

## C. THE ORTHOPEDAGOGICAL WITHIN THE PEDAGOGICAL\*

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### 1. PEDAGOGICS AS A SCIENCE

As a **science**, pedagogics purposively, radically, and systematically searches the reality of educating for pedagogical categories, as **illuminating** means of thinking about the essentials of the phenomenon of educating.<sup>(1)</sup> Its **complexity** has led pedagogues to concentrate on specific distinguishable phenomena within this complexity, and this has given rise to establishing various pedagogical part-perspectives. However, this creates the possibility that the different part-perspectives can artificially do research alongside each other, and it can be argued that one part-perspective has nothing to say to another, that their problems have separate identities, and that the **unity** in the multiplicity of perspectives can be lost.<sup>(2)</sup>

### 2. PROBLEMATIC EDUCATING

A child **always** finds him/herself in an educative **situation**, as the totality of concerns with which he/she and an adult must deal. During an educative **event**, the possibilities of acting momentarily become actualities, when an adult and a child participate together in actualizing the fundamental pedagogical structures.

In a problematic educative **situation**, there are noticeable moments of aggravation in the relationship between child and adult which must be dealt with **adequately**. In a problematic educative **event**, indeed, there are activities, but they are **inadequate**, and it can be qualified as an **event** where a child's **becoming adult is actualized**

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**inadequately** under the **guidance** of an **adult**, and because of this, he/she is **conspicuous**.

That a child's becoming adult does not occur as it should is usually noticeable because of conspicuous **behaviors**, especially in the sense that they are not what can be expected of him/her in everyday interactions. Being rebellious, telling falsehoods, neglecting obligations, manifesting learning and/or behavior problems, indeed, make a child conspicuous. These symptoms are nothing more than an indication of a **gap** between his/her **achieved** level of becoming adult, and his/her presently **achievable** level. Also, this is a summons to the adults to now engage in "special" intervention with him/her and help him/her with "his/her problem".

Any practical problematic situation asks for clarification--also whether there is a **founded** theory which can serve as a point of departure. Thus, for example, Adam did not ask Eve what problematic educating is, but what now must be done with Cain.

The age-long **hit-and-miss** intervention with a child in a problematic educative situation is especially attributable to existing inadequacies in fundamental notions about the **phenomenon of educating** as such.

To be able to help a child effectively in a problematic educative situation, first he/she must be understood as a personal actualizer (Dasein) in his/her being educatively situated. Only then can an educator determine **where** the educating is "distorted", **how** educative **guidance** and **under actualization** of potentialities have led to a child becoming pedagogically "distorted", and how this "becoming distorted" can possibly be abolished.

### 3. ORTHOPEDAGOGIC PRACTICE

Orthopedagogics is directed to a **problematic educative situation**. As pedagogics, it also poses fundamental questions about the essentials of becoming adult, with the aim of disclosing what is **problematic** about this becoming. A search is directed to everything belonging to an educative problem and distress, and what their possible prevention or rectification includes. Thus, an orthopedagogic **theory** is the result of a scientific fathoming and description of the essential characteristics of the educative situatedness of a child restrained or retarded in becoming adult,

and it is essential knowledge of his/her problematic educative situation.

However, in the first place, a problematic educative situation remains an **educative** one, and cannot be explained and described by categories other than **pedagogical categories**. Even so, there is no problematic educative situation where the educative essentials appear the same, because each is a **unique** situation within which adult and child participate in the event in **specific** ways and, more specifically, in **inadequate** ways. The fact of inadequate educating implies that the pedagogical categories do not appear as they ought to, and then there are **distorted** or **attenuated** appearances of the pedagogical essences.

A child who, in one or another way is restrained in his/her becoming adult, finds him/herself in a **different** educative situation than a child who is adequately **becoming** adult. Orthopedagogic work, as **theory forming**, rightly is directed to this **different** situatedness, as a **problematic situatedness**. The cardinal question is how such a child's becoming adult is actualized **differently** (inadequately) under the guidance of an adult, and how this **confusing situation** can be rectified.

For example, to determine **how** a child actualizes his/her being-a-person-in-educating, there is a linking up with psychopedagogics, and **how** the guidance, and teaching are actualized is determined by connecting with fundamental and didactic pedagogics, respectively. Only then can purposive, planned assistance be given so the gap [between the achieved and achievable levels of becoming] can be **bridged**. **Among other things**, this means a child must be given "special" support to a "new" **readiness** to venture, as a purposive resolve to **want** to enter a life situation and alter its meaning--with respect to his/her related possessed experience--so that the meanings he/she gives to educative contents agree with his/her potentialities.

To be able to answer these questions, the orthopedagogue is obliged to enquire into and acquire proficiency in various aspects which are implied by the problematic **educating**.

From a mere psychopedagogical perspective--also in connection with its so-called practical application--the problematic cannot be eliminated, but without the underlying psychopedagogical

knowledge, the actualization of the psychic life of a child restrained in becoming adult, also cannot be understood.

So also, "practically applied" fundamental pedagogics can merely identify the **problem** and solution, since it only indicates **what** is involved in **actualizing** fundamental pedagogical structures. However, without such knowledge, a problem cannot be decisively identified or solved.

The various pedagogical disciplines investigate the essentials of the reality of educating. Only when these essentials appear **distorted** and, e.g., there is **disharmony** among the actualizations of educating, teaching, and the psychic life, is the field of orthopedagogics entered. Orthopedagogic study implies that already established pedagogical knowledge is always its point of departure.

Today, there is no discipline which **integrates** the results of the various part-perspectives into a **unity**, and which can be described as postulating categories from a **collective** perspective. Thus, each practically directed pedagogical part-perspective is confronted with the task of converging all relevant pedagogical knowledge to a unity to attain its practical aim.

Because this especially raises the question of how a unique child who is restrained or retarded in becoming adult now must be further helped, and since this question cannot be answered from any one pedagogical **part-perspective**, an orthopedagogue is required to **integrate** all the relevant moments from all the various part-perspectives, with the aim of decisively answering this question.

When a problematic educative situation is identified by implementing pedagogical criteria, for example, there is mention of the **inadequate** actualization of the fundamental pedagogical structures, on the one hand, and an **under actualization** of a child's psychic life-in-education, on the other hand. To determine **how** the pedagogical essences appear as distorted or attenuated, in terms of educating inadequately, and **how** a child's psychic life is under actualized, the fundamental pedagogical, psychopedagogical, and didactic pedagogical criteria, after being integrated by an orthopedagogue, are implemented as **orthopedagogic** criteria.

Thus, orthopedagogic practice requires a collective pedagogical perspective because an orthopedagogue must be able to pick out **ortho-moments** which can be observed with respect to each differentiated discipline and organize them into an orthopedagogical theory to be implemented in the practice of orthopedagogic intervention with the parties in the problematic educative situation.

Functionalizing orthopedagogical insights, thus, means designing an orthopedagogic practice of assistance, by which all particularities are clarified in terms of their **pedagogic** consequences. The demand which the problematic educative situation poses, must necessarily be met by further specifying how a child under actualizes his/her psychic life in it, how the adults inadequately guide him/her, and how he/she must be re-educated.

Orthopedagogic assistance to a child restrained in becoming adult is not essentially different from educative help, but now it is specific educative help which, in various respects, and in accord with the immediate aims, must be put to practice on a differentiated basis.

#### 4. A MACROSTRUCTURAL AND MICRO-ANALYTIC APPROACH

The practical aim of orthopedagogic intervention with a child is to eliminate the problematic educating. This requires an understanding of the problematic as such.

Van der Stoep<sup>(3)</sup> indicates that all general theories, because of their nature, concentrate on the general or macrostructure. A macrostructure provides a guideline for a practice, in the sense that it points to specific tendencies for planning. A macrostructure contributes to a person's insights into specific problems by drawing the limits within which such a problem ought to be intercepted.

With reference to Van der Stoep<sup>(4)</sup>, it is stressed that orthopedagogics cannot remain bogged down in the boundaries of the problem, general guidelines, or tendencies in implementing its/her practice. Orthopedagogics is a functionalizing area of problematic educating, by which other demands are made of it than are made of a theoretical discipline such as general didactics.

There is continual mention of a practical educative **design**, a matter of **particularization**, i.e., at least of general pedagogical structures in compliance with **specific** educative matters [of a specific situation]. The explanation and interpretation, the practice, and evaluation which must flow from this within the framework and tasks of problematic educating, however, are entirely orthopedagogic matters which can be judged **pedagogically** only in the **general** sense of the word.

An authentic macrostructure which, with its pedagogical source, is relevant as a general guideline or tendency which must be interpreted and implemented in practice, otherwise haphazard success or failure will remain a characteristic of orthopedagogics as a practice-oriented science. In addition, such an interpretation is necessary to prevent various scientific areas from infiltrating and claiming orthopedagogic status, without any schooling in fundamental orthopedagogics.

For example, the macrostructure regarding **rejection** is, for understandable reasons, often vague with respect to the generalized insights which it expresses, and the orthopedagogue must eliminate this vagueness in his/her **own particularizations**. It is within the framework of these particularizations which the distinction between theory and practice is describable.<sup>(5)</sup> This means that, in so far as a practicing orthopedagogue is called to his/her practice, he/she is called to one or another macrostructural particularization, which also must reflect the nature or origin of the macrostructure, says Van der Stoep.<sup>(6)</sup>

A problem in becoming adult, and an educative problem are always nuanced; that is, an orthopedagogue is continually confronted with specific tasks within the boundaries of the macrostructure. There are different emphases, foci, and more. Therefore, the nuanced nature of the inhibitors of becoming adult compels nuances within the framework of intervening in an educative situation.

The general macrostructure, within which the problem appears, only brings to the fore a guiding proficiency by which an orthopedagogue must arrive at a microstructure, or part-structure, "**and which must be in accord with the particularities of the specific problem**".<sup>(7)</sup>

A general explanation is not interpretable as a matter of particularization. General guidelines regarding phenomena such as over-protection, affective lability, anxiety, rebelliousness, etc. only provide an orthopedagogue with boundary lines within which the pedagogical macrostructure can be brought to the fore with the aim of particularizing it within an orthopedagogic context.

Thus, an orthopedagogic practice must work through a macrostructure to a microstructure regarding a specific problematic educative situation to make it unproblematic again.

## 5. SYNTHESIS

In orthopedagogics there is a convergent point of departure from the various part-disciplines in terms of macrostructures regarding a problematic educative situation, in terms of the distorted or attenuated appearance of pedagogical essences, or distinguishable types of educative mistakes, such as over-protecting, rejecting, affective neglect, or in terms of teaching errors, or in terms of moments of under actualizing the psychic life, such as anxiety, uncertainty, sensory problems, etc.

As a practically directed science which proceeds from the pedagogical, as a unitary source of knowledge, orthopedagogics is always required to make a microanalysis of the unique nature of a problematic educative situation, and to understand **orthopedagogically**, a **specific** child in such a situation and from this knowledge, to proceed to design a **specific** helping practice.

With respect to such a design, all pedagogical essences are figured in, although some are more prominent than others. Now, however, by means of a microanalysis, a practical plan of **action** must be designed so that, e.g., it can be determined **how** an experience of security can replace experiences of anxiety, and uncertainty, **how** a child who will not **listen**, can hear what a teacher says, etc.

Thus, in addition to a macrostructural description (e.g., of the way an educative conversation is carried out), there also is a move to a **practical** educative conversation with the specific parties in an educative situation.

Consequently, an orthopedagogue must continually see the **nuances** in what didactic pedagogics, psychopedagogics, and fundamental

pedagogics have noticed are **in harmony with each other**, and in connection with them to design, not only a general practice, but also one for a specific child. Without **integrating** these **nuances** with each other, a practice for a child cannot be designed.

Now, it is obvious that, in this convergence of the results of the various pedagogical part-perspectives, by generalizing, there always is a loss of particulars regarding each distinguishable discipline, but then also there is an immediate gain in particulars regarding a unique child in his/her unique problematic educative situation.

## 6. REFERENCES

(1) Landman, W. A. and Roos, S. G. (1973). **Fundamentele pedagogiek en die opvoedingswerklikheid**. Durban: Butterworths, pp. 56-57. **English translation:**

[georgeyonge.net/node/113](http://georgeyonge.net/node/113)

(2) See Van der Stoep, F. (1975). Foreword. In Sonnekus, M. C. H. **Onderwyser, les en kind**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers, p. xiii.

(3) Van der Stoep, F. (1976). Wie is die kind met leerprobleme? In **Nuwe Reeks No. 123**, p. 15. **English translation:**

[georgeyonge.net/node/80](http://georgeyonge.net/node/80)

(4) Ibid

(5) Ibid, p. 17

(6) Ibid, p. 18

(7) Ibid, p. 19

### CHAIRMAN OF SYMPOSIUM (W. A. Landman)

The following are of particular importance:

1. Unity can be built up around and through a particular perspective on the reality of educating, and orthopedagogics especially lends itself to this. Orthopedagogics can continually provide meaningful syntheses;
2. the possibility of a collective perspective opens the way to unity;
3. practical application can be unity-promoting;
4. to talk of the area of focus of each perspective (discipline) of pedagogics can be divisive. Unity-promotion is to talk of the focus



of pedagogics (i.e., the reality of educating itself in all the places where it occurs), and then of the **function** of each of these perspective within that focus.