

## SOCIOPEDAGOGICS\*

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Sociopedagogics was studied as a science for the first time at the University of Pretoria at the beginning of 1934 when Prof. G. Cronje (sociologist) taught the subject "Educational Sociology" to credential and M. Ed. students. The rise of a general social awareness, serious distress about actual social problems such as the problem of Poor Whites, a realization of the involved and problematic nature of modern society and of the necessity of adequate social education for a child led to the decision that teachers also have to be schooled in "educational sociology" when they enter the educational profession.

With the establishment of the Faculty of Education in 1937, Prof. Cronje became head of the Department of Educational Sociology. In his study of educational sociology, he was greatly influenced by Ph. Kohnstamm of the Netherlands whose work of that time, **Peresoonlykheid in wording** (1929) [Becoming a personality], was described as a sketch of Christian education. It also is sociopedagogically meaningful to mention that Kohnstamm advocated and described a socially-directed aim with respect to the pedagogic, namely: Educating is to help a person in becoming to find the deepest inner peace attainable without worries or other burdens.

During these initial years, Prof. Cronje had a so-called "anthropological approach" to educational sociology that proceeded from the following pronouncement: A child is a person-in-becoming who grows up in social relations and by which he is strongly influenced. At this time lectures focused on problems that touched the school child, namely, family and neighborhood problems, the influence of peers, using leisure time, the role of the school in society, the relation between family and school, the relation between school and social work, juvenile delinquency, milieu restraints (the Poor White problem), etc.

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\* **Pedagogiekjoernaal** (1980), Vol. 1, No. 2, 177-198.

From 1939 to the beginning of the 1950's Prof. B. F. Nel promoted the subject of educational sociology and the pioneering thinking and research done in social pedagogics by Nel and Du Plessis during the 40's and 50's is written in Du Plessis'<sup>(1)</sup> dissertation (1957). At this time, the field of study of social pedagogics was described as educating a child to be a social being in the complex society which he has to enter.

There is a direct departure from the standpoint that an informative social pedagogics has to rest on thorough knowledge of modern society as well as on knowledge and understanding of the child-in-education linking up with society. An analysis of modern society and of social factors with important social pedagogic implications was done in terms of the descriptions of Karl Mannheim, W. Schubart, P. A. Sorokin and Lewis Mumford, among others. The field of social-pedagogic problems identified in this way was the following: The question how the social good and spiritual values can be implemented (among others by education) in a mass society; the determination of the place of social education in contrast to individual education; the dehumanization of society; the crisis of Western culture; uninspiring work (lack of pride and accountability in work); the power of technology; the use of leisure time; the weakening of moral awareness and feelings of responsibility--also regarding education; the educational implications of phenomena such as industrialization and urbanization; fast societal growth and the complexity of society, massification, spiritual decline and neglect, social mobility (modern traffic), materialism, societal decline, problems of social behavior, problems regarding sexuality, inflated contacts, norm pluralism, contradictory life philosophies (e.g., individualism - socialism; freedom - discipline), obscure educational ideals, etc.

Also our own country changed from a rural to a modern industrial society within a few decades which school systems of that time had to take into account. Thinking and research in social pedagogics had also centered on the pedagogic problems that arose from these changing social structures. Evidence of this is the following research that was done in the 1950's:

- (i) Aspects of the social-pedagogic renovation of teaching in South Africa, by Dr. P. J. J. du Plessis.
- (ii) An educational experiment in regard to forming attitudes about road safety, by Dr. P. J. J. du Plessis.
- (iii) Demographics, by Dr. P. J. J. du Plessis, Dr. W. W. M. Enslin and Dr. R. G. Macmillan.
- (iv) Coeducation: the question of separate or mixed secondary schools for boys and girls, by B. A. Grobler.
- (v) The farm school as a social pedagogic ray of hope in its environment, by J. G. J. Visser.
- (vi) The relationship between school achievement and the home milieu of elementary school pupils, by Dr. P. M. Robertse.
- (vii) Psychological and social theories and the curriculum with special reference to South Africa, by Prof. B. F. Nel. [In English].

In the 1950's, additional social-pedagogic thinking was concentrated on the question: What is the stand of our educators and our system of education against the process of spiritual decay?

The societal framework and related problems of a pedagogic-social nature in our society led to an awareness of the need and necessity for a social-pedagogic science. A thorough analysis of society was needed so that in that light educational aims and means could be determined in order to bring about the needed reforms and reorientations to keep up with the social-pedagogic demands of society.

The following pronouncements and views from the works of Nel<sup>(2)</sup> (1959) and du Plessis<sup>(3)</sup> (1957) show the direction of thinking and methods of social-pedagogics of the fifties:

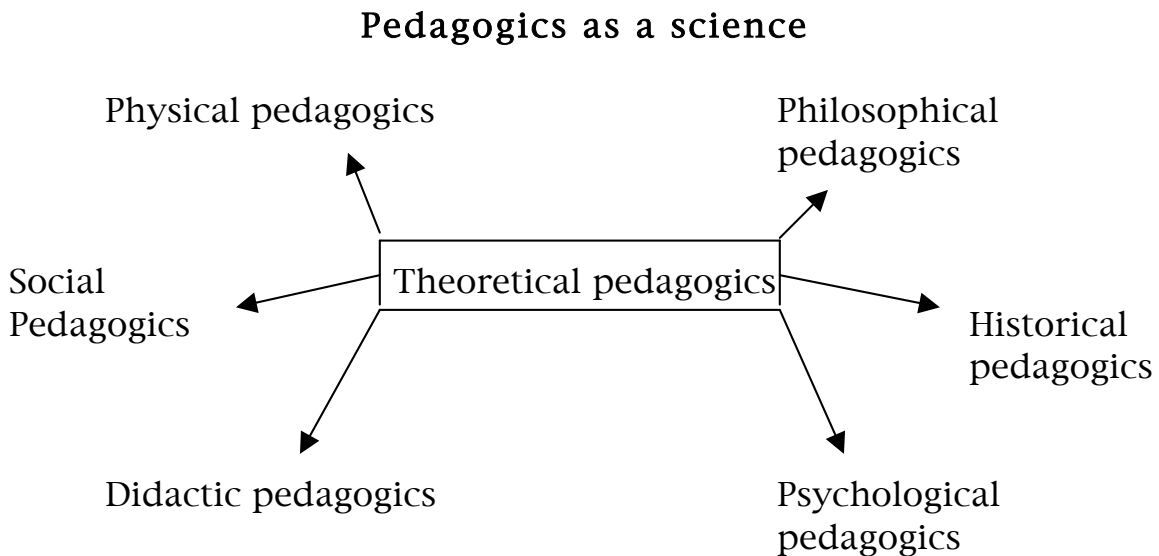
\* An accountable view of persons and of society are required to determine the nature of educating to social life and to contribute to building a healthy society (e.g., a person [child] is an existential being, contact being in dialogue with his fellow persons; a person has to be considered with respect to his social strivings).

\* The social pedagogic arises from the fact of the involvement among persons and has to do with the social problems (aspects) regarding the pedagogic.

- \* The association between educator and educand forms the foundation for healthy social relationships and for forming a healthy society.
- \* In educating, the socialization of a child has to be taken into account (the social aspect of the educational aim).
- \* The Anglo-American view of "Educational Sociology" as sociology applied to education is rejected. Social pedagogics is neither sociology nor applied sociology but pedagogics.
- \* Social pedagogics arises on the basis of a phenomenological analysis of the educational situation which then is analyzed from a social pedagogic perspective.
- \* The main categories of pedagogic thought and action have to be derived from and be based on the philosophy and/or life view of the pedagogue and on an analysis of the pedagogic situation. Points of departure, aims and means of the pedagogic are codetermined by knowledge of the educand and of the society within which he has to be educated. Thus, social pedagogics is a helping science of pedagogics as an autonomous science.
- \* Educator and educand are more than psychic or social beings. They are spiritual beings in becoming who can rise above their biological, psychic and social limitations.
- \* Each pedagogic situation is anchored in a societal group (family, school, community). Thus, social bondedness is undeniable. However, sociological data have to be tested with pedagogic yardsticks. The pedagogician has to fathom the influence and meaning of social factors from the pedagogic situation. Therefore, the name "social pedagogics" is preferred over "educational sociology". The latter conjures up the idea of applied sociology while we primarily have to do with pedagogics and not with sociology. The name "social pedagogics" refers precisely to the nature of this science, namely the social approach to the pedagogic.

During this period, the social pedagogic was viewed as a "new point of illumination of the pedagogic" which through thinking and research had to work against naturalism, individualism and rationalism by emphasizing a person as a spiritual and social being, and with an awareness of the necessity of research, planning, renovating and reorienting educating and teaching.

Regarding social pedagogic thought there is a connection with the pioneering work of the [Netherland] Christian pedagogues Kohnstamm and Waterink and their view of pedagogics as an autonomous science. Kohnstamm had indicated that pedagogics, as a systematic whole of knowledge, breaks down into a number of subordinate disciplines:



From this it is clear that the thinking about pedagogics as an autonomous science at that time assigned social pedagogics in addition to other part disciplines to it. Also social pedagogics was viewed as a clearly demarcated, so-called "componential helping science" of the pedagogic. This new part discipline "arose out of life necessity" with the task of reflecting on the question of how, by educating, the spiritual-moral decay after world War II could be combated. New societal conditions had created intensified social-pedagogic questions. Science and technology had labilized family and societal life, and they impeded social life, cooperation and forming the social good. New ways of living, relationships and groupings made social life and social educating difficult and

problematic. The importance of the supplementary social educative function of the school also was stressed in this light. The necessity for Social Pedagogics was noticed!

Further, in the 1950's social pedagogics was enlisted for the sake of studying the socialization that child and youth have to actualize as well as group forming.

Regarding reflection on educative aims, as viewed from a social pedagogic perspective, the view of American "Educational Sociology" was questioned in which the democratic form of life, i.e., "good citizenship", as a common foundation for a social-pedagogic approach to educating and teaching is accepted, because its "grasp of vital ideals" and the fundamental preconditions for "good citizenship" were not clearly and distinctly formulated. The view was that the American, Russian, German and Italian over-emphasis on social educating relegated it to a pedagogics of the State.

During this time, social-pedagogic thought dealt with the question of the reconciliation of individual and society and of educating the educand to a full-fledged community being. In broad strokes, the task (nature and content) of social pedagogics had to be determined by the difficult emphasis: individual or society. From a Christian view the standpoint was held that the individual is not there for the sake of society, but that society exercises its authority only for the sake of the individual. "This view rests on the fundamental thought of respect for the human personality as the highest stage of all individuality and as the end result of the ideal interaction between individual and society. In the synthesis between individual and society the accent falls on individual accountability in his relationship of human being to Creator. It has to be remembered that educating in society includes only part of the whole of educating. The concept "social pedagogic" first acquires for us a clearly outlined and practically usable meaning when ... the point of departure of this discipline is viewed as an integral point of illuminating the pedagogic" according to Du Plessis.<sup>(4)</sup>

In social-pedagogic thinking, thus, there was a guarding against not falling into absolutizing the social in reaction to the exaggerated individualistic view of educating of the previous century because

the resulting repudiation of human individuality is not acceptable from a Christian standpoint. Social-pedagogic thinking occurred in terms of a Christian pedagogics (Kohnstamm) that, under the influence of a personalistic view, advocated "a healthy teaching of social education." This has to bring about the most satisfactory reconciliation between individual and society that rightly should be allowed to occur in an individual **and** social educating.

Finally (as far as the 1950's are concerned), pronouncements of the time were thought about in terms of the following two contemporary social pedagogic categories:

(i) educating to society (socialization): The individual has to be prepared for the social life expected of him; social pedagogics centers on socialization.<sup>(5)</sup>

(ii) influencing social life through educating: It is the task of educating to exert itself to improve and continually reform society.<sup>(6)</sup>

At the beginning of the 1960's Nel<sup>(7)</sup> indicated a number of guidelines on the direction of thinking, the contents and the name of sociopedagogics:

(i) The educative situation is the point of departure for sociopedagogic reflection.

(ii) The sociopedagogue investigates the social relationships in the pedagogic situation.

(iii) He also studies specific social factors and circumstances that can have a far-reaching influence on the child and youth in their becoming adult.

(iv) Social factors and their influence on the educand have to be judged in accordance with pedagogic norms and prescriptions for acting in this regard have to be indicated.

(v) Social reality has to be approached from a pedagogic perspective and therefore this has to do primarily with a pedagogic investigation and not a sociological or pedagogic-sociological one.

(vi) In this light the name Sociopedagogics is preferred over Social Pedagogics and Social-pedagogics.

In addition, sociopedagogic thought during this period was influenced by the valuable contributions of Gielen (Netherlands) according to which Sociopedagogics has to do with "The social in educating and [the study of] education."<sup>(8)</sup> The following clearly formulated and exhaustive points of departure described by Gielen<sup>(9)</sup> exercised a direction giving influence on sociopedagogic thought here:

(i) The area (function) of sociopedagogics is the social aspect of the phenomenon of educating--the essence and scope of the pedagogic-social.

(ii) The social is present in the pedagogic phenomenon always and everywhere.

(iii) The omnipresence of the "social aspect" is guaranteed on the basis of our knowledge of [philosophical] anthropology and of social reality.

(iv) The unity between the individuality of a human person and other aspects of the pedagogic phenomenon guarantee that the social aspect is not viewed as isolated or is absolutized.

(v) Thus, in what is essentially human there is a basis for everything that is "social" in educating and pedagogics.

(vi) The I-thou relationship is the basis for the social.

(vii) World openness and environmental freedom make educating possible and necessary.

(viii) A person has to possess and maintain his individuality and sociality because both are required to be optimally human.

Another equally useful contribution to sociopedagogic thought in the 1960's came from Perquin<sup>(10)</sup> of the Netherlands who defined the area of sociopedagogics as "the pedagogic accountability of social life." This includes an insightful historical view of thinking and approaches to thinking regarding the sociopedagogic, an



indication of the four directions of thinking\* that can be distinguished in sociopedagogics, a definition of the social-pedagogic field of work, an analysis of the relation between sociopedagogics and other social sciences and opinions about sociopedagogics, research methods, activities and techniques.

The direction of thought in which Perquin's<sup>(11)</sup> contribution moved can be stated as follows:

- (i) Sociopedagogic thinking involves the following question: what does the nature of social life mean essentially for the educative situation?
- (ii) Society has a responsibility for problematic educative situations.
- (iii) Educating always occurs in a particular societal situation. Social life has to be of such a nature that adequate educating remains possible in the midst of rapid social changes--it makes educating possible.
- (iv) Sociopedagogic tasks: the sociopedagogue has the task of pointing out to society to its inevitable obligations and also to indicate means that society can use to not allow or create any situation in society that can work to impede educating.
- (v) Society is obligated to be livable for children and youth.

An outstanding characteristic of the way sociopedagogic thought had developed here in the 1970's is the fact that, under the guidance of fundamental pedagogics, the scientific method of essence thinking caught on and in this way meaningful sociopedagogic essentials were disclosed. These essentials were elevated to sociopedagogic categories and were used as illuminating means of thinking about the reality of educating from a sociopedagogic perspective. These essentials also were changed into sociopedagogic criteria by which there could be a meaningful sociopedagogic evaluation of educative situations that avoided a non-accountable haphazard judgment of educative activities. This puts the sociopedagogue in a position to lay out the practical educative implications of his thinking.

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\* 1. Social and individualistic pedagogics  
2. Sociology and pedagogics  
3. National educational doctrine  
4. Modern social pedagogics

The way in which thinking in sociopedagogics progressed during this period is written in the works of Du Plessis<sup>(12)</sup> and Botha.<sup>(13)</sup> According to Du Plessis<sup>(14)</sup> the area of sociopedagogics deals with "a reflection on social living as communal and societal in their relevance to the phenomenon of educating in educative events in educative situations." The area of sociopedagogics has a bi-polar character that lies in the concepts "**socio-pedagogic**." The two polar areas on which sociopedagogics has to cast its perspective is the educative reality and the societal reality where the former is embedded in the latter.

In terms of Landman's phenomenological design of the pedagogic activity structure, Du Plessis<sup>(15)</sup> states the following as sociopedagogic activity structures or categories in terms of which illuminating thought in sociopedagogics has to occur:

- (i) Giving meaning to society with increasing responsibility.
- (ii) Gradual breaking away from lack of exertion in society.
- (iii) Exemplification and emulation of norms in society.
- (iv) Pedagogic exploration with each other in society.
- (v) Thankfulness for security in our and in social life.
- (vi) Responsibility for our pedagogic or social relationships.
- (vii) Anticipation of future joining in with the social.
- (viii) Designing possibilities for joining in with the social.
- (ix) Gradually fulfilling societal destination.
- (x) Increasing regard for human dignity through social attunement.
- (xi) Increasing acquisition of freedom to socially-attuned responsibility.
- (xii) Increasing exercise of socially attuned self understanding.

As far as thinking in sociopedagogics is concerned, Du Plessis<sup>(16)</sup> states the following:

- (i) The point of departure of sociopedagogic thought: only the pedagogic as a **system** can ground the educative event as an autonomous science. It is a **pedagogic** essence-seeking (i.e., the essential pedagogic) science. The educative science has to do with universal primordial **educating** as educative event in educative situations. It reflects on a child as a personality-in-becoming to

adulthood. Thus, sociopedagogics cannot be grounded in any other way; however, as a part-discipline of pedagogics as a system it projects its own perspective on the **socio** implications for the educative event.

(ii) The terrain for sociopedagogic thought: The following aspects are points of focus:

- \* family social life as a community
- \* school social life as a community
- \* the school as a didactic reality in society
- \* the teacher and his class.

As a guideline for sociopedagogic thought, Botha<sup>(17)</sup> states that the concept "**socio**" refers to interpersonal relationships within and out of family relationships and this has to do with all social relationships within a child's life that are connected to his guidance, education and forming. The social life of a child-in-education (respectively, his being communicatively involved in his total social situation) is the field of reflection for sociopedagogics.

Botha<sup>(18)</sup> distinguishes between two scientifically accountable methods in practicing sociopedagogics, namely:

(i) A progressive-phenomenological method: On the basis of a phenomenological approach an ontological understanding of the social life of a child-in-education is laid claim to. The social life of a child-in-education offers the following possibilities for a relevant ontological understanding phenomenologically:

- \* The verbalization of the real essentials in the social life of a child-in-education.
- \* The verification of ontologically grounded [philosophical] anthropological findings and ontological-pedagogical pronouncements.
- \* The designation of two social ground structures, namely, intimacy and matter-of-factness.

The social life of a child-in-education can, in its essentials, be described in terms of sociopedagogic categories, namely:

- \* participation in pedagogic we-ness
- \* pedagogic going out to social reality
- \* gradual social-societal orientation
- \* gradual acquisition of identity.

These sociopedagogic essentials are actualized within the societal framework between the poles of intimacy (intimate, personal relationships) and matter-of-factness (formal, impersonal relationships). The aims of educating in a sociopedagogic perspective are: meaningful fellowship, social-societal flexibility and preparedness for the future.

(ii) A regressive-hermeneutic method: According to this, the following are functions of the sociopedagogic:

- \* It has to study the social situations within which educating occurs
- \* attention has to be given to education promoting as well as education debilitating situations and forces active in society
- \* with the aim of establishing an adequate practice of educating, on the basis of the above insights, to think about means for helping society to exercise its educational responsibilities as well as it possibly can.

By a regressive-hermeneutic method is meant society is analyzed to show its educative significance. Societal characteristics thus are related to the real essentials of educating in order to understand the latter better. There is a shift from a macro-situation (society) to a micro-situation (family and school).

Botha<sup>(19)</sup> stresses the demand of practical applicability that sociopedagogic thinking also must have; society, teaching practice, the child and family must profit from sociopedagogic thinking (theory) and research. Empirical-statistical research from a sociopedagogic perspective has undeveloped possibilities.

Regarding the most recent views<sup>(20)</sup> in the development of sociopedagogic thinking, the following can be stated:

(i) Sociopedagogics today is affirmed to be and is grounded as an independent part discipline of pedagogics as an autonomous science.

(ii) The function of sociopedagogics is to study (think about and empirically research) the relationships between educating and society (in all societal connections) with the phenomenon of educating as the point of departure and focus of thinking and research.

(iii) Because the phenomenon of educating is extremely complex, its illumination from various perspectives is required to be able to think about and understand the phenomenon of educating in its numerous facets. Sociopedagogics will, from a particular perspective, disclose and illuminate the essentials of the phenomenon of educating and use its own categories to describe its perspective. Thinking in sociopedagogics occurs in terms of sociopedagogic categories in order to disclose the essential characteristics and meaning of the phenomenon of educating in a **socio-connection**. Sociopedagogic categories describe and clarify the relations between educating and society.

(iv) Sociopedagogic categories are pedagogic categories and therefore verbalizes **the pedagogic** in a particular **socio-connection**:

- \* educating in society
- \* educating to society (socialization)
- \* educating as evolving interpersonal communication (educative communication)
- \* interaction between educating/society
- \* educating as social-societal orienting
- \* educating as guiding with acquiring an identity.

With reference to the question of the essence of human becoming in general and the social development of a child in particular, in addition to possible other views such as the objective-idealistic vision (Spranger<sup>(21)</sup>) and the "realistic" vision (Hansen<sup>(22)</sup>) of children and youths becoming adult, a **dialogic-phenomenological view**<sup>(23)</sup> is advocated in recent socio-pedagogic

thinking. According to this view all interpersonal communication (encounter)--and thus also educative communication and pedagogic encounter--rests on the foundation of understanding and acknowledging each other (the moment of acknowledgment and the rational moment in interpersonal communication). Persons (and indeed persons becoming adult, i.e., children) make themselves knowable to each other through conversation. For a person (child) communication has a practical and affective intelligibility. It is of the greatest importance for human personal forming. No one is more committed to being-accepted in communication than a child and for no one is the art of acceptance (acknowledging communication) more important than for an educator. Mutual acceptance is a precondition for understanding communication and for a pedagogically fruitful dialogue between adult and non-adult. The (dialogue) conversation is indispensable for human becoming.<sup>(24)</sup>

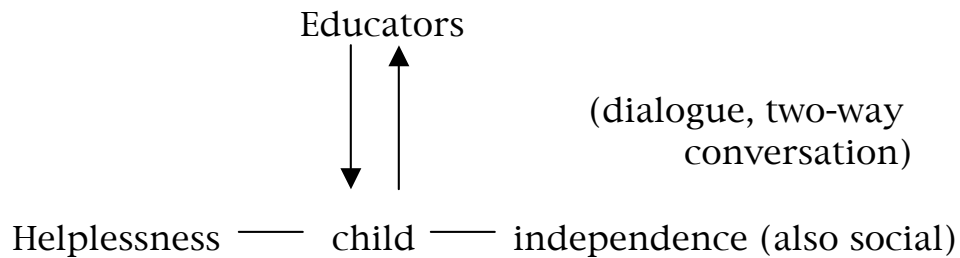
According to this dialogic view the growing up of a child and youth thus is especially actualized via **communication** (encounter, conversation)--the **dialogic life** of the educand. An educand develops thanks to his continually determining contents with respect to fellow persons (social attitude). Educative communication is required for this. The **dialogic living together** of a child with fellow persons is the alpha and omega of his specific human becoming.

Today, interpreting, describing and thinking about **educating to society (socializing)** and **educative communication** with respect to and with the help of sociopedagogic categories occurs in terms of this dialogic phenomenological view, and this primarily starts from the central notion that all educating and especially educating to society only are actualized in particular from living together in dialogue.<sup>(25)</sup> Educating is a continuous "conversation" with a child; educating is an unfolding dialogue (Ter Horst); educating is an unfolding interpersonal communication.<sup>(26)</sup>

In the light of this dialogic phenomenological view the following moments in educative communication are distinguished and emphasized: rational moments, acknowledging the other, emotional moments, conversational moments and moments of encounter.<sup>(27)</sup>

Thus, today thinking in sociopedagogics occurs in terms of the dialogic view that results in the following pedagogic findings:

- \* According to (general) pedagogics a **dialogic relationship** between educator and child is a precondition for educating.
- \* Educating has a dialogic character.
- \* Human becoming is not actualized without the unfolding dialogue that we call educating.
- \* Educating shows itself in the association between adults and children.
- \* Educating is a dialogue that makes itself eventually unnecessary:



- \* How a child will actualize his growing up (and also his social development) rests on the persons with whom he lives together in dialogue.
- \* A child's identity is determined by the degree to which he feels himself to be acknowledged **by others** (social).

Also, today sociopedagogics starts from the standpoint that to provide insights it has to rest on a thorough knowledge of modern society as well as on an understanding of the lived experiences and opinions of individuals as members of society. Therefore, today in sociopedagogics the necessity for meaningful interdisciplinary communication of sociopedagogics with the other two social sciences, namely sociology and social psychology, is emphasized. These two sciences are viewed from a sociopedagogic perspective as sciences auxiliary to sociopedagogics. A sociopedagogic perspective implies thinking directed to the social-community life of a child and a nuanced perspective on society and its problems without which there cannot be an adequate fathoming of the relationship between educating and society.

Sociological and social psychological facts, pronouncements and findings have particular value and meaning for sociopedagogs. In a necessarily close contact with these sciences, sociopedagogs, however, must not let them define it. Thinking in sociopedagogs has little sense and meaning if the concrete societal situation is not understood and thus not seriously taken into account, e.g., the sociological facts of the problems of change play an important role in sociopedagogic thinking.

However, a primary precondition for interdisciplinary communication is that particular "isms" such as the following have to be avoided: pedagogism, sociologism, naturalism, subject matter imperialism, socialism, determinism, etc. In addition, sociopedagogs must not give up its autonomy, point of departure and normative character.<sup>(28)</sup>

Where in sociopedagogic thinking **educating** is viewed as the phenomenon and **society** as the sub-phenomenon, today sociopedagogic thinking occurs around the following central sociopedagogic questions: what is the pedagogic significance of the social sub-phenomena; in other words, what do the social phenomena mean for the child's and youth's education and becoming to adulthood? What is the pedagogic meaning of the **social** regarding its pedagogic relevance, pedagogic aims, pedagogic norms and pedagogic questions?<sup>(29)</sup>

With the above view of the development of sociopedagogic thought during the past fifty years, finally, the following is stated regarding the future of sociopedagogs: Our modern society is extremely complicated and quickly changing and it requires a particular education to **be up to** it. The sociologist Ernst Zahn rightly views sociopedagogs as the most important science of the future. In the midst of radical social renovation sociopedagogs has to assume a weighty responsibility for educating and for society. In the midst of fantastic natural science achievements the most important science of the future will be the one whose realm of problems is to research the relationship between educating and society, to find solutions for the pressing pedagogic-social questions of our time and of the future.



## SUMMARY

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOPEDAGOGIC THINKING DURING THE PAST FIFTY YEARS

Socio-pedagogics was initially studied as a science at the University of Pretoria in 1934 when the subject Educational Sociology was taught to credential and M. Ed. students. A new social consciousness, concern about social problems, a realization of the complex and problematic nature of modern society and of the necessity for an adequate social education of the child led to the decision that teachers should have a background in educational sociology. During these initial years socio-pedagogic thinking was strongly influenced by the Christian pedagogics of Ph. Kohnstamm as well as by a so-called anthropological approach; namely, a child is a becoming person who is influenced by the social context in which he finds himself. Lectures and studies in educational sociology dealt with problems surrounding the school child, and the role of the teacher and the school in the community, juvenile delinquency, the socio-economically deprived child, etc.

In the 40's and 50's social pedagogics mainly dealt with the education of the child to becoming a social being in a complex society. The point of view was that social pedagogics should be based on knowledge of modern society as well as an understanding of the child's adaptation in society. Special attention was given to social problems in the mass-society of the post-war period (the crisis of Western culture) and to the problematic social education (socialization) of the child to morality and responsibility, in the midst of things like industrialization, urbanization, massification, moral decay, social confusion, materialism, problems of social behavior, social values, social theories, etc.--thus educational problems resulting from a radically changed social structure. During these years socio-pedagogic research and reflection were based on a phenomenological analysis of the educative situation from a social point of view. In socio-pedagogic thinking a balance was sought between individualizing and socializing in educating a child. Through education, a better society had to be created.

During the 60's the following guidelines were set for socio-pedagogic thinking:

- (i) The educative situation is the point of departure for socio-pedagogic thinking.
- (ii) Social relationships within the educative situation should be researched.
- (iii) Social factors that influence a child and his education should be researched.
- (iv) Social factors should be evaluated in accordance with pedagogic norms.
- (v) Social reality should be approached from a pedagogic viewpoint, as pedagogic thinking and research.
- (vi) Society as a whole has a pedagogic responsibility.
- (vii) Society must ensure the adequate education of a child in the midst of a changing social structure.

During the last decade, sociopedagogic thinking was practiced in terms of sociopedagogic categories or concepts by means of which pedagogic reality can be reflected on. In this way, meaningful sociopedagogic essentials could be disclosed. These essentials also serve as criteria for the meaningful evaluation of pedagogic situations. The search for essentials has thus become an important practice in sociopedagogic thinking as well as for research into the socio-implications of education. Sociopedagogics furthermore deals with interpersonal relationships in the pedagogic situation--the social life of a child in connection with his education. The social life of a child is described in terms of the actualization of sociopedagogic essentials. The aims of the social education of a child are:

- (i) That he will eventually realize a meaningful participation in society.
- (ii) That he will be able to handle various social situations.
- (iii) That he will be able to adapt to changes in society.

Regarding most recent views in the development of sociopedagogic thinking, the following are stated:

- (i) Sociopedagogics has been thoroughly founded as an autonomous sub-discipline of pedagogics as a science.
- (ii) The function of sociopedagogics is the study of the connection between pedagogic reality and social reality, pedagogic reality being the point of departure for thinking and research.
- (iii) The following sociopedagogic categories describe and disclose the essentials of the connection between pedagogic reality and social reality: education, society, socialization, communication, social orientation, identity, etc.
- (iv) A dialogic-phenomenological view is held of the development in general as well as the social development of a child, namely, a child can only develop in communication with his fellow human beings.

Sociopedagogics also has the task of communicating with sociology and social psychology to gain expert knowledge of society and of the manner in which the individual functions as a member of society.

Sociopedagogics has to answer the following question: what is the pedagogic meaning of social phenomena, with emphasis on pedagogic relevance, pedagogic aims and pedagogic norms and values?

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