed experiences in memory is made redundant. A formed person is delivered from being overloaded with detached possessed experiences by which higher thought-achievements are more easily and more quickly made possible. The world of conceptual ideas, thoughts, words and fantasies, in this respect, often stand in opposition to that of the empirical. Thus a pupil who only hears about a particular topic, reads about or reflects on it on the basis of earlier experience or by pure fantasizing, at most, often tries to construct a thought-form.

But the experiential structure (as a foundation for learning) is not without its problems. For example, Strasser<sup>(55, 103)</sup> sees as a great danger of an empirical grounding for a theory of experiencing that it threatens to carry everyone to the same, i.e., similar results. He contends that the "style" of a methodological way in any empirical science by which a person approaches a matter is inter-subjective in nature. This empirical foundation gives the concept experiencing a general, impersonal and mechanistic character.

A phenomenological way of reflecting on the concept experiencing tries to describe the event as it really presents itself to a person and therefore it must be seen as an unrepeatable, unique view of an area of reality that a person will learn to know. This means that a person is moved by the things around him and is called to act. Because experiencing implies experiencing “something” there always is a dynamic moment present in so far as experiencing means a person is involved in undergoing a particular event.

However, also there cannot be experiencing unless a person retains something of the event. Therefore, it is meaningful in a particular didactic preparation to try to search for links with already experienced knowledge that is available. Husserl has provided an important pronouncement about this matter: Regarding a person’s cognitive going out to reality, Husserl<sup>(10, 56)</sup> has indicated that the concept experiencing can have two meanings: On the one hand, it means what a person successively construes as a self-given and actual moment of a matter (a number of separate experiences) or also the quantity out of such self-givens (particularities) that can be built up as they have remained fixed in memory. About this he talks of particular “sedimentations”. On the other hand, experiencing means that on the basis of which the actual acquaintance of something is carried to the general act of understanding the matter.

Of these two meanings, “understanding” is primary and therefore it is possible that by the acquaintance of particular moments of a matter the mutual relations among them can be seen. This does not have to do with an atomistic building up but with the compilation of a larger unity of understanding out of a number of separate sensory impressions. What is of additional importance is that “Jede Kenntnisnahme – und das heisst: jede aktuelle Einzel-Erfahrungsgeschicht von einem Vorverständnis her”.

From this, undoubtedly, it seems that the first, original meaning of the concept “experiencing” refers to the being-there in reality of a person and in his practice of living each day, and that he manifests himself in the genuineness, freshness and uniqueness of the acquisitions that each separate person makes in his life-involvement.

The dynamic and the scope of the concept experiencing teaches a didactic knowledge only in its forms of appearing: mindful observing (aanskouing), lived experiencing and encountering because only thus are self-acquisitions, inner observations (aanskouinge) and self-disclosures given on the basis of realizing direct interventions of a subject with another subject, with an object or with a matter; consequently, special attention must be given to the notion of “nearness-to-reality”.

### **2.2.3 Concerned involvement in a matter as a fundamental precondition for acquiring experience**

We have indicated that two facets of the concept experiencing can be distinguished, i.e.:

- a) that of actualizing or terminating an event in so far as it is concerned with a view of a particular area of reality, and
- b) that which has remained and is available as experiential knowledge.

In contrast to many earlier studies that had allowed the emphasis to fall on possessed experiences and that had paid particular attention to the concept of experiencing as memorizing, exercising and applying, we lay the accent on the beginning of the event and the ways of acquiring experience.

Already from the time of Comenius reality-involvement was seen as the point of departure for all teaching. For example, Pestalozzi calls direct, mindful observing (aanskouing) an absolute requirement and fundamental of all human knowledge. The nearness-to-world and to-reality of a person helps to bring an object “closer” and to make a representation so much image-richer. In the prefix “Er” of the German word “Er(fahrung)” – it is emphasized that outside of a concerned involvement, in fact, a person cannot experience. Thus, experiencing claims a person in his totality. When a person handles an object itself, turns it around, takes it apart, can catch it and then put it together again, its “otherness” and its essence is disclosed. In a didactic respect, experiencing, as a direct learning activity, thus is much more than merely “becoming acquainted” with an object.

Consequently, Kohnstamm's belief of the benefit and value of a well furnished, vivid foundation for human activities still cannot be disregarded. Concrete experience always can offer the support for and verification of any doubt or confusion that might arise by mere rationality.

Genuine experience only can be acquired in a "serious" situation in which a pupil acts with heightened attention, a greater readiness to achieve and intentionality.<sup>(5, 170)</sup> For the acquisition of such experience, more is expected than the physical presence of subject and object in a situation of association. By designing an experiential space such that there is opportunity for an involvement in reality and self-activity for life and work, for wrestling with problems as well as with the accompanying errors and frustrations, but also for the joy and fruits as lived experienced in self-disclosure and personal creations, a person is touched and his experience acquires meaning.

Therefore, there is much value attributed to a form of teaching in which a pupil can "release" himself from rigid methodological principles where he can work through to a state in which a confronted object can take the center of his landscape and awaken an objective valuation by him and where his own creations involve a true (real) lived experiencing. Van der Stoep<sup>(14)</sup> then also distinguishes between experiential acts that do not directly go beyond the data and constitutive "experiential" acts that indeed exceed reality. Thus, there is a clear difference between ways of experiencing where a person, in stepping up to the Umwelt, "withdraws" himself and is claimed by the object confronted and all of his experiences carry the mark of a personal view.<sup>(22, 26)</sup> Educating and teaching correctly can make use of didactic-pedagogical principles such as those of self-activity, individualization and lived experiencing in terms of project-work, choir-work and group-work to allow for the acquisition of necessary experiential knowledge. The greater the available experiential wealth, the richer the "source" that the vital is going to provide for ("feed" to) pure thinking and fantasizing; the nearer-to-reality and -world the experiences and

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<sup>(14)</sup> Van der Stoep, F.: Inaugural address, University of Pretoria, 1966, p. 8.

views, the more vivid, maneuverable and fuller is the power emanating from them.

Any form of teaching that only supports pure rationality, at most can penetrate to the psychological moments of being human and involve the cognitive life of a person. Such one-sidedly directed influences allow a person later to appear as a naked intellectualist that lies behind secondary information and book-knowledge. Thus there is no experiencing as a secondary or “second-hand” structure. Experiencing always is a matter of involvement with things, with reality itself. This being-by-things, therefore, is a matter that becomes a part of a person himself - if there is experiencing.

#### **2.2.4 The significance of possessed (acquired) experiences**

Experience in the sense of having experienced knowledge at one's disposal always points to the results of a personal acquisition by independent participation in reality and thus cannot be transferred from one person to another. Also no person inherits part of his experience from his parents. All experiencing involves an event in which a particular area of reality is unlocked for a person. Hence, it is impossible to experience nothing. As in the case of the activity of learning, not all experiencing is a **conscious** event. A small child largely acquires his experience when in a playing way he steps up to things in his surrounding world. Possessed experiences manifest themselves when a real connectedness with a matter leads to the disclosure of certain affinities, characteristics and idiosyncrasies. Understandably, living phenomena (persons, animals, plants) usually direct a stronger, embracing appeal to a learning person and thus direct experiencing more than does experiencing lifeless things. Also, a person seldom finds himself in a situation confronting phenomena of which he has no foreknowledge or knowledge. The life of a child, therefore, unlike what Locke believed, is not a blank sheet of paper on which impressions from the outside leave a trace. The event of experiencing constitutes itself in the form of manifestation of mindful observing (aanskouing), lived experiencing and encountering continually alternating with and complementing each other,

In designing and planning an experiential field and learning space for a pupil, it always must be kept in mind that each subject matter area demands a “typical” way of experiencing and form of learning and with a defective provision for this, the task of a pupil can be unnecessarily difficult and he will have little success in acquiring a grip on the topic.

However, the possessed experiences only become knowledge when experienced insights and views are delimited and formulated in language or are brought into relation with existing concepts and are practiced. The broader and deeper the experience of a pupil is, the richer and fuller his pre-scientific knowledge will be out of which further unfolding and forming can be drawn. However, with this there always is the possibility that with further reflection the experiential knowledge can lead to “false” results when it is brought into agreement with borrowed information and incorrect patterns of thinking and is transformed into untruths. A shortage of experiential knowledge and beginning symbol-teaching too soon, instead of leading to an illumination of the task for a pupil there is additional burden as a consequence of his lack in and vagueness of his available experience.

In some subject matter such as History, and to a lesser degree also Geography, in traditional teaching a pupil largely is dependent on a symbolic and image-rich form of illustrating for their views. With the help of an incidental image (model, drawing) or a symbolic representation (chart, schemata) there is an attempt to hold reality before a pupil. A pupil then must rely on these images, symbols and linguistic descriptions as the only indications of what the topic includes. With this it is stated that rather there can or ought to be a proceeding from an exemplary form of teaching where the experiential knowledge is provided, in terms of a **known** (particular) example or object from local lore, that is needed for illuminating the general concept. The general, scientific concept “statesman”, e.g., easily can be explained to a pupil with an individual case such as that of Dr. Verwoerd (RSA) or Benjamin Franklin (USA). However, a teacher must remember that experience cannot be transferred as a series or chain of actions that follow each other or by a number of prescribed “laws”. Rather, a pupil must acquire the opportunity to himself investigate the characteristics of

a phenomenon and himself to lived experience the cause and effect of an event and to himself observe (aanskou) the means-end or functional character of an object, Then he will gain from this general meanings and values whereby his maneuverability becomes heightened on an abstract level. The behaviorist view and interpretation of the concept experiencing as a “haphazard” or “trial-and-error” activity unfortunately has seriously impeded the didactic field of vision on this matter for several years. Indeed, the acquisition of experience is no one-sided activity that only springs from a subject (person). It is a mutual dialog between subject and reality that is realized within the fusion of person and world. However, there also are additional viewpoints that a teacher must look into. The eventual joint achievement or experiential result of a pupil usually is also visible in the integration of a number of new experiences (achievements) with already available pre-concepts. A child usually has at his disposal separate and distinct possessed experiences that at most are vague, chaotic and incomplete. By greater mindfulness, interest and especially practice there can be a deeper result. If a teacher can open his eyes wide enough (in a figurative sense) and also looks behind himself to everyday, simple things, an unknown wealth of experiential knowledge from his surrounding world opens for him. Thus, it also is necessary that a pupil be allowed to acquire experience of “unaccepted” things (not in an ethical or religious sense) by which he is made ready for the greater dangers and resistances of an unprotected adult world, and he will be less vulnerable in his later life.

Along with the increase of experiential knowledge, there is a refinement and sublimation of scientific concepts and a person arrives at a better orientation of himself with respect to time and space. Along with greater experience and formedness the tension on the horizontal as well as vertical levels are diminished since the “strangeness” of each new encounter and the “otherness” of each new lived experience and the superficiality of some observations (aanskouinge) now have decreased.

### **2.2.5 Experiencing and the school**

For didactics, the formative sense and value of a child’s experiences culminate in their act-character, their ways of world and reality

acquisition. Experiences form the foundation for all later concept formation and knowledge structures. In ordering and synthesizing experiential contents, the possibility of knowledge growth and independent structuring (productive thinking) arises. Van der Stoep<sup>(61, 8)</sup> indicates that although constituting and establishing a personal world always are original experience, original experiencing is not always constituting because it never emanates solely from intention, but indeed from an acting person. Experiencing is a positive matter of a child participating in life and is not a passive event. This matter is a task for the school.

A school, as a second-order educative space, sometimes shows a deficient, one-sidedness regarding the wealth of experiences that it offers. The school clearly shows signs of danger in formalized instruction that only is attuned to cursory-superficial auditory and/or visual experiencing. When a child must be the benefactor of such cursory and mostly superficial offerings, he does not easily arrive at clear concepts and insightful knowledge. If supplemented by the experiential wealth and enticing lifeworld of his parent's home, for all practical purposes, he becomes very receptive to days and years at school. Gradually there is a shift in emphasis from thinking in actions, from practical to more theoretical schooling. While a child lived at home, he was usually involved with real things, but now (at school) he must rely on a representation and interpretation of reality by an educator. The quickly increasing content-knowledge is "transferred" merely as information. If a child does not always succeed in giving meaning to this content we find that later he is forced in his judgments, circumstances and coherences of form to reach back to these quasi-experiences for verification.

To make a learning situation in school meaningful a school must choose simple contents with local lore significance that can provide for a linkage of before school and school experiences. By allowing a child to engage in actively doing (something) as much as possible, the new contents will acquire greater meaning. Each perception must be directed to disclosing the essentials of a topic and not to exercising a particular sense organ. Thus, the contents must be chosen such that it addresses a child to learn spontaneously and himself search for answers to actual questions. In this way each

experience offers a child a first, small path that later he must travel in order to disclose higher categories of life reality. Especially for a small child, the realities that only can be learned in unreal ways must initially be omitted as far as possible.

In summary, we must briefly conclude with the following important aspects:

- (i) The contents and forms of presentation for acquiring fruitful experience must be chosen in terms of general didactic principles and ground forms.
- (ii) Opportunity must be allowed for experiencing in a looser classroom context in which varied interventions of a child himself and his nearness-to-reality are done justice.
- (iii) There must be a guard against the untimely or unscientific use of teaching aids by which the original experience is substituted.
- (iv) A thorough preparation in Particular-Didactics and a meaningful engagement can more directly ensure actions from the side of a child.
- (v) One always must allow for the unique nature of the subject matter as well as the stage of becoming and experiential potentialities of a child.
- (vi) Re-disclosures and linkages with historical traditions can be motivating and help develop a pleasant learning climate.
- (vii) Acquiring experience is not an experiment where each must do his individual research in seclusion. There must be opportunity for mutual deliberations and group attempts.

The reality involvement of each person (child) has open possibilities but no one can deny that shortcomings and gaps also appear. Therefore, it also is a task for didactics to change the school situation such that human Dasein can be unfolded as completely as possible in it, i.e., by, in judicious ways, supplementing direct experience by the use of various aids to make the learning event richer and fuller. Thus, today we can help a child to see more sharply, hear more finely, to feel better (tactically) and move more quickly in order to experience fruitfully. For additional

illumination, we, we attempt to differentiate the concept experience more finely via its moments of mindful observing (aanskouing), lived experiencing and encountering by looking at each separately.

### 2.3 MINDFUL OBSERVING (AANSKOUING) AS A FORM IN WHICH EXPERIENCING IS MANIFESTED

Today observational teaching and learning are not new concepts. Already in the older pre-18<sup>th</sup> century pedagogics, observing was identified with representing and taking in an external world. Along with this insight into the necessity of observational teaching, educators focused on aids and techniques as well as school systems to develop what later began to exercise a worldwide, comprehensive influence. There was a time when it was believed that each drawer and shelf in a classroom must be filled with observational and teaching aids because, as it was believed, it would be possible for each child to master and understand any topic.

Along with a re-awakened Humanism and a New-Humanism in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a counter pole for a rationalistic verbalism, there was a plea for a form of teaching where non-rational powers no longer were underestimated and there was a working from a concrete object to more abstract concepts. With Comenius and Rousseau the golden rule then was stated that, as far as possible, all learning must occur on the basis of sensory perception. Even abstract ideas and phenomena must be “brought closer” in terms of images and symbols. From a stern philosophy Kant indicates that observing must be seen as receptivity for impressions from the outside by which the event of observing is introduced and placed in an essentially passive light.

Of deeper importance is the opinion of Pestalozzi who views observing as a matter of things placed before the eyes. With this, the event of observing acquires a more dynamic character by which it is possible that a child’s perceiving seldom can be built up as a meaningful coherence. Observing, seen in the light of such a solemn grasp of reality, makes it an important way of forming for each person. Observing must be done following the foundation of each methodological principle with beginning teaching as well as in introducing new topics within continued teaching. Therefore, in

preparatory teaching and again in introducing “foreign” learning material, opportunity must be allowed for a longer “involvement” with the objects themselves and for assimilating (measuring, weighing, breaking down, building up, etc.) them until the unique nature and essences of the matter become disclosed. Such an observational acquisition is not the same as passively listening to an explanation, a thoughtless adoption on the basis of an external “stimulus”, an inner representation or simple reflection of something external. Much rather, this refers to an intellectual activity by which new relations are established and meaning is given to sensory impressions.

A pupil must be viewed as an “intellectual” worker who, from the very beginning, ought to be led from passivity to activity. From this it is clear that “doing” (playing, working) is a way to unlocking insightful learning and concept forming. In order to lead our teaching to the high level of true observing (aanskouing) and to experiencing in the broadest sense of the word, spontaneous participation and a motivated pupil going out to the surrounding world are preconditions. Consequently, modern forms of teaching must try seeking a more robust unlocking via the principle of local lore [Heimat] (excursions, trips, exhibitions, etc.) as well as so called work pedagogics (experiments, teaching machines, programmed instruction, etc.).

Another final problem that needs closer delimitation and explanation is that of perceiving.

### **2.3.1 Perceiving and mindful observing (aanskouing)**

We have seen that a controlling factor of the access of each person to an opposing object continually remains his actively taking a position. Along with becoming aware of a particular object, in his immediate environment, one also experiences an influence and an appeal from the object to him. In perceiving, a continual stream of impressions from outside is interrupted and a person’s receptive attitude makes room for the actual dynamic of sensory perceiving. A particular object is segregated and brought to the center of a person’s landscape. Thus, this is an event in which a person not only is directed to subject matter but simultaneously to himself. He

answers the appeal of the object and gives meaning to his own **sensations**. In this way, perceiving<sup>(12, 69)</sup> is in sharp contrast with a pre-observational view of sensing: a “sich selbst wissendes erfassen”. And although perceived forms sometimes can include more distinct views, they have a lived experienced center of gravity. With the first glance of a complex subject, in spite of all confusion, there arises a gestalt-quality based on emotional convictions. Thus, also in this regard, Strunz<sup>(57, 40)</sup> asserts that a person’s perceptual contents do not include a separate sensing of an external impression, but much rather it has a totality-character that appears as a gestalt-quality. In each perceptual image, a gestalt-character is manifested, i.e., a global grasp of the awareness of an opposing, relevant concreteness (characteristics of an object). Here again a variation can arise that ranges from the most diffuse, incomplete to more sharply defined structures. Even with adults, who already have conquered the physiognomic ways of lived experiencing, there still remains an affective totality-view that he is left with that is a gestalt-quality for him. Thus, he can perceive the whole without disclosing the elemental. Hence, in our perceptions (the result of the event of perceiving) usually there are whole-images of unlocked unities of what show themselves as having a gestalt-character for a particular person and that stand out separately from a background. This is an extremely important matter for a school. The ultimate perceptual gestalt arrived at by a pupil coheres greatly with the mindfulness he shows, i.e., in so far as certain structures become accentuated in the foreground and background of his landscape in connection with the scope and complexity of the object of perception. Therefore, pupils from the same class will look at the same object and one sees that the final result of their perceptions differ greatly. What can a teacher deduce from this?

Indeed, perceiving has a degree of receptivity but only in so far as the appeal of the external object is recognized as a precondition. As with earlier theories of perceiving, this will be seen as a product assembled between sensing and reappearing representations, meaning that the important active moment and constituting action are neglected.<sup>(27, 129)</sup> Herbart had asserted that each perception only is a realization of a coalescence between newly surfacing impressions and earlier understood representations of a matter. Today we know that intentionality is a human act that largely

determines his being addressed by things. Proceeding from particular foreknowledge about a matter and on the basis of earlier lived experiencing, a pupil can assume a position toward things that is evidence of the directedness of his intentionality.

Should a pupil now confront an object with which he has not acquired prior experience his perceived image cannot extend further than the external structure and global form of the perceived object. This observing is congruent with the spontaneous grasping and totality lived experiencing of a small child in reality with things. However, it can happen that, as a result of the demand of the matter, a person is touched deeply and he is compelled to form his own image of the object on the basis of perceiving it globally. Understandably, this will allow his direct views of the object to appear more vividly. For objective impressions it is necessary that a person remain with a matter for a while, to allow reality to show itself to one categorically and make its unique structure visible. Accuracy and attentiveness in the act of perceiving allow a thing to be experienced more nicely, more fully and with greater coherence by which one's own judgment of and insight into form, size, weight, color are much improved.<sup>(11, 81)</sup> It already is shown that intentionality is the decisive factor in the act of perceiving. Thus, there only is genuine perceiving when an object is looked at in terms of a fundamental question or on the basis of an actual problem that has emerged. The genuineness of perceiving thus lies in the fact that a fundamental question appeals to the creative power and constituting potentialities of a person.

Consequently, e.g., no form of teaching can allow a child only to copy and name drawings and diagrams before a sensory perceived object is penetrated with a questioning attitude and broadened to a spiritual activity. As forms of external perceptions about which a teacher must know, Hehlmann<sup>(25, 565)</sup> distinguishes the following:

- a) Visual perceptions – brightness, colorfulness;
- b) Auditory perceptions – tone, music, language;
- c) Smell and taste perceptions;
- d) Touch perceptions – heat, changes in pressure;
- e) Kinesthetic perceptions – movement, rhythm;
- f) “Organic” perceptions – by which the boundaries between one's emotional and psycho-somatic lives are fluid. Thus, one

finds that in any perceptual task, a schooled perceiver assimilates the thing “other” than an unschooled person.

But an act of perceiving also implies value judgments and the disclosure of truths. Strasser<sup>(55, 76)</sup> alleges in this respect that no distinction can be made between the perception of an object and the value that it already contains, or again awakens, for a person. Thus, any perception occurs on the basis of a meaning-attribution and appreciation that the object or matter already includes for a person.

This is an important pronouncement for a teacher because he continually is involved in **directing** a child’s perceiving and therefore in a didactic situation he must proceed **from** these pre-givens. Understandably, he places the emphasis on the “truth” of perceiving (the “waar” of waarneming). Hence, a child’s perceiving requires an active relating emanating from a total person that is demanded by his knowledge, interests and values. Thus, this is an orienting and norming attitude because it has to do with the figuring forth of perceivable contents. A genetic (developmental) examination teaches us that the event of perceiving shows a close relationship to each stage of a person’s becoming. Its initial form of manifestation is the first, global lived experiences of a small child without any factual and spatial analysis but with a greater richness of affective and dynamic whole-qualities. After this follows the realistic-level headed ways of examining of a youth with an eye to attaining a scientific worldview of a cultured person. In his turn, an adult lived experiences the appeals from the external world in general as meaningful because he already has become the carrier of a gestalt quality (meaning-quality). Nothing is more superficial than a form of teaching where the learning activity remains directed only to contents and evaluative moments are left out of consideration. On the other hand, careful perceiving means that the multi-formed Umwelt will learn to be known in its truth-character as objective knowledge. We experience each day in practice this void in reality-involved value judgments that, as functional knowledge, must form the key for human judgments and norms. Hillebrand<sup>(27, 126)</sup> says all observations (aanskouinge) are perceptions that show a character of clearness and vividness, i.e., by stripping the unique nature and structure of a topic of all details they can be easier to recognize and distinguish.

While mindful observing and perceiving strive for the same aim, i.e., **to learn to know an object**, all considerations of the concept of mindful observing (aanskouing) must be tied to the event of perceiving.

### 2.3.2 The concept of mindful observing (aanskouing) itself

Hehlmann<sup>(25, 17)</sup> calls observing “das indringliche und lebendige Erfassen eines gegenständlichen Ganses, in übertragenen Sinne auch eines Sachverhaltes oder eines Zusammenhanges durch unmittelbare Wahrnehmung oder durch Wesenserfassung”.

Following this, mindful observing implies more than perceiving, it also is an elaboration of it. Through a further inner working, a perceived image is blended with an on hand thought structure or fantasy image and brought into harmony with what already is seen in a perception as a characteristic, as meaningful and as coherent. Thus, Hillebrand<sup>(25, 128)</sup> asserts, e.g., that there only can be full mindful observing when in the act of perceiving a child also is addressed in his emotional life. This kind of observing, thus, is no psychological concept but pushes through to a spiritual penetration of what the object includes. This “seeing into” and “penetrating” from a person’s interiority is more than merely a fleeting perceptual image or an intellectual understanding. The result of this kind of observing is greater clarity regarding the unique nature, structure and inner coherence of the perceived phenomenon, but also more clarity and differentiation of other conscious contents. This final image of mindful observing often is built up from a number of partial perceptions. Insight into the congruence among the elementals can lead to an additional or continued ordering in thinking and to concept forming.

For mindful observing to be formative it is necessary that the uniqueness in the structure of a matter or the essentiality of the categories that are manifested in it are understood and mastered. The elaboration of the perceptual image taken up will be more or less comprehensive depending on the subjective push that was awakened in a person for a matter – his intentions, motivation, strivings, interests, etc. Therefore, persons from heterogeneous

backgrounds and vocations who are involved with the same object will show large differences in their final observational image. Any considerations that limit the concept of mindful observing to a cognitive activity, i.e., to an act by which a perceptual image of a particular area of reality arbitrarily can be manipulated in his field of consciousness by a perceiver uproots the concept from its existential anchorage.

However, to see this kind of observing as a moment of acquiring experience and learning there must be an allowance for the working of intentionality that arises from a person's interiority. An observational image is the fruit of an elaborating and blending of an image of perception with a unique inner view of the matter. Sometimes this unique view can be pushed by an earlier experiential moment or greatly supported by a rational acquisition or thought structure.

Strunz<sup>(57, 45)</sup> also distinguishes a concrete-thing-like view, that even though it is a totality view in which the pre-observational or perceptual quality still is prominent, it is not emotionally laden. In this kind of observational event and result, the utility value of the object is predominant. On the basis of the previous view, we cannot agree with Aarts<sup>(1, 137)</sup> when he asserts that a person himself is able to "produce" observations via his fantasy. This immediately separates the concept of mindful observing from the empirical and with this from gaining experience. However, mindful observing remains primarily a spiritual event and not an organizing result. Van der Stoep<sup>(61, 199)</sup> also correctly indicates that a child in school not only is a "learning" child because he observes, but he learns to observe and observes to learn. Irrespective of our use of a multiplicity of observation aids, our teaching still can lack vividness when the correct attunement and actions of a child toward the matter are lacking. True mindful observing, as a balanced blending of person and world, of practical life experiencing and theoretical deepening, requires that learning content is chosen from the world of a child such that he acquires active experiences and insight into the structure of the object. In connection with the pronouncements of Wittmann about observing (aanskouing) as an analytic-synthesizing elaboration of an observable thing in a person's Umwelt, Bonsch<sup>(5, 49)</sup> provides further explication of the concept of

structure-observing (aanskouing). An opposing object always addresses a person and he must respond. Observing, as an event of becoming, is immediately brought to a close. As a creating and elaborating event, from what is newly visible a whole image is constructed with a contribution from fantasy. Only when a first global perception (gestalt-quality) is expanded to an objective structure with fixed boundaries on the basis of additional partial perceptions and on hand representations is the essence of observing realized, i.e., insight into the new structure.

The result of mindful observing thus is an addition to a landscape and experiential world and always occurs consciously. Rohrs<sup>(47, 179)</sup> summarizes the whole structure, perhaps best, as follows: “Anschauen heisst dann Ausloten diesser Sinntiefe und -fulle, est ist eine geistige Leistung: verstehender und sinnstiftender Art”.

### 2.3.3 Doing and mindful observing (aanskouing)

Since this kind of observing is carried largely by a learning intention emerging from a person’s interior, it is the task of didactics to disclose ground forms and implement principles that claim a pupil in his totality. In particular didactic planning and subject didactic planning of fruitful learning activities, room must be allowed for purposeful doing. The thinking of a small child still is embedded in his active doing. Although a child of 10-11 years mostly operates in a concrete world,<sup>(5, 74)</sup> it also is important to know that from the fourth to fifth year a child’s thinking already is **controlled** by more intensive perceptions. Therefore, it is acceptable to reason that the fuller and richer a field of perceiving is subject to an analysis of its particulars, the stronger is the synthesis of the related view of the topic and the more complete and meaningful is the image of observation.

This view is not new. Froebel had introduced all of the ideas about “Tatanschauung” (active observing) in his pedagogical theory by which more is indicated than a mere sensory perceiving: by this ‘more’ he means active participation and active doing. The most natural and spontaneous ways of “viewing” and conceptions of learning begin in the play of a child. By a perceiving as well as a creative association with things around him, a child arrives at

answers by allowing the objects to “speak for themselves”. They give “commentary” expression on a child’s own lived experiencing. The sense and meaning of the majority of a school’s activities ought in this way to be carried back and coupled together, i.e., a coupling of one or another category of the learning activity in its human forms of appearing. By actively doing a person acquires the opportunity for perceiving the authenticity of a particular object and to compare it with any thought-structure that might exist. With that a pupil must venture to design a unique observational image that at the same time is added to the meaning of his own lifeworld.

Wittmann<sup>(5, 50)</sup> gives the following apt definition of observing (aanskouing): Observing, as an activity, is a process that progresses temporarily and gives form to complex “seen” contents because there are architectonic views building up through analytic-separating and synthetic-relating.

#### **2.3.4 Klafki’s concept of categorical aanskouing (mindful observing)**

In light of the foregoing, no student of didactics can ignore the contemporary pronouncements of Klafki regarding categorical observing as it manifest itself in a didactic event. By the nature of the matter, therefore, a person must see into the coherence of the problematic of categorical forming and categorical observing. To learn to know the essence of a topic and be able to give it meaning, a person must first show a concerned involvement with it so that from pre-concepts and partial views he can build up a larger unity. Only when a broader and more general relationship and meaning become visible from the separate meanings of partial perceptual images is the act of categorical observing realized.

For such a categorical acquisition of reality the general in terms of the particular, the unity out of the parts, the thought-gestalt from different thoughts must be synthesized. Such an adequate observing that can draw out a categorical unlocking of reality and world can be referred to as categorical observing. However, in an ordinary classroom situation each period cannot lead to mindful observing that has formed a child since this requires that a particular observation (insight, characteristic) must be repeated in

more than one case (example) and recognized by a pupil. Although it must be accepted that reality always shows itself to a person categorically, such an elevated notion as categorical observing is required for certain areas of reality, it is not granted to all persons.

## **2.4 LIVED EXPERIENCING AS A FORM IN WHICH EXPERIENCING IS MANIFESTED**

The concept lived experiencing often is placed under a variety of inferred meanings as well as generalized conceptual confusions and so often is misused to such a degree that false and sentimental interpretations are attributed to it. In the thought and literature of contemporary didactics it has fallen into desuetude because it has mostly been displaced by the vogue-word “encounter”. There even is a falling back on the more overarching word “experiencing”. Thus, today in many respects there is talk of “encountering” where in earlier years it would not have been so easy to think this. Thus, e.g., where formerly there would have been talk of a religious meaning, today theologians prefer to speak of the concept of the “encounter” of a person with his God.

In about 1910 we find that in Germany the so-called “Lived Experience Pedagogics” appeared that contrasted the value of lived experiencing with the acquisition of merely intellectual and rational learning material. In lived experience teaching all actions and learning activities largely are directed at making a pupil enlivened and ready to learn through inner emotional participation and enthusiasm.

In view of the reasonably extensive and even far-reaching confusion that reigns in the contemporary pedagogical literature with respect to this matter, the following exposition is offered not only to clarify the matter somewhat but also to interpret it didactically.

### **2.4.1 Some essential characteristics of the event of lived experiencing**

Dilthey<sup>(5, 60)</sup> describes lived experience as a moment of Dasein that is opened by a stream of lived experience and, thus, includes a multiplicity of experiences on the highest level. Also,

Hehlmann<sup>(25, 131)</sup> defines lived experience as: “das durch starke Gefuhlsbeteiligung ausgezeichnete Innewerden van personbedeutsamon Inhalten”. This immediately makes all lived experiences deep-seated experiences, although there can be many experiences and observations (aanskouinge) that lack a strong character of lived experiencing. Therefore, all lived experiences include experiences, but not all experiencing is lived experiencing. Hence, for a grasp of true lived experience there must be a search for entry into actualities that already have emotional meaning for a person or have a power of appeal to have an affective influence. For example, one thinks of a young boy who has succeeded for the first time in completing a circuit that allowed a light bulb to burn. The fact that each lived experience (the result of a stream of lived experiences) claims the emotional life of a pupil, allows us to proclaim it as an important formative event that must be utilized fully in teaching.

Bijl<sup>(3, 77)</sup> says a requirement for the lived experienced understanding of a matter a person first must distance himself from the “world of praxis” and arrive at a much greater concerned involvement (than merely perceiving). Lived Experience Pedagogics also implies a much deeper educating than (e.g.) only being directed to the realization of scientific work. Rather, the event of lived experiencing cuts to the depth of a matter more than to its comprehensiveness, and since contemporary teaching has been handicapped many times by the burden of the overload of learning material and thus depth necessarily is lost, a greater direction to discovering lived experience possibilities is postulated strongly. This will require a more intensive didactic preparation for designing learning situations in which much more personal confrontation and direct involvement with the learning material is provided. In a learning situation, as soon as there is strong mention of subjectivity, in an existential sense, it holds that it really is necessary that lived experiencing becomes a factor that somewhat influences the progression of the event.

In view of the greater subjective character of lived experiencing, it cannot be equated in a general sense with experiencing. If this subjective aspect is supplanted by a more businesslike attitude, we still have the more comprehensive word “experiencing” to use. If

one proceeds to presenting a definable, determinable, analytically-knowable exemplar, understandably, lived experiencing cannot be a teaching aim. In such a case this involves a pushing through to the essentials and an unlocking of the fundamentals of the object itself.

In contrast to this, a didactician must be aware that initially a person does not learn to know a matter as a particularity with a unique structure of a typical nature. Bollnow<sup>(4, 20)</sup> says our view is mistaken that the general is not validly acquired on the basis of lived experiences of the particular.

W. Neubert<sup>(5, 60)</sup> distinguishes the following seven moments of lived experience:

- (i) The immediacy of the view;
- (ii) The connected unity – what the particular lived experience allows to appear as a meaningful “other” in contrast to the other views;
- (iii) A many-sided structure of tension in which at the same time a general validity and an individuality are taken up;
- (iv) An historical character – trying to find linkages with earlier meaningful experiences;
- (v) A developmental skillfulness – a lived experience development out of a sequence of “psychic states”; this can differ in intensity and a kind of lived experience can be recalled again;
- (vi) Its objectifying tendency;
- (vii) It has a creative (constituting) power such that impressive lived experiences can later be melded into re-lived experiences.

Bonsch<sup>(5, 61)</sup> points correctly to the particular significance that the creative character of lived experiencing can have in teaching. With the help of words, mimicry, images, art works, religious prescriptions and historical documents, to mention only a few examples, there can be provision for arousing re-lived experiences by which a broadening of an earlier self-lived experience can be brought about. Particularly in the human sciences (creative subject matters) there are particular possibilities via lived experiences (ways of acquiring experience and learning) to attain an access to

unlocking a subject matter area. He then also sees the essential difference between lived experience and ordinary experiences as seated in the creative possibilities that the first-mentioned throws open. For the human sciences, the lived experience of a particular event is worth more than is a precise-logical explanation or a systematic step-by-step illumination.

The insights into the difference between the human and natural sciences is fundamental and, therefore, is defining for the choice of methods and methodological principles.

This brings us to the actual question of whether it is justified to say that a poet can be “encountered” by the pupils through his work. We give a negative answer to this and assert that at most it is possible for a pupil, on the basis of a re-lived experiencing to try to create a fantasy image for himself. This makes such an event a genuine lived experience. From this lived experiencing, a vital power can surface that can serve as an impetus to self-constitute it. However, such an emotion and lived experience never can be guaranteed from the beginning and usually comes as an undeserved gift in a fruitful moment. The didactic preparation and methodological design, however, can be directed to making a pupil more independent and conceptually ready. Therefore, a pupil who lives a secure and varied life will himself venture more eagerly and intensively and show a large field of re-lived experiences to which many fruitful linkages can be found.

In contrast to this, a new object easily will leave a child cold who knows nothing yet of the matter and thus attributes no value to it. Children who come from a family in which they have learned to know with security and love, in a school didactic event show considerably richer value-judgments by which their lived experience potentialities are better used. One sees this, e.g., in the greater love they show for animals and plants.

#### **2.4.2 Values and lived experiencing**

We have indicated that a person with broader “experiential knowledge” and possessed knowledge already has at his disposal connections (knowledge) on the basis of which he can make choices.

From the aspect of lived experience, the significance of this must be seen in the fact that on hand experience again flows into lived experiencing and offers a pupil the dynamic needed for a renewal to mobilize his potentialities.

Each lived experience contributes to a person learning something from an object that his admiration forces on him. The lived experienced value, however, is not exclusively in the quality of the learning content but also is coupled with the amount of sacrifice that comes with the acquisition, i.e., the extent to which a person is going to lose himself in the matter and how deeply into it he is going to go. Sartre<sup>(51, 37)</sup> explains this phenomenon by indicating that a person goes out to a reality that surrounds him because he feels captivated in an awareness of ignorance (in accordance with Langeveld's principle of emancipation). As a consequence of his displeasure with this condition of not knowing, he tries to learn to know reality. Human cognition regarding this problem is conspicuously limited. A metaphysics of thought structures readily indicates that human views and experiences have qualitative as well as quantitative limits. Limits always imply, however, that there must be something "after". Although what cannot be made totally transparent to a person, he also cannot deny its existence. The concept "values" implies that a person contemplates. Thus, the emphasis falls on the quality of the matter or object with which he involves himself. To be able to evaluate and express a judgment require of him that he must be governed by the norms and values that address his lived experiences. To help a child meaningfully lived experience his Umwelt requires that the deeper values become visible in terms of which further judgments are possible. When such a thorough educating and teaching are lacking (e.g., with primitive cultures), out of necessity they proceed in other ways of attaining illumination that make judgments possible. We see this clearly in how various old civilizations make futile attempts to try to eliminate limits in mythology.

Thus, in order to be able to choose what you want to offer yourself up for, a certain [degree of] formed-ness is required. With the choice and ordering of learning contents, thus, cultural contents (Bijl) and totalities (Van Gelder) must be sought that, as aids for lived experiencing, must be introduced to a pupil. Only when a

didactician has decisively answered for himself **what** contents (beauty, form, etc.) conjure up lived experiential possibilities for a person can he try to force such values into the foreground.

### **2.4.3 Contents of a matter and lived experiencing**

Although it might appear as if the possibility for acquiring lived experiences increases with the fullness, richness and completeness of experiences the question remains whether, along with each horizontal unfolding there also is a necessary vertical deepening (growth). With a defect in the conversion from astonishment to admiration on the basis of appreciation, often the event becomes stuck in the outward appearance of a matter and this becomes an “enjoyment” for a pupil. Cultural goods that are transferred from one generation to the next on the basis of mere tradition makes the event “top-heavy” and often this subdues the activity of a pupil. In order for a given learning content to be raised really meaningfully means that this given must awaken lived experiences in a pupil. All learning contents (subject matters, sciences) do not lend themselves equally well to providing such rich lived experiences. In general, the human sciences have a greater possibility for creative lived experiences than the exact, natural sciences. Bonsch<sup>(5, 61)</sup> gives a good example of how in history we can provide for the necessary lived experiences by seeking linkages between the learning content and its local lore value for the pupils. On the basis of his available pre-lived experiences he then can easily arrive at a real lived experience of the new matter.

At the same time, this also explains why today our teaching often does not include any effective lived experiences for a child. The theme and its significance quite simply leave him cold. Because there is no formative sense or formative value in the content disclosed, necessarily a child more easily is going to refuse it. Since the content does not address a child’s affective life, his judgments only flow from the rational. This allows us to think back to the impersonal forms of teaching that the followers of Herbart had strived for in terms of formal steps of learning. Today, is not this deficiency in lived experiencing possibilities also one of the greatest criticisms of programmed instruction?

In sharp contrast to all possible formalisms are teaching via self-activities and lived experiences. The latter forms of teaching advocate a looser classroom context because the pupils differ in their skillfulness in lived experiencing and conceptual readiness. Thus, the same schema must not be compiled for all lessons. Where lived experience is striven for as a provisional aim, the situation must be prepared to the extent that later there can be a push through to imagining and signifying enduring characteristics [essences]. The value that a matter acquires for a person thus is unique to the object itself. Lived experiencing helps to throw a bridge between the subjective values a pupil attributes to a matter and the objective values that the matter possesses inherently.

Schulze<sup>(51, 52)</sup> distinguishes between two possibilities (tendencies) according to which a person steps up to the things facing him:

- (i) He will maintain it as a whole; and
- (ii) He will characterize variations within it.

From this, a large didactic task is to disclose what in the object appears valuable for a pupil and what differentiated characteristics of the object have lasting (characteristic) values. A teacher knows that through a totality view and lived experience of a gestalt, but also through pre-lived experiences of variations in the aim structures, certain characteristic views are acquired and, as objective values, form separate lived experiences. Such lived experience values become a possessed experience that in future actions, as re-lived experiencing, can bring about a further fusion of subjective and objective moments.

#### **2.4.4 Lived experiencing and didactic principles**

For the acquisition of real lived experience it is necessary that, as far as possible, a learning person become detached from a still popular formalism without abandoning the feeling of security and being directed emanating from the direct or indirect accompaniment and support of the adults.

The design of a didactic situation must allow opportunity for objective perceiving and true mindful observations (aanskouinge),

but the place and value of inner participation and emotional relationships must not be overlooked. Today we hear so many outcries of child-directed or pedo-centric teaching and the resulting work-schools and school systems. With this, formative contents are only media to help realize or quicken the “natural” unfolding of a child. Pedagogical criteria are taken mainly from the insights of developmental psychology that make educating nothing more than help for this unfolding. As long as the becoming (development) of a child is the [primary] focus, an educator must remain in the background.

The greatest danger of this standpoint is that too quickly too much responsibility is put on the shoulders of a child. The limits of lived experience potentialities always must be considered along with the fact that this will differ with each child. The authenticity and uniqueness of the results of lived experiencing, and the creative powers stemming from these particular acquisitions, give them pedagogic-didactical meaning. Through a teacher’s presentation, emotion-imbued depiction and co-lived experiencing in music, art, literature, history, etc., particular possibilities for lived experiences and re-lived experiences are thrown open that provide access to a particular area of science. However, it often happens that a teacher suffices with a matter-of-fact, logical explanation and a rational ordering. After this he expects that, at the end of the period, the pupils are able to give a general formulation or systematic demonstration regarding a problem.

In order to increase the possibility for acquiring lived experiences, a teacher must keep his teaching fluid and try to introduce variation as far as possible. There must be a striving to realize his particular didactic preparation in a lesson situation; i.e., to design a situation within which a harmony is achieved between didactic objectivism (regard for the essence of a matter) and didactic subjectivism (respect for a learning person).

In a person’s access to an opposite standing Umwelt, two fundamental attitudes always are possible:

- (i) A reserved, knowing (cognitive) attitude in which a person distances himself from an object and thus attains a rational, matter-of-fact view and objectifying of it;
- (ii) An immediate grasp and greater reality-involvement or greater self-involvement, a surrender to or losing oneself and being absorbed in an event. This largely corresponds to an emotional (affective) connectedness.

From these two poles it is clear that, although lived experiencing and distancing can alternate with each other, there only can be lived experiencing when distancing has been discontinued. Lived experiencing requires didactic principles that allow for experiencing that is near-to-world (reality) and stronger emotionally laden experiences. Here the personal attitude and enthusiasm of a teacher will help “color” the lived experiences.

Weniger sees, as a didactic task, awakening and bringing about fundamental lived experiences that illuminate the fundamental meaning of a matter and thus, as a category, unlocks an area of reality. A particular view (idea) emanates from each lived experience; therefore, a really “large” or intense lived experience will “shake” a person internally. The singularity of the event guarantees its identity, hence it again is recallable as a re-lived experience. In addition to scientific knowledge (image of mindful observing) it also acquires a value-concept for a person. A person who for the first time sees a fountain bubble up out of the ground, without thinking of the general concept “fountain”, can arrive at a value-concept, e.g., “the source from the depths”. This image of a “source” cannot be made lived experienceable by any rationalization or representation of a co-subject.

Pestalozzi had tried to release teaching from a fathomless material fullness by seeking simple, everyday or elemental contents. The sense of this is that each lived experience provides for an individual structure that can serve as a fixed point for self-orientation. Consequently, reality once again is unlocked, and in unique ways, for each person. Bollnow<sup>(4, 22)</sup> says that from the viewpoint of the exemplary form of teaching there must be allowance for each lived experience to penetrate to the meaning-concept (value) of each matter. What indeed happens is that an enduring view out of

separate lived experiences (on the basis of different examples) repeatedly is recognized which leads to adopting a norm or value-judgment. Reproduction and memorization as well as any habitual or valence-actions assume a minimal subjective involvement and as a form of learning have a minimal lived experience-value. For realizing lived experience teaching, learning activities must be directed to disclosing the exclusivity of an object.

## **2.5 ENCOUNTERING AS A FORM IN WHICH EXPERIENCING IS MANIFESTED**

To say I have an appointment with someone and I am going to encounter him or her does not yet mean much. Many things indeed can occur consciously or non-consciously that prevent realizing an encounter. "Encounter" is a purely existential event that, in its original meaning, only can occur between persons. The dialogue between person and person is something different: it realizes itself as openness in contrast, e.g., to the closedness of an animal; as freedom in contrast to bondage; as potentiality for change in contrast to a temperament-bound constancy. Any deviation from and expansion of the concept of encounter must result in a "watering down" of its primordial meaning.

### **2.5.1 Known analogous forms**

Encounter, as an exclusive inter-subjective event, only can be done full justice if the uniqueness and individuality of both encountering partners are recognized and not ignored at any stage. Thus, what makes an encounter possible is not as simple as some authors will make it. Prohaska<sup>(46, 22)</sup> also asserts that a person only arrives at full self-actualization in an encounter that "endures" with another person. And thus it must be accepted [by a believer] that full human actualization and becoming only are realized in an encounter with the godly "You".

We must accept that the only exception possible to an extra-worldly encounter between a person and God is all other co-human encounters that only are a fore-step to such an extra-worldly encounter.

In the daily use of language, as well as in publications, we find that the concept of encounter is used in an unreal sense as an analogous form where it can better be designated by concepts such as experiencing, lived experiencing and mindful observing (aanskouing). Although this usage speaks of an “encounter “ with another person in his works, his creations, his thoughts and dreams but also with non-human objects, with a landscape, this only provides evidence of the broad applicability and mobility of the concept in which he tries to meet an existing need via these analogous forms. This points to a possible deficiency in our language.

Bollnow<sup>(4, 12)</sup> indicates that under the pressure from the lack of a correct word, now a multiplicity of forms of use and meaning of the concept appear. As an intellectual necessity, all inter-human interactions, influences and interventions, as well as those between person and a matter, and even those between a person and situation all are depicted by and embodied in the same word as long as there is an indication of a point of intersection between two dynamic, related activities. In the broadest sense, there is mention of an “encounter” between persons, between person and a matter and between a person and a situation.

For additional study of encounter as an existential event, the following literature can be consulted:

- (i) Bonsch, M.: GRUNDPHANOMENE IM UNTERRICHT;
- (ii) Buytendijk, F. J. J.: DAS MENSCHLICHE;
- (iii) Guardini, R. & Bollnow, O. F.: BEGEDNUNG UND BILDUNG;
- (iv) Prohaska, L.: PAEDAGOGIK DER BEGEGNUNG;
- (v) Schultze, F.: DER MENSCH IN DER BEGEGNUNG;
- (vi) Strasser, S.: OPVOEDINGS-WETENSSCHAP EN OPVOEDINGS-WIJSHEID.

### **2.5.2 The space of encounter**

The encounter between two persons is a reality. Each member of a society and species on earth has a physical space in which he feels himself to be most at home; e.g., birds in the sky, fish in water and

people on land. Each person comes forward to meet another in a space limited by his own horizon (as far as his lifeworld stretches) within which, at each moment, some degree of experiential contents can be actualized as knowledge or knowing. In his action-radius each member has given a unique structure to reality that must be unlocked for the other party in an encounter. Therefore, the total space of each encounter is constituted differently and has a unique character.

In the space of an encounter a learning person not only experiences the appeals emanating from the objects themselves, but it is a situation within which a pupil and the learning material are claimed further and sometimes brought closer to the matter through the introduction, presentation and ordering of the other person. This new and wider confrontation still is not encountering, although it is an important moment of each encounter and must form a highpoint of our teaching.

Each encounter has its beginning in such a space that is rich in contents and interwoven structures. Here the danger always exists that one member can dominate the other and the opportunity to emancipate and expand horizons is neglected. When the two members now, on the basis of a value judgment about or attunement to a jointly involved content, offer each other a hand or come forward and want to provide help, still a certain distance between them must be maintained. In any physical space all physical laws must be satisfied. Thus, it is not possible for two persons to occupy the same space simultaneously.<sup>(46, 14)</sup> However, this physical distance does not make an encounter impossible.

Although an encounter is realized on a spiritual level and because a person is not exclusively spiritual, we cannot ignore altogether his somatic-physical existence. Physical manifestations and psychic utterances in reality reflect a person's innerness and are necessary part-moments of each event of encounter and also serve to admonish, motivate and realize spiritual values. Since the two members of an encounter step up to meet each other on the basis of shared values and attunement and then proceed from a certain means of encounter, and although a physical distance between them must be maintained, they cannot be aloof with each other.

Prohaska<sup>(46, 11)</sup> names three movements (actions) characteristic of the course of each encounter:

- (i) a movement of coming closer or moving to another;
- (ii) a movement of proximity—the members are with each other for a shorter or longer time;
- (iii) a movement of parting or moving away from each other (leaving).

Although such a schema shows an excessive illustrating and fragmentation, still it does point to essential facets that some merely see as moments of the original [phenomenon] encounter. In practice, an encounter usually is the beginning of a learning event that proceeds to a period of lived experiencing or activities of mindful observing (aanskouing) since there is a push from an awakened intentionality.

### 2.5.3 Means of encounter

The relationship formed between members in an encounter also implies the existence of means of encounter that, as an aim, converges all activities. As long as there still is not yet “something” that claims them or that unavoidably is closely directed, a mere situation of associating endures. The compulsion that makes an encounter possible, on the one hand, comes from an existential necessity and existential involvement that emanate from the depth and intensity of the attraction between the two persons, but also, on the other hand, a person is pushed by an appreciation and formative sense that the common object awakens in him.

Just as the encounter members differ from each other, so does the attractiveness of an involved object differ for each, and thus also the intensity of his participation. Thus, each encounter only reaches its highest form when it is linked with the acquisition of norms and values. Only when the means of encounter have an imminent value for each partner can there be a deeper attunement between each other. In an educative situation, in his unconditional obedience to authority (as a researcher), an adult can present an

example for a pupil (as seeker) that is going to help him compile his own hierarchy of values.

However, the encounter event cannot be separated from the other forms of reality acquisition because it is more than merely a sporadic event, only alternating for shorter or longer periods in support of the course of learning.

In some cases, this forms the beginning for a strong emotionally laden lived experiencing where the means of encounter have acquired particular meaning for a pupil and strongly address his emotional life. On the other hand, from the interest awakened for a new area of concern, after it is carefully perceived, a heightened value judgment thrives that is going to direct a person's intentionality and is going to make him readier for an encounter.

It is a task of a teacher to choose learning contents and order them such that, as sciences, they show: truth as beauty in artistic forms, and as ethics in cultural forms. When the contents of learning and their presentation create the opportunity for encountering, lived experiencing and mindful observing, this will make it easier for a learner to possessing norms and acquire a notion of values that help him move from a poorer to a richer Dasein and at the same time broaden his horizon.

By choosing the means of encounter that call up already meaningful experiences or that appear as attractively demanding and genuine, offer meaning to the event and makes easier an entire sacrifice from the partners.

Schulze<sup>(51, 19)</sup> also indicates that the first part of the [German] word (be)gegnung [encounter] points to an intensifying of its meaning and this makes encountering more than a mere undergoing of experience. However, the event of encounter does not always conform to the recognized norms and values, but thereby it sometimes cuts through and contributes to destroying the good. The careful selection of encounter-members and -means can limit such negative results to a minimum. So the form of teaching and classroom organization can be such that pupils work together, that in one or another way they already feel dependent on each other or

even manifest a community. Bollnow<sup>(4, 20)</sup> then also asserts that content is of minor importance in an encounter; here the involvement is with the values that a person puts in the foreground and the change that obedience to the norms requires. He forgets, perhaps, that a person first must learn to know before he can choose, that the norms and values acquire meaning in terms of knowing.

In an encounter there is opportunity for a horizontal as well as a vertical unfolding of a pupil. The activities are directed to broadening knowledge and disclosing values. This then also gives sense to a bipolar structure of a didactic-pedagogical situation where adults and not yet adults stand by each other (spiritually integrated) and the learning material is penetrated. In an encounter a pupil finds himself in a “united” space where he can rely on the value judgments of an adult. As long as a personal stake and appreciation are not yet possible for a pupil, an adult serves as a mirror, but especially as a catalyst to awaken his spontaneous “hunger for learning” and to overcome any tendency to perseverate or spiritual apathy.

In an encounter space a pupil finds himself in a broader but more ordered field of experiencing and, at the same time, in the middle of the world and the heritage of previous generations. To fulfill the cultural-historical mandate that the cultural contents (means of encounter) for the younger generation must not be neglected so that they remain unharmed, there now have been institutes and formal educational institutions erected within which provision must be made for encounters between the generations and mastery of contents.

The question that each adult (educator) must ask himself is: “In what will I encounter the younger generation?” Prohaska<sup>(46, 98)</sup> says attaining encounter readiness should be seen as a primary teaching aim. All educating and teaching must be directed to preparing a pupil to make use of each encounter-possibility. An encounter itself cannot be compelled or guaranteed. All activities on a physical and psychic level only serve as preparation for spiritual “maturity”. Each encounter contributes to building interpersonal relationships but also to learn to know oneself better through the other. An

encounter-ripe person has at his disposal unique experiences for later better understanding not only new personalities but also humanity.

Thus, our encounter-aim, i.e., building a bridge between the content and the realization of values and also a formative aim gives the event a pedagogical sense. A clear analysis of the phenomenon of encounter, from the perspective of human becoming, throws open insights requiring that an encounter must be given a rightful place in teaching. A didactician must have knowledge of the encounter-value of learning contents by taking into account the encounter-maturity of pupils at each phase of educating.

#### **2.5.4 The didactic-pedagogical significance of encounter**

Weniger's<sup>(69, 14)</sup> explanation is meaningful when he says that if an adult "stoops down" to try to bring about an encounter with a child, this does not in any sense mean that he is childish. That a person is going to educate, give help and support to a not yet adult is unique to being human. On the other hand, Guardini<sup>(32, 31)</sup> indicates that a child has at his disposal a unique dynamic and potential skillfulness that enable him to proceed on his own initiative and bump up against fellow persons. These advances toward and "standing next to each other" of a person in a situation of association with others is the first precondition for an encounter and for educating. An encounter usually proceeds, except for a few circumstances, to a level where two "unequal" members, e.g., mother/child, teacher/pupil, doctor/patient, stand facing each other. Both factors, however, can damage a good result from the event.

An educator (adult) who is an "I"-person (Napoleon, Caesar) will not find it easy to come to an encounter with his pupils. His autocratic actions and even brutal bearing by which he tries to force everyone under his power sow suspicion and create distrust with the consequence that a pupil is going to close himself to any further approach. Because usually such a teacher shows little tact and a poorly developed judgment, as a person he has never acquired the inner magnitude and personality needed to earn respect from a pupil and for establishing a healthier relationship of trust.

Where an attunement for each other exists, and where a pupil discovers that the interventions and aims of a teacher in his teaching now are in agreement with what for him now seems to be valuable and that claim him as a meaningful task, then a situation of association now changes to a situation of encounter. Thus we see that a task of teaching is to choose slices and representative exemplars for a child from his undivided Umwelt and offer, according to principles of ordering, what for him bring about guidelines that are going to make it easier to understand the complex and unsurveyable whole [of his Umwelt].

By the systematic, yet sporadic encounter moments, an adult acquires the opportunity by direct indications and holding before a child corresponding examples that later will help him construct a way of living. In this way also the danger is avoided that inaccurate, subjective views and pre-scientific experiences are falsely constructed into a science. Where a pupil, in his lived experiencing, easily “loses” himself in things, the interpretations, actions and attitudes of an adult, as shown in an encounter, will help a child acquire an appreciation of a matter. Encountering, as a dynamic event in becoming implies that a pupil will distance himself from inaccurate pre-scientific lived experiences or from any disposition to which he still might adhere and show his readiness for and a directedness to work together with a teacher. Both members must have a readiness to bring about an interest in being “bonded” in which an “I” and a “you” make room for an “us”. The feeling of affinity, trustworthiness and solidarity that promote an exploratory attitude largely depend on the power emanating from the attitude of each member and the relationship between them.

Where each inter-human association potentially includes the possibility for an encounter, this possibility increases when in the attunement to a particular matter, intention and activity converge.

When a teacher succeeds in his presentation to awaken re-lived experiences of earlier experiences or when a problem arises out of a child’s genuine questioning attitude, this will serve to motivate and encourage [a child] that will contribute to allowing a situation of association [being-by] to change to a fruitful encounter [being-with].

The problem of attunement is related to this. When a child becomes aware of his shortcomings and his clumsiness to independently proceed to accessing the essences of a matter, spontaneously he is going to turn himself to an encounter-member for help and guidance.

However, with a child who has never met genuine resistance (discipline) earlier, the above preparation and planning for a possible fruitful situation for an encounter is going to be taken up less seriously and the activities of a teacher will remain stuck on a peripheral level. Each teacher already has experienced that it is easier to get along with some individuals and classes than with others. Where there is “resonating genuineness”, working-together and self-discipline prevail, encounters, friendships and love easily occur. Then there are cases, after months and even years, where little trace of real encounters can be found. It requires pedagogical insight and didactical tact to allow some pupils to become aware of the seriousness of the situation and to persuade them to mobilize their potential. The way in which a teacher initiates the event and the relationship that exists between him and a pupil are going to influence the course of the event positively or negatively and make him a friend or an enemy.

This indicates clearly that a pre-given character is going to influence each encounter advantageously or detrimentally. If one person recognizes another as someone as an “I”, clearly there is a greater attunement toward each other. However, encounters also awaken in a child a feeling of gratitude and an inner influence by the awareness that he has received more than what he deserves. This feeling of undeserving offers (as a didactic aid) favorable encouragement for further learning achievement. It then is the task of a teacher to plan a lesson situation such that the possibility and field for encounter between teacher and pupil is delimited with greater probability of a merger (point of intersection) with directions of interest. For a genuine encounter, balance must be maintained between inner pushes and outer appeals, between pathic (affective) and gnostic (cognitive) moments, between one’s own experiences (lived experiences, mindful observations [aanskouinge]) and what is represented by an adult. Too much initiative and domination by a teacher easily will catch the pupils by surprise and

force them into a receptive attitude. Opportunity must be allowed for a child to acquire experiences independently and to give meaning to his Umwelt. Where perhaps he inwardly or outwardly is disturbed or impeded, this is going to damage his unfolding or even allowed to become stuck on a certain level. This then can lead to a pupil experiencing one frustration or defeat after another. He thus is forced into a “half-baked” attitude that takes away his self-confidence and creates uncertainty.

As a result of feelings of inferiority, some pupils will seek temporary compensation through aggressive or mischievous behavior, but indeed they are increasingly “flooded” by others (fellow pupils) and hence only are “encounter-caricatures”.<sup>(51, 91)</sup>

Thus, there is little hope for a true encounter with such a pupil who finds himself all the more isolated by attacks from outside. On the other hand, someone with a feeling of inferiority cannot be a good encounter-er. His striving for power allows him to distrust everyone and everything. Thus he builds a wall around himself. He wages a cold war against everyone because he always expects to defend against a possible “onslaught”. All of his life dynamics are steered in a wrong direction that leads to negative discoveries. By his own doings his free movements are resisted and his interest, vigilance and pressure from attending unite to defend instead of attack. This decreases his productivity. Schulze<sup>(51, 71)</sup> uses the striking expression that such a person heads for a state of being a “narrow minded I”. An “I” person quickly is isolated and all the more difficult to understand.

Because no genuine relationship can be formed with such a person, his fellow persons remain unknown to him, but still suspicious, and he remains a stranger to himself. For realizing our aim for encounters, both members must open themselves to each other. Hence, that an encounter (e.g., when a teacher goes out of his way to help a weak or restrained pupil) can call up a deeper lived experiencing that can result in genuine bonding. Hence, it remains a task of a teacher, as adult and educator to do justice both to the pupil and the learning material. He may never try to use them to flatter his own “ego”.

F. Ebner<sup>(46, 19)</sup> calls an encounter a great wonder that only can occur with persons, and when two subjects are made one spirit, their landscapes will not only be separate but become united. This brings us to a possible structural model of an event of encountering as a summary of the previous deliberations.

### **2.5.5 A simple structural model of an encounter**

Although here we necessarily are going to distinguish between certain fundamental activities that essentially must be recognized as elementals of an encounter, this does not imply the separate existence of each. As a first moment there must be a situation of association or a motion occurs that is going to bring about a “standing facing each other” of the subjects. In a potential educative situation this implies the presence of an adult (with his own action-radius) together with a not-yet-adult (with his own action-radius). In a previous situation of encounters and periods of teaching certain contents had been presented to pupils as foreknowledge that can help and motivate them for this (following) encounter (as re-lived experiencing and the accomplishment of thought structures). The existence of a readiness to learn and his own stake will determine the intensity and direction of the movement (activities).

As a second moment that necessarily must follow the movement of the first (a person always finds himself in a situation in which he must respond by acting) we can distinguish an attunement to a particular means of encounter that is going to give direction to the activities. In the dialogue that the event introduces, a particular object is isolated such that it can throw open particular meaning for both members. The experiential landscape of each person changes, all detail is pushed back and a particular matter is placed at the core of awareness.

As the third moment, an encounter lies at the point of intersection of the above two activity structures [moments] and is realized in the unification of the separate spaces of encounter. The existence of a separate “I” and “you” makes room for a “we”.

The fourth and last moment is characterized by additional activities of lived experiencing and mindful observing (aanskouwing) depending on whether the subjective or objective moments of the event exercise the strongest influence.

In these separate modes, each member searches for further explanation and illumination of the newly acquired experience. The course of this occurs on a level determined by each member and in a direction in which his intentionality and interests give the strongest push. Following this close relationship and concerned involvement, each [member] is going to distance himself [from the other] anew and try to regain his own lost existence and [recover from his] self-estrangement.

The necessity for a double instead of a one-sided going out to the means of an encounter, as a shared aim, was discussed already. This makes an encounter an intentional instead of merely a haphazard event. The formative value and formative sense of the means of encounter thus are definitive for a course of direction where, for a longer or shorter time, they must become the common center of the landscape of awareness of both parties. This then brings us to the third and most important moment, i.e., suddenly and easily becoming aware of a common directedness that excludes all other events for a period of time. This is followed by a confrontation in a field of tension where first there is a horizontal movement and a pupil proceeds to acquire the object; then there is a vertical dynamic to be noticed in the directedness of an educator to realize values and norms.

This alternation between encountering and distancing is an important formative moment that must not be underestimated in any teaching event. This also makes it necessary that an adult must sporadically intervene in the course of the event to make possible such encounters.

Of lesser importance is the fact that a teacher must not at all times dominate but also must step back in order to allow a pupil the opportunity to orient himself and determine his temporal and spatial position by himself.

A child lived experiences his world as a still unordered event in which conscious and non-conscious moments as well as the pathic (affective) and the gnostic (cognitive) blend. From his own acquisitions and in terms of the interpretation of the other, eventually he constitutes his own lifeworld.

The place and value of an encounter as a way of acquiring experiences never can be estimated too highly and any acceptance of an expanded or analogous form of the concept “encounter” undoubtedly will violate its fundamental meaning.