

PEDAGOGICS 1

BASIC CONCEPTS

1.1 PEDAGOGICS

G. *pais* – child; *païdo* – boy + *agein* to lead; *agagos* – leader: another name for education, but sometimes preference is given to the concept *pedagogics* because of the generalization that the terms *education* and especially *educationist* have undergone. The latter is used for almost every scholar, whether or not he has studied pedagogics. In South Africa, as a bilingual country, the translatability of concepts must also be considered. The English word *education* can mean *teaching*, *knowledge of education* or *the act of educating*. It is confusing if one is not clear about which of these meanings is intended. The word *pedagogics* does not leave any doubt about what is meant. Opvoedkunde (education) indeed is a typical Afrikaans word but because of the broader and often incorrect meaning given to it by laymen, for some educationists it has become necessary to find another word that indicates precisely what is meant and, at the same time, will not lead to confusion when translated into the other official language. As a science of accompanying a child, pedagogics can claim autonomy because it has its own delimited field of study, own terminology and own method(s).¹

1.2 PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVE(S)

The science practiced is pedagogics and it gives a particular perspective to the reality of accompanying a child as a human matter. For the sake of specialized study, the core area (pedagogics) is subdivided into pedagogical perspectives (part-perspectives, part-disciplines). The unitary character of these pedagogical perspectives that are differentiated (but never separated) must never be lost sight of because all are concerned with studying pedagogical matters. Pedagogics is an autonomous science of child accompaniment and it is essential to acquire a clear image of the various pedagogical perspectives, otherwise there is the danger that one aspect will be accepted as the whole. Therefore, it is incorrect to view pedagogics as the totality of its pedagogical perspectives. The pedagogical perspectives must not be seen as separate subjects—each gives a particular perspective to the pedagogical reality and arises from the core area. The nature of the pedagogic phenomenon determines what subdivisions must be made. The following pedagogical perspectives (among others) on the phenomenon education are distinguished: fundamental pedagogics, history of education, empirical education, didactic pedagogics, comparative education, orthopedagogics and sociopedagogics.²

1. My (G.D.Y.) translation of Van Rensburg, C.J.J., Landman, W.A. Bodensteyn, H.C.A. *Basiese begrippe in die Opvoedkunde/ Basic Concepts in Education*, Orion, Halfway House. 1988, p. 182.
2. My (G.D.Y.) translation of op cit., p. 183.