

# ORTHOPEDAGOGICS\*

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## 1. Introduction

At the University of Pretoria, concern for and thinking about a child with problems develops hand in hand with the activities of the Child Guidance Institute, which is established in 1929 in the Department of Social Work. In 1949, after the Institute is assigned to the Faculty of Education under the direction of B. F. Nel, an exceptional period is ushered in, during which the pedagogical foundation is laid, on which orthopedagogics could be built, as an identifiable pedagogical perspective. Until his retirement in 1970, Nel is the propelling force behind thinking about the **deviant** child, and he shows unambiguously that intervening with these children is primarily a pedagogic matter and, indeed, he accomplishes this in a period when it is generally accepted that this intervention is an extension of medical, psychological, sociological, and psychiatric work.

Especially since the 1960's, many publications appear by persons connected with the Institute, in which it is shown how one must set about helping a child in educative distress. There are relevant questions about the role of the educator in helping a child who, for one or another reason, is "conspicuous". The child's educational situatedness is taken as the point of departure and thinking about a child with problems is strongly influenced by the prevailing pedagogical thought of the time.

## 2. The deviant child, as educationally situated,

With reference to a philosophical-anthropologically founded pedagogical thought, especially after World War II, special attention is given to both the disabled child and those with learning and educative difficulties, in general. With the conviction that giving assistance to these children must take place within an educative

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situation, a pedagogical-psychological approach is advocated which rests on a personologically oriented view, according to which a child is seen as a somatic-psychic-spiritual being. Nel refers to a "modern direction of thinking in the pedagogics which the Faculty of Education is developing, and which now links up with the anthropological-pedagogical views which developed in Europe, especially in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and France, where the pedagogical situation is the starting point"(30:1).

He explains, in exquisite ways, how an accountable "psychological pedagogics" arises, within which the **existential-human** is brought to the foreground, and he says that only a psychology and pedagogy which are rooted in a "**modern philosophical anthropology**" are able to understand<sup>(28: 5)</sup> persons in their totality, i.e., in their world involvement, and to study them in their existential situations.

In orthopedagogic thought, the emphasis is placed on the fact that a child with problems must be approached as he/she "announces" him/herself within an educative situation in relationship to an adult to whom he/she is committed for help and support. Thus, there is a search for the essentials of a child, i.e., for an accountable child-anthropology, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a consideration of the fact that a child him/herself establishes relationships in which he/she encounters things. This implies a grounding of these essentials in the world established by a child with problems, i.e., as a child who is committed to being educated (49: 32).

From this point of departure, it is obvious to Nel that the orthopedagogic "must function as a **part-science within the framework of pedagogics**" (28: 4). Starting from Langeveld's statement that a person is the only being who educates, is educated, and is committed to education and, also, from his moments of development, i.e., the biological, that of helplessness, safety and security, and emancipation, Nel indicates that a restrained child, **in particular**, is committed to being educated because of his/her greater helplessness and seeking help, his/her need for sympathetic, authoritative guidance, and the adult's responsibility to support

him/her to become morally independent. For Nel, the basic pedagogic and orthopedagogic aim is forming a child's conscience (28: 5), and he generally finds it "difficult to determine the boundary between current pedagogic and orthopedagogic assistance"(28: 5).

### 3. Accent on the "disabled" ("handicapped") child

Since the 1950's, European "orthopedagogues," such as Van Gelder<sup>(58: 59)</sup>, Vliegenthart<sup>(69)</sup>, Rienstra<sup>(10)</sup>, Hanselmann<sup>(17)</sup>, Asperger<sup>(1)</sup>, and Grewel<sup>(16)</sup>, child psychiatrists, such as Vedder<sup>(66)</sup>, child psychologists, such as Hart de Ruyter<sup>(18)</sup>, and medical doctors, such as Valk<sup>(53)</sup>, and Schenk<sup>(45)</sup> exercise a significant influence on thinking about children with problems.

During this time, orthopedagogic thinking is particularly directed to the **disabled** child, although the practical assistance given in the Child Guidance Institute has a strong foundation in clinical child psychology and is specifically provided to children with "character flaws" and learning problems. Nel indicates that a restrained child, as does a normal child, is always in a pedagogic situation and, thus, is subject to everything pedagogic (including the moments of development), and that the aim is to potentialize and activate a child's spirituality in terms of forming his/her conscience. He identifies himself with Dumont's description of the orthopedagogic field of work, i.e., that "educating a deviant, handicapped child, a child in educative distress (Van der Zeyde), in orthopedagogics remains, in principle, the same as educating an ordinary child, except that the contents are relativized by the limits imposed by the diminished educability ... The difference between pedagogics and orthopedagogics lies in the difference in the means of educating, among which the most important is the orthopedagogue's attitude toward education. The difference is that the **same** means are used **differently**, i.e., more frequently, with greater or lesser emphasis, for a longer or shorter time, with more nuances or more deliberately"(9: 148-149).

Thus, for Nel, the aim of education and of orthopedagogics is the same. Also he<sup>(28;11)</sup> embraces Valk's view that "where ordinary educating takes adequate steps to achieve this aim, one speaks of pedagogics. Where extraordinary steps are followed, one speaks of orthopedagogics"<sup>(53: 247)</sup>.

Until the beginning of the 1970's, the **disabled** child remains the point of focus. In addition, there is agreement with Vliegthart's<sup>(68)</sup> overarching orthopedagogic theoretical scheme regarding the large variety of forms of child disturbances. The emphasis is especially on a child's disturbance, and the correlated **being different**, which is a **fundamental category** in orthopedagogics. In this connection, Pretorius<sup>(38)</sup> refers to the following moments:

- \* All disturbed children are committed to education;
- \* all are impeded in attaining adulthood, and because of these impediments, they attain a lower level of adulthood, and at a later time than they would without the impediment;
- \* there is a loss of obviousness (they are "conspicuous");
- \* the differentness of these children is central.

Research is directed to the disabled child and to specific forms of disturbances; the steps to be taken to best help such a child are placed in the spotlight. A considerable number of publications by faculty and students have one or another specific disturbance as a theme, e.g., the child with cerebral palsy, brain-damage, poor vision, hardness of hearing, epilepsy, and mental retardation. In 1970, an international symposium is organized by the Faculty on the **destitute** child and his/her insertion into society<sup>(48)</sup>.

#### 4. Pedagogical diagnostics

With the aim of better understanding the deviant child, excellent progress is made in establishing a **pedodiagnostic practice**. The concentration is on establishing a person-image, i.e., a learning-, lived experience-, and language-image of restrained children, and those with behavioral and learning problems<sup>(33)</sup>.

The attempt is to **understand** a child in his/her **wholeness** (as a totality) and, by means of methods of "understanding", to establish a totality-image of his/her personal structure<sup>(27: 3)</sup>. The prominent place held by diagnostics is seen in the fact that, since 1972, equivalent degrees in "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics" are offered, in addition to specializations in Clinical Child Psychology and Mental Health Care, on the B. Ed., M. Ed., and D. Ed. levels. Also accentuated is the fact that pedodiagnosics occurs in an educative situation<sup>(27: 10)</sup>, and clear guidelines are established for designing such a diagnostic practice.

The unaccountability of a naturalistically oriented explanation of a child's problems, as noted from experience<sup>(30: 1)</sup>, which is directed at isolating, controlling, and measuring psychic characteristics with psychological tests and measurements, is exposed in convincing ways by Nel<sup>(27)</sup>, Sonnekus<sup>(49)</sup>, Gouws<sup>(15)</sup> and others. The publication series of the Work Community for the Advancement of Pedagogy as a Science helps introduce methods and media<sup>(8;14; 19; 21; 31; 32; 33; 52; .65; 70)</sup> for acquiring a person-image.

From psychological and pedagogical perspective, there is remarkable progress in expanding fundamental and empirical methods through a phenomenological approach. Diagnosis acquires the stamp of a subjectivizing approach to children with problems which involves further expansion, systematization, differentiation, and refinement of particular essentials of educating. A unique combination of quantitative, qualitative, and pedagogic evaluation is designed. According to Nel<sup>(27: 13)</sup>, an exhaustive and thorough person-image not only provides a clear picture of the various aspects of a child, as a person, but also shows what has led to the distorted person-image.

The following is an example of the information included in a person-image<sup>(29: 33)</sup>:

This child is affectively disturbed and has a qualitatively good intelligence. He/she finds school to be an unpleasant place

and, hence, his/her attitude of resistance and friction at home. Because his/her affective disturbance leads him/her to feel insecure, anxious, and tense, he/she also is depressed. Thus, he/she does not explore his/her schoolwork, and does not concentrate or persist in attending; he/she is not able to penetrate the symbolic character of language and, thus, does not explore language. His/her deficient education at home lacks loving care by his/her mother; divorce and his/her being flung about among his/her parents and stepparents intensifies his/her insecurity; there is no father-identification by which he/she can acquire guidance and a course in his/her life; there is no father who can exercise consistent authority over him/her. It is concluded that he/she is growing up in a distorted educative situation such that he/she is not able to live closely with his/her parents in a relationship directed to his/her adulthood.

Such a person-image clearly indicates how a child lived experiences his/her world (with security or insecurity, etc.), and what the condition is of his/her exploration<sup>(12: 98)</sup>.

Orthodidactic diagnosis is built on pedagogic diagnosis, and aims for a "total image" of the learning world of a child with learning difficulties which, according to Sonnekus<sup>(49: 39)</sup>, is differentiated on two levels, i.e., an image of the lifeworld, as experiential world, which a child constitutes for him/herself based on the modes of learning, and an image of lived experiences in terms of learning relationships with, e.g., the learning material, or the learning task, with other children and with adults. On the other hand, the image depicts a structural image of the forms of the course of learning or the activity structures which are at the foundation of the child's difficulties with a subject matter (e.g., arithmetic) in terms of globalizing, analyzing, and synthesizing, or concretizing, schematizing, and abstracting.

In a 1962 M. Ed. thesis on **Die antropologies-pedagogiese agtergrond van ortodidaktiek** [The anthropological-pedagogical background of orthodidactics] , S. J. L. Gouws<sup>(13)</sup> indicates that, finally, there is a breaking away from a mere analysis of errors and a remediation of symptoms, and the activity structures of learning (i.e., globalizing,

etc.), and deeper-lying educative problems are taken into consideration. For example, it is determined whether a child works systematically in his/her handling and activating methods of solution; if he/she works independently; how his/her insights, and plans of action seem to be; if there is a rise in the course of his/her learning and thinking. A structural image of the pathic (affective) and gnostic (cognitive) lived experiences are acquired, and there is a continual accounting of the child's educability<sup>(49: 38)</sup>, which is linked with the sort of educating he/she can participate in. In this regard,

Sonnekus<sup>(49: 35)</sup> says, for example, that a defective affective educating can so restrain a child's pathic (affective) lived experiences of the learning event which he/she is not able to distance him/herself to a cognitive level of learning. Such a child is blocked or even flooded by his/her own vital-pathic lived experience, and this hinders him/her in establishing a lifeworld in accountable ways.

The diagnostic practice for determining the pedagogically achieved, in relation to the pedagogically achievable level<sup>(49: 36)</sup> is placed on a solid foundation. Effective use is made of pedagogical criteria. Especially, psychological-pedagogical (and later psychopedagogical) criteria figure prominently, and mainly this is **psychological-pedagogical** diagnostics. This especially involves a search for essentials of a child's lived experience, which includes the state of his/her pathic (affective), gnostic (cognitive) and meaning giving (normative) lived experiences. For example, it is determined whether a child, because of his/her lived experiences of his/her behavioral or learning problems, is flooded by his/her affective lived experiences and, therefore, is restrained, at the expense of the cognitive.

There is a search for the essentials of a child's experiential and learning worlds, in contrast to diagnosing symptoms. However, the emphasis has not yet fallen on the real **under-actualization** of the **modes of learning**, and the **modes of actualizing the psychic life**. Why the being-together of adult and child gives rise to deviancy when the essentials of educating are implemented inadequately is not yet specifically shown. What is included is establishing a

**psychic-image**, with the accompanying statement that the child " ... does not live in a close relationship with his educators, which is directed to his adulthood"(29: 33).

On this basis, however, one can successfully build an authentic orthopedagogic diagnostics, which involves determining the **problematic dynamics of educating** as such, and not merely determining the level of adulthood already attained by a child.

## 5. Therapeutic intervention with a deviant child

Also, the therapeutic intervention with a child acquires a clearly **pedagogical** flavor grounded on the primordial ways of educating by purposefully striving to implement essentials of educating in the therapy.

Because the emphasis falls especially on **re-educating**, **pedotherapy** also deals with promoting values and with spiritual forming. For Nel<sup>(27: 9)</sup>, **pedotherapy** is an **act of re-educating** because, with the ordinary means of educating and teaching, the restrained child is not able to attain the highest form of adulthood of which he/she, with his/her restraints, is capable. Therefore, for him<sup>(28: 9)</sup>, orthopedagogic assistance includes two inseparable aspects, i.e., the **spiritual-formative** aspect, where the accent falls on activating and potentializing the spiritual dimension of a restrained child, and the **orthodidactic** aspect, where particular and specialized "learning methods" are applied to try to overcome the learning difficulties which the restrained child experiences.

Pedotherapeutic research is especially directed to its improvement, and explicit attention is given to procedures for doing this. However, it is still very **generally** directed to help with meanings with the aim of **conscience forming**. Also, there is a conspicuous separation between a child's role and that of an adult, because evaluating a child's role during the diagnosis is still "isolated" and somewhat speculative, and the role of the adult also is reflected on speculatively.



Nel<sup>(27: 6-7)</sup> says that when a child manifests a disturbed personal image and, thus, the usual methods of **educating** cannot be followed, special methods then must be applied so his/her personal image can again be corrected, re-formed, transformed, re-educated to make him/her again receptive for being educated in the usual ways. He<sup>(26: 57)</sup> calls this application of specialized methods **pedotherapy**, because it involves an adult-child situation where a child must be brought to the correct psychic-spiritual attunement. The aim is to make a child free to discover him/herself and to assume his/her responsibility for life, says Vorsatz<sup>(70: 60)</sup>.

In this light, until the beginning of the 1970's, pedotherapy, in fact, is mainly an applied logotherapy, which qualifies as **pedotherapy** because it occurs in an educative situation. By means of pedotherapy, especially by using play, imagery, and conversation, a child is assisted out of his/her helplessness in a safe, life certain, and secure milieu to explore his/her world in normal ways and make contact with other persons in his/her world. There is less concentration on direct prohibitions and limitations of a child's manifest behaviors of a deviant nature, since this only would lead to greater and stronger compensatory deviant patterns of behavior<sup>(70: 75)</sup>. Subsequently, it is attempted to bring a child to a trusting relationship so he/she purposefully will further explore his/her own world and, thus, be amenable again to the educative aims of his/her natural educators.

The following are examples of pedotherapeutic aims, somewhat applicable to each deviant child<sup>(12; 98)</sup>:

- \* Readying him/her to accept his/her situatedness;
- \* Preparing him/her for self-acceptance;
- \* Re-establishing his/her affective and temperamental life;
- \* Improving his/her use of language;
- \* Releasing him/her from anxiety and threat;
- \* Readying him/her to explore his/her world;
- \* Preparing him/her to accept safety and authority;
- \* Acquiring insight into the demands of propriety.

## 6. On the way to an accountable orthopedagogics

Especially in the 1970's, orthopedagogics settles in and an authentic foundation is laid on which it could be developed further.

**Problematic educating**, however, is not yet at its center, and until the 1970's, there is only a vague reference to the quality of implementing educative essentials in their mutual interrelations.

It has gradually become clear that orthopedagogics not only involves a **disabled** child, but also a child who is **different** from an ordinary child.

Although, from the beginning, Nel and his co-workers have the idea that thinking about children with learning and behavioral difficulties constitutes a "separate and unique area"<sup>(27: 7)</sup> under the dome of the pedagogical, and which announces itself as a **part-science** of the pedagogical, research and pronouncements about a child with problems is still mainly done from a general **pedagogical** and **psychological** perspective. Real specialization is still lacking and, until late in the 1970's, specific psychological and pedagogical insights are applied as psycho-orthopedagogic pronouncements about the problematic educating, and the child's deviancy is explained accordingly.

The **integrated** role of the child and adult in the problematic educative event is still not clearly noted. Postgraduate training attuned to intervening with the "deviant" child falls into two categories, i.e., specializing in special education, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, specialization in assisting children with learning difficulties and behavioral deviations. Additional academic and professional qualifications in this regard result from acquiring an M. Ed. and D. Ed. degree in "Educational Psychology". Since 1962, some M. Ed. and D. Ed. degrees are also given in "Clinical Child Psychology and Mental Health Care", and from 1970 to 1972 also in "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics", which in 1975 is changed to "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics and Pedotherapy", and which subsequently is replaced by a specialization in "Orthopedagogics".

There is further refinement in acquiring a learning image, but the interaction between the inadequate actualization of the essentials of

educating and the under-actualization of the modes of learning as such, are still vaguely shown. The focus is mainly on establishing a **learning effect image**, and a child with learning problems is still mostly viewed as someone who learns inadequately because of defective learning modes such as perceptual-motor or auditory-verbal loss, or because of educational difficulties, **in general**, rather than because of a **particularization** of the **problematic dynamics of educating** regarding a particular child with learning problems.

Hence, there is little evidence of a founded orthopedagogic perspective because of its "dependence" on and intertwining, first with psychological pedagogics, and later with psychopedagogics, and the order of the delay from this perspective is mainly that orthopedagogics is an area of application for their ideas.

Even though there is reference to the prevailing pedagogical thought, particular psychological trends are also leaned on heavily, especially the German psychology of thinking<sup>(42: 72-78)</sup>, the child psychology of Hart de Ruyter<sup>(18)</sup>, the child psychiatry of Vedder<sup>(66)</sup>, and others.

That Nel's orthopedagogic thinking is constrained by the absence of an authentic and clear pedagogical macrostructural launching pad [i.e., a pedagogical perspective] is clearly reflected in the conspicuous separation which he makes between the psychological and the pedagogical, and in his description of orthopedagogics, as a complex scientific structure in the midst of the pedagogical<sup>(28: 8)</sup>. He attributes this complexity mainly to the fact that orthopedagogics deals with a child in his/her pedagogical situatedness, for which reason it also requires knowledge of theoretical pedagogics, and its part-sciences, in particular, psychological pedagogics, didactic pedagogics, social pedagogics, etc.; in the second place, it is involved with a **disabled** child, and knowledge of a child with defects in his/her physical or psychic-spiritual structure is important. With reference to Dutch orthopedagogues of the time, he describes<sup>(28: 9)</sup> orthopedagogics as **educative activity** on behalf of a child who, because of his/her

psychic-spiritual and organic structure, is seriously impeded in offering him/her ordinary education.

Thus, for Nel, the deviancy or disability, along with the educational occurrence of this child are primary, rather than the **under-actualization of his/her psychic life potentialities** in terms of a problematic educative event which has been actualized by the child and/or adult. It is not until the late 1960's and early 1970's that clear structural, categorical, and criterial schemes are established in didactic pedagogics<sup>(54; 55; 56)</sup>, fundamental pedagogics<sup>(22; 23; 24; 35)</sup> psychopedagogics<sup>(47; 50; 51)</sup>, and sociopedagogics, and figured in the description of a particular problematic educative situation in terms of the quality of the implementation of these essentials [e.g., structures]. The desire for an "independent" orthopedagogic perspective now is clearly pushed to the surface.

## 7. The orthopedagogic as a pedagogical perspective

Since the beginning of the 1970's, increasing emphasis is placed on **problematic educating** as such, and although a child's physical, intellectual, and other disabilities still figure prominently, thinking begins to concentrate increasingly on the problematic educative **dynamics** as such. This increasingly reveals the necessity for a distinction between a problematic educative **situation** and a problematic educative **event**. A problematic educative **event** is related directly to inadequate educative **activities**, where a child is continually **restrained** in becoming adult, or in learning, and his/her personal potentials are under-actualized-in-education<sup>(60: 37)</sup>. In a problematic educative **situation**, there are **aggravating circumstances** regarding the course of educating, e.g., disabilities, poverty, and more. However, these aggravating circumstances, in themselves, cannot qualify as a **problem in becoming adult or in learning**, since they do not force a child to **inadequately** actualize his/her personal potentialities. Essentially, the becoming and learning of a disabled child are no different from those of another child; however, there is a **differentness** in their quality, which can be **restraining**<sup>(60: 39)</sup>.

In 1973, a systematic search begins to uncover the problematic educative dynamics underlying a unique child's being restrained. The practical direction of orthopedagogics, aimed at neutralizing these dynamics, also become more compelling. With the establishment of the Department of Orthopedagogics, as an independent academic department in 1977, specific attention is given to disclosing the essentials of problematic educating<sup>(60:39)</sup> as such, and neutralizing or eliminating the problem by authentic orthopedagogic insights.

Irrespective of the categorical description of problematic educating, research also is directed to exposing the essentials of the dynamics of particular problematic educative phenomena<sup>(3; 6; 7; 20; 41; 42; 44; 46)</sup>. In particular, the emphasis is placed on both the child's **inadequate** self-actualization of his/her becoming adult and of his/her learning potentialities, and the **inadequate** guidance by the adults, both of which constitute a **unitary event** in terms of a problematic educative event. The emphasis is placed on the **disconcerting** or **attenuated** appearances of the essentials of educating in a child's educative situation, rather than on the type of restraint with which he/she must contend or on general (vague) references to the appearance of educative essentials.

The meaningful development of pedagogical thinking at the University of Pretoria has also placed orthopedagogics clearly in perspective. The establishment of a categorical structure provides the indispensable basis for orthopedagogics, and is a necessary step for clarifying the status of orthopedagogics as a pedagogical perspective<sup>(11: 63)</sup>. These solid categorical structures, disclosed and described by pedagogues, "invite" orthopedagogues to also implement them regarding orthopedagogic problems.

It becomes clear that pedagogics, as a science, also has a specific orthopedagogic function<sup>(60: 37)</sup>, which amounts to constructing an orthopedagogic theory, and designing an orthopedagogic practice. Especially when Sonnekus and his co-workers<sup>(51)</sup> proclaim the area of study of psychopedagogics as the psychic life of a child-in-education, it is realized that orthopedagogics could be pursued only

as supplemental to psychopedagogics, or to any other sub-perspective, because **problematic** educating cannot be comprehensively identified by any other perspective than the orthopedagogic.

Initially, a very strong emphasis is placed on so-called "joint perspectives". However, this entails obvious problems, and only result in a tendency for orthopedagogic questions to still be illuminated from that sub-perspective of pedagogics which is most appropriate for the investigator's aim, rather than doing this from an **orthopedagogic** point of view. Thus, although there is a strong emphasis on implementing joint perspectives, the joint figuring of the various pedagogical categories is not yet realized regarding practical educative problems. This still involves describing **distorted** essentials, especially with psychopedagogical and fundamental pedagogical categories by means of a so-called psycho-orthopedagogic study<sup>(38: 72-74)</sup>.

Although problematic educating is penetrated from more than one perspective by means of categories, criteria, and structures, there is not a successful convergence of these structures, and the dynamic of problematic educating, as a unitary event, is not illuminated. The task of convergence of orthopedagogic theory is not yet fully recognized, as is evidenced from the following: "Along with the fundamental pedagogical, there are two other part-disciplines of pedagogics which serve as the foundation for designing a pedotherapy, i.e., psychopedagogics and orthopedagogics"<sup>(40: 18)</sup>.

The practical implementation of orthopedagogics makes it impossible to conclusively explain a problematic educative event from only one perspective. Therefore, there cannot only be, e.g., a psycho-orthopedagogic, or fundamental-orthopedagogic, or didactic-orthopedagogic, or socio-orthopedagogic perspective. Hence, it is recognized that there are no orthopedagogic moments which can concentrate on the problematic educative event from a psycho-, fundamental-, didactic- or socio-pedagogic, perspective to prominently bring to the fore the appearing essentials of educating.

However, it is realized that an accountable disclosure of the essentials of problematic educating, and their elimination, require an illumination of **where** and **how** the educative essentials, in their **relations** with each other, are distorted<sup>(60: 37)</sup>. The two-fold task of orthopedagogics clearly emerges so that **constructing** a theory and **designing** a practice enjoy particular attention.

An essential description of problematic educating now occurs with pedagogical categories, always in an overarching **ortho-perspective**. Orthopedagogic theory embraces a reflection on a situation in which a child faces an adult, and where his/her becoming adult and learning are **under-actualized** by the child him/herself, which also points to **inadequate guidance or accompaniment** by the adult.

Now, the scientific disclosure is directed to a **failing** educative event, as problematic, **and** to a child's giving inadequate meaning to the educative contents. This thinking task occurs in terms of all available, but **relevant**, pedagogical concepts. This relevant knowledge of the various pedagogical part-perspectives is, thus, integrated, synchronized, and converged in relation to a problematic educative event<sup>(60: 37)</sup>.

Thus, an orthopedagogic theory is the result of a scientifically accountable penetration and description of the essentials of a particular educatively situated child who is restrained in becoming adult, or in learning and as such, this is knowledge of the essentials of problematic educating, i.e., of the attenuated occurrence of the essentials of educating.

Because problematic educating is still educating, orthopedagogics is rooted in the pedagogical, and derives its "autonomy" as a pedagogical perspective from nowhere else<sup>(61: 186)</sup>. Therefore, the orthopedagogue is compelled to continually take note of new categorical, criterial, and structural concepts of the other pedagogical part-perspectives, and to interpret their specific usefulness for and relevance to the educative dynamics, and to incorporate them into his/her orthopedagogic theory.

Thus, it becomes clear that orthopedagogics must remain a perspective which is aware of the essentials disclosed by the other pedagogical part-perspectives, and it must correctly consider them in its own specialized practice with the obvious aim of adapting or refining them to it. This scientific work also elevates orthopedagogics to a full-fledged pedagogical part-perspective equivalent to the others<sup>(11: 70)</sup>.

Now, orthopedagogics also is clearly a convergent pedagogical perspective because the orthopedagogue must be able to select the relevant restraining moments in terms of each different pedagogical part-perspective and allow them to be practiced in the intervention with a child restrained in his/her becoming. The macrostructural description of the (problematic) educative reality provides the guideline for an orthopedagogic practice, in the sense that it indicates particular tendencies for planning, and draws the boundary within which a particular problem can be intercepted<sup>(64: 7)</sup>.

Since the 1940's, orthopedagogic thinking at the University of Pretoria progresses beyond the initial notion **that** orthopedagogic work is a pedagogical matter, by describing it **as** educative work, in the light of the current reflections on the problematic educative dynamics, with the aim of designing an effective practice to eliminate the problem. The authentic macrostructure, which is relevant for a particular orthopedagogic situation, as a general guideline, is continually particularized, reinterpreted, and made into a practice, and it appears there is little mention of haphazard successes and failures.

Because the orthopedagogic task of particularizing also requires penetrating empirical research, particular attention is given to this. From the pedagogical, as a macrostructural basis of knowledge, particular fields of educative problems are disclosed, and research is directed to specific areas.

Since orthopedagogics is practice, with the main aim of eliminating concrete problematic educating, theory is also always functioning in **orthopedagogic practice**.



## 8. Orthopedagogic practice

### 8.1 Orthopedagogic diagnosis

Orthopedagogic practice falls into a few distinguishable components: diagnosing, pedotherapy, and guiding the deviant child's parents.

Since 1975, an already sophisticated, widely accepted, and orthopedagogically founded practice, has been developed further. Regarding diagnostics, clear guidelines are established, and particular functional activities are precisely specified about how to gauge and describe, in its essentials, a problematic educative situation of a particular child restrained in becoming and learning.

Formerly, behavioral and learning problems are interpreted, from beginning to end, in terms of a child, and educative defects are related to his/her worlds of becoming and learning, as his/her experiential world. Today, diagnostic research is directed to interpreting behavioral and learning problems in terms of **problematic educative dynamics**, as a description of the nuances of the attenuated appearance of the essentials of educating. In particular, stock is taken of **how** the problematic educative dynamics, and the disharmonious teaching dynamics can be effectively disclosed, in which connection the usability of available media and procedures are re-evaluated<sup>(46: 64)</sup>.

By means of orthopedagogic diagnostics, an image is established of a deviant child's inadequate relationships with life contents, which he/she has created on his/her own initiative, but under the accompaniment of his/her educators. This implies an image of the quality of the implementation of the essentials of educating, with specific reference to a child's personal **meanings** and personal **attribution of meaning** in terms of his/her personal-actualization-in-  
**education**<sup>(64: 50)</sup>.

Until the beginning of the 1970's, there is gradually greater concentration on establishing **that** there is a gap between a child's attained and attainable educative level; since then, there also is specific concentration on the **nature** of this gap, in terms of **inadequately** implemented particularized essentials of educating.

In 1976, a weeklong symposium<sup>(63)</sup> is arranged in the Department of Orthopedagogics, where attention is not only given to the retarded child but, in particular, there is reflection on the **restrained** child, to show **who** a child is with learning problems, and what the connection between inadequate educating and learning problems implies. Also, with the help of videotapes, specially produced in collaboration with the Audiovisual department of the University of Pretoria, it is demonstrated how orthopedagogic practice works to counteract a problematic educative dynamic, especially by pedotherapy.

## 8.2 Pyrotherapeutic practice

In the early years, assisting a deviant child pedotherapeutically is characterized by a clearly defined aim and thorough planning. Where, for a very long time, pedotherapy is viewed mainly as enabling a child to live with his/her natural educators in a "relationship directed to his/her adulthood" and, this, is shown to be an event actualized in an educative situation, and the effective use of play, image, and conversation, as well as other means of communication, are refined, since the beginning of the 1970's, it is shown that pedotherapy is mainly concerned with supporting a child to a re-lived experiencing, as a redefining, in the sense of attributing new, different, favorable meanings to his/her own situatedness<sup>(40)</sup>. In this regard, Pretorius<sup>(40)</sup> says that, when a child's lived experiencing in the original educative situation is unfavorable to his/her becoming, in the pedotherapeutic situation, he/she must be supported to **redefine** it. He<sup>(39)</sup> shows that the pedagogical relationship-, sequence-, and aim-structures must be implemented, and pedagogical criteria must be applied to evaluate the therapeutic actions<sup>(40: 7)</sup>.

Gradually, there is a breaking away from an applied logotherapeutic oriented, a Rogerian, and an existential child therapeutic approach, and the views of Vermeer<sup>(67)</sup>, Van der Zeyde<sup>(57)</sup>, Lubbers<sup>(25)</sup>, and Dumont<sup>(10)</sup> are built on, and a pedagogically accountable therapy is developed with the aim of supporting a child to **modify** his/her unfavorable **feelings, knowing, and hierarchy of values**.

Hence, pedotherapeutic practice implies a more refined and intensified educative practice, which involves the **modification or correction** of meanings, rather than the addition of new meanings. On this basis, pedotherapy is qualified as an **orthopedagogically founded** activity. The therapeutic event is always characterized by an "ethical-normative influencing, of aligning behaviors to norms, regulating, disciplining, relating, offering, confronting a child with the demands of reality, etc."<sup>(40: 23)</sup>, but always with respect to specific, soundly selected contents of reality connected with a child's **disharmonious** experiential world contents, which must be 'replaced' by specific, **harmonious** experiential world contents. This essentially assumes that the problematic educative dynamic has been **neutralized**.

In this light, nowadays, the pedotherapeutic event is described as establishing an intensified educative situation in which an encounter occurs between the orthopedagogue and a child restrained in becoming and learning, during which he/she is purposefully helped to change specific meanings regarding his/her unfavorable feelings, knowledge, and hierarchy of values, as a reconstituting of his/her experiential world.

Although the implicit aim of pedotherapy is re-educating a child to attain full-fledged adulthood<sup>(40: 23)</sup>, the explicit aim is **changing meanings** to such a degree that the child's meanings agree with those meanings which he/she, at this stage of life and according to his/her ability to give meaning, ought to have already been given to him/herself and to life.

In contemporary pedotherapeutic practice, the overarching educative aim, thus, is still pursued indirectly, but there is always a

specifiable, specific pedotherapeutic aim which is related to changing meanings: Special educative help is offered the deviant child which, in varying circumstances and in accordance with the immediate aim, is actualized on a differentiated basis.

The design of pedotherapeutic theory has clearly become a matter of particularizing the **general pedagogical** structure by taking into consideration the **particular problematic dynamics of educating**. The explanation and interpretation, the practice, and evaluation stemming from this, within the framework of the problem of becoming or learning are, however, an out and out **orthopedagogic** matter which can be pedagogically evaluated only in the general sense of the word. Therefore, these days, particular attention is given to the **orthopedagogic** founding of pedotherapy, which aims to eliminate the defects which still remain<sup>(6; 36; 42; 60)</sup>. In addition, an **indirect**, as well as a direct approach is given a prominent place during pedotherapy, as an orthopedagogically accountable procedure.

With reference to the pioneering work done from the beginning in the faculty, the procedures are continually refined. The necessity for thorough planning regarding the pedotherapeutic **contents**, and the **form** in which it is presented, is accepted today as the point of departure, and there is a meaningful enlistment of didactic and subject didactic insights<sup>(60: 146)</sup> because it is clear that pedotherapeutic guidance does not differ fundamentally from teaching, although there is clearly a functional difference specifiable in terms of the ways in which the didactic structure is used in pedotherapy. In particular, the importance of **contents for substitution**, as a linking factor between pedotherapeutic **guidance** and the **changes of meanings** (re-orientation in terms of **actualizing** the psychic life) is shown in the pedotherapeutic situation, with special reference to the reduction of the substitution contents, to stating the problem and to ordering the contents.

The course of the pedotherapeutic sessions shows a clear correspondence with the course of a lesson, and the haphazard success (and the talk of general vagueness), which often is a characteristic of earlier pedotherapy, has largely been

eliminated<sup>(60: 147)</sup>.

## SUMMARY

The early development of orthopedagogics is closely related to the activities of the Child Guidance Institute, which is established as early as 1929 in the Department of Social Work.

With the inclusion of this Institute in the Faculty of Education in 1940, under the initiative of Prof. B. F. Nel, a shift of emphasis occurs towards an educational orientation in dealing with the exceptional child. This is the origin of orthopedagogics, as a sub-discipline of pedagogics. The boundary between pedagogics and orthopedagogics, however, is not clearly defined.

During the 1960's, orthopedagogues based in Europe exercises considerable influence on the Institute's approach to the exceptional child. The emphasis falls strongly on the concept of handicap, although the Institute deals more specifically with children with learning difficulties and character flaws. Assistance is geared toward attaining education aims and, more specifically, to molding a child's character. The orthopedagogic nature of the assistance is found in the extraordinary steps taken to achieve these aims. The differentness of the exceptional child are an important point of departure for the orthopedagogics of that time.

In striving for a better understanding of the exceptional child, excellent progress is made in establishing an orthopedagogic practice of diagnosis, in which the wholeness of the child is respected, and the diagnosis is aimed at elucidating a child's total structure of personhood.

The help given has a strongly pedagogical character. Pedotherapy is defined as re-education because it is aimed at correcting or reforming unsatisfactory aspects of a child's person-structure by spiritually molding him/her since this could not be achieved via the usual channels of educating. Therefore, pedotherapy is initially largely an applied logotherapy, which qualifies as pedotherapy because it is practiced within the framework of the pedagogical

situation. Use is made of playing, drawing ,and discussing, as forms of therapy.

Although orthopedagogics is established as a part-discipline of pedagogics in the 1960's, it is not until the late seventies that its specialized function becomes truly differentiated. Until then, it draws on the insights of both psychological and pedagogical perspectives for its own theory and practice. It is the explication of categories and criteria of the pedagogical structure by didactic, fundamental, psycho and socio sub-disciplines of pedagogics, which make it possible to reflect on the essential nature of a particular problematic situation of educating, from an independent orthopedagogic perspective.

Since its establishment as an independent academic department, the Department of Orthopedagogics attempts to reveal, in terms of categories and criteria, the essentials of a particular problematic situation of educating, and to design a practice for rectifying what is problematic. Specific emphasis is placed on a child inadequately actualizing his/her potential, and on the inadequate support and guidance provided by the adult. Problematic educating is described and explained in terms of the distorted and inadequate implementation of the essentials of educating. The orthopedagogic approach also implies the identification of how and where the pedagogical essentials are not properly actualized. Such a description of problematic educating requires a convergence of pedagogical insights gained from the various pedagogic sub-disciplines.

Orthopedagogic intervention to assist an exceptional child is a complex procedure in which diagnosis and pedotherapy are the most important components. Diagnosis is essentially concerned with revealing the problematic aspects of the dynamics of educating in terms of the quality of implementing the pedagogical essences. This also implies that the nature of the retardation of a child's progress toward adulthood be specified.

In pedotherapy, an indirect approach is used with a view to change the unfavorable meanings with which a child has invested his/her personal world of feelings, knowledge, and values. Didactic insights

are enlisted in planning the form and contents of pedotherapeutic sessions.

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