

## CHAPTER 2

### ORIGINAL EXPERIENCING AND DIDASKEIN

#### 1. DIDASKEIN AS AN EXPRESSION OF ORIGINAL EXPERIENCING: THE ESSENCES

The person-world relationship shows that there are inherent, necessary deeds which are exercised by a person. A human being manifests characteristic activities, he/she shows a characteristic lifestyle and he/she exercises certain deeds which are and can be exercised only by a human being. The human being, as an existential being, was and can go outside of him/herself and to master terrains and fields which were hidden from him/her. This mastery, however, remains within the limits of what is authentically human, which means that human limitations cannot be exceeded. His/her designs, inventions and creations make it possible for him/her to enter different relationships with things and fellow persons, to signify his/her world differently, to broaden his/her life horizons and to orient him/herself anew, and to acquire new perspectives.

However, it is impossible for him/her to create something that lies outside authentic humanity. Every day, new designs appear in the human lifeworld which result from human initiative and are testimony of the human dynamic and progress in life and world. The truth of this claim speaks for itself if, it is considered that, according to contemporary opinion, most of today's youth under six-years, one day will follow an occupation which today is unknown.

Occupations practiced by persons, however, are not designed, created, or invented by them. They belong to the primordial experience of being human. They are human ways of being in the world and cannot be eliminated from the course of human life. Educating is one of these authentically human activities which is given with being human. Educating is not the product of human initiative but is a mode of living peculiar to being human, and it

does not lead back to any origin, or anything previously given. Educating is. This means that, as a phenomenon, it cannot be traced back to anything else, to a cause or origin or to another phenomenon.<sup>1)</sup>

If the phenomenon of educating is investigated in the spontaneous lifeworld of persons, and described as it presents itself, it is conspicuous that the event of educating is carried by the phenomenon of teaching. Educating is realized in teaching (Van der Stoep). It is impossible to think about educating without implicating teaching in it because there always is educating with respect to something (values, norms, dispositions, skills, etc.). Educating is realizing an aim, as a matter of intervening by someone in the lifeworld who knows, with someone who doesn't know. Stated more carefully and didactically: intervening, via the lifestyle of one who knows, in the lifestyle of one who doesn't know. This means that the original being in the world of a human being is expressed in teaching, which is undeniably and inescapably embedded in an educative situation. Teaching **is there**. If teaching is removed from the course of human life, this would mean that the possibilities of actualizing educating are removed which, again, means the human being vanishes as he/she essentially is. With this, educating is thought away because, the moment a person exposes content (values, norms, etc.) in an educative situation, he/she is involved in teaching in the original situation. This teaching activity is established to direct a child's going into the world in terms of specific contents with an eye to realizing an aim. Thus, one concludes that didaskein (i.e., to teach) necessarily is a form of expression of a person's original involvement with the world, which means that his/her original ways of going into the world are, among other things, a matter of teaching. It is not invented or created by anyone, unlike many other activities exercised by persons, but it appears among and between persons because human beings are who [and how] they are.

The question might arise about why this is going to be essential in a didactic or teaching theory. This can never be a matter of theory, for the sake of theory. As already discussed, teaching and educating are inseparable and parallel concepts. When one appears in the human lifeworld, the other appears by implication. Teaching,

because it establishes the possibilities for actualizing educating, is a **practice** which appears daily in the human lifeworld. A thinker must show how the activity of educating is actualized in teaching. He/she must establish insights about a practice. He/she must bring to the surface, clarify, and systematize what is essential to this practice to make it possible for the practitioner to be able to carry out his/her practice in accountable and purposeful ways. The practice must be fertilized so the practitioner can engage in a better practice. Any theory of teaching must seek its origins there where teaching spontaneously appears among and between persons, otherwise it is not **essentially** a theory of teaching. The aim is to create a second order practice [e.g., school] which corresponds essentially to a practice which was. To be able to do this, regarding what was investigated in its essences, there must be a search for its structure (origins) so the original phenomenon can be knowable and describable, and its essences can be brought to the surface.

This teaching, as it shows itself in the original experiencing of human beings, is a radical intervention in the lifeworld of a child. An adult gives clear and unambiguous evidence that he/she is not satisfied with the situation. He/she wants his/her intervention with his/her child to bring about change which is attuned to provide help and support to a child on his/her course of becoming to adulthood. This accompanier of a child has an aim in view. He/she expects that his/her intervening will be seen in a learning effect which will change a child with respect to his/her total involvement in the lifeworld. There must be clear evidence that, during his/her becoming, he/she is involved in what he/she is aiming to become. Now, the educative activity (i.e., also the teaching activity) is an event which occurs so often it becomes commonplace in a person's course of life. In fact, it has become so common that the effect of an adult's intervention in the reality of educating is not noticed. But, indeed, it is an essential part of educating, such that the matter "teaching" cannot be noticed in its essences and be brought to the surface apart from and without this effect. If teaching is viewed as radical in nature, this certainly assumes that it must be effective according to some standards. This effectiveness must be knowable, visible, and capable of being indicated in teaching **where it originally appears**. If teaching is not disclosed categorically [essentially], this means that, as such, it will not be evident in a

person's lifeworld. Educating, thus, cannot be completed without a teaching effect. Since teaching is an unreal object, this leads to the consequence that, as such, it is only knowable, visible, or indicatable through a categorical view of the total event, which includes the teaching effect as it appears in the lifeworld. The adult must be able to qualify the results of his/her intervention as effective in terms of clearly indicated criteria, i.e., yardsticks for evaluating the teaching effect. Nowhere in the human lifeworld is there mention of teaching without any effect. The degree of effectiveness, naturally, will not always be the same, because it reflects the quality of teaching. Therefore, the teaching must be carefully planned so that guarantees can try to be made for its result to be effective. For the sake of a systematic and orderly exposition, we now illuminate the significance of the original experiencing (*didaskein*) and its connection with the second order design (i.e., the school).

### **(i) The connection between original experiencing and the categories of teaching**

A didactic theory is attuned to fertilizing a practice, the teaching practice. Essentially, this involves the matter of teaching. This teaching is not "something" as a substance; it is not a concrete, manipulable quantity which can be experimented with. Teaching is an event in the human course of life. The task of a theoretician is to delimit and described this event so it becomes clear why something occurs in teaching, to make the matter of teaching knowable in its essences, to describe how it is possible to evaluate teaching, how the teaching situation can be re-established and repeated and how this re-established situation again can be executed. All these matters are connected, and they must bring about a categorical (essential) view of "teaching" and bring the essentialities of this event to the surface in its totality.

In the first place, a theoretician must locate the matter of teaching there where it appears in the human lifeworld. He/she turns him/herself to the original experience as teaching, out of which its essences (categories) are identifiable. These essences are named so that it is possible to provide a description of the matter in terms of these names which he/she will readily verbalize and, thus, make them knowable. The relevant matter here is teaching, not as it

appears in any second order established design, but as it essentially appears in the human lifeworld. The categories can never be a description of a formalized situation, because such a situation does not portray the source, origin or root of the experience (teaching) as such. Under ideal circumstances, the formal situation (school situation) can only be a good imitation of that piece of experience which already has occurred in the original acts of educating persons. Therefore, such a second order practice can have certain deficiencies since it has not necessarily taken up the structures of the original experience itself. The categories verbalize and describe in its essences that original experiencing, that turning to the world, that intentional going to reality which is known as teaching. Thus, the categories verbalize what intuitively-originally lies embedded in the educative situation and which can be transposed to a formal situation by means of an acquired skill. This makes possible a practice such as the school's teaching. If teaching cannot be made knowable the establishment of a school would run the risk of being a meaningless design as an educative institution, since one would not **know** with what he/she must involve him/herself in the school. Thus, the school is purposefully placed on a child's *co* of life so he/she can be taught there with respect to those slices of reality which are important for constituting his/her own lifeworld. Thus, the primary task of school is in teaching which, in its turn, is knowable (categorical) from the original experience of persons. The profession practiced in school can never exceed human experience—at best, it can be a refined imitation of an event which clearly, understandably and denotatively speaks from the course of life of persons.

The didactic categories merely illuminate that piece of original participation of persons in what is known as educating, and is actualized by teaching. The categories verbalize this originality of a person's dwelling in the world, thusly: that aspect of the original experiencing in which the verbalizations, as didactic categories, are rooted. In ordering and systematizing these essences of *didaskhein*, a didactician creates a didactic structure of teaching as it originally appears in the lifeworld of persons. Thus, there is a clear connection among the original experiencing, the original teaching and the description of the **teaching** practice in its origins. These origins are a clear indication that teaching is a primary, first,

a fundamental way of being in the world. Indeed, in its categorical structure, the original experiencing shows a close connection with the essences of teaching as such, which compels one who thinks about the phenomenon of teaching to ask the following questions: Is teaching essentially so intertwined with the original experience that separating them appears to be forced and unnatural? Has the original experience then so much to say about the progress of the teaching activity that this activity apparently is born out of the original experience? Because the activity of educating (teaching) is given originally, is a person's participation illuminated in its origin by the didactic categories?

To teach a child contents (values, norms, dispositions, skills, etc.) and, in doing so, help him/her on his/her course of becoming adult, is a fundamental meaning giving act of persons. Teaching [educatively] is the practice by which a person [adult] introduces meaningful relationships into the life of a child. Should a person aim to better realize this primary function, this means that he/she strives to better master this/her original way of being in the world, and to allow it to speak more clearly to his/her way of inhabiting the world. Since there is only one authentic way of shedding light on this second order established practice, the categorical structure of teaching is meaningful because it illuminates this life practice, which otherwise would be obscure, haphazard, and difficult to evaluate. This categorical structure, indeed, is theory but it describes precisely that original moving to, entering and experiencing the world and life as they arise in the teaching situation as a constituent of experiencing.

The original lifeworld and the original reality of educating make it possible for one to identify the categories of teaching as the essentials of that piece of reality known as "teaching". In terms of these categories, it is possible to describe the matter of "teaching" and, thus, be able to answer the question: What is teaching? Thus, the categories are descriptive and are used to describe a matter, event (teaching) which otherwise would be difficult to express in words.

However, a theoretician cannot suffice with merely a categorical description of the matter (activity) he/she wants to illuminate for a

practice. A practitioner is interested in the possible implementation of insights in a practice so that previously stated aims can be realized. The theoretical insights must possess possibilities of being actualized in practice. Through teaching, a practitioner will intervene in a child's course of life. This intervention is a radical event, in the sense that a child must change. His/her dwelling in the world is drastically influenced by it. He/she learns new meanings and continually and accumulatively orients him/herself with respect to a lifeworld which becomes larger for him/her; in his/her judgment of it, he/she can be more objective, etc. In brief, his/her lifestyle changes. He/she gradually becomes what the educator expects him/her to become, and then the educator can declare him/herself superfluous as an accompanier in the life of this child.

This effective intervention in the life of a child through teaching is possible because the educator (practitioner) can acquire an understanding of the essences of teaching through the categories. The matter is not ended with this. A practitioner is interested in the results of his/her intervention in the form of a teaching effect of which the child must give clear evidence. Thus, the categories of teaching must be evaluated in these results as the teaching effect. Just as the original reality of educating shows the essences of teaching, by which it is possible to describe the matter of "teaching", so the reality of educating shows the essences in terms of which it is possible to evaluate the effect of teaching. Hence, when we move to the possible further implementation of insights, this means that these categories of teaching must be evaluated. A practitioner proceeds to establish a teaching practice in terms of these essences, i.e., with the categories of teaching as the cornerstones of his/her practice. In practice, these cornerstones must be evaluated so that a practitioner him/herself can ascertain whether what he/she is involved with, indeed, is essentially what he/she assumes he/she is involved with. The essences which are expressed through the categories are the pillars on which the teaching practice is built, and which a practitioner must evaluate and judge from time to time. In summary: evaluating the categories creates the possibility of establishing a practice which is in fundamental agreement with the practice which is found in the original experience. In practice (school practice), the original

experience cannot be exceeded, since it is a second order design which is cast in the same mold as what already occurred earlier. However, a practitioner must be able to qualify his/her practice as effective in terms of clearly designated criteria.

**(ii) The connection between the original experiencing and the criteria of teaching**

An educator, as practitioner of the practice of educating, necessarily must teach. It is for this reason that he/she questions the reality of educating, within which teaching is inexorably embedded, to find an answer to the question: What is teaching? From this slice of human experiencing, the essences speak clearly: the essences of teaching are manifested in terms of its categories. The answer arises clearly and unambiguously: Teaching is “unlocking reality”; teaching is “child participation through the activity of learning”; teaching is “accompaniment”, and more. **Thus, teaching is knowable through its categories.**

Educating (and therefore teaching) is the purposeful intervention in a child’s life. It is a purposeful intervention, in the sense that an educator does not intervene with the child in cursory ways. He/she intervenes to realize pre-established aims. There must be a **change** in a child’s being situated because possibly the educator deems the framework of meaning of this adult-in-becoming is still deficient, or he/she might judge the child’s sense of community is still lacking such that he/she does not yet shuw any societal or social “conscience”, etc. In what the child’s deficiency manifests itself is not what is relevant. What, indeed, is of importance is the fact that the child still exhibits shortcomings in his/her life equipment. These deficiencies must be meaningfully replenished, incorrect views must be corrected, new norms and values must be functionally engaged, etc. The educator tries to allow the child to change. For a theoretician, and also, by implication, for the practitioner, this change is of great importance because, in the reality of educating, it is manifested as a **teaching effect**. When a thinker attends to this matter of change, which he/she makes knowable as a teaching effect, criteria of teaching arise.



A teaching situation demands of the participants that there must be activity. Teaching assumes that an educator must bring reality nearer to a child and introduce it as a meaningful matter, while a child must unlock him/herself for this reality, i.e., he/she must throw him/herself open and join in the teaching event through the activity of learning. A teaching event undeniably influences the life of a child. This is not to assert that each teaching intervention of the adult is necessarily successful, and that the success of each intervention is observable in the form of dividends. It only means that an adult's intervention in the life of a child can be measured in the form of a teaching effect which shows itself as a change in a child's being situated. Indeed, the result of the intervention is immediately observable and ready for evaluation. The effect of teaching is observable in a person as a change in his/her dwelling in the world. Because of the intervention of someone who knows, he/she shows a depth in life perspective such that some matters show more prominence and others less prominence in his/her landscape. The attunement of a child with respect to the given reality, changes because he/she arrives at new knowledge, insights and discoveries through the help and support of adults. The teaching effect is seen in a child discovering him/herself in life, as it were. He/she discovers that there are boundaries which must be conquered and exceeded, that there are codes of behavior which must be obeyed, that, as a co-involved person within reality, he/she is **co-responsible** for the harmony of his/her relationships to everything that is, etc. Therefore, the reality of educating shows the essences for describing the matter of "teaching", i.e., the categories, and the essences for evaluating the **effect** of teaching. The system of teaching as such, needs no further evaluation, since the categories, in so far as they sufficiently illuminate and describe the system itself, allow teaching to become clearly knowable. The effect obtained by the teaching, however, is a matter of cardinal importance. The outcome of the teaching activity must show a result in the life of a child. This result, as expressed in the reality of educating, shows all the essences in terms of which teaching can be judged and evaluated.

The insights, as they appear in the reality of educating, make it possible to establish a practice (also a school practice) as a reconstitution of the original practice. It is possible to search for

the congruity which exists with the practice of the original educative reality. A didactician-pedagogue must be able to give an account of how, based on insights, he/she can proceed to establish an effective practice and repeatedly create it. The categories illuminate the essences of teaching, and this makes it possible for a theoretician to describe and make knowable a piece of human experiencing; but this leaves the result of the teaching activity still unclear.

Teaching, as an activity, is not pursued for the sake of teaching, but for the sake of the result it has on a child's life. The practitioner of the activity of teaching (the educator) must be able to judge the extent to which there is congruence between the effect of his/her practice and that of the original reality of educating. To be able to do this, the manifestations of the reality of educating must be detected, named as effects, and made knowable. In terms of these effects, the result of the second order design must be judged. For the practitioner, it must be possible to evaluate whether his/her intervening qualifies as successful, or if he/she must repeat the event to bring about the desired effect of teaching. A theoretician starts with the assumption that educating is successful, in the sense that it brings about the desired change in a child. The question which a theoretician can ask is: What makes the intervention in the life of a child (educand) an effective intervention? In what is the effectiveness of educating manifested? The effectiveness must be disclosed as a criterial structure of the reality of educating so that this human practice can be evaluated and judge in terms of this structure. It must be an assessment of how, in terms of the cornerstones (i.e., the categories), an effective practice can be established. Indeed, this must influence the person who is in this situation for the sake of this piece of experiencing. The criterial structure, as it expresses the evaluative tendency of the original experiencing, primarily judges the effect of the intervention, of which the categories speak and which are knowable through them. The *categories* describe the intervention, i.e., teaching as such, but the *criteria* evaluate the effect of this intervention as teaching. Thus, the categories begin with the assumption that the intervention they describe is effective. It has brought about a change in a child, and this change must now be carried into new situations by repetition. This has to do with designing the practice to try to ensure the intervention will be effective. Criteria proved the

yardsticks by which a practice can qualify as effective or dismissed as ineffective.

**(iii) The connection between the form of the original experiencing and the form of the didactic design**

Each day, in natural, spontaneous ways, a person is involved in reality; that is, with the things surrounding him/her. Life and world demand that he/she deal with the whole of reality. Thus, he/she cannot refuse to participate from one situation to a subsequent one. Reality is not a stream which arbitrarily sweeps a person along. He/she continually orders, arranges, and organizes his/her own participation in life and the world. In a person's turning to reality, there are clearly differentiated, distinguishable modes of living recognizable such that it is possible to separate and reveal aspects of Dasein. The possibility of recognizing, describing, and judging "teaching" also expresses the original involvement of a person with reality because a human being, in the reality of educating, is inevitably committed to teaching. Consequently, the possibility of disclosing this slice of human activity (teaching) is rooted in a person's original involvement within reality. By means of the phenomenological method, it is possible to disclose, name, describe and, thus, make knowable that slice of experience known as "teaching". Also, the **effect** of the practice of teaching can be disclosed as a criterial structure of the reality of educating.

The sense of any didactic theory is that the teaching practice which a person carries out and repeatedly actualizes must be fertilized by it; thus, it must be possible to plan the practice more effectively and allow it to find expression. This practice must be in accord with the essences of the original experience as it arises, is planned, and realized in the reality of educating. However, this slice of human experience has a form which is not arbitrary. When a person proceeds to the act of teaching, he/she engages in a form of living which relates to the specific imperatives of the aims he/she wants to reach. The didactic situation is purposefully planned to involve a child as a learning participant in the teaching event. He/she must open him/herself for reality and enter the teaching event by the act of learning, while an educator brings reality nearer to him/her and meaningfully unlocks it for him/her. When it is a person's aim to

teach his/her child regarding anything which is important to him/her, or to which he/she gives value, he/she will show a form of living which is realized spontaneously and naturally, fits and connects with the aims he/she wants to achieve. Because teaching is an authentic human activity, the form in which any teaching occurs must correspond with a human form of living. Thus, the form appearing in the original experience predisposes the form possibilities for a teaching situation.

Because a person can never exceed or surpass the experiences at his/her disposal, it is not possible to create, in any planning, a form or design which arises for the first time in this new structure. The appearing form of teaching entirely reaches back to what is observed as form in the original experience. A person's original ways of being in the world constitute the original experience and show a great variety of activities. For didactic theory building, human involvement as an educator in the original reality of educating is of great importance because it is there that one must search for the appearing forms of the educative event. The help or teaching which an adult offers the not yet adult, necessarily must take on a form. If this does not happen, it means that this [teaching] activity does not appear. Then also, no account can be given of the progress and eventual execution of the event in which he/she ventures. It is the task and aim of didactic theory to investigate the original experience to distinguish within it those forms of living which have possibilities for didactic implementation. The forms of teaching obviously reach back to the original experience where these forms of living appear. The consequences are obvious. As far as form is concerned, the actualization of a tendency of the original experience in a specific time, culture or society is no different from that in other times, cultures, and societies.<sup>2)</sup> Essentially, teaching appears as a universal human lifestyle, and, thus, in the same way everywhere, with emphasis qualified, in so far as contents are concerned.

The possibility that a person can create a didactic situation anew implies that, in the original experience, there is a form present, and this makes it possible for a person to create such a situation. If the practitioner (teacher) can learn to know what teaching is, by means of categories of educative reality, if he/she can judge and evaluate

his/her teaching effect in terms of criteria of teaching, and if he/she can discern and describe the form of his/her intervention, then something like a teaching aim is possible. A teacher can never talk about a lesson aim if he/she has not acquired basic insight into the practice he/she wishes to pursue. In his/her preparation, a teacher can detail a lesson aim, among other things, based on his/her insights into the essences of teaching. However, these insights into the *fundamentalia* do not yet bring the lesson into motion because the categories only give a description of teaching as such. To allow the structure to become functional, i.e., to functionally implement teaching, a teacher must acquire basic insights into the meaning and results of teaching. Should he/she look for an effect of his/her intervention, this also implies that he/she looks for basic forms of living in which he/she can cast his/her practice. A didactician-pedagogue is continually confronted with the task of formally reconstituting the original experience as a practice. The entirety of these insights makes possible the planning of a lesson aim (teaching aim). The educator must be able to justify fundamentally and functionally his/her planning from the original experience so that he/she can account for each aspect of his/her calling. The correspondence with the original reality of educating, therefore, is indicatable and functionally in harmony with the experience as it appears in the everyday course among persons.

#### **(iv) The functional aspect of “Didaskein”**

The acquired insights as described in the previous section essentially are not theory for the sake of theory. These insights enable a teacher to distinguish and strive for a teaching aim in his/her preparation for which he/she can be accountable. Also, he can functionally-criterially search for the effect of his intervention or give expression to the form when he makes certain decisions about how he/she will bring into motion again the original form in the second order practice. The entirety of these insights makes pronouncements about the lesson structure in general possible, e.g., about the teacher’s lesson aim. However, the logical question in this example is: What will the teacher attain with his/her lesson aim?

The teaching criteria, as already indicated, presume a teaching effect, as such. However, no educator can branch off from a pure

teaching effect as effect. The teaching effect only has sense in so far as it will or ought to bring about change in a child. The child must give evidence in new situations which he/she has made progress in his/her journey to adulthood. Thus, the educating must show evidence which he/she has come into **motion** in didactic reality and with this activity is involved in actualizing his/her own possibilities in a didactic theory. This movement or activity of a child (teacher) is given with being human and, as such, is a way of being. The significance of any didactic theory is contained within this postulate: The lesson aim has a learning aim in view. Thus, rooted in this original way of being human are the possibilities of the child participating in the situation, and they are distinguished and planned (the learning aim in the lesson structure) in a didactic design. Also, this matter refers to the original experience because, in the form, there is not only an adult who intervenes in a child's life, but also indications of a child who must answer to the appeal which an adult directs to him/her. The activities of both participants in the event of educating (teaching) show complementary characteristics. If the activity of the educator can be described as teaching-directed, the activity of the educand in the reality of educating can be described as a learning activity. The form of the teaching is directed to the form of the learning, i.e., to the modes or ways in which the learning activities are manifested in the educative event (Van der Stoep). The learning activity is a precondition for teaching. In addition, through the learning activity, a child can actualize his/her own potential because of an educator's intervention in accordance with the forms of living which, for both of these persons, are modes which lie in the original experience.

Because various possibilities about **how** educators teach their children are embedded in the original experience, in didactic theory, which interrogates the original experience, there is something such as a methodology. The possibility of a method (e.g., example) speaks from the original experience which primarily aims at acquiring skills. The various ways (modes of learning) in which a child, because of his/her being-there, enters reality also speaks from the original experience of persons. From this close entwinement of the original participation of adult and child in the educative situation, a didactician can see a child's ways of actualization

(modes of learning), in so far as they are relevant to the didactic situation. It is important to indicate that, it is here that the new (designed) situation will be fulfilled. Thus, there is a clear didactic relationship between the original intervention in its form as well as actualizing aspect of the didactic reconstituting. A didactician continually has the task of showing how he/she can actualize this intervention **anew**. This indication flows from his/her insights into the original experience. Thus, the original experience provides a fundamental account regarding all the relevant matters in building a didactic theory which eventually must result in a lesson structure. The original experience can provide an account of this because the original presence of a person in the world presents him/her with an unavoidable teaching task. The possibility of his/her formal activity in the school situation is rooted in the reality of a person's original ways of going into the world. The educator's insights into the matters dealt with are of fundamental importance for understanding the aspects which necessarily arise in a matter such as the lesson structure.

An educator must realize that the original experience is the foundation of his/her practice, otherwise he/she has no idea from where this practice **originates**, how this practice is **possible through repetition**, where the effectiveness of this practice becomes observable, and why this practice can be explained as **functionally manageable**.

## 2. EXPERIENCING AND THE TEACHING TASK (THE DIDACTIC IMPERATIVE)

In the literal sense of the word, a human being is reality-involvement. He/she is an unavoidable participant in a series of situations and events which regularly follow each other, and for which he/she is also co-responsible because of his/her being human. His/her original presence in the world confronts him/her with the task that he/she must act in carrying out his/her daily life. Therefore, there can be no distance between a person and reality. A person can never define him/herself as a spectator and reject the demanding character of the dynamics of life. He/she is and remains a participant in the situations in which he/she finds him/herself.

In the same way, educating, as a universal phenomenon (event) in a person's life, cannot be eliminated from a person's daily involvement in life. Educating **is**, because a person **is** and, thus, is an unavoidable part of the reality with which he/she is co-involved. Because he/she is a human being, he/she is involved in educating and, thus, in teaching.

A child is an adult's help-seeking companion in life; he/she is a companion who, through becoming adult, actualizes his/her own future and potentialities. Because an adult sees the meaning of his/her educative intervention in his/her own historicity, he/she does not turn his/her back on his/her educative responsibilities. These responsibilities show a demanding character which he/she dare not refuse; consequently, the activity "teaching" appears during a person's life spontaneously and effortlessly, as a way of being involved with reality. The mysteries of reality must be unlocked for a child, and a child must learn to master reality so that he/she increasingly can give meaning to his/her own being-there. Therefore, a person's being in the world implies meaning-giving activities, of which teaching is one of the most important. His/her going out to reality is meaningful to him/herself, otherwise he/she would withdraw him/herself from reality, which never occurs. The logical result of this is the insight that a human, in being human, is actualized in teaching.

Teaching, as it appears in didactic-pedagogic situations, also is knowable as a formative event. This means that, in formal, planned ways, adults provide help to not-yet adults in terms of certain contents so that the not-yet adult is helped to better enable him/herself to reach his/her destination. Since a child is co-involved in this event, in the sense that he/she must make him/herself ready and available for the intervention of adults (unlocking reality), a child is a participant in his/her own forming, and this must not be viewed as a process which a child undergoes. The forming is seen in the effect of teaching which is knowable in a child as an elevation in carrying on a dialogue, modifying choices, etc. With the latter manifestation of the effect or influence of teaching (that of choice modification), an adult is proclaimed to be a free, emancipated being who not only has the right and freedom to exercise his/her choices in situations within the demands of propriety, but also allow



him/her the freedom to exercise his/her choices with respect to what he/she participates in. Eventually, a youth always is also free to make a vocational choice according to his/her own insights and convictions, to marry someone, etc. But no person can become what he/she ought to be if he/she doesn't submit him/herself to and participate in the life form which we know as teaching. Therefore, without fear of contradiction, one can assert that teaching belongs to our original experiencing. Thus, teaching is a mode of living of human beings, a calling which demands of a person that he/she act without the possibility of choice concerning the activity itself. Teaching is thereby part of a person's daily, meaningful realization of living.

Teaching should then also be described as a way of an adult providing help to a not-yet adult, because the being in the world of both necessarily calls them to give meaning to their own being-there. The meaning of a person's (adult or child) being-there elicits teaching as an original, spontaneous way of intervening. An adult's own being-there demands that he/she teach such that things will give meaning to a child's being-there, which he/she intuitively experiences as meaning-seeking, and it is demanded that a child step up and open him/herself to the reality which an adult presents or introduces to him/her. A child's own becoming shows itself in that he/she can learn, thus, can spontaneously and **fundamentally** participate in a teaching activity. In this way, his/her world involvement gradually becomes more meaningful, directed, and accountable. The things (contents) with which he/she is involved, direct an appeal which he/she must answer. A person is in continual dialogue with life and world. He/she must act, but cannot do so accountably if the things (contents) are unknown, diffuse, obscure or hidden. Therefore, life can only be meaningful if a person learns to associate with and become acquainted with the things which surround him/her daily and with which he/she converses in his/her dwelling in the world. The intervention-power (meaning) of teaching is rooted in this task. It is possible for a child to establish a meaningful relationship with reality in and through teaching, but he/she is not able to do this alone. Thus, he/she inevitably turns him/herself to an adult. The task enclosed in this "meaningful relationship with reality" is one of the imperatives presented by the original experience, by which teaching necessarily

is a form of living to bring the person (child) to other things so he/she can disclose the sense of being.

With this, teaching becomes a matter of life imperative.<sup>3)</sup> Each child must be taught and through the being-there of his/her child, each adult is called to teach. In this didactic imperative, the original sense of educating is realized irrespective of the contents he/she is involved with in the matter.<sup>4)</sup> An adult's own involvement in this world is a meaningful matter for him/her because of his/her own, personal giving meaning to the surrounding reality. As a child progresses on his/her way to adulthood (as he/she participates in his/her own becoming and changing), he/she increasingly gives meaning to his/her being-there. The didactic task is observable in this movement. Giving meaning to his/her own existence and surrounding world is not automatic because the world is a matter of hidden sense which must be systematically unlocked and disclosed through the help and support of those who know.

Therefore, as a matter of giving meaning, educating refers to life **contents** to which meaning must be given. An educator aims for altered activity structures of a child, as he/she gradually introduces and accompanies him/her to what, for a child, are still unknown, uncertain and concealed structures of reality. The teaching task is that an educator must establish a formal series of situations by which the unknown is presented so that a child can gradually attribute sense and meaning to those aspects with which, out of ignorance, he/she still cannot associate with meaningfully. While a form of teaching appears in the lifeworld as a form of living, the contents are closely interwoven with and follow from a life or worldview. Thus, while form has a universal character because these forms of living refer to what is general, and they are not determined by time, place or culture, contents are a specific matter because persons do not turn themselves to and enter reality with respect to the same matters, purposes and contingencies. Therefore, the course of educating appears as a particular form of actualizing educating as it speaks from the original experience of persons. On the other hand, the life and worldviews refer respectively to the contents in terms of which the form comes into motion.

When there is planning for a didactic practice, it is now obvious that a harmony must prevail between the form and contents of the planning. The form and contents must be brought to each other and coupled with each other such that an effective course of teaching can be realized. In the lifeworld, there are didactic possibilities indicated in which there are connections among life forms, educative forms and learning forms, out of which the realization of the course of teaching is possible. In constructing a didactic theory, a didactician finds, in this balance between form and contents, the postulate of the didactic imperative. A teaching structure resulting from this can only progress unhindered if the planning satisfies two criteria:

- (a) The teaching must be near to life. If the contents which primarily express the life and worldview of the educator are foreign, this means that a child is introduced to and receives a reality which is foreign and unrealistic to life as emphasized by the teacher and ignores the demands of the time. The teaching task of a school always speaks to a child's need for help to find him/herself and to arrive at self-discovery in a lifeworld for **him/her**.
- (b) Essentially, the teaching must be relatively educative. This refers to a teaching form which originates from the course of an educative situation with its possibilities of implementation for a didactician.

Van der Stoep states this as follows: "The synthesis of the near to life and the relatively educative intervention, in theory building, presents the postulate of the didactic imperative. The didactic imperative comes forward in relief as that appeal to which responsible adults might not say no".<sup>5)</sup>

Finally: The realization of a lifestyle by a child means making visible the meanings attributed to life contents. Without contents, a person would not be aware of the world. Meaning is attributed to the things of the world, and they are ranked in order of priority according to the intensity of emphasis. The life contents unfold before a person to the extent that he/she attributes meaning to reality. This unfolding of reality occurs in close connection with a person's life and worldview, in the sense

that the meanings attributed by him/her are an entirely personal matter which springs from a deeply rooted norm- and value-structure. Thus, reality is normatively **interpreted**, and lends itself to emphasizing itself in the lifestyle of a person and from which his/her own life contents become visible. These personal life contents are matters of an educative aim because, by implication, they represent a person's educative contents. Didactically, it is with respect to these contents that a harmony with the didactic form must be accomplished so that an optimally effective course of teaching can be realized.

### REFERENCES

1. Van der Stoep, F.: Didaktiese grondvorme, p. 6.
2. Van der Stoep, F.: Didaskein, p. 79.
3. Van der Stoep, F.: Ibid, p. 66.
4. Van der Stoep, F.: Ibid, p. 67.
5. Van der Stoep, F.: Ibid, p. 137.