

## CHAPTER 2

### CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION

#### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE SITUATION

In the previous chapter a disharmonious lesson situation is described as a disturbed interconnection among pedagogic-, teaching-, learning- and content-essences that result in the inadequate appearance of the essences of the lesson structure. It is further emphasized that a learning problem is not necessarily equivalent to a disharmonious lesson situation. A disharmonious lesson situation serves well as a pre-formed field for learning difficulties but there can be authentic learning difficulties only if there is distress (Ter Horst), crisis (Van der Stoep), confusion (Ter Horst) and being blocked (Gouws). Therefore, a child cannot be labeled as having a learning problem simple because aggravating circumstances are present with respect to the actualization of his learning. Only when a child does not learn in accordance with his potentialities and experiences his involvement in his situatedness to such an extent that he is dependent on professional help can he be typified as a child with learning difficulties.

The following task is to examine more closely the matter of distress, of being blocked, of confusion, etc. The reason for this is that these ways of being in need must necessarily bring the educative factors to the fore. Should the role of the educator with respect to learning problems not be put into relief, the search for possible constituents of a problematic educative situation, and thus of a disharmonious teaching situation, will be seriously handicapped, if not made impossible.

Following the model of Ter Horst,<sup>1)</sup> orthopedagogues in South Africa<sup>2)</sup> state that a problematic educative situation is the area of focus for orthopedagogics. Since orthodidactics is an inseparable facet of orthopedagogics, they both have the same point of departure. A “disharmonious teaching situation”, as the area of

focus for orthodidactics must, therefore, be viewed as being a narrower delimitation within a problematic educative situation. A disharmonious teaching situation always refers to the matter of school teaching while a problematic educative situation primarily has the original experience of educating in its field of vision, although it is not blind to the didactic problems in the school.<sup>30</sup>

Ter Horst<sup>4)</sup> [in Dutch] describes a problematic educative situation as follows: “A problematic educative situation is one that is experienced by those involved in it as hopeless, meaningless and threatening and in which, without professional help, one cannot succeed in an entirely satisfactory way to change a perspective that is resistant to change”.

By educative situation he understands the complex interdependent whole of factors that influence a child’s becoming an adult. By “factors” is meant “factually functioning powers” with respect to a child in an educative event. In addition, he indicates that the factors can be differentiated into those that promote and those that restrain educating. In this regard, Pretorius<sup>5)</sup> asserts that an educative situation becomes problematic when the educationally impeding factors dominate those that promote educating.

The above descriptions of a problematic educative situation also mention hopelessness, meaninglessness and being threatening. The implicit meaning that must be attached to this is that “education-impeding factors” is a circuitous criterion for determining a problematic educative situation. Consequently, from the perspective of lived experience, this criterion must be particularized to a refined one by which an authentically problematic educative situation can be identified. On close examination, it is obvious that what is lived experienced must have an important if not central place in judging that an educative situation is problematic. It is indeed the case that numerous educative impediments can arise in an educative situation without those involved being aware of being in distress. Hence, such a situation is not necessarily a problematic educative event.

Modern child anthropological views postulate the lived experience of security and safety as preconditions for optimal personal

development [becoming]. Lubbers<sup>6)</sup> says [in Dutch]: “Yet it depends precisely on an ‘acceptance in love’ or if the child finds security in his parents in a world where they protect him as well as possible. Then there arises a particularization by which the child’s development progresses in a not risk free but joint adventure. Then the child can develop undisturbed”.

The conclusion to be made from this is that a child who does not experience security in an educative situation live experiences it as distressful. A number of authors also indicate that educative distress is the most important criterion for determining a problematic educative situation:

Nel<sup>7)</sup> is of the opinion that a child experiences educative distress if he does not experience a being-bonded with his educator. Kwakkel-Scheffer<sup>8)</sup> agrees with this by asserting that educative distress is a deficiency that has a particular character [in Dutch]: “The condition of educating is bad and the educative activity is inadequate”.

Following Langeveld, Pretorius<sup>9)</sup> identifies disturbed communication as characteristic of a problematic educative situation and adds that educative distress results in a life threatening, assimilated anxiety. The child’s existential possibilities are endangered when he becomes isolated from his educator.<sup>10)</sup>

In a pedagogical sense, a disturbed communication means a child’s inability to make his distress and need for help known to his parents as well as parental impotence to provide help and eliminate his distress. None of those involved are able to eliminate the break in communication.

Thus, according to Ter Horst,<sup>11)</sup> there is a circular dynamic: In a normal educative situation there is a dynamic field of tension, i.e., educator and child are dependent on offering a perspective on each other. The dynamic is linear because the educative factors are attuned to the child becoming adult.

The dynamic factors in a problematic educative situation, however, are attuned to each other without perspective and thus impede each

other. For those involved in such a situation, this lack of perspective gives rise to feelings of despondency, isolation, guilt, disenchantment, etc.,<sup>12)</sup> so that it is rightly contended that the child is touched in his entire being-a-person.

If it is kept in mind that a person's, and thus also a child's, world is one that is primarily realized through feelings,<sup>13)</sup> it is obvious that affective distress or labilized emotionality does not leave the other modes of being unscathed. Human modes of action have "moderate affect" as a motive that does not arise from the intellect, but in its spontaneous way of working, the cognitive potentialities are awakened and the affect indicates an aim for them.<sup>14)</sup> As with his affectivity, a person largely directs his cognitive potentialities and also intervenes in their implementation. According to Van der Stoep,<sup>15)</sup> the affect is another side of existential situatedness. In other words, "Dasein"-quality is allocated to the emotional life instead of to a reaction-quality. Therefore, educative distress and the under-actualization of the psychic life go hand in hand and they constitute a problematic event of educating.<sup>16)</sup>

Therefore, the under-actualization of his psychic life is viewed as a child's response to the problematic educative situation. This response also can include disturbed forms of expression such as bedwetting, stealing, lying, nail biting, stuttering, etc. A lifestyle characterized by anxiety, insecurity, isolation, uncertainty, etc. is a further manifestation of someone who is restrained in his personal actualization.

These restraints in personal actualization (thus in his becoming adult) therefore are typified as factors that can give rise to a gap between the attained and the attainable level of personal actualization. Because of inadequate self-actualization and inadequate adult accompaniment/guidance, adequate personal actualization is simply not possible. Psychopedagogics repeatedly stresses that this actualization event occurs in terms of becoming and learning as equally primordial structures; that as given potentialities of actualization they continually take their course by means of *moments of self-actualization and guided actualization*.

Thus, it is important to know that *disturbed communication* between educator and child necessarily results in a child's inadequate personal actualization.

This disturbed communication implies a disharmonious educative event. Since Kwant<sup>17)</sup> asserts that authentic communication always presumes an encounter and since Landman posits encounter as a moment of the pedagogic sequence structure<sup>18)</sup> essential for authentic educating, disturbed communication, as a constituent of a problematic educative situation, must refer to a faulty encounter and thus to a disharmonious educative event. Among other things, this means the inadequate realization of the fundamental pedagogic relationships. The pedagogic relationship, sequence, aim and activity [structures] appear as disconcerting because of the break in communication among those involved. In other words, this break necessarily is discernible in a disharmonious teaching situation. For the purpose of the present study, it is not be relevant to remain with these matters but rather to concentrate on the interpretation of the didactic-pedagogic and psychopedagogic moments.

In accordance with the particular relationships that the fundamental-pedagogical structures show with, among others, didactic-pedagogical essences (see chapter one), it follows logically that the latter structures will also appear as disconcerting in a problematic educative situation. The informal-haphazard character of the event of double unlocking in the original educative situation implies that the disconcerting appearance of the didactic-pedagogical essences are not brought to light so prominently in a problematic educative situation. For the same reason, an inadequate learning event maintains a lower profile in a problematic educative event than inadequate becoming. The unbreakable connection between learning and becoming, and thus between restrained learning and restrained becoming, is not put into question by this but rather is confirmed. Certainly restrained learning is the result of a problematic educative event. Even so, the inadequate learning effect, as a result of the purposeful unlocking of contents and the stimulation of the child by teaching, does not figure very prominently. Indeed, what is conspicuous in a problematic educative situation is the restrained becoming resulting from the inadequate realization of the principles or moments by

which a child's becoming must thrive, namely, the principles of helplessness, security, exploration and emancipation.<sup>19)</sup>

So far mention has been made mostly of a child *restrained* in his becoming. Yet it is a known fact that orthopedagogues make a distinction between a learning restrained and a learning handicapped child. Learning restrained means a child who is restrained, delayed or obstructed in his becoming adult. Being handicapped in becoming refers to a child who has "deficiencies" or handicaps inherently present. Although traditionally orthopedagogics has taken responsibility for both types of children, attempts are still continually made to place one or the other outside of the scope of orthopedagogics, and not without reason.

In this connection, the name "orthopedagogic" plays an important role. In its etymological meaning (Greek: "orthos" = straight), orthopedagogics is that discipline of pedagogics that involves itself with the re-adjustment or getting back on track of a derailed child,<sup>20)</sup> and by implication, the elimination of what restrains him in his becoming adult.

Advocates of these ideas seize on the inability to neutralize a child's handicap in order to "show" that such children fall outside of the domain of orthopedagogics and rather that they belong within the purview of Special or Extraordinary Teaching.

On the other hand, elaborate arguments have been advanced around which only a child handicapped in his becoming constitutes the terrain of orthopedagogics. With Hanselmann, Vliegenthart<sup>21)</sup> argues [in German] that "Healing pedagogics ... is the doctrine of teaching for the education and well-being of all of those children whose *physical-mental development is permanently restrained by individual and social factors*" (italics mine). Then he mentions in passing that [in Dutch] " ... pedagogic advice for the benefit of children whose parents have *more or less gotten bogged down* does not fall to orthopedagogics". (Thus, a child restrained in becoming is excluded).

In the midst of these rather conflicting standpoints, theorizing about a problematic educative situation offers a very acceptable solution

to this problem. As mentioned, two criteria, among others, for identifying a problematic educative situation are educative distress and the under-actualization of the psychic life. As an indication of this, this means that a child restrained in his becoming unquestionably finds himself in a problematic educative situation while a handicapped child does not have to find himself in such a situation. Being handicapped, as such, does not necessarily constitute a problematic educative situation,<sup>22)</sup> but only when he lived experiences his being handicapped as a deficiency, and arising from this, educative distress is present does he find himself in a problematic educative situation. Obviously, there is then also an under-actualization of his psychic life. The implicit meaning contained in this is that, in spite of aggravating circumstances, the educationally handicapped [child] can flourish to an optimal personal realization, [in the sense] that he can give form to that level of adulthood that he is in a position to reach on the basis of his personal potentialities.<sup>23)</sup>

In such cases there is not a problematic educative situation and also the handicapped child does not make a claim for orthopedagogic intervention.

Consequently, when in the present study there is reference to handicapped children this means he is a handicapped child who finds himself in a problematic educative situation and is thus also restrained in his becoming.

Finally, it must be emphasized that a problematic educative situation, in various respects, can be referred back to a variety of errors in educating that are made knowingly or unknowingly by the educator. Rienstra<sup>24)</sup> mentions affective neglect such as rejection by one or both parents, too strong a bonding between parent and child, ambivalent emotional relationships, etc. Pretorius<sup>25)</sup> adds hardening, over-strictness, instability, weak correcting, neuroticizing, etc. Ter Horst<sup>26)</sup> and Rienstra<sup>27)</sup> also mention contributory factors such as family composition, family relationships, healthiness, provision for social needs, working mothers, etc.

On the other hand, various kinds of factors can be present in a child that are at the foundation of a problematic educative situation. Talent, temperament, forms of disturbance such as neurological, physical, mental handicaps, etc. often give rise to a problematic educative situation. For example, because these factors are often somewhat concealed, a teacher does not acquire a grip on them and then [the child's] behaviors become guesswork and consequently errors of judgment result.

This somewhat cursory discussion of a problematic educative situation provides unquestionable evidence of a pedagogical side to learning difficulties. This also brings to light the fact that a problematic educative situation only shows its impact in a particular pattern of lived experiencing such as being limited, stuck and without perspective. Obviously these matters provide important clues for a secondary practice, and there can be an attempt to distinguish them as constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation.

## 2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE SITUATION AND A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING EVENT

Pedagogues of note cite weighty arguments in order to show that the pedagogic constitutes itself in the didactic. Van der Stoep's pronouncement that educating realizes itself in teaching and that the meaning of teaching is in educating has been mentioned many times. This also implies that a lesson situation is a continual reconstituting of the original educative situation.

However, it must be stressed that important shifts in emphases and particularizations in the original situation unfold in the school situation; in truth this is indeed a characteristic of an accountable lesson practice because without these shifts categorical unlocking would not be possible.

However, in its essential structure, there is no difference between the original [home] pedagogic situation and a reconstituted lesson situation [school]. *Consequently it is more correct to view the original pedagogic situation and a formal lesson situation as two*



*types of situation both of which have as their primary aim the child's becoming adult.*

A formal lesson situation differentiates itself from the original lesson situation in that it does not have a haphazard character, that it is specific in its purpose and, as such, shows a great deal of plasticity; it also has a systematic course and it is characterized by orderliness.<sup>28)</sup>

In an analogous way, a child does not show himself differently in a lesson situation. Here he is also someone whose psychic life is actualized in terms of becoming and learning. Because the educative reality in a lesson situation now points to the reality of teaching, the educative aim to the teaching aim and the educative contents to the learning contents, the emphasis in this situation also falls on the child as a learning child.

His participation in the teaching is now a matter of self-unlocking, his response to the teaching appeal is a matter of a learning involvement with the contents; briefly, the situational imperative is a matter of a formal evaluation of the effectiveness (or not) of his participation by learning.

Although demands are made in the original [home] educating in terms of which a series of situations must take their course there is no *formal* evaluation. In a [school] teaching situation that, after all, implies an accelerated entry into reality, a child is consistently called to participate by learning. Consequently, the quality of his participation is formally evaluated regularly.

Thus, a child who inadequately enters a [formal] teaching event shows himself as learning-restrained in the evaluation of his learning. If his situatedness is also characterized as being blocked, without perspective and threatening, his teaching situation is typified as disharmonious, and he is judged to be a child with learning problems.

Hence, it is clear that problematic educating insinuates itself into a disharmonious teaching situation. That is, the constituents of a problematic educative situation reverberate in a disharmonious

teaching situation—and yet the two types of situation are not precisely equivalent. Therefore, by means of a few situation-analyses, there is a search for what calls a disharmonious teaching situation into existence.

### **3. A SEARCH FOR CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION**

A search for constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation must result from an analysis of a few disharmonious teaching situations in which different children with learning problems find themselves. The common details acquired in this way can be viewed as constitutive of a disharmonious teaching situation.

As discussed in chapter one, this will be an orthopedagogic (respectively, an orthodidactic) unraveling and interpretation of disturbed-appearing psychopedagogic, didactic pedagogic, and fundamental pedagogic essences. The disharmonious teaching situation will be analyzed against the background of the life world, as experiential world, of a child with learning problems.

The following children with learning problems will be discussed as they show themselves in a normal didactic lesson situation:

- a) The neurologically handicapped child.
- b) The affectively disturbed child.
- c) The mentally handicapped child.

#### **3.1 The neurologically handicapped child**

At this point in time, it appears as if neurological handicaps have become a prominent subcategory of learning and educative difficulties, especially because of the apparently greater scope that this phenomenon has begun to assume. Without discussing in detail this apparent increased comprehensiveness, it is sufficient to consider, in passing, a few contributing factors that today are inclined to have increasing importance: A greater awareness of those children with learning problems that do not show conspicuous deficiencies or disturbances regarding the sensory, motor, emotions and intelligence has taken root from a variety of places. Interest in

and concern about this [type of] child has led to purposive and intensive research from a variety of disciplines, the result of which are more refined and sophisticated differential diagnostic procedures. Thus, children who previously had remained undiscovered and whose under-achievements were attributed to a variety of other factors have now become identifiable and nowadays assimilated into the frame of the neurologically handicapped.

The extensive writings on the causes, classifications and degrees of neurological handicaps will be avoided since they are not considered to be of cardinal importance for the aim of the present study.

For the same reason a discussion about the preferability of one current term over another is avoided. There is satisfaction with the term “neurologically handicapped”, not so much to introduce a new term but because, as an overarching concept, it is deemed to be suitable for that child that we have in mind.

Namely, the concern is with a neurologically handicapped child, irrespective of whether he is brain-damaged, brain dysfunctional, minimally brain-damaged, psycho-neurologically dysfunctional, or as a child with specific learning handicaps or restraints. The concern is with a neurologically handicapped child in a disharmonious teaching situation, especially in so far as there is a search for possible common moments that constitute what is disharmonious.

Consequently, attention is focused on the question of who a neurologically handicapped child is, and by implication this includes the ways he relates himself to the learning task, how he announces himself as an initiator of relationships in the act of learning, thus, how he proceeds by means of learning to attribute meaning.

In order to acquire a grasp of the life world of a neurologically handicapped child we must begin by touching lightly on a few typical behaviors.

### **3.1.1 Behaviors that influence the learning of a**

## neurologically handicapped child

Eisenberg<sup>29)</sup> challenges the fact of a neurologically handicapped syndrome, while Birch<sup>30)</sup> fights against a too simplistic view such as, “... all brain lesions, wherever localized (are) followed by a similar kind of disordered behavior” [In English]. Kalverboer<sup>31)</sup> indicates that even hemiplegics show only a limited correlation with typical behavior problems.

Nevertheless, a number of authors such as Cruickshank, Birch, Eisenberg and others mention a number of typical behaviors that *can* be manifested by the neurologically handicapped.

Eisenberg<sup>32)</sup> distinguishes three typical characteristics, namely, hyperkinesis, disturbed attending and intellectual deficiencies. Cruickshank<sup>33)</sup> adds problems of perception, antisocial behaviors and emotional lability.

However, the majority of experts make detailed distinctions. Thus, Beck<sup>34)</sup> indicates that the following fifteen characteristics were mentioned by prominent researchers such as Strauss and Lethinen, Doll, Goldstein, Bender, Gesell and others: perseverations, distractability, deficient integration, perceptual problems, conceptual problems, defective speech, motor uncoordination, hyperactivity, emotional lability, irritability, nervous twitching, intellectual deficiencies, poor memory, asymmetrical development and general insecurity.

Since some characteristics have more relevance for the teaching event than others, the following deserve fuller explication:

### 3.1.1.1 Hyperkinesis or hyperactivity

Hyperactivity is viewed as one of the most prominent behavior disturbances of a neurologically handicapped child. This is a motor restlessness that is defined by Cruickshank<sup>35)</sup> as, “the necessity for a child to react with a movement to all stimuli in his environment” [In Dutch]. Schulman<sup>36)</sup> views it as, “an observed inability to modulate activity level in response to variations in environmental demand “ [In English]. In other words, the child is not in a position to regulate

and control his motor activities; he is overactive and not able to sit still when that is expected of him.

### **3.1.1.2 Attention disturbances**

A neurologically handicapped child is unable to limit his attention to what is important. Cruickshank<sup>37)</sup> describes the phenomenon as “forced responsiveness to extraneous stimuli” [In English], while Eisenberg<sup>38)</sup> views the phenomenon as an inability to selectively focus and hold attention. Therefore, this child is not able to attend in an undisturbed way to determine what is relevant to the situation. He is excessively distractible, which indicates a hyperawareness of visual, auditory and tactile sensations/stimuli.

### **3.1.1.3 Disturbed perceiving**

Kotze<sup>39)</sup> shows, by elaborate documentation that in many circles perceptual disturbances are primary behavioral criteria for being neurologically handicapped. Thus, for example, he quotes Diller who asserts that, “The most extensive and definite studies of brain-injured children have been in the area of perception” [In English], and further, “The role of perception in the functioning of the cerebral-palsied person is almost the entire story of cerebral palsy as a condition” [In English].

Since such a child not only has corresponding learning problems but also shows learning behavior similar to that of a spastic cerebral handicapped child,<sup>40)</sup> the above characteristics also hold true for him.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, in particular circles, research on the neurologically handicapped is concentrated exclusively on perceptual-motor problems. The upshot of this is that diagnostic procedures and means of providing help for such a child are excessively focused on the perceptual-motor.

The following characteristic perceptual disturbances of a neurologically handicapped child are acknowledged.

#### **a) Dissociation**

A child is not able to see, hear or feel an object as a whole, unity or “gestalt”.

### **b) Figure-ground disturbance**

A neurologically handicapped child experiences difficulty in bringing what his attention is directed into an accurate mutual relationship with background data. Therefore, he is inclined to confuse foreground with background.

### **c) Perseveration**

This is the phenomenon where a child does not have the ability “to easily switch from one mental operation to another” [In Dutch] according to Cruickshank<sup>41)</sup>. With such a child, the impression is created of a prolonged continuation of a stimulus into the subsequent activity in which the child is involved.<sup>42)</sup>

## **3.1.2 Corporeality and learning**

Although the attention is primarily directed to a neurologically handicapped child who does not show outward signs of being spastic, in light of the above behavioral characteristics it can be stated with a relative degree of certainty that such a child lived experiences his body as deficient because it continually fails him. Hence, the relationship between learning and a bodily way of being must be explicated.

It is an indisputable existential fact that being-in-the-world is a bodily being-in-the-world. The body is the foundation, the preliminary outline of human existence as I.<sup>43)</sup> The body serves as an access to the world, as a springboard (Langeveld) for acquiring a grasp of the world. As such a human being becomes bodily involved in the world such that the body can be viewed as passage between a person’s spirituality and his occupation with what is objectifiable. And with this it is not contended for one moment that the body is “nothing more” than a medium or instrument of existence. Bonekamp<sup>44)</sup> asserts directly that the body is experienced by the I. Linschoten<sup>45)</sup> concurs when he comments [In Dutch]: “Among all

experienceable things our body is the most our own". I am present to myself to an entirely particular extent in my body members by which I arrive at knowledge of the world.<sup>46)</sup> Therefore, if my hand gets hurt it is *I* who hurts, and if the ear does not receive any sound it is also *I* who does not hear.<sup>47)</sup>

Hence, experienced corporeality means that my body is totally entwined with my being-a-subject in which my body is entirely on the side of my being-a-subject; I am my body.<sup>48)</sup> Marcel<sup>49)</sup> says [In Dutch]: "I cannot say that I am my body because I am more than my body. I also cannot say that I have my body because I do not possess it as I do a thing or tool that I can manage without".

Experienced corporeality, as a unity of subject and body, is manifested in the actualization of Dasein: Merleau-Ponty<sup>50)</sup> views body and spirit as in a mutual dialectic that finds its synthesis in giving sense and meaning. In his encountering involvement with the world, a person is thus more than his body, he enters his landscape in such a way that his body is passed over.

My corporeality puts me in a position to actualize Dasein because as the "vehicle of my intentional acts"<sup>51)</sup> [In Dutch] I can become involved with the world and I can appropriate my world for myself. World involvement is therefore bodily involvement and in the case of a child he thus initially associates pre-reflectively with the world.<sup>52)</sup> In order to grasp, to handle he enters into bodily contact with reality. Because these ways of giving meaning and existing at first occur through a manipulative involvement with things, he learns to know their own nature,<sup>53)</sup> also in terms of their form, difference, similarity, mass, etc.

A person continually finds himself in a world that is interspersed with fellow humans. Dasein is actually mostly *mitsein*:<sup>54)</sup> The world is that which I share with others and it is a participation in the same world that constitutes being-with.<sup>55)</sup> A person thus gives sense and meaning within an existential field prepared by others and, therefore, existence is always co-existence. In truth existence is only *real* existence (in contrast to possible existence) when one enters into communication with another.<sup>56)</sup> Thinkers such as Camus, Sartre

and Christoff also continually emphasize that the realization of a person must occur via the other, i.e., the world of fellow humans.<sup>57)</sup>

Contact with the other also occurs through the body. A person makes himself present through his body and indeed as someone who shows himself through his behaviors, attitudes, expressions, utterances and words. At the same time he also learns to know and understand the other through his corporeality. Engelbrecht state this so: “I discover and understand the other and his line of thought, feelings and intentions much better from paying attention to his situated body and corporeal activities.” He goes further by indicating that within the referential space of corporeality, the gestures of one Dasein spontaneously evokes counter-gestures from another.

In light of the fact that an effective teaching event is an event of double unlocking, presumed to be a harmonious act of learning and teaching, these pronouncements are particularly significant with respect to a neurologically handicapped child. Because of his particular situatedness and particular pattern of behaviors, an educative gesture often does not evoke the anticipated counter-gesture from such a child. Fundamental-pedagogic relationship structures are therefore not adequately realized so that a disharmonious educative event results that contributes cumulatively to an under-actualized psychic life.

Add to this the fact that on the basis of his behaviors he is looked at by another with a disapproving, lamentable, even antagonistic look. Because of the disastrous nature of this for the adequate realization of the fundamental pedagogic relationships, this also has a decided effect on his body image and ultimately his self-concept.

Bodily involvement in constituting a world is confirmed further when the *act of spatial orientation* is examined: it is necessary that a child gradually transforms worldly or geometric space into an anthropological space or a space-for-me. Following Heidegger<sup>58)</sup> [In Dutch] this transformation occurs by an “activity of circumspection”, by bringing the remote nearer by taking being in hand, by what he describes as “removing distance”.



By taking in hand, Dasein, moreover, has the characteristic of “orientation”, of situating or orienting. As with “removing distance”, orienting is a person’s way of being-in-the-world and it is founded in his “activity of circumspection”.<sup>59)</sup>

It is clear that the “activity of circumspection” emphasizes the central position of the body in the act of spatial orientation, and therefore, it is not surprising that Kwant,<sup>60)</sup> Vliegenthart,<sup>61)</sup> Merleau-Ponty,<sup>62)</sup> Strasser<sup>63)</sup> and others *identify the movement potentialities of the body together with the act of perceiving as the primary modes in the act of spatial orientation*. The fact of bodily movement through space and the correlated handling of objects make all distance and space relative, or in other words distance and space are transformed into space-for-me. Bakker<sup>64)</sup> states it thusly [In Dutch]: “A distance has its own meaning. One time the way to my office is subjectively longer than at another time. An ‘objectively’ longer way can be subjectively shorter than a way that is ‘objectively’ very short”. The place where my body finds itself, thus, is oriented to what in the surrounding world is discovered as at hand. A person can find his way because everything is involved with his body and from his body he can indicate left or right, front or back.<sup>65)</sup> He measures the world with the dimensional relationships of his body: High is what he cannot reach and large is what he cannot embrace.<sup>66)</sup>

Obviously, the act of perceiving is not left out of consideration in spatial orientation. In reality it is continually the other side of bodily movement: The space in visual perception is the most immediate data. Although limited by a horizon it extends out in front of the perceiver and that is for him a differentiated and concrete presence. As a consequence of its structuredness -- among other things, with respect to the constancy of the size of a form and its color -- nearby space especially has an appealing character. It invites being handled and therefore one finds here a fusing of haptic and optic space.<sup>67)</sup>\*

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\* Acoustic space has a firmer grip on a person than the visual. In this case, one stands *in* a space in which he is the receptive center. Whether we want to or not, sound continually binds us to the surrounding world. As such, sound does not constitute any space but fills a preexisting optic and haptic space.<sup>68)</sup>

Orientation with respect to *time* also occurs via the body. Augustine<sup>69)</sup> already contended that time is not experienced as a succession of separately measurable moments but as duration, as a concatenation of the past, present and the future, and that it is lived experienced as a recollecting, attending and expecting.

For Heidegger<sup>70)</sup> past, present and future are “ecstasies” of temporality that mutually implicate each other: A person is in advance of himself in the future, he is already a thrown-being in the world in the past and, thirdly, “he has lost himself in the things of the world that is made possible in his present position”<sup>71)</sup> [In Dutch]. In this way Dasein realizes itself in time.

The way in which an orientation in time is accomplished, following Kephart<sup>72)</sup> is originally a motor activity that later is combined with auditory-visual perception. He distinguishes three aspects in terms of which a conception of time is brought about, namely synchrony, rhythm and sequence. All three are accomplished by motor activities: “Synchrony is observed when muscles move in concert, rhythm is developed when muscles move alternately or recurrently. Sequence is observed when movements occur in coordinated patterns. From the generalization of many such observations, a temporal system evolves, and a temporal dimension develops”<sup>73)</sup> [In English].

Thus it seems that a person orients himself in terms of time and space by means of his body. In addition, it seems that there is a particular relationship between learning and corporeality. Engelbrecht<sup>74)</sup> strikingly summarizes this relationship when he asserts: “The body is the situation-core in which his whole existence is anchored and out of which he acquires a perspective in the world. Through his body, a person obtains a grip on the world”.

### **3.1.3 The learning world of the neurologically handicapped child**

If the learning world, as experiential world, is viewed against the background of the above pronouncements, it suddenly seems that his corporeality, as a body-with-deficiencies, is a much greater obstacle in his constituting reality than can be inferred from the

mere characteristics of a neurologically handicapped child. Namely, this involves not only the fact of bodily involvement and the resulting hindrance that the bodily deficiency brings about, *but as experienced corporality this touches a child over the full range of his existence*. His body does not and can never have only instrumental value but it also, and especially, has encountering- and lived experiential-value.<sup>75)</sup>

In a comprehensive investigation, Kotze<sup>76)</sup> finds that a neurologically handicapped child continually has difficulty with his body, that he thus manifests a strong bodily lived experience of which there is the experience that his body-with-deficiencies plays no small role in the eyes of others. In other word, he lived experiences his body as something that handicaps him in his existential giving meaning.

*The possibilities of going beyond the learning task thus do not acquire adequate form because his body is "in motion" between him and the task*. He experiences his body on a labile-pathic level so that it no longer serves him as a "springboard to" but as "a blockage from". He is indeed held prisoner by his body so that his learning can scarcely be adequately actualized in terms of exploring, emancipating, distantiating, differentiating and objectifying.

Given this, it must be kept in mind that a neurologically handicapped child, as educatively situated, *often does not receive adequate support and guidance with respect to his intense lived experiencing of his body*. Because of a lack of understanding by the adults, he often finds himself in unenviable situations that could have been avoided by a prudent anticipation of and avoidance of them.

Therefore, it is not surprising if he experiences himself as a child-in-affective-distress because he has feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. A labile-pathic life disposition is therefore found in such children and according to Clemmens<sup>77)</sup> are manifested by anxiety, hostility, rebelliousness and school phobia.

It is known that lived experiencing on a labile-pathic level is not very conducive to an adequate actualization of learning.<sup>78)</sup> When below attention is given to the actualization of the differentiated

modes of learning by this child, it will appear that the labile-pathic level of lived experiencing plays a predominant role in the act of learning.

### **3.1.3.1 The accompanying modes of learning**

#### **a) Sensing**

In an exhaustive investigation of the life world, as experiential world, of a neurologically handicapped child, Kotze<sup>78)</sup> found the following: “These children mostly search for sense and meaning by means of sensing as the immediate, non-distanced mode of lived experiencing and thus they remain caught in a subjective lived experiencing of the learning task and does not arrive at knowing as objective, universal knowledge of the objects of learning.”

Although this does not include the traditional explanatory model for perceptual-motor disturbances, this finding offers a more comprehensive explanation for such a child’s learning problems by placing them within the context of the total actualization of the psychic life. It is known that a stable pathic sensing is a presupposition for the adequate form of gnostic-cognitive learning. Because of insecurity, anxiety and tension a neurologically handicapped child shows a labile-pathic sensing and therefore is not able to take an adequate gnostic-cognitive attitude.

Consequently, he creates the impression that he lives “past” his world, that his grasp of reality is inadequate. He lived experiences his world as one of vagueness, as unstructured and even diffuse. Perceptual disturbances such as figure-ground disturbances, dissociation and perseverations are prognoses of this, but also of a primal, pre-cognitive, labile-pathic sensing.

Thus he is not in a position to continually elevate his level [of lived experiencing] because his objective attitude is deficient in his dialogue with reality. As a result of his hyperactivity, superficially speaking, it appears as if he explores his world adequately. However, on closer examination it appears that in terms of his experiencing there is mention of difficulty in an “intentioned turning to, an entering into, a dealing with and an exploration the

things that his immediate field of presence constitutes”<sup>80)</sup> This serious defect in experiencing again gives rise to the inadequate realization of the essences of becoming.<sup>81)</sup>

Obviously differentiation, as an essence of becoming, is seriously thwarted by a labile-pathic sensing. According to Ferreira,<sup>82)</sup> differentiation includes, on the one hand, I-discovery, and on the other hand, a penetration to the categorical structure of reality. For this an investigative, reflective and discriminative attunement is necessary, something that obviously does not figure adequately in the landscape of this child.

Mention was already made of a non-distantiated and a subjective way of lived experiencing by these children so that it is accepted as obvious that they will also not adequately differentiate and objectify.

The predominant labile-pathic sensing thus gives a clear indication of an under-actualized psychic life. It must be continually emphasized that such a child finds himself in an educative situation. He is thus also dependent on guided actualization and should this proceed inadequately in any way, it has an accumulative effect on his restrained becoming. It also is obvious that the inadequate actualization of the following modes of learning also will detrimentally influence the above essences of becoming.

## **b) Attending**

Stable attending is not only a precondition for the actualization of the gnostic-cognitive modes of learning, but in an accompanying capacity it is intimately enmeshed with them. Sonnekus,<sup>83)</sup> Birch,<sup>84)</sup> Ross<sup>85)</sup> and others therefore directly note that should attending slacken there is simultaneously a reduction in the quality of a child’s perceiving, thinking and remembering.

Where sensing is the first being concerned with the contents, paying attention (attending) is a readiness to remain involved with them. Paying attention thus implies a sharpened learning intention during which the totality of a child’s learning potentialities are focused on the matter of relevance.<sup>86)</sup> In itself, this predisposes the taking of a

gnostic-cognitive attitude because the child by willing, lived experiencing, experiencing and knowing penetrates to the real essentials of the matter.

Attending, therefore, also implies a selective activity during which something is in the focal point of the child's attention and the surrounding particulars fade provisionally into the background.<sup>87)</sup>

Mindful of the behavioral pattern of the neurologically handicapped child, it is stated bluntly that there scarcely can be a stable attending. Figure-ground disturbance, dissociation, distractibility, etc. necessarily must lead to an inadequate/unstable attending.

A neurologically handicapped child lived experiences this to a particular extent. Lived experientially he is continually thrown back on his own body and this lived experience of his body leads to a further labilization of the pathic level of lived experiencing. Thus such a child finds himself in a vicious circle in that the labile-pathic lived experiencing reinforces once again the lived experience of his body. Therefore, it is not surprising that researchers such as Schilder,<sup>88)</sup> Eisenberg,<sup>89)</sup> and Bender<sup>90)</sup> find that a neurologically handicapped child *is seriously frustrated by his perceptual disturbances to such an extent that he continually shows an underlying anxiety.*

This child thus regards himself as blocked, not only with respect to his bodily deficiencies but also in terms of his inadequate educative guidance. He lived experiences himself in his situatedness as an outsider, as someone who finds himself in the world without a grip on it, on the one hand, and as incomprehensible for the world, on the other hand. In this connection, his inadequate temporal-spatial orientation is an aggravating factor.<sup>91)</sup>

In light of his problematic educative situatedness, as affectively distressful, the behavior pattern of a neurologically handicapped child acquires new significance, especially when it is interpreted from the perspective of lived experience. His hyperactive behavior and disturbed attending are now viewed as a desperate attempt to acquire a grip on reality by means of adequate attending. Bender<sup>92)</sup> expresses this as follows [In English]: "One may say the

hyperkinesis may be understood as an effort continually to contact the physical and social environment, to re-experience and integrate the perceptual experiences in a continual effort to gain some orientation in the world". On the same matter, Ross<sup>93)</sup> asserts that hyperactivity, perseverations, distractibility and impulsivity are results of an inability to selectively attend. He also says that as a child becomes older and thus more able to selectively attend, hyperactivity correspondingly decreases.<sup>94)</sup>

The above findings underline the fact that the total behavioral pattern of this child contributes to the inadequacy of his act of learning. And this is in agreement with the findings by the Van der Stoeps, namely, that learning achievement is always a point of culmination in which the totality of childlike involvement in and mastery of reality are made observable.<sup>95)</sup> This also confirms the decisive role that attending plays as an accompanying mode of learning, also especially because it appears that the totality of behaviors that serve to encumber adequate learning result from inadequate attending. *By implication this means that a teacher in a disharmonious teaching situation does not proceed to think about and plan effective means and procedures in order to sufficiently guide the child to attend adequately.*

### **3.1.3.2 The gnostic-cognitive modes of learning**

It is repeatedly emphasized that sensing and attending not only have an accompanying capacity but also especially serve as preconditions for the adequate actualization of the gnostic-cognitive modes of learning. At the outset, it can also be categorically stated that a neurologically handicapped child also shows an inadequate actualization of the gnostic-cognitive modes of learning.

It is clear that *perceiving*, as a distantiating, objectifying act of learning that is especially directed to analyzing, comparing, ordering and synthesizing, as necessary steps in solving a problem, is actualized with difficulty by such a child. If it is kept in mind that he continually struggles with problems of analysis and synthesis on both an auditory and visual level, it appears that a penetration to the essential nature of what he experiences perceptually is not adequately realized. Reversals, problems of sequencing, problems

with the recognition of words and sounds are only a few indications of his inability to adequately realize perceiving as a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning.

*Thinking*, in its essence, implies re-structuring and ordering a multiplicity into a unity and thus presumes a synthesizing act in which schematizing, classifying and especially abstracting have a prominent role,<sup>96)</sup> cannot be adequately actualized by a neurologically handicapped child.<sup>97)</sup> His pathic lability and his resulting inability to adequately realize the accompanying modes of learning, the under-actualization of perceiving (to which thinking is closely related) all point to the obvious fact of an under-actualized thinking.

The findings of research that has been carried out in this connection shows that the act of thinking is not authentically realized, especially because of a defective classifying, categorizing and ordering, all that finally result in an inability to abstract. De Hirsch<sup>98)</sup> attributes this inability to a deficient grip on and mastery of the real essence of a matter. In an investigation, Werner<sup>99)</sup> brings to light that this child's deficient classifying, schematizing and ordering are reduced to an inability to abstract: One of the tasks in his research required that a number of words must be classified under various categories. One neurologically handicapped boy had classified "bread" and "pipe" together with words such as "workbench", "hammer" and "saw" with the following illuminating explanation [In English] "When you have finished working at the bench you want to eat and smoke a pipe". This allows Werner to conclude that he has classified the words according to a *concrete situation* and not in terms of the more abstract category of "tools".<sup>100)</sup>

In passing, it must be emphasized once again that language and thinking are reciprocally implicated with each other. Deficient language acquisition damages an adequate course of thinking, while an under-actualized act of thinking also allows language acquisition to stagnate at a lower level.



Viewed in this light, it is not surprising that authorities such as Johnson,<sup>101)</sup> Wepman<sup>102)</sup> and De Hirsch<sup>103)</sup> show that quantitatively and qualitatively the language of a neurologically handicapped child is not up to standard. The previously cited research by Werner confirms the truth of this child's deficient grip of the abstract concept (in this case of "tools"). Tasks of defining and formulating as given by De Hirsch<sup>104)</sup> to these children also confirms that their language functions mainly on a concrete-visual level.

Studies show that this child does not adequately actualize the learning modes of *imagining and fantasizing* on a gnostic-cognitive level.\* Bender<sup>106)</sup> mentions [In English] "endless daydreams", and "overtalkativeness (sic) with confabulations", while De Hirsch<sup>107)</sup> concludes that a neurologically handicapped child shows a strongly under-actualized imagining in his play. This child especially experiences problems of placing himself in the role of someone or something, and since this is an essential facet of illusive play, as the highest level of play discerned,<sup>108)</sup> it is doubtful if this child can play on that level.

*Remembering* also is not adequately actualized by a neurologically handicapped child. Myklebust and Johnson,<sup>109)</sup> Bender<sup>110)</sup> and Eisenberg<sup>111)</sup> indicate that these children experience problems especially with respect to the calling up or making present (recalling) aspect of remembering. Obviously the under-actualized remembering has a particular effect on the learning achievement of this child.

Meyer and Simmel<sup>112)</sup> throw interesting light on the act of remembering by showing that these children mainly memorize mechanically and not by means of insight and understanding. Therefore, they often are unable to solve arithmetic problems in spite of the fact that they can have the basic operations under control.

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\* Sonnekus and Ferreira<sup>105)</sup> state clearly that these modes of learning can have a strong pathic-affective flavor, and when actualized on this level, a child "loses" himself in a world where pathic-affective feelings, wishes or desires run rampant.

Such an act of remembering is in keeping with a mode of learning that for the most part rests on a labile-pathic level and, in addition, where no claim can be made of a real understanding of the learning contents, it is obvious that a child cannot meaningfully integrate these contents with his existing possessed knowledge, and thus also cannot make them present [recall them] again.

In summary, it must be emphasized that learning is a unitary act and that the various modes of learning are presented as mere distinctions in actualizing learning. In addition, this implies that learning is not the actualization of a substance within a person but that it indeed embraces the actualization of the psychic life as the actualization of Dasein. Therefore, the inadequate actualization of learning does not leave the above-mentioned neurologically handicapped child unharmed: The lived experiencing of his body as a body-with-deficiencies, of his being-in-the-world as temporally-spatially disoriented; the fact that he lived experiences his situatedness as a failure under the eyes of the other all contribute to a negative self-concept and -image.<sup>113)</sup> This in itself has resulted in feelings of despair, threat, lessened self confidence, in short, a general obscuring of his intentionality. Therefore, such a child finds himself in a situation of affective distress that can primarily be qualified as a being in need of pedagogic trust, authority and understanding.

In light of the above, *this means that eliminating the disharmonious teaching situation of a neurologically handicapped child lies in the fact that the accompaniment of him must take its initiative in knowledge of his life world as experiential world.* The planning of each lesson ought to take its form from that knowledge and it ought to be focused on the child's modes of actualizing learning and the deficiencies in his learning results.

In the following, attention is given to this child as he shows himself in a normal didactic situation.

#### **3.1.4 The neurologically handicapped child in a disharmonious teaching situation**

As discussed in Chapter One, it is the teacher's task, on the basis of his subject didactic skills, to bring into motion a supple lesson design that will result in a harmonious teaching- and learning-act. It was also stated that the lesson structure represents a convergence of all accountable didactic-pedagogic insights, and that every lesson design finds its embodiment in terms of the lesson structure.

When a neurologically handicapped child in a disharmonious lesson situation is focused on, this must necessarily occur against the background of the lesson structure. However, a complete analysis of all of the essences of the lesson structure is not possible here. A few moments in a lesson that really is designed for a non-handicapped child will be analyzed from a neurologically handicapped child's situatedness in order to show what is constitutive of a disharmonious teaching situation.\*

With respect to the *reduction of the learning material* it appears that in an ordinary school the lesson design rests on the assumption that the children have homogeneous or common possessed experiences at their disposal.<sup>114)</sup> A neurologically handicapped child shows a vague, diffuse grip on reality that has the consequence of an inadequate possessed experience in quality and quantity. The ordinary didactic lesson does not make provision for this and thus it is obvious that the reduction of the learning material, in particular, and curriculum planning, in general, do not take this into account. Consequently, this reduction appears as inadequate on the learning horizon of such a child so that the act of teaching can already take a disharmonious course here.

Also *stating the problem* once again must find a connecting link with the life world and the possessed experiences of this child.<sup>115)</sup> And where a teacher in the usual didactic lesson does not anticipate such a possibility and thus does not proceed to a specific individualization of stating the problem, the chances are good that a disharmonious lesson situation will be created.

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\* Since the lesson aspects to follow will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three, here there is only a brief discussion of them, and indeed in terms of a search for possible constituents of disharmonious teaching.

How important knowledge of the neurologically handicapped child's life world is deemed to be for stating the problem can be illustrated in terms of the way in which the *child question* figures by him:

That the child question is given as a possibility to a neurologically handicapped child cannot be doubted in any respect. However, since the child question flourishes in parallel with self-differentiation as an essence of becoming,<sup>116)</sup> and since he shows an inadequately thriving self-differentiation, it must be accepted that the child question, in its level of realization, does not appear on his horizon in an adequate way. His questioning attunement gives evidence of a deficient breaking through sensory lived experienced actualities. It is an indication of being-unable to break out of the immediately present as pathically lived experienced sensing. Thus, the child question figures inadequately on a gnostic-cognitive level; the why-question, as a search for anticipated order figures forth with difficulty and thus is a further indication of his vague and diffuse grip on life reality.

Because he accepts as obvious a gnostic-cognitive questioning in an ordinary didactic lesson, a teacher's stating the problem is not always attuned to guiding a child to breaking through what is immediately present. As a result, the neurologically handicapped child experiences an inadequate gap in knowing, the learning contents thus appear as meaningless and perhaps a disharmonious lesson event is inevitable.

Against the background of this child's world relatedness that is described by Cruickshank as one of "mis-formed sensing and confusion" [In Dutch], it is logical that *ordering the learning material* is a necessary condition for constituting a harmonious lesson. The adequate ordering of the learning material not only guarantees the good course of a lesson but it also provides a most needed ordering of a neurologically handicapped child's unordered engagement in learning.

On the other hand, adequately ordered learning material offers security and stability to him and on the basis of this, on the other hand, it offers an important foothold with respect to taking a more adequate cognitive attitude. Sonnekus<sup>118)</sup> views the ordering of

learning material as ordering experiencing, willing and cognitive lived experiencing and this holds true to a still greater extent for a neurologically handicapped child.

It is not the aim to identify particular principles for ordering at the cost of another. Because so many factors determine the choice of an ordering principle, the propagation of a particular principle would be hazardous and objectionable. As a few principles are mentioned below this must be viewed rather as an attempt to indicate their suitability for a neurologically handicapped child.

Myklebust and Johnson<sup>119)</sup> deem the *symbiotic* and *local lore principles of ordering* as extremely suitable for a neurologically handicapped child. In light of his disorganization and confusion in unfamiliar situations, it is logical that a nearness to reality offers this child a foothold and that these principles of ordering continually deserve close consideration.

Eisenberg<sup>120)</sup> is an advocate of the *concentric principle of ordering*. He asserts [In English}: “The brain damaged child who fails to respond to conventional tutelage may be capable of moving ahead if we begin by simplifying the challenge we present and then tax him with progressively more complex tasks”.

There must be agreement with this especially in light of the fact that this child shows an inadequate analyzing and synthesizing, and that he has difficulty making meaningful connections and relationships. Following De Cort, Van Goor and Den Dulk<sup>121)</sup> call this form of ordering the “cursory activity form” [In Dutch], and they indicate that this activity form is very suitable for those with a chaotic, unstructured world image.

For the same reason the *principle of integration* must be considered with great caution in ordering the learning material for such a child. One could even assert that should a teacher regularly make use of this principle of ordering, it can serve as an aggravating factor in a disharmonious teaching situation.

From the above examples it is clear that an incorrectly chosen principle of ordering can be a contributing factor to bringing about a disharmonious teaching situation.

*Matters about the form of a lesson* such as choice of ground forms, methodological principles and methods of unlocking can also give rise to a disharmonious teaching situation for a neurologically handicapped child. Thus for example, particular ground forms mentioned above are not suitable for him without purposeful particularizations. The teacher who allows his choice to fall on the example as a ground form and does not know *how* he is going to usher in the example with this child thus contributes to bringing about a disharmonious teaching situation.

Linking up with and supplementing the exemplary, a few comments are made regarding *learning and teaching aids*. In the case of the neurologically handicapped child the example plays a large and important role especially because it can also be used as an aid to eliminate perceptual disturbances or to bring about understanding by structuring the “correct” perception. If in designing his learning and teaching aids the teacher does not take into account the perceptual disturbances of a neurologically handicapped child, the chance of a harmonious teaching event is slim.\*

As in the case of all children, the *didactic principles of actualization* play an essential role in teaching a neurologically handicapped child. However, such a child finds himself in a normal didactic situation where the principles of actualization are brought into motion often in diametric opposition to what he requires. Hence, in such cases there is clear talk of disharmonious teaching.

Eisenberg<sup>122)</sup> as well as Kotze<sup>123)</sup> mention, e.g., the slow learning tempo of a neurologically handicapped child. Where the lesson tempo in a normal didactic situation is directed to a “normal” child, it is obvious that a handicapped child will soon find himself in a disharmonious teaching situation.

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\* See also the comments about this matter in Chapter Three that, in more than one respect, are applicable to the neurologically handicapped child.

In the previous discussion of the neurologically handicapped child there is continual reference to his *modes of actualizing learning* and therefore it is deemed not necessary to again describe this question in detail. Only a few comments in this regard: If a teacher does not have available detailed information regarding a child's modes of actualizing learning, his teaching occurs in a haphazard way and the chance of a disharmonious teaching even is that much greater. It is a recognized fact that a neurological handicap can avenge itself in an auditory or visual or both modalities.<sup>124</sup> If a teacher in presenting his lesson directs an appeal to that sensory modality that is inadequately actualized, the chance of constituting a disharmonious teaching situation is very good.

Finally, it must be emphasized that an adequate actualization of the *fundamental pedagogic relationships* is an essential necessity for establishing a harmonious lesson event. Because of this child's labile pathic lived experiences that lead to insecurity, anxiety and educative distress, it is a particular task of the teacher in presenting a lesson to allow the fundamental pedagogic essences to harmonize with the contents and the child's actualization of learning. His task is that he must especially integrate trust, authority and understanding in *nuanced* and *refined* form into his unlocking.

The foregoing gives clear evidence that a harmonious teaching event with a neurologically handicapped child can only be created if the teacher has at his disposal a detailed image of the child's actualization of his learning. All data deserve the most careful consideration in correlating and particularizing them in an accountable lesson. Particularizing means, among other things, that the pedagogic essences must be interpreted in their specific details so that they can be integrate with other essences in a refined form.

## **3.2 The affectively disturbed child**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

At the beginning it must be clearly stated that the aim is not to provide a comprehensive and penetrating discussion of the problem of affectively disturbed children. The primary purpose is to give an explanation and interpretation of an affectively disturbed child as

situated in a problematic teaching situation with the aim of disclosing constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation. By disharmonious constituents of teaching is meant disharmonious moments of self-actualization that can result from or can be correlated with or be the consequence of a disharmonious guided actualization.

For the sake of a general orientation a few pertinent matters are briefly considered:

Already a number of efforts have been made to give a verbal definition of an affectively disturbed child. Despite grand efforts, to date there is still no generally accepted description and it is doubtful that one will be realized in the future.

Reasons for this are based, first, on the fact that there is not one identical name for these children. The current literature mentions, among others, “maladjusted children” (Caspari,<sup>125</sup> Laslett<sup>126</sup>), “emotionally disturbed children” (Morse<sup>127</sup>), “emotional disorders” (Pearson<sup>128</sup>) disturbed adjustments (Vedder<sup>129</sup>), etc. so it is often difficult to determine if all of the labels have reference to the same type of child.

Second, no two affectively disturbed children show the same behaviors. The problem is so comprehensive that it houses a diversity of “types” or “syndromes”. Thus, for example, a child difficult to educate, a traumatized child, an educationally neglected, a “psychopathologized” child, a child unprepared for school and even an autistic child fall within the scope of “affectively disturbed”.

A third reason is that there are various degrees of affective disturbance that resist a general definition.

Perhaps the most important reason is that every description occurs from a particular frame of reference that can be unacceptable from other perspectives with other frames of reference.

In addition, each description involves a value judgment<sup>130</sup>, that strictly speaking involves taking a personal standpoint and one acquires insight into the extremely difficult problem of a general



description of an affectively disturbed child. Paul<sup>131)</sup> states this thusly [In English]: “Emotional disturbance, perhaps more than any other handicap, interacts with the personal values of those who define it”.

Since an affectively disturbed child also lends himself to multidisciplinary intervention, especially from a medical and psychiatric perspective, there has been an inclination to view such a child as someone with an abnormality, a psychiatric deviation or a pathological condition. Consequently, more than one attempt has been made to describe this child in psychopathological terms and to make classifications accordingly. Here Vedder’s<sup>132)</sup> classification of children with “disturbances in adjusting” serves as a good example, as he talks of psychotic, “psychopathologized” and neurotic children. Without denying that some affectively disturbed children can indeed be housed within the scope of a psychopathology, from a pedagogical perspective a strong position is taken against this direction of thinking. A labeling of these children with particular images of illness would result in a child disappearing behind the image of illness and that the possibility for differentiating and particularizing the provision of help can largely fall away. Laslett<sup>133)</sup> also makes objections against this [In English], “... because it has tended to deflect attention from the educational needs of maladjusted children, and it has tended to lead to an assumption that psychiatric disorders or pathological conditions are present in all these children and not only in some of them”.

It is accepted that an affectively disturbed child shows himself by means of socially unacceptable behaviors. Hewlett<sup>134)</sup> states this as follows [In English]: “Underlying all of the specialized terms and complex diagnostic labels used to describe him, is the implication that his behavior, for whatever reason, is maladaptive according to the expectations of the society in which he lives”.

Literature regarding the affectively disturbed child is differentiated into two main groups: Stott<sup>135)</sup> talks of children with “under-reactive behavior” and “over-reactive behavior” while Faas<sup>136)</sup> distinguishes between “aggressive” and “retiring behavior”. Caspari<sup>137)</sup> mentions “difficult children” and “withdrawn, inattentive children”. For the

purpose of the present study the aggressive and the retiring child will also be sufficient.

An affectively disturbed child with *aggressive behaviors* is described as someone who is continually resistant, impudent, disobedient, destructive and brutal. He is inclined to throw tantrums, tell lies, steal, etc. With his peers he does not hold himself at all to the rules of any game, is bullying and is inclined to confront others for the slightest reason.

An affectively disturbed child with *retiring behaviors* is inclined to isolation and regression. His inconspicuous behaviors make him conspicuous. However, it must be emphasized that this child is no less affectively disturbed than an aggressive child. This child withdraws into a world of daydreams and wild fantasies. He is anxious and shows unusual fears. He is selfish, oversensitive and cries very easily. He has few friends. Moreover he brings on the anger of his fellow pupils because he is continually currying favors from his teacher.

Both groups of children are inclined to enuresis, encopresis, pulling at one's face, stuttering, "compulsive" behaviors such as pulling one's own hair, nail biting, etc.

The behaviors noted above are a mere compilation of typical symptoms and thus is what the outsider normally notices.

However, for a pedagogue this entails an understanding of these behaviors. The emphasis does not fall on the labeling of a particular illness syndrome but it involves an understanding of the childlike situatedness in order to show the restraining effect of his affective disturbance on his personal realization. On this basis there then can be an attempt to eliminate the restraint and to guide the child to maximum personal actualization.

Before taking an orthopedagogic view of an affectively disturbed child, which necessarily implies a view of him as a learning child, there must be brief reference to the *foundations* of learning and affect.

### 3.2.2 The connection between learning and affect

In chapter one it was shown that learning is a primordial modus of Dasein and that it implies an act of creating relationships. The actualization of Dasein is unthinkable without the act of learning.

Also the affect is a primordial modus of Dasein. According to Heidegger<sup>138)</sup> a person is not only knowingly involved but also caringly involved in the world: all modes of being of Dasein are concrete modes of one fundamental form of being-in [the world] that he calls “care”. As a fundamental form of Dasein’s being-in, “care” (Sorge) manifests itself in two modes, namely, in its dealing with intra-worldly beings [things] it is concern (besorgen) and in its relationship to its fellow beings it is solicitude (Fursorge).

A caring association is thus essentially a sensitivity for things, an attuned being-there.<sup>139)</sup> As Bollinger<sup>140)</sup> shows, Dasein-space is primarily thrown open through an encounter with others, and as Kwant,<sup>141)</sup> Jaspers<sup>142)</sup> and Bakker<sup>143)</sup> contend, the actualization of a person occurs via establishing meaningful relations with others, it is clear that the affect does not possess only a quality of reaction but in truth is a constituent of Dasein.

As constituents of Dasein affect and learning *necessarily*<sup>144)</sup> show a mutual relationship. Heidegger especially throws light on this problem when he distinguished “Befindlichkeit” next to “Verstehen” as existentiells [categories] of Dasein. By “Verstehen” is meant an original potentiality from which all ways of knowing become possible.<sup>145)</sup>

As a being-found with things, a person also acquires a grip on things in their meaning for life. In other words, in his attuned being-there he is also summoned to constituting, restructuring, demarcating, structuring, thus to actualizing learning.

The attunement and original understanding may not be viewed under any circumstances as unconnected modalities.<sup>146)</sup> This original understanding is always present in the attunement and all “Verstehen” is essentially attunement. “Befindlichkeit” and “Verstehen” as such are not only constitutive of the ground-

structure of Dasein, but at the same time they constitute the actualization of Dasein as an existential possibility.<sup>147)</sup>

Thus it appears that the realization of these modes of Dasein cannot be considered [to occur] without an act of learning. Both “Befindlichkeit” and “Verstehen” are illuminative,<sup>148)</sup> and thus, on the one hand, the act of learning is a precondition for realizing both of them, and on the other hand, learning finds its foundation in this attunement and original understanding.

With the above as a foundation the following must indicate the way in which the affect announces itself during the act of learning with special reference to an affectively disturbed child.

### **3.2.3 The learning world of the affectively disturbed child**

Contemporary psychopedagogics underlines the mutual implication of learning and affect. Childlike learning means entering a dialogue as a dialogue elevation.<sup>149)</sup> Underlying the involvement in a dialogue is a confirmation of one of the primordial facts of being human, namely a wanting to be familiar with the world.<sup>150)</sup>

According to Sonnekus<sup>151)</sup> a childlike dialogue occurs by various modes of being that basically are manifested as ways of childlike lived experiences. Childlike lived experiences, now viewed as learning, continually vary and change from a pathic-affective to a gnostic-cognitive level. Thus, a child takes a position with respect to learning contents on an emotional and/or knowing level.<sup>152)</sup> Consequently, the pathic is continually present, even when the gnostic is more relevant, and the reverse.<sup>153)</sup>

Authentic learning is realized when a child proceeds to break through his pathic horizon and makes a leap to taking gnostic positions. A precondition for this is a stable pathic level of lived experience in contrast to a labile and even impulsive level.<sup>154)</sup>

Learning and becoming as equally primordial structures in the psychic life of a child in education, occur via particular modes of actualization. Sonnekus<sup>155)</sup> distinguishes among sensing, attending,

perceiving, thinking, imagining, fantasizing and remembering as particular ways of actualization, or modes of learning.

*Sensing* is an emotional way of learning and continually is a preparation for or beginning of all knowing ways of learning.<sup>156)</sup> Van Niekerk<sup>157)</sup> proposes sensing as an accompanying mode of learning because it is the first involvement of a child with the contents, which implies that he becomes aware of them. Sensing is a subjectively colored [form of] intentionality as an immediate, pre-cognitive dialogue with the contents of the world.

When a child opens himself to the contents, thus manifesting a willing intention to make them a part of his own experiential world, this means that he participates by perceiving, thinking, imagining, fantasizing and remembering and that by attending he remains involved with the contents.<sup>158)</sup> It is especially important to observe that attending has its origin in the pathic-affective wondering about what is gnostically lived experienced, and that a stable sensing is thus a precondition for it.<sup>159)</sup>

By stable sensing is meant that a child has assimilated to such an extent the modes of lived experiencing of his possessed experiences, be this labile-pathic or stable-gnostic in nature, that he can continually break through them and in doing so remain involved with the learning contents in an ordered way.<sup>160)</sup> This assimilation is only possible when a child experiences love, acceptance, security, encouragement, trust and understanding, briefly, when there is no educative distress.

An affectively disturbed child's lived experiencing of anxiety, insecurity, uncertainty, etc., as labile, unassimilated sensing, continually direct such a strong appeal that his attentive remaining with the learning contents necessarily is interfered with. His learning intention weakens; the learning contents no longer serve him as being worth wondering about so he no longer experiences them as a resistance-for-me-that-must-be-overcome.

His labile sensing and attending cause him to not be directed to a search for the authentic sense and meaning of the learning contents. Distractive and hyperactive behaviors are common. Yet this does

not mean that he never finds himself in the world attending. Rather, because of a labile sensing, his attending can show particular inadequacies in its modes. In this connection, Ross<sup>161)</sup> mentions [In English] an “overexclusive attention” by which he means that a child is not attuned “... to focus on those aspects of a stimulus-complex which *carry the distinctive feature* (my cursive)... He is captured by one aspect of the stimulus and attends to it to the relative exclusion of all others”.

It can also happen that a child can only pay attention to either the visual or the auditory aspect of the learning material as is shown by Senf,<sup>162)</sup> Lovaas and Sreibman.<sup>163)</sup>

It is obvious that the inadequate realization of the accompanying modes of learning promote an inadequate actualization of the gnostic modes of learning.

The above remarks imply that an affectively disturbed child's *perceiving* is inadequately realized; apart from the fact that such a child *thinks* on a concrete-visual level, Hewett<sup>164)</sup> also mentions a disordered and chaotic way of thinking, of an impulsive and uncritical approach to thinking; Leslett,<sup>165)</sup> Hewett,<sup>166)</sup> and others find an inadequate actualization of *remembering*; Shapiro<sup>167)</sup> finds that the *world of fantasy* of an affectively disturbed child, as shown in his play, is interspersed with anxiety, rage and feelings of shame. Sonnekus<sup>168)</sup> indicates that an affectively disturbed child seldom reaches the highest level of play, namely illusive play.

The above inadequate actualization of the psychic life goes hand in hand with a child's intense lived experience of educative distress. In truth, many authors consider educative distress to be one of the most prominent factors that gives rise to affective disturbances. For example, Laslett<sup>169)</sup> admits [In English] that physical and genetic factors might contribute to affective disturbances but indeed with the absence of “fundamental support systems” as a primary causative factor: “The system includes unconditional love of the child by an attachment figure or figures; adequate nurture and physical care; the presence of appropriate identificatory (sic) and modeling figures; and appropriate discipline”.

Thus, it is not surprising that an affectively disturbed child announces himself as being-different, thus as someone with a different world-foundation and –meaning. He is not different only on the basis of his behaviors; he also lived experiences his being different because he is aware of his conspicuousness. He is continually under the eyes of others, and his unacceptable behaviors lead his peers and teachers to often see him as full of hostility. He lived experiences failure and rejection by his peers and this again leads to (unacceptable) behaviors by which he tries to wheedle their acceptance out of them.

For his teachers he is a source of worry, confusion and frustration. They become uncertain about their behaviors with him so that a spontaneous, intuitive attunement is replaced by a forced, calculated way of relating to the child. He is no longer viewed merely as a child but indeed as someone-with-disturbed-behaviors.

The child's sense of safety is undermined by this. He is aware of their "hidden, masked negative feelings, and he experiences this as depressing",<sup>170)</sup> so that he lived experiences himself not only as being different but as a lesser being, as "thrown into the world".<sup>171)</sup>

Without doubting his freedom to attribute meaning, it can be accepted with a reasonable degree of certainty that an affectively disturbed child's negative lifestyle is confirmed by the disapproving attitude of his educators and peers and that a negative self-concept is inevitable.

#### **3.2.4 The affectively disturbed child in a disharmonious teaching situation**

In the above, there is mention of an under-actualization across the entire range of the psychic life of an affectively disturbed child. Because of a lived experience of the lack of a sense of safety, that also can be qualified as educative distress, he is not able to learn adequately.

For a teacher to guide an affectively disturbed child to an adequate actualization of learning, he must take into consideration the matter of under-actualized modes of learning. In truth, his lesson must be

directed to the elimination and/or avoidance of a child's labile-pathic emotional life.

In order to indicate what tasks a teacher is confronted with to create a harmonious lesson event with such a child, a few aspects of the lesson will be referred to briefly after which the phases of the course of the lesson will be put under a magnifying glass:

In chapter one it was mentioned that a lesson serves as a juncture for actualizing the pedagogical essences; in addition, it was mentioned that the [essences of the] fundamental pedagogical, didactic pedagogical and psychopedagogical find their actualization via the learning contents. Without their harmonious actualization there cannot be a harmony between guided actualization and self-actualization [of the psychic life].

Since an affectively disturbed child is going to be weighed down by a labilized emotionality, as a consequence of which he, on the one hand, has a need for adequately actualized educative relationships, and, on the other hand, he has difficulty realizing such relationships, a teacher is confronted with the task of breaking through these ambivalent feelings in presenting his lesson.

Normally, the actualization of the pedagogical relationship structures occurs intuitively and without thought. In the case of an affectively disturbed child their realization must be purposefully planned. This implies that a teaching situation is also a *pedotherapeutic* one, on the one hand, because a teacher has the elimination of the educative distress in view and, on the other hand, because the educating must occur more explicitly, more intensely, more emphatically.<sup>172)</sup>

The above implies a purposeful planning that necessarily must be taken up in the lesson aim as a primary aim. Planning this can only occur after a careful analysis of a child's disharmonious educative relationships in order to determine their failings:

Are the parents too strict? And if so, in what respect, where and when? Are they too accessible? Are they available for him and do they accept him? Is there a harmonious marital relationship? Do



the parents understand their responsibilities, also with respect to the demands of propriety under which they are placed? Etc.

On the other side, a teacher must again place the worthiness of his own trusting, authority and understanding relationships under a magnifying glass, and after the necessary refining and particularizing of them, especially in light of a child's life world relationships, "build them into" the lesson design. Thus, he can question himself, e.g., with respect to the following: To what extent do I make myself accessible to a child? What is the nature of my regard for this child's personal being? Is the quality of my encounter with him of such a nature that he can confidently venture with the learning contents? How should I conduct myself so that he can accept me as the bearer of authority? Is my authority of such a nature that he will accept the validity of what I explain and present? Is my authority firm, flexible and pliable enough? Do I really understand the otherness of the affectively disturbed child? Do I understand his involvement with the demands of propriety that also can speak through the learning material?

These and similar questions bring the teacher to insights that will help to refine and particularize the fundamental pedagogical relationships.

This means that he must not only take into account the reduced subject matter contents but also the reduced "experiential world-contents" of a child, that he must moreover allow to harmonize with the subject matter contents. The lesson- and learning-aims must show particular nuances because they also incorporate pedotherapeutic aims such as guiding a child to a readiness to learn, with the implicit imperative of stabilizing his emotionality.

Obviously such a nuanced teaching aim involves a different emphasis being placed on the *reduction of the learning material*. It will still continue to involve disclosing the essentials in light of the lesson aim, but now a teacher must identify affective footholds or hindrances in the reduced learning material in order to emphasize or avoid them, respectively. His reductions must also occur against the background of the child's foreknowledge in terms of the particular themes. He must necessarily anticipate to what extent the

affectively disturbed child's learning problems have put him in a position to achieve adequate learning effects, etc.

*This amounts to the fact that an affectively disturbed child will continually find himself in a disharmonious lesson situation if the lesson design is not directed to his specific affective disturbance.*

Redl and Wineman<sup>173)</sup> indicate convincingly that not only a neurologically handicapped child but also an affectively disturbed one gets a great deal of relief from a structuring approach. By this is meant a purposeful *ordering* and structuring of a child's chaotic being-in-the-world. The point of departure for this is in the assumption that the child shows a deficient inner structure. What is not had from within must be brought in from the outside.<sup>174)</sup>

Thus, situations must be constructed in such a way that it ought to be as clear as a bell how he must behave in them. Dumont<sup>175)</sup> views this approach as a means for confronting a child with [In Dutch] "... a difficulty to present, a way to indicate, a plan to realize" so that he can discover structure.\*

If the above approach is followed in a lesson it will lead to specific particularizations and nuances over the entire range of the form of the lesson. For example, when play is chosen as a ground form, it must be refined in such a way that it will continually be directed to forming the inner structure of the child. In the same way ordering the learning material, the didactic principle of actualization, teaching- and learning-aids, etc. must be brought into agreement with the principle of structuring.

From this it seems that a lesson design for an affectively disturbed child unquestionably must show different emphases. Therefore, a teacher must also be responsible for the *position* that he takes in a lesson situation. By virtue of the greater accent on his educative and pedotherapeutic functions, he must, e.g., bring about a greater sense of safety in the hope of illuminating or eliminating the child's educative distress, it appears as if he must take a position *by* the child.<sup>176)</sup> However, his position will also be determined by the

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\* See the detailed comments on this same matter in Chapter Three.

various aims that he wants to realize in each phase of the course of the lesson.

And this inevitably leads to the question of learning material as aim and as means. Since this matter is dealt with in chapter three, at this stage a few comments are sufficient: When learning content indeed is presented as aim in a lesson, it should continually have as its other side of contents as means; it must always be kept in mind that the contents are also applied as means in order to eliminate the child's lived experienced sense of being unsafe. It is necessary that meaningful problems must figure on a child's learning landscape but, at the same time, the learning material must serve as a pedotherapeutic means. Thus, e.g., affective footholds in the learning material must be made accessible to the child so that he can ascribe favorable meanings to them.

Also, with respect to the various *phases of the course of the lesson* particular considerations hold true:

Where, in the *phase of actualizing foreknowledge*, this involves making relevant possessed knowledge present so that, in light of the teaching aim, it can serve as meaningful points of contact for the to be unlocked learning contents, a teacher is confronted with a particular task with respect to an affectively disturbed child.

Sonnekus<sup>177)</sup> indicates that actualizing foreknowledge occurs mainly via remembering as a modes of learning that, in itself, is subject to the adequate actualization of sensing and attending.

Where an affectively disturbed child gives evidence of an inadequate actualization of these modes of learning a teacher should pay strict attention to means for stabilizing the child's sensing and attending in order to allow remembering to be actualized adequately.

Thus recognized stimulating means such as newness, surprise, change, complexity, etc., must be implemented with caution. Because of this child's inclination to sense on a labile-pathic level,

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\* See Chapter Three.

the teacher must be on guard against too broad a beginning regarding making a lesson stimulating. A purposeful lesson stimulation, presented in a trusting, safe atmosphere, will contribute greatly to the pupil adequately attending and remembering and thus will actualize his foreknowledge.

*Actualizing foreknowledge* continually occurs in light of the lesson and learning aims. Therefore, according to Louw,<sup>178)</sup> the foreknowledge is placed in a new framework by which the new theme is lived experienced as meaningful. Active and dynamic guidance by a teacher puts a child in a position to place the foreknowledge into a meaningful relationship and this occurs by lived experiencing the new theme as a problem.

Normally this requires an adequate actualization of perceiving and thinking, and to a lesser extent imagining and fantasizing. In his search for “solutions” a child is continually in search of possible meaningful connections and relationships with the actualized foreknowledge and this leads to adequately actualized perceiving and thinking that sporadically become interchanged with imagining and fantasizing. In all of these cases, a stable sensing and attending hold true as preconditions.

With respect to an affectively disturbed child the possibility is very great that a labilizing of sensing and attending can suddenly appear.

In his search, in order to see the new problem from the known, an affectively disturbed child, because of his deficient ordering, schematizing and transforming, is inclined to look for relationships by means of imagining and fantasizing. Without adequate support and guidance he can very easily fall into a labile imagining and fantasizing or “daydreaming”.

To prevent this, a teacher must carefully plan his didactic principles: For example, the *lesson tempo* must be of such a variable nature that it can continually avert a possible labilizing. In this connection, repetition and the question-and-answer method can be profitably implemented.

No lesson for an affectively disturbed child can be considered without the *principle of individualization*. If the teaching is not directed to the inadequately actualized modes of learning of the specific child, the chances for an adequate learning result are very slim.

As far as *learning and teaching aids* are concerned, they must also meet particular requirements. If it is taken into consideration that normally an aide presents the foreknowledge graphically, to a particular degree this must be designed to offer resistance to possible perceptual disturbances. Paired with this it must be kept in mind that an affectively disturbed child is easily distractible and that too many non-essentials can contribute to a labile sensing and inadequate attending. Therefore, the aide must be reduced to its absolute essentials.

This comes down to the fact that a teacher must cognitively guide the child to lived experience a *problem and to its formulation* that can only be realized if this guiding and support are through affective and normative educating. If it is taken into consideration that in this lesson phase there also is going to be a guiding to the “deepest and liveliest meaning-conceptions”<sup>179)</sup> with an eye to solving a problem, it is obvious that a stable emotionality is a precondition for reaching a readiness to proceed to a more gnostic attitude.

In the phase of *exposing the new contents* the concern is with making the essences of the learning material discernible so that the child can arrive at a solution to the [lesson] problem. The presentation as well as the interpretation of the elemental-contents, are closely related to the pupil’s readiness, his particular potentialities for actualization and the unique nature of the subject matter.

The fact of an affectively disturbed child’s labile emotionality and the correlated inadequate actualization of learning, therefore, necessitates an act of unlocking that must occur also in terms of pedotherapeutic principles. The positional nearness of the teacher, his structured and ordered presentation, the purposeful realization

of the fundamental pedagogic relationships are all matters that must receive the closest attention.

Besides this, careful attention must be paid to the anticipated *modes of learning*. Where this involves forming concepts and the mutual relationships among concepts it is important to take into account that thinking is an under-actualized mode of learning and that the child shows a deficient schematizing, ordering and abstracting. Thus, when thinking as a mode of learning is anticipated, a concrete approach should be seriously considered. It must be stressed that normally an affectively disturbed child indeed has at his disposal the potentialities for functioning gnostically and for abstracting.

A more concrete approach provides, on the one hand, a strong affective foothold to the child and, on the other hand, it forms the basis in terms of which he can eventually acquire a grip on the conceptual and abstract.

Therefore, the teaching and learning aids must be planned accordingly. The emphasis must especially fall on learning aids that will put the child in a position to discover insights into the essentials of a particular theme. The possible visualization of abstract concepts, schematic representations, etc. will contribute to structuring, transcending and taking a gnostic attitude.

It must be emphasized that the child, in an intimate being-bonded with the teacher, must be guided step by step to a reduction of the learning material. Although it is generally accepted that the child must finally break through to insight by independent struggle,<sup>180)</sup> the teacher must continually be at his disposal in order to provide help and support.

A stable sensing and attending always remain an essential necessity for the adequate actualization of thinking and, therefore, the teacher, with all pedagogical means at his disposal, must try to stabilize the child emotionally.

The *actualization of learning contents* is of cardinal importance for an affectively disturbed child. Where this embraces the control of a pupil's insight into and grip on the unlocked learning contents and

where, because of labile sensing and attending, possible gaps in the mastery of the contents can arise, this lesson phase can not and might not be taken up lightly.

In truth this is deemed to be so important that, depending on the nature of the learning material, it might not be ignored at any time and it must be intertwined in the total lesson. In other words, *continual control* is the fate of a teacher of an affectively disturbed child.

In addition, the control must be done in such a way that the child will not be exposed to a further labilization. Van Dyk and Van der Stoep<sup>181)</sup> assert directly that the actualization of this lesson phase gives proof of a true teaching skill. And this is indeed the case with a teacher of an affectively disturbed child. Questions that suggest and initiate, tasks, problems, etc. must be implemented in such a way that they will continually serve to strengthen a child's level of attending. This further implies that a teacher must strike a cautious middle course between an unnecessary verbose and a superficial control by which the essences of the lesson contents are not dealt with. Both extremes include the possibility of a labilized attending.

*Functionalizing* has the aim of a spiritualizing, of a deeper understanding, of a clear striving for improved achievements, of an operative formed-ness and of a preparation for other situation-independent lived experiences, applications and creations.<sup>182)</sup> This implies a proceeding from elemental to fundamental contents and means, among other things, a meaningful integration of the new with existing knowledge.

In light of an affectively disturbed child's labile emotionality and the consequent inadequate actualization of learning, this lesson phase required a carefully planned impact. Guiding to and maintaining a stable sensing and attending must continually be kept in view. Therefore, functionalizing preferably will take place under the watchful eyes of the teacher. A relaxed and trusted situation is essential because there must be no obstacle with respect to the teacher's access and availability. If the functionalizing now occurs by a succession of examples, reviews, repetitions, etc. *these must occur in the lesson situation.*

Although in this lesson phase a child proceeds to *self*-actualization, it must be stressed that guided actualization must be continually available to an affectively disturbed child.

Apart from activity as a didactic principle, differentiation and individualization are of particular importance, and also with respect to this lesson phase.

After bringing the functionalizing aim to a close, a final *evaluation* aim follows during which “ in a formal situation, it is asked of a child to provide evidence that he can carry out a particular achievement (work performances, operations) up to *standard*”, according to Van der Stoep and Van Dyk.<sup>183)</sup>

In as much as the evaluation of an affectively disturbed child does not differ essentially from the usual modes of evaluation, it will suffice to anticipate the same didactic principles, modes of learning and teaching and learning aids that normally are anticipated in this lesson phase.

The above gives unquestionable evidence that a disharmonious teaching situation will be constituted unless the lesson design is attuned to the learning world, as experiential world, of an affectively disturbed child. Obviously this implies an orthodidactic diagnostic in order to obtain an image of the actualization [of the child's] learning and an image of his learning results.

### **3.3 The mentally handicapped child**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

The mentally handicapped child constitutes approximately 15% (Dumont) to 25% (Vedder) of a normal school population. For basic reasons provisions cannot be made for him in either a separate special school or in a school for mentally retarded children.

Under the current approach children are classified as mentally handicapped when their intelligence quotient falls between 80 and 90. Thus, they are somewhat less gifted than a child of average



intelligence and, therefore, the actualization of their psychic life occurs more slowly.

Although he can maintain himself to a degree in a normal school, still he is characterized as having a slow learning tempo that eventually can accumulate into one or more failures in the course of his schooling. Dumont<sup>184)</sup> directly asserts that being mentally handicapped inevitably results in learning problems and he ascribes their origin to the fact that these children are evaluated by norms of tempo and achievement that are far above their potentialities.

Without going into this problem, it remains a fact that this child presents a teacher with a particular task if he wants to allow a harmonious lesson design to become functional. Dumont<sup>185)</sup> and Vedder<sup>186)</sup> both mention the possibility that a mentally handicapped child can show adequate school progress within particular limits.

In order to determine what a teacher must take into account regarding a mentally handicapped child in his lesson design, it is necessary to briefly examine his learning world as an experiential world:

### **3.3.2 The learning world of the mentally handicapped child**

Although a mentally handicapped child is currently described as someone who has deficient intellectual potentialities at his disposal, it must be stressed immediately that this does not mean that he shows himself as a “minus-variant” only regarding his cognitive dimension. Indeed, he shows himself to be restrained over the full range of his existence. Therefore, the world relationship of meaning of such a child will continually be an indication of a particular attunement that, on closer examination, will allow the essences of his being mentally handicapped to come to light.

A mentally handicapped child is someone who eventually can succeed in abstracting (as an essence of adequate thinking), but he can never have at his disposal a flexible and supple mastery of what is abstract. In other words, an ordered cognitive attunement on an abstract level does not fall within his potentialities for mastery.

Since the human surrounding world is permeated with abstract concepts, this means that he cannot acquire a proper grasp of the world of meaning. In other words, a world of meaning does not entice him to respond adequately.

His inability to adequately abstract, as an act of thinking that is the highest form of its development,<sup>187)</sup> also implies the inadequate realization of the essences of abstracting such as re-structuring, classifying, ordering, synthesizing and schematizing. Thus, at most a mentally handicapped child can have a global-diffuse grip on reality as is clearly evidenced from his involvement with a subject such as mathematics.

Mathematics requires rigorously logical acts of thinking in which the understanding of number is deemed to be of cardinal importance. Since Dumont<sup>188)</sup> proposes classifying and serial-ordering as preconditions for understanding number, it is understandable that it is difficult for a mentally handicapped child to break through to understanding number. Therefore, in general, such a child views mathematics as his “most difficult” subject.<sup>189)</sup>

However, it is not only thinking as a mode of learning that is inadequately actualized. All of the other gnostic-cognitive modes of learning are inadequately actualized not only because of this child’s lesser learning potentialities but especially because sensing as the emotional-accompanying mode of learning is labilized. Various obvious reasons for this are indicated:

Because of an unsteady attitude on a cognitive level, he does not encounter things as things-with-meaning that invite him to deal with them. Thus, he lives “past” his world. The task-nature of the world (learning contents) does not adequately speak to him and his questioning of the world does not include a search for clarity and insight but is based on what is immediately experienced from the learning contents. In other words, he shows a habitual intuitive, pre-cognitive attitude of knowing,<sup>190)</sup> that in its turn reinforces the under-actualized nature of his other modes of being. Especially his affective going out to the world becomes touched since the inevitable failures in the cognitive sphere lead to affective instability and an obscuring of his intentionality. In itself, this leads to a

further under-actualization of his already limited cognitive potentialities.

In addition, it must be taken into consideration that this child's failing involvement with things occurs under the critical and even condemnatory look of others. Labilized feelings such as anxiety, dejection and desperation are therefore often the order of the day.

The above findings give evidence of the handicapped becoming of such a child. Although he indeed is able to eventually reach the Piagetian abstract-ideational phase of thinking, he maintains an inadequate grip on this phase. Vedder,<sup>191)</sup> in this respect, makes the following comparison: If one views the different stages of intelligence as rooms in a house, a child of normal intelligence can move around well in the room of abstract thinking while a mentally handicapped child indeed crosses the threshold but still feels ill at ease in it.

His handicapped becoming, however, is continually going to be paired with a being restrained in becoming. Because he is subjected to and compared with the norms of the normally endowed, he experiences his intellectual handicap as a defect. The feelings of being strange that parents, teachers and even peers show toward him find their impact in affective distress. Thus this child experiences educative distress because he has a need for understanding, acceptance and safety. He can no longer be viewed merely as a child-with-lesser-learning-potentialities that at most has a nuisance value in a class; he is a unique child in his own right who also can make a claim for the categorical unlocking of reality.

### **3.3.3 The mentally handicapped child in a disharmonious teaching situation**

Once again it is not the aim to make a complete lesson situation-analysis of a mentally handicapped child. This is primarily a search for what constitutes a disharmonious lesson situation. With this in view, a few relevant moments of a lesson design are discussed.

In many respects, *reduction of the learning material* is decisively important for establishing a harmonious lesson event. In the case of

this child it is so much the more so because the reduction must also allow for particular factors such as his attenuated possessed experiences, inadequate readiness to learn and the ways in which his insights can be restructured.

As in the case of a neurologically handicapped child, the question also arises about if and how the elemental appears on the learning landscape of a mentally handicapped child. Is he really able to handle the elemental, especially considering that its real meaning can only come to its full fruition if a pupil has acquired all of the related proficiencies that are relevant to it?<sup>192)</sup> In light of his labile affectivity, his deficient cognitive learning potentialities that, moreover, are under-actualized, in each case, it seems that *should he indeed be in a position to handle the elemental, this can only occur by means of carefully designed measures of guidance.*

In this connection, his deficient foreknowledge is a co-determinant of the nature and amount of essences of the learning material that must be presented. By implication, this means that the learning material in fact usually must be attenuated so that their essences, especially regarding their relationships and mutual coherencies, must be presented concretely, etc.

It is mentioned that such a child has difficulty in being enticed by the things in his world to take a cognitive attitude toward them. This means that the world, as such, does not announce itself as a *problem* for him and that he thus does not experience it as a problem. Consequently the child question figures in an entirely inadequate way on a cognitive level in his landscape of learning.

Viewed against this background, a teacher is confronted with a particularly important task in his lesson design. On the one hand, his *statement of the problem* should awaken an experience of wondering in him; on the other hand, it must be formulated in such a way that the child does not become overwhelmed by the problem and in doing so undergo a further emotional labilizing.

In this connection, it is of cardinal importance that the statement of the problem flow from and link up with the life world of the mentally handicapped child. It must be continually held in view

that his life world—no matter how superficial and unstructured it might appear to an adult—provides a definite “foothold” for him. He is satisfied with what his world offers him and he lives his world without asking questions about the essentialities of it. The design of stating the problem must find a connection with this if it is to be in any sense meaningful to this child. By implication, this includes a *simple, singular and concrete* question that must guide the child step by step to lived experience a problem.

From the nature of the matter, this lived experience of a problem must occur via stable sensing and attending and therefore planning the enlivenment of a lesson must receive careful attention. Which considerations and principles can only be determined by the pedodiagnostic data. For example, the *nature* of the inadequately actualized fundamental pedagogical relationships will determine whether the emphasis will fall on the realization of sympathetic acceptance, on the firmer exercise of authority or a greater understanding of the demands of propriety. The fact is that these and other considerations ought to receive the strictest attention of the teacher so that this can also be incorporated into the teaching aim.

*Ordering the learning material* must also be considered against the background of the life world, as experiential world, of such a child.

As in the case with a neurologically handicapped child and an affectively disturbed child, the life world of a mentally handicapped child also shows an unordered-ness and unstructured-ness. Yet there is a difference: The unstructured-ness of the first two especially revolves around a labile and even impulsive sensing. Flowing from this is an under-actualizing on a cognitive level.

With a mentally handicapped child, on the basis of his affective distress, there also is a labile-pathic sensing but his unstructured-ness rather gives evidence of a deficient grip on the real essentials and an inadequate insight into the mutual relationships and coherencies.

In designing a lesson, a teacher must thoroughly allow for the above. Without wanting to discredit other principles of ordering—

by the nature of the matter, a variety of factors determine the choice of a particular principle of ordering—indeed, it seems that the symbiotic, concentric and linear principles have a particularly valuable role to play.

The *symbiotic principle of ordering* speaks for itself.

Judging only from a mentally handicapped child's learning world, a *concentric ordering*, i.e., from easy to difficult, on the one hand offers a foothold and thus a more stable sensing and attending result. On the other hand, this continually allows for a progression from a concrete-visual to an abstract-ideational level.

A *linear ordering* holds the advantage for such a child that the learning material is divided into small steps or units. If the one is offered directly after the other with a very gradual increase in degree of difficulty, this offers a mentally handicapped child the opportunity to acquire a grip on the learning material in accordance with his potentialities.

In contrast to a neurologically handicapped and affectively disturbed child, it appears that play as a ground form lends itself well to teaching a mentally handicapped child. Especially, it gives a less "formal" flavor to the learning material and provides such a child with the opportunity to participate in the teaching event with greater confidence.

When this child's situatedness in a lesson event is examined, it is conspicuous that because of his lesser learning potentialities and/or their under-actualization, he finds himself in an exceptional position. Therefore, the *didactic principles of actualization* must receive particular attention if a teacher is serious about establishing a harmonious lesson for a mentally handicapped child.

It is known that a mentally handicapped child shows a *slow learning tempo*. A teacher is compelled by this to anticipate this child's learning tempo and, in so far as it is at all possible, to present his lesson accordingly. In addition to a generally slow guided tempo, he must also vary the tempo of the different phases of the course of a lesson. In this connection, one thinks of a slower tempo during the

exposition of the new, in comparison to a possibly faster tempo during functionalizing, etc.

Closely related to this is the question of *individualization*. Where a mentally handicapped child is in a class with below and above average children, differentiating and individualizing are necessities. Where there is already a broadly differentiated grouping, individualization always remains of the utmost importance. No child always has at his disposal the same learning potentialities or maintains the same learning tempo. However, guided individualization is directly dependent on a teacher's intuitive attunement to, anticipation of and pedagogic sensitivity for such a child's situatedness.

*Guided activity* to self-activity is also a basic principle of actualization that must be implemented in a lesson situation with the greatest caution. If one thinks about the labile-pathic emotionality that often is manifested in feelings of anxiety and insecurity, and a mentally handicapped child's feeling of inferiority, a sympathetic guiding to self-activity cannot be emphasized enough. If a teacher does not keep in view respect for his human dignity, appreciation for his lesser learning potentialities, continuous educative accord, etc., his guiding to self-activity cannot thrive properly.

On the other hand, his guiding activity lies in the event of unlocking where, according to Van Dyk,<sup>193)</sup> the "possibility, truth and necessity of the matter must be pointed out" to a child.

Mindful of such a child's inadequate and fluctuating intentional directedness, the value of *teaching- and learning-aids* cannot be stressed enough. In order to maintain his intentional directedness and allow it to thrive, a teacher must design his aids--once again depending on the learning aim—so that they promote a stable sensing and attending.

By means of color, movement, the strange, the exceptional, etc, a child must be led to a first astonishment and later to the experience of a problem. Still, the teaching- and learning aids must also be characterized as clearly reflecting the essences of the matter.

The concrete-visual teaching- and learning-aids, also regarding their contents, perhaps will be the most effective.

Where a textbook is used as a learning aid a teacher must assure himself that the essentials are able to be easily distinguished from the non-essentials, that abstract concepts are explained and described and that the contents spread throughout are looked at. Should this not be the case, it cannot serve as a suitable learning aid and the needed improvisation must be displayed.

A retrospective look at the requirements for a harmonious lesson (design) for a mentally handicapped child underlines once again the importance of a differentiated teaching system. It is almost impossible to simultaneously present a harmonious lesson to an intellectually normal and handicapped child. Even in a differentiated class a mentally handicapped child presents a teacher with a particular but not insurmountable challenge. However, knowledge and understanding of the life world, as experiential world, of such a child is and remains an absolute precondition.

#### **4. CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION**

The above examination of the situatedness of three types of child with learning problems, viewed as examples from three areas in which learning problems frequently occur, namely neurological, affective and cognitive disturbances.

In spite of the somewhat divergent examples, a macro-structural situation-analysis disclosed particular common details that are proposed as possible constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation. It must be emphasized that bringing about such constituents does not eliminate the need for disclosing the individual significance of each. Orthodidactic practice continually requires an understanding of a child's inadequate actualization of learning, and this implies a micro-structural situation-analysis.

The presence of the following moments leads to constituting a disharmonious teaching situation.



#### **4.1 Disharmonious pedagogic relationships**

No teaching event can progress harmoniously when the fundamental pedagogic relationships appear as disturbed or are inadequately realized. A disharmonious teaching situation is characterized by a feeling of mutual frustration. A child's inadequate learning result leads to the teacher feeling estranged because, among other things, he experiences the child's failures as reflecting his own teaching. Therefore he does not make himself available to the child as a trust-bestowing, authority-bearing and understanding educator. Moreover, he is not prepared to direct his teaching to the specific actualization of learning of a child with learning problems.

On the other hand, it is so that a teacher neglects to reach and understand a child in his being different. He does not see a child's distress and possibly is not aware of his specific deficiencies in actualizing his learning. Consequently, he approaches a child as not-restrained or not-handicapped that, in terms of a child's learning outcome, progressively degenerates into a catastrophe.

A child experiences the disturbed educative relationships as a further reinforcement of his neediness. He possibly experiences his teacher as an inaccessible and unsympathetic authority figure who confronts his problems without understanding. His teacher is experienced as someone who is not approachable because, in light of the above, trust and acceptance do not flourish. The necessary intimacy between those involved in the teaching situation appears to be disturbed and contradictory. Consequently, the child responds with behaviors of anxiety, insecurity, tension, etc., by which he makes known his need for adequate educative relationships.

#### **4.2 Affective distress**

With a child, affective distress is always educative stress. In essence, affective distress means a need for educative safety. A child in affective distress experiences his educative situatedness as meaningless and threatening. Therefore, a child with learning

problems can only accept the disharmonious teaching situation in these terms.

The intimate relationships among affectivity, intentionality and cognition imply that a labile affectivity will take itself out on the entire range intentional directedness and/or taking various cognitive attitudes. Sensing as an affective, accompanying mode of learning shows a lability that necessarily results in an inadequate actualization of learning.

### **4.3 Experience of being different**

Because of the indirect and finalizing character of a formal teaching situation, and the continual evaluation of the learning effect related to this, a child with learning difficulties quickly finds himself as an unsuccessful person in the eyes of others. He lived experiences himself as someone who does not meet expectations, as someone who occupies an exceptional position.

A child with learning problems, therefore, shows a negative self-image or self-view that not only contributes to a further under-actualization of his psychic life but that also and especially leads to an obscure future perspective.

### **4.4 Inadequate realization of cognitive potentialities**

Because of the particular relationships among the above-mentioned constituents, it is not strange that the analyzed situations continually show an inadequate actualization of cognitive potentialities. Whether this is now ascribed to endogenous or exogenous factors, the fact is that the teaching is seriously impaired in those situations. This matter understandably is related to the following aspect, namely, that the level of achievement, as a whole, by which the learning result is interpreted under the different and more comprehensive concept than “deficient learning results”.

### **4.5 Deficient learning results**

Although not a constituent in its own right, deficient learning results are the necessary consequence of a disharmonious teaching

situation. As indicated, this indeed also has a relationship to the cognitive achievement of such children. On the other hand, one must recognize that learning results are not and cannot be limited to the cognitive. Affective involvement, previously referred to, also is relevant here; but so also are particular motor-physical skills and mobility by which the settlement of a child in the “learning-life-situation” is greatly influenced. In truth, the preceding does not qualify as constituent of a disharmonious teaching situation until deficient learning results have *clearly* made their appearance. This means that there must be a historicity of failures and in addition that it must show an accumulative effect.

#### 4.6 Incorrectly anticipated didactic lesson designs

Incorrectly anticipated particularizations of the didactic design, i.e., judging from the teaching aspect, constitutes a disharmonious teaching situation in so far as it is not attuned to the attainable level of a pupil. Thus, for example, the teaching aim is not formulated in terms of the pedagogically attained and attainable levels. It is incorrectly accepted that a child finds himself on a particular level and on this basis particularized learning aims are formulated. Eventually it is evident that the lesson and learning aims are not realized because of particular gaps between the attained and attainable levels that are not taken into account. Often it is the *modes of actualizing learning* and the *deficient learning results* that are not adequately considered.

In practice this comes down to the fact that each lesson activity regarding a child with learning problems proceeds more or less disharmoniously, and that each distinguishable lesson phase can constitute a disharmonious teaching situation.

The following are examples of constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation:

As connecting factors between the lesson and learning aims, it is obvious that the *learning contents* contribute decisively in various respects to constituting a disharmonious teaching situation. The *amount* and *type* of contents also are of decisive importance. Too many or too little contents in particular circumstances can result in

inadequately disclosing or even glossing over their inherent meanings.

When the type of content falls beyond a child's grasp of reality, the risk is that it will appear as meaningless on the child's landscape. The catastrophic result of this often is the constitution of a disharmonious teaching situation.

The above implies an *inadequate reduction of the learning material* that not only directly influences, to a greater or lesser degree, *stating the problem* and *ordering the learning material* but also the matters of *planning the form, the didactic principles of actualization* and the total *course of a lesson*.

For example, too many contents, inadequate individualization, attenuated teaching aids, etc., each can make an essential contribution toward establishing a disharmonious teaching situation. Often this also leads to an almost inevitable under emphasis of the contents as means,

Since these moments are fully discussed in following chapter. These few incidental comments are sufficient. *What is emphasized here is that each essence of a lesson structure, and each phase of the course of a lesson can serve as constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation if they are not focused on the child's modes of actualizing his learning.*

## 5. SYNTHESIS

In the present chapter three types of children with learning difficulties were discussed macro-structurally as they show themselves in a normal didactic situation.

Since a teacher's lesson design is based on the assumption that each child learns adequately, that each has at his disposal a more or less homogeneous possessed experience (with respect to a particular lesson theme) and that each can adequately meet the general criteria for adulthood, it is obvious that the teaching of the mentioned children proceeds disharmoniously.

In spite of the diversity of the three types of children with learning problems, common factors are identified in each of their teaching situations that necessarily hold true as constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation.

As will appear later, the identified constituents have important consequences for orthodidactic practice.

In the next chapter a few orthodidactic considerations are presented about designing a lesson for a child with learning problems.

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