

A. THE UNITY OF PEDAGOGICS: B. DIDACTIC PERSPECTIVE*

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In considering a matter such as the unity of pedagogics, it is reasonable to ask if one is not involved with the obvious. Understandably, the notion of “obvious” is strange to the world of science because science is attuned precisely to expressing reality, however evident it might be. Therefore, if one substitutes the concept "obvious" with "conspicuously evident", one still faces the problem that even the "conspicuously evident" is not necessarily manifested in thought because, for example, thinking implies an amplification of a phenomenon or experience as such. In such a case where the thinking as well as the phenomenon or experience are exceeded, this implies that the word (theory) has an "excessive" character which, in its turn, leads one to notice that fundamental concepts, such as “phenomenon” and, “experience”, in relation to the word or science, are not concepts with the power of conveying identical meaning. Therefore, the unity of which there is talk, in evident reality, is not necessarily reflected in the science; hence, this area of study deserves consideration. I am the first to admit that these introductory remarks regarding the relation between evidence and science are an oversimplification, but they open a way for further reflection--especially from a perspective on the subject area, with the aim of acknowledging the practice of science implied in this evening's theme.

Beyond any doubt, pedagogics is an experiential science because its practice and effect are evident in experience, i.e., in the involvement of persons in an evident reality. A science (in this case pedagogics) exceeds experience itself, in that it formulates what is essential to it, it describes a practice in its essentials, and it establishes criteria in terms of which such a practice can or should be constituted. The postulates of pedagogics cannot be anything other than the formulation of evidence given within reality, while the explication mentioned in science, as noted above, is situation-exceeding, with far-reaching consequences for pedagogic practice. To give but one

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example: it is on this basis [of exceeding] that an institution such as a school is possible. The implication of this for practicing a sub-discipline of pedagogics, such as didactics, is not only far-reaching, but is literally at the root of didactic structures, in so far as there is pedagogical study. As we know, reality is the first source of knowledge, and is diverse or multi-formed, which immediately, creates the possibility of putting aside formulating the unity which is evident in it. Therefore, the unity of a science, e.g., that of educating, is not obvious. Again, this leads one to realize that evidence from reality is not necessarily reflected in the explanations or descriptions of it. Thus, for example, a science, as a logical construction, should not simply claim a continued progress or a continuity of evidence, such as what it has disclosed in the phenomenon itself.

In addition, the history of pedagogical thought provides sufficient proof for the validity of the above discussion, which even makes it possible to assert categorically that this history of the pedagogical, indeed, does not reflect the unity of its practice.

I have written previously¹ that it is important to keep in mind that, in its origin, the terrain of the pedagogic is a unity. The reason is that there is only one educating, only one educative reality and, therefore, there can be only one science of educating. If this sounds too *a priori*, it must be epistemologically unraveled from the immediate evidence from the phenomenon as it becomes known within the effects of one's actions. However, this is a separate problem, which I leave at that. Also, I have written that educating is actualized in teaching, and that the meaning of teaching is primarily in educating.² With this, a perspective on the reality of educating is discernible, i.e., that of teaching. The pronouncement made here is fundamental in nature, particularly regarding the unity of this view of teaching in relation to that of educating. Any explication of the unity of the pedagogical which does not take this into consideration, does not account for the fact that a didactic perspective on the matter creates good possibilities for promoting or disturbing the unity of the pedagogical.

¹ Die Stand van die Pedagogiekstudie in die moderne tyd (Pedagogiekstudies No. 69).

² Didaktiese Grondvorme.

The most important deduction to be made from this is that teaching is the area or terrain for realizing the structures of the other part-disciplines [of pedagogics], and this must be reflected in any authentic didactic explanation. In addition, the essentials of teaching must be brought into balance with educating, and a teacher is confronted with the imperative to preserve this unity in his/her pedagogic work. In other words, the practical application of all pedagogical essentials and structures must be actualized in didactic practice. Outside this perspective, teaching as such, is hypostatized and, therefore, disconnected from its educative origin. This is a matter returned to later. Examples of the actualization of educating in a teaching situation are abundant, and the work of (to mention only a few) Professors Landman, Sonnekus, Van Zyl, and Botha are well known. Consider the matter of fundamental pedagogical structures during classroom practice, the coherence of fundamental pedagogical essences, and the essentials of the lesson structure, as well as of the essentials of the lesson structure and learning, etc.

The only conclusion one can reach, in this regard, is that didactic pedagogics must be considered along the entire range of findings of the other part-disciplines to be able to keep in clear focus the practice to which one is directed. However, this is not all. The recent history of teacher preparation clearly shows previously not mentioned nuances which flow from these relations, and which have entered the field of vision. Disciplines such as fundamental pedagogics, psychopedagogics, sociopedagogics, and comparative pedagogics, until very recently, are viewed as nothing more than of academic importance in teacher preparation. Although relatively recent, this matter has begun to change radically, in the sense that these disciplines, in convincing ways, and to an increasing degree, have demonstrated their claims by their effective implementation in teacher preparation programs. The importance of this observation is that this trend implies a movement which has not remained bogged down in one or another scientific claim, but which has brought about an actual and demonstrable infusing the training programs themselves. It is doubtful if, anywhere else, there is more solid and irrefutable evidence for the unity of the pedagogical than precisely this.

Over time, even in the past few decades, in its nuances and emphases, didactic pedagogics has shown the interesting tendency to focus on specific aspects. Even in the recent literature, which

generally and particularly is of exceptional worth, one notices the same tendency. On the model of the general procedures of specialization, didactic pedagogics, along the whole line, has shown this deficiency by, e.g., its focus on matters such as aims, formative theory, curriculum research, teaching techniques, learning psychology, techniques, and models, to mention but a few of the most important. It is only logical that, by researching and formulating these important points of focus, the didactic findings increasingly have lost their educative origins and, with this, the sense and integration of its practice by a general and comprehensive insight into educating. It is equally understandable that the direct effect of this can only be that the unity of didactic research with the pedagogical will be lost. It also is significant that many didacticians have reached back to different related or relevant areas of science, such as psychology, cybernetics, rhetoric, cultural philosophy, and even ethnography to anchor the meaning of their research, and the nature of their practice. Perhaps it is meaningful to illustrate this matter in a two-fold manner. If didactic pedagogics is reduced to or conceptualized as a theory concerned only with teaching, this forces research to illuminate the teaching intention and activity as such, and the entire theory is changed to a so-called teaching method, with allocated effective teaching activities for a teacher, with the aim of regulating practice following didactic-canonized principles. This matter eventually results in a watered down set of assignments, which one finds difficult to label as anything other than a set of good pointers for practice. On the other hand, if one reduces the didactic to a theory of learning, little else comes into focus than findings regarding learning intentions, and spontaneity, which leads to accomplishing something which one just as well might call a psycho-didactics. The way such an approach disturbs the unity of pedagogics speaks for itself if one merely considers the matter of aims.

The entire matter of the unity of didactics, as a pedagogical particularity, is very clear when one views it from the angle of what today is generally known as didactic analysis. The benefit of this, in my opinion, is in the fact that, from the construction (i.e., from the thought construction and plan/design of teaching), a regressive perspective is acquired on the teaching practice as it functions secondarily [i.e., in school, and not originally in the family]. It also is very clear from the literature that those who involve themselves in didactic analysis, with the aim of establishing adequate models, and other forms of constructions, increasingly, are compelled to

postulate definitive criteria in terms of which their views of the matter called "pedagogical work" must be evaluated. The total confusion which exists in the didactic terrain, in this regard, suddenly becomes clear in terms of the first, and according to my meaning, most authentic criterion, i.e., terminological clarity. In other words, it is very clear that, in one way or another, all didactic theories result in the construction of a lesson structure, or aspects of a lesson structure. The concretization which, by implication, is taken up in the theoretical explanation, however, is an indication that its formulation is not at all in agreement with what is meant by functional. Authentic research, itself, is infected with this, at least with respect to terminological confusion, such that specialization, focus, and one-sided nuances are brought to the fore, such that the matter of the pedagogical is distorted to such an extent that it is no longer recognizable as such. A most persuasive example of this, perhaps, is the so-called social science didactics, which today, in various respects, constitutes the warp and woof of Western European didactic thought. The most important outgrowth and deficiency noted from this is that the syntheses which didactic pedagogics is forced to make, prevent it from exercising its practical responsibility, which has a disturbing effect on all the other aspects which serve as focal points of consideration in this regard, among which are the curriculum, lesson planning, teacher preparation, the school as a social institution and, above all, the pedagogical as a science.

CHAIRMAN: The idea of a LIVED EXPERIENCE UNITY by pedagogues is of special importance. This leads to the idea that:

1. methodology can create a bridge between the experience of evidence (real essentials) and making them logical to constitute the pedagogic;
2. unity can be created in a specific perspective. This means each practice of a pedagogical perspective (discipline) must try to create a unity in the pedagogical with its specific perspective on the reality of educating as its center;
3. unity can be actualized in practice.