

## CHAPTER 3 DIDACTIC THEORY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter an explanation was given of the relationship between educating and teaching, and the reciprocal meaning as well as the structural relationship between the two was indicated. A brief description also was given of the phenomenon of educating as it appears in the human life world. It also was stressed that educating is given with being human and, to the extent that a person is involved in reality, educating is an everyday phenomenon. In describing the relationship between teaching (didactics) and educating (pedagogics) it was noted that educating is actualized only by teaching. Further, it was indicated that the meaning of teaching is found in educating. An additional deduction made from this relationship is that the contents presented in teaching must serve educative aims. That is any contents that are unlocked in a didactic situation primarily are the norms and values descriptive of adulthood and must be presented in a systematic and orderly way.

This chapter deals with didactic theory, i.e., the phenomenon of teaching as it appears in the human life world, and this means there must be a penetration to the real essences of teaching and that the descriptions of it must result in findings that are universally valid (true for all persons and all times).

It is only possible to meet the scientific demands of universality if a common (joint) and accountable point of departure can be found for analyzing and describing "teaching". This common point of departure is the original experience of educating. In this phenomenon (first givens) the inseparable unity of educating and teaching is shown. The task of the didactician is to look for this original experience so that eventually he can postulate its fundamental essences or categories. That is, he must first delimit and then describe the particular phenomenon but in such a way that his description can pass the test of validity. The scientific grounding and categorical description of the phenomenon "teaching" are a relatively new problem in didactics because in the

past didacticians used other sciences, e.g., psychology and biology, as the explanatory grounds for the didactic act. Apart from the fact that these sciences do have important insights to offer, it is not possible to explain the phenomenon of teaching by means of these or other sciences.

To avoid this scientific dilemma of traditional didactic theorizing, the didactician must go back to the phenomenon itself. Therefore, he must look for the phenomenon of teaching in the human life world and arrive at its essentials (categories) that disclose what is didactic regarding its origin, nature and functionality. He must do this in order to extract from human experience the structure of what is known as “didactics” and scientifically formulate it in words.

It is important to emphasize again that where adults and children are involved with each other in a particular situation, whether this is in school or at home, the pedagogical categories hold unconditionally. In other words, when an adult and child are involved with each other there is both educating and teaching. The aim of this involvement primarily is recognizable on two levels: on the one, there is emotional forming in terms of particular values and norms that emphasize the religious and moral life of the child, and, on the other, there is a teaching-directed intervention that is focused more on the conscious life of the child and by which there is involvement with contents of the human life world so that the child can establish his own life world in terms of them.

The manifestation of the forming of a child’s emotional and conscious life possibly is the reason for the traditional separation between teaching and educating. The danger is that pedagogic categories (that are viewed more closely later in this chapter) and didactic categories are placed along side each other and that both are valid because they are a description of reality and in this respect they do not exceed this reality. The phenomenon of learning bridges their separation.

Learning is dealt with more broadly in Chapter 6. What is of relevance here is that in each didactic situation there is at least one person involved in the situation by learning. In the previous chapter, where the relationship between educating and teaching is

described, the phenomenon of learning was indicated. It was noted that educating shows that a child must unconditionally bow to the authority of the particular norms he has learned. This means that the norms really can be appropriated and lived (this also holds for codes of behavior, attitudes, attunements, etc.) only if a child has learned. In this respect, learning is a condition for educating.

This implies that the scientific analysis and description of the original didactic event also must include the learning phenomenon. This description eventually results in establishing the categories (essences) of the phenomenon of learning (this does not merely have to do with learning results). In their mutual influence and meaning, the categories of learning and of didactics must lead to the unveiling of particular didactic criteria or yardsticks by which the image of didactics becomes clearer.

A summary of the above argument only can serve to improve the reader's insight into what follows: Didactic categories are directed to bringing about the phenomenon of teaching as knowable and scientifically describable. The function of didactic criteria is to provide particular yardsticks by which a situation described as a didactic one can be recognized and, if necessary, repeated. In other words, didactic categories are directed to disclosing the essences of the didactic, while didactic criteria are attuned to evaluating the course of the didactic activity. That is, didactic criteria are used to evaluate the quality of learning in terms of its effect.

In light of the didactic categories and criteria, the teacher now can answer for and evaluate his practice. He can use the categories to recognize the origin of his teaching practice and to understand its fundamental nature. By using didactic criteria, he can assess the quality of the effect of learning of the children in his class and, in turn, this provides him with important insights for his future planning. However, categories and criteria do not provide him with an explanation of the way he must teach in the lesson situation in order to do so effectively. Therefore, it is the task of the didactician to search for particular ground-forms in the original experience of educating that are spontaneous and fundamental ways by which a person, and in particular a child, enters into reality. The lesson situation in the school then can be designed in terms of these forms

so that the school, as a formalized life world of the child, and teaching, as formalized educating, reflect the spontaneous pre-scientific life world as nearly as possible.

Fundamental didactic ground-forms are dealt with fully in a later chapter. However, here it is important to indicate that in investigating the didactic ground-forms the didactician should carefully attend to the possibilities that methodology offers him. This can help to put the didactic ground-forms in clearer focus. The ground-forms offer particular indications of the various methods that can be used in countless ways by a teacher in the classroom. In this way, it is possible to identify and meaningfully systematize and order general didactic, subject didactic and methodological factors that can help the teacher to better understand the nature of his daily teaching practice.

The primary problem that must be investigated in this chapter is a careful analysis of the phenomenon “didactic” as it shows itself in educating. The aim is to disclose didactic categories and criteria. To the extent that insight into the didactic is considered in this chapter, it is important to investigate the meaning of pedagogic categories in the context of didactic theory. In addition, the systematizing and ordering that are relevant to describing didactic categories and criteria can reveal didactic principles. Within this framework, an aspect that must be focused on is the significance of the teaching contents because they primarily influence the didactic form and therefore have particular relevance for theoretical didactic statements.

## **2. PEDAGOGIC CATEGORIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR DIDACTIC THEORY**

In the previous chapter it was repeatedly indicated that a child is committed to an adult for support and help on his way to adulthood. This help- and support-giving intervention and involvement of child and adult is called educating.

It also was indicated that this relationship between child and adult is a primordial one and, therefore, is not reducible to one or another explanatory basis. It is given with being human. It also is

emphasized that educating is actualized in terms of contents; these contents serve the aim of gradually, and to the degree that a child is ready, realizing a particular life view image of proper adulthood. These contents are brought about by teaching and serve as the boundary and point of orientation within which an adult directs a child's movement to adulthood. As boundary and point of orientation these contents serve both adult and child on the latter's path to adulthood.

These contents that primarily are typified as norms and values especially are directed to forming a child emotionally. A child must create his own life world in terms of them. However, this does not mean that the phenomenon of educating is to be described in terms of the structure of the contents, as such. To describe the phenomenon of educating in a scientifically accountable way, the investigator must make the categories of the phenomenon knowable. The categories, as essences, used to investigate the phenomenon and that lead to valid descriptions, provide the beacons or focal points in terms of which educating ought to be reflected on if one does not want to abandon the field of pedagogics and its findings.

Also, the categories and structure of reflecting on the phenomenon are seen as a specific-pedagogic matter that clarifies the possibility of a phenomenon such as educating. In this chapter there is not so much a detailed explanation of the pedagogic categories, as such; they are only drawn into the discussion to answer the question of whether pedagogic categories, from the nature of the matter, also have validity in the didactic situation and, if so, what is the nature of such validity.

Some of the pedagogic categories that are relevant here are futurity, normativity, freedom, responsibility, expectation, security, adulthood and authority. The question that must be answered is whether the phenomenon of educating can appear in its essentials if these categories are not disclosed. A thorough description of all of these categories is not a realistic aim here and, therefore, futurity is briefly handled as an example for reflecting on the others.

The child is not yet where he must and can be. This means that he cannot yet live his own adulthood but this is where the path he is on is going. Therefore, adult life is in his future. Now it is true that a child is someone who-wants-to-become-someone and for this reason he wants one day to be a grownup. In this sense he is future directed and he also is futurity; the educating by an adult must provide help so that one day he will reach his adulthood. If the adult's intervention with a child does not show that he continually orients him so he can realize himself in the future, then there is no educating. This means that an adult's intervention in such a case does not help a child give meaning to particular values and norms and that these values and norms have no meaning for his future adulthood. In this way, the phenomenon of educating is knowable and describable in terms of the category of futurity.

Now the question is: Is this category necessarily valid in a formally established didactic situation such as is found in a school?

For the sake of clarity, it is justified to use the pedagogic category of futurity also as an example for testing and evaluating the course of the didactic event. This category implies that a child is dynamically on the path to adulthood. That is, he is involved in exploring and trying to acquire a future and also the world of the adult. This activity implies learning in the sense of "learning to know" and "learning to command". Learning to know and to command are peculiar to a child's activity in school. Thus, it is clear that school is a place where the future is established. This means the school contents place the future within a child's reach.

The contents that are relevant here, in addition to their usefulness, also have value- and norm-meaning that extends wider than what is immediately discernible. This is the basis for the school always holding a particular ideal out as a prospect that ordinarily is known as a teaching aim. In this way, the contents in school represent the entirety of a child's future adulthood. From the nature of the matter, these contents include a religious-moral orientation, social forms and work-directed activities. Today this matter is especially important in view of the complexity of the reality within which a child one day must stand as an adult.

In the family the parents guide their child on his way to adulthood and this guiding speaks of security. In the same way, in the school, a teacher offers a child secure guidance toward his future. The conclusion is that one cannot reflect otherwise on the school and didactic activities if the category of futurity does not appear in the situation. In this respect, the school is an extension of the intervention of parents with their child in the family where there is vigorous teaching intervention in order to guide their child on his path to adulthood. In school this guiding is carried on systematically and fulfilled to a certain degree.

The reader continually must keep in mind that here the concern is with the didactic-pedagogic, i.e., situations in which an adult and a child, in spontaneously or formally established situations, establish particular relationships or enter with each other into the surrounding reality. Since this situation is a didactic-pedagogic one, it is difficult and scientifically impossible to implement categories other than the ones mentioned when reflecting on and describing the situation. Also, in light of the indissoluble unity of educating and teaching, it is justifiable to accept that the pedagogic categories have relevance in establishing pedagogic-didactic situations such as in a school. Because this is a purely didactic-pedagogic situation, findings about the validity of the pedagogic categories are justified only for this situation.

This means that a didactic situation in which only adults are present cannot be described by these pedagogic categories. In other words, pedagogic-didactic categories are not necessarily relevant to a purely adult [andragogic] didactic situation.

A summary of the above possibly can bring the matter of didactic categories in didactic theory building more clearly to light:

- a) The didactic assumes that reality, irrespective of its nature, must be thrown open (unlocked) or presented by an adult.
- b) This presenting or unlocking of reality for a child can occur only on the basis of the fact that a child, because he is a child, is attuned to learning. This means that each child shows an intention directed to learning. Therefore, all

teaching is directed to helping a child with the aim that he can reach his destination (adulthood) as a person.

- c) The indissoluble unity between educating and teaching means that it only is possible to show a distinction between them. Considering that educating emphasizes more the emotional forming of a child and teaching stresses more consciousness forming, there also is mention of forming as such. Therefore, educating, teaching and forming are a unity and always have a coordinated relationship to each other.
- d) The educating in the educative intervention with a child eventually falls aside when a child can properly command reality himself as an adult. This means that the formative teaching of an adult has its own autonomous identity that, although it cannot be radically different from childhood teaching, still is different because the moral moment is not unconditionally involved there.
- e) The essential relationship between teaching and forming also must show an essential relationship between the categories of forming and teaching. This implies that the didactic categories necessarily must have validity in the formative situation in the same way that the pedagogic categories have validity in the pedagogic-didactic situation. This means that the didactic categories obviously or necessarily also must be categories of the forming of adults. The implication of this is that there are pure didactic categories that have validity outside of the educative categories simply because teaching and forming still occur long after educating has become superfluous.

### 3. DIDACTIC CATEGORIES

Before systematically explaining and clarifying didactic categories, it is necessary to make a few introductory observations. During the past two decades the search for didactic categories has resulted in the systematization of concepts. The search for didactic categories in didactic pedagogics is not odd or new, but their formulation indeed is new. It is remarkable that the didactic literature contains many examples of didacticians who take the didactic situation as their point departure in searching for their categories. Such a point

of departure is understandable as is taking the school as a point of departure because the didactic so obviously appears there. In addition, the choice of the school as a point of departure for didactic theory also is understandable because didactic pedagogics is a discipline of pedagogics that must, among other things, make pronouncements about the school. In this way and from this point of departure, a number of “characteristics” of the didactic school situation are described. The fundamental idea of this work is that the didactician investigates and inquires about the practice of school teaching in order to improve it. It also is conspicuous that this search for didactic “characteristics” does not stem from a rigorous scientifically accountable point of departure but really is based on the researcher’s intuition. Consequently, the meanings of the “characteristics” described are formal.

When the formalized didactic situation (school) is taken as the point of departure for didactic theory, the spontaneous and naïve human life world, and especially that of a child, is lost sight of. Today didacticians view and think about the didactic situation against a pedagogic background. Thus, didactics is didactic pedagogics. It also involves much more than principles and methods of teaching.

Didactic categories are much more than didactic characteristics. Didactic categories must describe the totality of facts such that the activity (situation) emanating from them can be understood and expressed in words. This means that didactic categories are more fundamental than didactic characteristics. In thinking through the didactic-pedagogic situation, however, it is conspicuous that many of the so-called didactic “characteristics” also really do refer back to the original pedagogic-didactic situation as we find it in the home. They refer back in the sense that they do not only have a connection with the secondary, formal didactic situation (school) but they also qualify as didactic categories.

The fact is that didactic activities do not occur or appear for the first time in the school. In the original situation of educating, it is obvious that a child learns spontaneously, i.e., he spontaneously involves himself with or turns himself to the reality surrounding him. This spontaneous involvement with reality appeals to the

parent to equally spontaneously (i.e., not formally) create for the child situations within which he can learn.

The correlated spontaneous activity of the parent also can be characterized as naiveté. The parent's spontaneous creation of a learning situation is naïve in the sense that the parent does not necessarily have formal training in didactics. Therefore, didactic categories must be relevant to this spontaneous, naïve and original situation. They must be essences of the human life world. This implies that didactic categories must describe the essences of the profession that we know as didactics. In addition, this implies that they also must describe the didactic school situation in its essences. The reason for this simply is that essentially the formal school situation is a reconstitution of events that began long before schools were thought of.

The “characteristics” of the school situation mentioned earlier, even though they do not describe the totality of the didactic situation, still are particularly relevant for didactic theory. Because the didactician also must describe and be able to guarantee the reconstitution of the learning activity in the school, the description of the school's characteristics is used to help formulate didactic criteria. This is discussed more fully later.

From what has been said, the reader will recognize the prominence of unlocking reality, learning and forming as necessary for the didactic activity. Because they are so prominent they are dealt with first. However, it is important to note that one didactic category is not more important than another. All didactic categories are equally valid and important because they describe the totality of what is called teaching. The explanation that follows is merely systematization. Also it is not the only systematization possible because didactic categories can be arranged according to certain criteria or particular ways of grouping. It also is important to note that the names of the didactic categories can differ. If a particular didactician prefers to use other terminology in that he gives a particular category a different name, this does not mean he has created a different category or has supplanted one category with another comparable one.

### **3.1 Unlocking (presenting) reality**

The explanation of categorical forming given in the previous chapter stresses the importance of unlocking (presenting) reality that is fundamental to teaching. Unlocking reality implies that a person who knows and commands certain aspects of the life world unlocks the contents for the benefit of one who does not yet know and cannot command the contents. This activity underlies the teaching intervention of an adult with a child. The aim is to aid the child to achieve a firmer grasp of reality so that he feels secure in exploring reality on his own.

Unlocking reality is an essential characteristic of the original relationship between adults and children—even a cursory examination of any classroom confirms this. The fact that an adult unlocks reality for a child cannot be explained on other grounds or referred to other reasons than an adult's educative intervention with a child. This activity of unlocking is given with being human and, therefore, is fundamental to describing the didactic event. It also is noted that unlocking reality refers primarily to the role of the teacher or adult in the teaching situation.

The theory of categorical forming also states that the person who must be formed must open himself to reality. This implies that in unlocking reality, the didactician throws open and unlocks a particular aspect of reality so the child who does not know that reality can investigate and master it. The task of the teacher is that he must be able to account for the contents, the form of unlocking and his aim in unlocking particular contents. In addition, he must be accountable regarding the way he invites a child to unlock himself for reality, for the nature and quality of a child's opening himself to reality and ultimately for his interpretation of the contents (elementals) so that the child can experience them as meaningful and in doing so to transform them so they become an authentic part of himself (fundamentals).

### **3.2 Learning**

The didactician's primary role in the lesson situation is in his unlocking reality. However, if a child does not learn, then the

teacher's unlocking of reality is meaningless. When the original didactic situation is examined, it is conspicuous that a parent only unlocks contents for his child that he can understand and for which he is ready.

This category is not concerned with the ways a child learns (this is explained broadly in another chapter) but with the fact that a child learns. A child's learning activity in the lesson situation is of primary importance in the course of the situation and, as such, it is a category of the structure of teaching. A child learns because he is a human being and because for him the learning activity is a spontaneous mode of existence. This is why it is meaningful for an adult to direct a child's spontaneous learning toward his eventual adulthood—his eventual destination. The fact is that a child also learns outside of the didactic situation and, therefore, teaching is not a condition for him to learn. The learning intention is given as an original aspect of human existence. An adult uses a child's learning as an opportunity for the child to achieve greater independence and adulthood.

In order to realize this category, a teacher must present reality in such a way that it will stimulate a child's spontaneous learning intention. Then his spontaneous learning can be directed by the teacher's unlocking contents.

### **3.3 Forming**

Unlocking reality is the help an adult offers a child with the aim that the child will reach adulthood. In this respect, the child's relationship to reality is formed. This implies that the teaching offered a child primarily must be formative. In its essence and effect, teaching is formative in nature for the following reasons: the help that an adult provides a child in the didactic situation eliminates the child's irresoluteness and reservations about a given aspect of reality. The effect of forming, namely, being formed, means that a child emancipates himself with respect to reality and that he can establish his own position in it.

Furthermore, there is mention of the creation of a new, comprehensive interiority (inner life) that results in a broader and

deeper experiencing. This amounts to the didactic situation providing a child with the opportunity to acquire broader experiences and in this way to expand them. These two aspects of the category of forming increase and progressively realize a child's potentiality to become acquainted with a larger and broader reality. To the degree that a child is formed in the didactic situation, his relationship to reality changes. This change is evident in a broader (more encompassing) and deeper relationship to reality. In this respect, there is a more adequate relationship to reality.

### **3.4 Orienting**

It is not possible that reality can be unlocked for a child without him simultaneously becoming oriented to it. It is obvious that an adult cannot unlock the broad and encompassing reality if the child does not have fixed points in terms of which he can determine his position in the new reality unlocked. Therefore, the didactic meaning of orienting is that a child must determine his own position with respect to known fixed points. These fixed points normally are the contents in the didactic situation. The didactician presents aspects of reality in his unlocking of it that the child can understand on the basis of his readiness. A child uses the unlocked reality to orient himself in it. This orienting provides him with the opportunity to enhance and enlarge his mobility and familiarity with reality. Without this orienting, reality remains chaotic and undifferentiated for him.

Without orientation, it is not possible for the didactician to guarantee a child's passage to adulthood. If orienting is not in the situation it cannot be typified as didactic and it is not a situation within which a child's path reaches to adulthood.

### **3.5 Accompanying (guiding)**

During the unlocking of reality and the related giving direction to a child's learning, the didactician does not leave the child to his own devices. The didactician is continually involved with the child; he indicates direction, checks mistakes, tests insights, repeats aspects of his unlocking, allows the child to rehearse certain activities, etc. He does all of this to insure that he is steadily improving. This

accompanying is central to the course of the didactic activity because it emphasizes that the didactician is continually trying to meet the child in the situation. Didactic activity cannot exist without this category.

A teacher in the classroom also is continually observing the child to insure that he is progressing properly according to expectations. Irrespective of the accompanying providing the child with stability and security that are indispensable for the didactic and learning acts, at the same time it serves to indicate direction for the child and to affirm to him that he is on the right course.

### 3.6 Objectifying or distancing

Unlocking reality, learning, forming, orienting and accompanying imply that in the course of didactic activities a certain distancing or objectifying arises between person and reality. Without this distancing or objectifying one cannot acquire a proper perspective on reality. Since parents and teachers are adults, they already have established a particular standpoint or perspective on reality. This means that one has distanced oneself from reality to the extent that one can now view it objectively. The fact that a person can talk about a reality means that he is not stuck affectively in it. This objectifying or distancing is necessary before a teacher can properly teach a child about reality. The aim is that the child must attain the same objectivity about it. Objectifying reality by the child is of cardinal importance to the teacher because it is a precondition for an impartial judgment of it.

This does not have to do with **objectivism**—after all, objectivism can never be a pedagogically accountable didactic aim. Objectifying essentially means that a child can distance himself from the immediate contents in such a way that he is capable of identifying their essences (elementals) and their relationships with each other. The aim is to enable the child to make sound judgments in terms of which he can evaluate the particular contents and accept or even discard them. Objectifying in this sense is not only confined to educating but it also gives quality to a person's lifestyle. If objectifying does not appear in the didactic situation, a child loses himself in reality to the extent that he is not able to plan reality in a

surveyable order and, therefore, he will be incapable of making decisions about the contents.

### **3.7 Imperativity (demanding)**

The didactic always is concerned with progress. In the didactic situation certain demands are made of a child that he cannot ignore. This does not mean that these demands always are met. The fact that demands are made in the didactic situation cannot be ignored. When the expected level is not reached the adult repeats the situation until he is satisfied that the child has properly met the demands. The unlocking by a teacher is never diffuse or uncertain; it is specific and direct. In this respect, specific demands are made of the child and the adult expects him to improve in certain ways in order to respond to the imperative (unavoidable demands).

All of the previous categories are meaningless if the imperative nature of the situation is not recognized. Even when a child is learning on his own (e.g., when doing homework or working independently with a program), imperativity retains its authority as a didactic category. This is because auto-didactic situations cannot be authentically realized if a child does not answer the demands that are placed on him.

### **3.8 Anticipating**

It was clearly stated previously that the future is continually realized in the teaching situation. In this context it is clear that the didactic activity always is directed to realizing the future; it is a human involvement directed to the future. If the future must be realized in the present there necessarily is anticipation. In this sense the relationship between the categories of anticipation and imperativity is clear. The demands made of a child in the didactic situation have a strong bearing on the structures of his future activities with respect to reality. If a teacher anticipates a child's future in the classroom, this implies that he has a concept of this future that he (the teacher) considers to be important.

If there is no anticipation, this means that a teacher presents or unlocks contents that do not necessarily have a direct consequence

for a child's future. The basic meaning of the curriculum is that it clearly spells out what a child must do now to enable him eventually have a particular quality of mastery of reality. Anticipating does not mean that a teacher must be a futurologist. It means that he must anticipate a child's course of life in order to prepare him for the realities of life that he will encounter one day. The didactic event cannot be thought of without the category of anticipation.

### **3.9 Formalizing**

The didactic activity is aimed at realizing certain skills and a child's mobility regarding specific aspects of reality. Skills and mobility culminate in better insight, greater efficiency and more independence. However, because these qualities of a child's learning are not necessarily achieved with the first unlocking, the teacher must repeat the didactic situation in order to present the essences of the learning contents again. This means that he re-structures a certain didactic situation so a child can demonstrate his insights and skills with respect to a particular reality, exercise them or even have a new opportunity to acquire the contents.

Therefore, a teacher must formalize the situation in order to be able to repeat it in its essentials. In this context it is important to differentiate between "formalizing" and "formalism". In this context, formalism implies that a teacher casts his lessons in only one form (and no other)—this leads to a rigid use of recipes. Experience shows, however, that formalism in a didactic situation is not possible; a child simply does not learn according to recipes and each didactic situation essentially is unique.

Formalizing, as a didactic category, pushes to the foreground the matter of the immediate and mediate character of the didactic in the sense that a teacher must be aware that a situation must be constructed that can function in two ways: firstly, to offer an opportunity for a better and more purposeful orientation to reality and, secondly, to offer an opportunity for a better appropriation of reality. Formalizing enables a teacher to once again present a child with contents previously exposed. Formalizing and accompanying, as didactic categories, are closely related: formalizing provides the didactic structure within which accompanying can be realized.

### **3.10 Socializing**

The didactic situation is essentially a social situation in both the spontaneous, naïve family situation and in the more formal school situation because in each there is involvement with reality in which an adult and a child are present. The quality of their joint presence in reality speaks of a particular interpersonal involvement that specifically is social in nature. Thus, there always is a specific social relationship between them in a didactic situation. The learning activity of a child in the course of his learning involvement in reality is a matter of social intercourse, of norms (codes) and of activities (behaviors) that insure the positive direction of his learning.

The didactic category of socializing influences not only the course and direction of teaching. It is an essential part of it because it cannot exist as an activity without social relationships and because its outcome or effect cannot be visualized without the category of socializing. It is simply the case that a child cannot plan his own way through reality and the world and through life without the help and support of an adult and still emerge at the other end without being harmed. In addition, for a child reality is only meaningful to the extent that it is a human reality. A child experiences reality as meaningful to the extent that he identifies himself with the person of the adult and that he is able to form a positive relationship with the adult. This course of involvement with reality has a clearly socializing tendency. Where socializing, as such, is not realized in the didactic situation, it cannot be described as a didactic one.

### **3.11 Delimiting (demarcating)**

Demarcating and reducing, the following category, are closely intertwined but they are distinguished because delimiting primarily involves time and form. In the family situation where educating is originally experienced, a parent sets particular limits regarding the time to be used for the teaching activity and also to the form in which the situation is cast.

Concerning time, an adult chooses when he will present certain contents to a child. He does this in accordance with his evaluation of the child's ability to understand it and what he thinks a child should know at this stage. The course of the didactic situation also is demarcated by time—the parent is not continuously involved in teaching his child. In the more formal didactic situation of the school the question of time is so important that extensive research has been done about dividing time in relation to the subject structures of the school.

The same applies regarding form—the parent chooses particular forms for his unlocking or exposition that takes into account his child's readiness as well as the quality of the contents that he unlocks for him. If time and form are not demarcated, the didactic situation is diffuse and even chaotic which obviously is not the case in reality. The practice of teaching is orderly and defined, an important consideration in its reconstitution in the classroom.

### **3.12 Reducing**

Where demarcating primarily involves time and form, reducing is concerned with the contents involved in the didactic situation. This involves reducing the contents to what is important and absolutely essential. In a child-parent relationship in the spontaneous life world it is obvious that the adult strips certain contents of everything that is secondary or incidental. The essences that remain are the point of departure for constructing an initial framework within which a child can move with reasonable security. By reducing the contents, a parent recognizes his child's tendency to become lost in details. This has the danger that the child will not be able to arrive at the essences if he is left on his own. Reducing contents to essences offers a child the opportunity to simplify complex structures. This enables him to explore reality with the necessary security. Reducing to essences implies that an adult must be able to account for the ways in which he systematizes (the essences of) the contents and for what he views as essences.

### **3.13 Achieving**

In discussing the category of “imperativity” it was noted that the didactic situation essentially has a demanding and progressive character. Achieving is also mentioned because an adult expects a certain level of attainment from a child regarding the reality unlocked. Thus, it is obvious that an adult will control and evaluate a child’s achievements in the didactic situation. If the adult does not do this then this means that he ignores the demands placed on him be the category of “accompanying”. Controlling and evaluating are essential aspects of the “forming” that he has aimed for and to which he directs himself in his didactic intervention. At the same time, this puts a child in a position to judge and criticize his own participation. This underlies the possibility that the child can taste the fruits of success or experience the disappointment of inadequate participation. Both of these aspects can be positively employed to motivate a child in later learning activities. Controlling and evaluating are used for the greater and more responsible participation of a child in the didactic situation. It is obvious that controlling and evaluating qualify as such only if they are paired with sympathy and are orienting in nature. They only have meaning if they support the child with security on his way through reality.

### **3.14 Progressing**

There is an ascending and continuous line that indicates didactic progress. The simplicity of a child’s world relationship must make room for the complex world relationship of an adult. Thus, the exposition of the contents must be progressive with respect to an increasing complexity and scope of learning material. The previous categories each have a progressive character regarding the quality and nature of a child’s progress and advancement in the didactic situation.

The progressive character of the didactic is closely related to the increasing differentiation of the aims that an adult has in view in creating a particular didactic practice. A child’s role in the didactic situations must be progressive otherwise eventual adulthood cannot be attained.

At this stage it must be clear that these categories (separately and together) retain their validity in every situation that can be described as didactic; they also apply to situations where only adults are involved in didactic activities, i.e., where educating, as such, in no way is implied.

In describing each of the didactic categories it was mentioned that the didactic situation must periodically be repeated if a child does not reach the desired level of mastery after his initial involvement with the contents. In this context it is meaningful and important to be able to recognize the structures. However, to be able to repeat this situation the didactician will have to make use of certain criteria to enable him consciously and accurately to repeat the situation. When repeating the previous situation, the form, the contents and the duration of the new situation must correspond as far as possible to the earlier one. The aim is to realize the essences of the previous situation as closely as possible. Repeating the structure of the situation is not possible without applying particular didactic criteria.

#### 4. DIDACTIC CRITERIA

Didactic categories must provide an answer to the question: What *is* or what *constitutes* the didactic situation? Therefore, didactic categories provide the beacons or points of departure for thinking about the didactic phenomenon as well as the beacons in terms of which a didactician can describe the didactic. However, when designing didactic criteria the aim is different in that they have to do with determining the requirements for constituting a situation as a didactic one; the didactician knows that, as a type of situation, it must be realized through repeating it. This also involves determining how such a situation can be assessed and evaluated. Evaluating the didactic situation implies that the contribution of the didactician in the situation must be clearly identified in terms of criteria. In addition, didactic criteria must determine how a desired didactic situation can be effectively repeated.

It is clear that there is a close relationship among didactic categories, didactic criteria and didactic principles. It is obvious that most didactic categories directly give rise to particular didactic

criteria and in this respect it is difficult to think about didactic criteria without didactic categories. However it must be borne in mind that didactic criteria are not primarily used to evaluate the people involved in the situation; they must serve to recognize, evaluate and, when necessary, repeat the activities in the didactic situation.

It is possible to deduce didactic criteria directly from didactic categories by asking, for example, whether unlocking reality is truly present in a specific situation. This question and answer can serve as a didactic criterion. However, the aim of didactic criteria is not to evaluate the validity of the didactic categories but to evaluate the quality of the teaching activity. Where didactic categories emerge from the origins of the phenomenon, they are the result of a logical analysis of the didactic situation as such. Didactic criteria are concerned with the quality of the teaching activity and not with the fact of the activity.

#### **4.1 Perspective**

Perspective involves placing particular matters in their prominence within the landscape of insights. Experience and scientific examination of the didactic situation show that no one can determine the priorities of reality for another person—each person must decide this for himself. This means that each person in accordance with his insights, conceptions, value-judgments and intuitive feelings furnish his own experiential and knowing horizon and views certain things as more important and more prominent than others regarding specific content. The educator can, however, aid and support a child in this deciding by placing his own insights, conceptions, etc. at the child's disposal with the aim of aiding him to orient himself. Any new knowledge that a person encounters will change his perspective on it in one way or another. Qualities and values that are contained in the contents such as truth, beauty and utility will change the emphasis and prominence of these contents in a child's horizon of knowledge.

Because a child is still becoming adult, this ordering of contents and the resulting change regarding his possessed knowledge is more important and radical than it is for an adult. Thus, it is clear that

the structures of knowledge a child masters will influence his perspective on reality. If the category of forming is not realized in the didactic situation it can be asked whether or not a child's perspective on life reality has flourished because forming assumes change in the sense of an improving, broadening and deepening. Improving, broadening and deepening assume a perspective on reality and without perspective the category of forming will necessarily fail. Thus, this criterion serves as a gauge for determining if a child's perspective on reality has progressively acquired form.

## **4.2 Constituting**

If a didactic activity has progressed formatively, a child necessarily has constituted or created a new reality for himself. No person is born with a full mastery of reality. The meaning of the didactic activity, indeed, is that a learning person will establish or create a unique reality for himself. If it is determined that the learning person in a didactic situation has benefited from the activity, constituting obviously is of importance here. A teacher who uses constituting as a didactic criterion in the first place searches for the fact of the constituting and not necessarily its scope.

## **4.3 Relationality**

In a child's relationship to reality, also in a social relationship, this deals with an "introduction" to reality. This introduction is observable in a changed relationship to reality. A person's life progresses in a solidary way (i.e., a person establishes a particular relationship with the reality outside of himself) and a solitary way (a person establishes a relationship with himself) and, therefore, the task of the individual establishing a relationship to reality is an important didactic criterion. Thus, the didactic act is focused on helping a child establish a relationship with the reality outside of himself and with himself. These relationships that he establishes result in his being in a changed relationship to reality and to himself. In this sense, relationality is present and is closely related to the category of orienting that refers to a person in the teaching situation arriving at a particular and also valid determination of his own standpoint in life. Relationality as a didactic criterion focuses a

teacher's attention on the need to evaluate continuously a child's growing and changing relationship to reality.

#### **4.4 Self-discovery**

The fact that the didactic activity realizes itself in the solitariness of a child implies that he discovers himself in the situation. A child must exceed his limits, break down resistances, solve problems and attain certain levels of achievement. To be able to do this he needs the help of adults.

If there is no evidence of self-discovery this means that categories such as anticipating and futurity are not adequately realized in the didactic situation. The didactic situation also is aimed at the child eventually discovering a unique disposition and position in reality and the life world. Thus, a teacher's task is to help him to discover his dispositions because he must help him to become what he can and ought to be.

#### **4.5 Emancipation**

If there is evidence of the child constituting a personal world, changing his relationship to reality and self-discovery there also is evidence that the adult increasingly is made superfluous because the child is increasingly capable of making his own decisions and willing to accept full responsibility for his decisions. A child explores reality from a position of security in the educative situation to the extent that he is emancipated from the adult in that the adult's aid and support become unnecessary. A child who learns effectively also emancipates himself from the learning contents. There are qualitative changes apparent in the way a child is involved in reality (the learning contents). Essentially, this qualitative change includes a greater self-reliance and willingness to approach a problem himself.

The basic attitude that makes emancipation possible is a child's ability and willingness to venture into and be exposed to situations, even new ones, in order adequately to meet the demands of such situations himself. One notices this at an early age when a child insists on dressing himself and later on tying his own shoes. During

puberty and adolescence the willingness to accept responsibility is sufficient proof that a child is prepared to act in accordance with his conscience. Therefore, emancipation is always concerned with discovering and accepting values, norms and judgments in terms of which one lives as he ought to because he chooses to unconditionally subjugate himself to the authority of norms and values.

#### **4.6 Expectation**

In the discussion of futurity, as a pedagogical category, and anticipating reality, in a didactic connection, it was indicated that the future must be met. Because a child is someone who wants to become someone himself, the criterion of expectation can be raised. In teaching the unknown, the evocative, the adventurous, the beautiful, rights and similar perspectives continually are presented.

The appeal that goes out to a child from these contents is primarily directed to his spontaneous and natural eagerness to learn. A teaching situation shows itself particularly in that a teacher continually awakens expectations in a child regarding contents that are still beyond his reach. In this way a teacher uses the contents to appeal to a child to participate in the teaching situation. A child is continually and cumulatively enlarging his experience because an adult continually confronts him with important and meaningful aspects of reality. Within this frame of reference, confronting a child with learning content fulfills his expectations. In this regard, the adult is involved in helping a child make a future and this future that they create together evokes a particular expectation in the child with regard to it.

#### **4.7 Rationality (rational command of reality)**

It is only reasonable to expect that an adult's systematic reduction of content in the teaching situation should elicit a child's rationality as his contribution. Therefore, rationality involves a child's more objective (clearer) insight into his own situation in his involvement with the world and the things within it. This means that a child's intellectual insight enables him to view reality with greater clarity. This does not mean that the intellectual ability of the child is the

most important or only aspect to be considered in teaching; the teaching aim is to create a harmony between a child's emotional and intellectual command of reality. A child's rational control of reality greatly elevates his hyper-naiveté and spontaneity in this regard and strengthens his grasp of reality.

#### **4.8 Security**

A child must be encountered in an atmosphere of stability, security, safety and acceptance in a didactic situation before he can really venture in the situation. Here security especially means bringing the child to rest and stabilizing his affective disposition. Thus, from time to time a learning child must be brought to rest and given the opportunity to reflect on what is being taught. This is not a choice but an imperative. Security in the teaching situation is a fundamental pre-condition for a child to realize the teaching aims by mastering. Without stability and an atmosphere of safety, the child becomes uncertain and doubtful; his desire to venture into the unknown is diminished to the extent that the quality of his involvement with the learning contents is seriously impaired.

#### **4.9 Transcending**

When a human being involves himself in reality, in one way or another he transcends that reality. Transcending literally means overcoming the physical and visual and entering the realm of the metaphysical and abstract. In this sense, metaphysical means the realm of what is more than the physical. In the teaching situation, transcending means that the life- and world-view of the educator provide a bridge for a child spanning his own life world and the world above and beyond being human. A child must transcend the physical world in order to recognize the hand of the Creator in the life world [of the believer].

This is surely the final meaning of the reality a child is confronted with in his education. A child's deepest convictions, his most fundamental experience of meaning and his greatest appreciation of reality are formed in transcending that reality. Where transcending does not occur, experience can easily lead to skepticism and even nihilism. Neither is a positive educational influence or aim.

Teaching that does not help a child transcend reality is not really educative in its effect.

As mentioned previously, a teacher must be able to repeat the teaching situation. A child is not always intensively involved in the teaching situation; he does not necessarily reach the desired level of competence after his first exposure to new learning contents. Didactic criteria must enable the teacher to evaluate the quality of the teaching situation he has designed as well as the quality of the child's involvement. His aim is to improve his teaching.

## **5. DIDACTIC PRINCIPLES**

### **5.1 General principles**

#### **5.1.1 Sympathy**

The word sympathy literally means to feel together. In everyday usage, sympathy means to share someone's feelings. It has a wider meaning in the didactic situation. Here it means that the parent or teacher will have the insight to look for the child where he is and not where one thinks he ought to be. An adult does this because the aim of the didactic situation is to help the child. Sympathy here involves a particular attitude, a way of approaching and entering the situation. He places himself at the disposal of the child.

At the same time, sympathy requires a particular stake or attitude of the child. The difference, however, is that an adult is accountable and remains responsible for initiating or establishing the didactic situation. The fact that in the didactic situation a teacher takes the initiative, but from time to time expects the child to take the initiative, confirms and describes the real nature of initiative as a didactic principle. That is, the adult has the primary responsibility for initiating or establishing a climate or atmosphere in the teaching situation in which mutual trust and acceptance are evident. The teacher's design of a didactic situation means that he places certain contents at the disposal of a child in such a way that it reflects his sympathetic initiative. A child's welfare is a teacher's primary concern, whether a child understands and appreciates the teacher's educative aims or not. Where there is no sympathetic initiative the

teaching practice is without exception rigid and formalistic. By its nature, such a teaching-style will inhibit the smooth development of the situation and, at the same time, the child will experience insecurity. In its turn, the quality of the demands made of the child and the quality of the support given by the teacher are determined by sympathy. Where sympathy is absent, the teaching practice can hardly form a child adequately.

It must be stressed that sympathy does not mean an undisciplined, loose association between adult and child. Where the teaching situation is undisciplined, in that the adult has no authority, educating and its aims cannot be achieved and the situation degenerates into an arbitrary and chaotic one.

### **5.1.2 Clarity**

The didactic situation always is directed at aims. Irrespective of the immediacy of the contents, adult and child in the situation are jointly involved in creating a future. If the situation must be repeated to acquire a firmer and better grasp of reality, the principle of clarity cannot be omitted. A teacher must be able to state clearly where he will go, precisely what he aims for, how he is going to attain particular aims, what he expects of a child in a particular situation, how he is going to evaluate the results of the didactic situation, etc.

Therefore, this deals not so much with a clear presentation because a clear presentation is a result of clear aims, clearly ordering the contents, well thought out application of specific methods and controls, etc. This does not deal merely with a half formulated lesson presentation. The didactic principle of clarity is a question of didactic insight rather than of a good narration, a particular demonstration or an interesting experiment. It is possible that the narration, demonstration and experiment are fluent, interesting and clearly executed but have nothing to do with the ultimate aim. Clarity means insight into the didactic situation.

### **5.1.3 Tempo**

The principle of clarity implies clarity of purpose: the teacher knows what he wants a child to achieve. Wherever movement (from a position of childhood to a position of adulthood) is of the essence, there is always tempo. Tempo is of particular importance in the didactic situation because a child can so easily fall behind. Each human being has his own tempo, for example in eating, reading and walking—and also in learning. It is also generally accepted that each person has his own life tempo. It is therefore only logical that a child will reflect his life tempo in his learning activities. As in everyday life, the tempo of teaching will also partly determine the speed and rhythm of the progress of teaching.

Tempo is one of the most important and difficult problems facing a teacher: he must try to maintain a balanced tempo in order to ensure that the quicker children are not bored and, at the same time, that the slower children are not left behind. A number of aspects are important in this context: firstly, we know that a child must reach a certain level of achievement within a certain period. This is clearly illustrated by the finality of examinations at the end of the academic year. The tempo or pace a teacher sets has a general as well as a specific aspect. On the one hand, it has a bearing on his teaching as a whole; on the other, it has a direct bearing on the particular lesson. The tempo a teacher maintains has an important influence on the life tempo of the child as well as on his eventual lifestyle as an adult. In this sense, tempo is closely related to the attitude toward life, especially where a child is expected to learn to live in accordance with the demands the adult world will one day make on him. This is something very few teachers think of and which is generally underestimated when planning and assessing teaching tempo. If tempo is not realized harmoniously in the teaching situation, the children become bewildered, dismayed, discouraged or bored; one can even expect frustration and aggression as a reaction.

#### **5.1.4 Dynamism**

The didactic situation is preeminently one of movement. Dynamism, in didactic terms, is more concerned with the quality of the attitude, the enthusiasm and the zeal of the participants. It

gives the movement in the situation the character one expects of effective and enriching teaching, a character of dynamism.

A teacher's enthusiasm and attitude directly influence the quality of a child's enthusiasm and attitude. A teacher expects a child to take part in the teaching situation according to his ability with enthusiasm and dedication; these attitudes and qualities of participation are of decisive importance. For this reason the dynamism of the teacher qualifies as a principle of teaching to achieve good results. If the teacher is not dynamic the class soon becomes listless and bored and the effect of teaching is not what it should be.

### **5.1.5 Balance**

Because formal teaching must follow a precise timetable, a teacher is often tempted to over-emphasize a certain didactic or pedagogic aspect to the detriment of other equally important aspects. This kind of teaching is unbalanced and inharmonious. A teacher who subjects everything in his teaching to discipline or to freedom creates an unbalanced or inharmonious situation. Furthermore, it is important for a teacher to ensure balance as far as time is concerned (its effective use), as far as form is concerned (its variation) and as far as contents are concerned (their choice). Balance ensures the harmony without which an accountable and meaningful dialogue between teacher and child (each according to his rightful participation) cannot take place. Without balance, neither a teacher nor a child can contribute meaningfully to the teaching situation.

The meaning of the general principles is found in planning the course of activities in the didactic situation as a whole, i.e., over a long period of time, in order to draw guidelines for an accountable practice. They especially serve an important aim in constituting a desired practice.

## **5.2 Particular principles**

### **5.2.1 Stating and formulating the problem**

The general experience of teaching indicates that learning is activated and directed by a meaningful problem. Psychopedagogic research supports this everyday experience. As far as a child is concerned, this statement is particularly true. Because a teacher plans a specific learning activity in the teaching situation, he tries to formulate the problem in such a way that the child can't help being absorbed by it. This does not mean that a teacher merely announces the problem. Announcing a problem does not mean that a child will experience it as a problem or that he considers the problem as his to solve. The problem should evolve out of the actualization of a child's prior knowledge (fore-knowledge) concerning the subject.

A teacher must, therefore, question a child's relevant prior knowledge in such a way that the child starts asking questions to try to rectify his inadequate knowledge by solving the problem. In this way a climate is created conducive to accepting and solving problems.

It is clear that this aspect of teaching requires special skill: the implication is that a teacher must effectively involve a child with the contents, but in such a way that the child experiences the contents as a worthwhile challenge. Stating the problem, therefore, serves as a functional introduction to the teaching activity as well as an examination of the circumstances in which to effectively launch the lesson.

### **5.2.2 Planning**

The formal teaching activity is seldom, if ever, the result of intuitive or spontaneous activities by a teacher. A teacher must plan every lesson because the activities in the school are formalized to the extent that careful planning is a precondition for success.

It is clear that stating the problem and planning are closely related. Planning includes such aspects as selecting learning contents, introducing teaching and learning aids, choosing and using certain teaching methods, to mention only a few. Planning also includes the total of a teacher's preparation because in his planning he intends to identify a structure in terms of which he can anticipate teaching

situations. This is of central importance: the design a teacher makes in his planning is literally a preview of what is to happen in a particular lesson. A teacher certainly does not allow the situation to develop incidentally. Consequently, he does not plan only the form of the lesson but also its development and the course it must take as well as the way in which the pupils must master the contents. His planning also includes provision for possible learning difficulties and problems. The detail implied by the criterion of planning is dealt with more fully when the structure of teaching is described in a later chapter.

### **5.2.3 Illustrating**

All teachers know from experience that illustrating contents (reality) in the didactic situation is of exceptional importance to ensure its effective progress. Illustrating does not mean only the introduction of visual materials in the didactic situation. In fact, illustrating is the medium for realizing a child's perceptual ability, as a form of learning. This means that the contents must be made accessible to a child's perception, especially because of the very important role that perceiving plays in learning. Because the presentation of contents to ensure effective perceiving is of decisive importance, it is clear that inefficiency in this regard hampers the progress of the lesson to the extent that any success or learning effect is quite incidental.

### **5.2.4 Systematizing and ordering**

In the first place, systematizing and ordering refer to a teacher and the quality of his activity in the class; in this respect systematizing refers to a teacher's attitude and ordering to his skillfulness.

A teacher's attitude and skills are related factors that largely determine the fluency of the didactic situation. This holds true for the form (method) as well as the contents (learning contents). At the same time, this also is a matter of delimiting the situation in so far as using the time available to the teacher and the role of the pupil is concerned, which influence the rhythm of the lesson's progress. Systematizing and ordering are guarantees against aimless teaching, careless designs, inaccurate evaluation and listless participation by the children. Systematizing and ordering are

conspicuously related to the didactic principles of planning and illustrating.

### **5.2.5 Surveyability**

If a teacher does not have a surveyable [comprehensive] and objective view of the didactic situation the possibility of repeating the situation in its essences is not realizable. Surveyability concerning the structure of teaching is a precondition for effective preparation and meaningful reflection. A teacher must be able to give a surveyable [comprehensive] account of the teaching situation he has prepared and put into motion. A child must also achieve a surveyable command of the contents otherwise he remains immersed in detail and finds it very difficult to synthesize the various aspects of the contents. This influences the quality of his objective judgment; only if a child has a surveyable view of the contents is there mention of successful learning.

### **5.2.6 The scientific character**

A teacher's responsibility in establishing a didactic situation is mainly two-fold: on the one hand he must be able to be accountable for his didactic design, i.e., for matters such as methodological principles, the particular methods and ground-forms that he is going to select in order to establish a particular situation and secondly he must be able to be accountable for the contents that he has in view for this situation. The scientific quality of his didactic design is visible in the way he reduces contents to their essences (elementals) and the way he assesses and helps a child reach the same level of command of the contents. The reduction of contents to their essences is discussed fully in a later chapter.

At this stage a few introductory remarks are important. The contents have their own nature because they must reflect the nature of the subject from which they are taken. This nature refers to a scientific structure, e.g., physics, history, linguistics, geography, mathematics, etc. that as sciences contain their own methods in terms of which they can be unlocked. A teacher must account for this scientific nature of the different school subjects and he must be able to harmonize them with his teaching methods. An

understanding of the harmony between the nature of the subject and the method of teaching determines the harmony between contents and form in the lesson design. If there is no harmony between form and contents the learning effect is endangered. The teaching of chemistry is a good example of a teacher's options in this respect. He can either treat the various topics theoretically by using textbooks or he can vitalize his teaching by providing the pupils with the opportunity to carry out experiments which will inevitably lead the child to a clearer understanding of the nature and scientific methods of chemistry.

### 5.2.7 Controlling (monitoring)

The meaning and importance of guiding and controlling in the didactic situation have been touched on generally in the description of didactic categories. Without guiding and controlling there is no accounting or responsibility for teaching activities; also there is no evaluating or basis for identifying a child's problems in the learning situation. In addition, without control a teacher cannot critically assess his teaching and therefore he will not be in a position to improve it.

Often a teacher will proceed with his teaching activities for quite a long time without actually controlling or assessing the quality of the pupil's participation and achievement. Also he quite often carries on his teaching activities without taking stock of himself or the way his teaching is developing. It is for these reasons that the didactic categories emphasize the importance of control. No teacher should ignore or minimize the importance of control. If it is lacking teaching is carried on without criticism and, therefore, without accountability; this kind of teaching is unacceptable under all circumstances.

In terms of the above description of the didactic principles, it is important to note that their function is to focus mainly on two aspects of teaching. Firstly, the totality of the course of the didactic activity is brought into view with the aim of designing consecutive teaching situations. Secondly, these situations must be assessed in order to determine their effectiveness so that, if necessary, they can be repeated as specific types of situations. The means and aids a

teacher introduces in these situations must be evaluated in terms of their own criteria, for example, by means of the language the teacher uses, his attitude in front of the class, his attitude toward individual pupils and the class as a group, etc.

So far this chapter has dealt with the theoretical description of didactic categories and criteria. Furthermore, the didactic principles have been explained and the point has been stressed that their realization in the teaching situation ensures that a child experiences the didactic situation as meaningful.

However, in a theoretical treatment of teaching it is necessary at this stage to examine certain factors that primarily influence the form of teaching.

## **6. FACTORS THAT PRIMARILY INFLUENCE THE DIDACTIC FORM**

In the theoretical discussion of the didactic offered in this chapter it is repeatedly said that the didactic situation primarily is involved with the help that an adult offers a child to find his way to adulthood. It also was repeatedly stressed that this help or teaching offered by the adult must take a particular form otherwise the teaching is left to haphazard success that is unacceptable and unsatisfactory. Because teaching is a purposeful intervention, the didactic situation cannot be realized haphazardly. At least a teacher must be able to account for his management of the course of the situation. Because it is his task to account for his practice, he must plan the didactic situation accountably. To be able do this he continually concentrates on various factors that provide possibilities and means to organize and consciously channel the help he offers a child, to enlarge and simplify his teaching, to increase or decrease his teaching tempo, to assess and evaluate, etc., all in terms of a child's actions in the situation.

It is obvious that a wide variety of factors are involved in these considerations. The aim is not to deal with each one fully at this stage. Only certain aspects are discussed in order to place the problem of didactic form (which is fundamental to the design a

teacher is to make) in perspective. The other aspects will be dealt with in the chapter on the structure of teaching.

## **6.1 Language**

Insofar as language is an intrinsic aspect of the form of teaching, it is seen primarily as a determining factor of perceiving, experiencing and objectifying to which a child is attuned in the life world. In the original experience of educating parents concentrate on language and use language as a factor regarding the form of educating. One notices this in a wide variety of teaching situations common to all educating. Examples are naming objects; questions adults answer and ask of children; characteristics of objects, matters and persons the adult systematizes; materials that an adult places at the disposal of the children and arranges by means of language; stories that are repeatedly read or told to a child; events from various aspects of the life world that a parent dramatizes for his child; the clarification of phenomena, especially in nature; instructions given and explained in language; concepts, names, characteristics, etc. that an adult continually repeats for a child's benefit.

These important activities cannot occur without language. An adult also expects a child to follow him in each one of these specific structures; for example, a child must repeat the words after the adult, must be able to act after the adult, must be able to follow the adult's actions in playing, etc. All of this is done with the intention that the child will eventually master these facts of the life world independently. Each one of these activities reveals or discloses the reality surrounding a child and ensures his active involvement in life. They also enable him to take note of each of these aspects of reality and to provide evidence that he is capable of mastering reality in these terms.

## **6.2 Skills**

In the didactic situation, a teacher continually concentrates on the skills a child must master to become independent in the life world. In this concentration on skills an adult seeks to create a harmony between a child's spontaneous, activity-directed life attunement and the demands that the surrounding world place on him in this

regard. For this reason an adult encourages a small child to carry out certain activities, knowing well that these activities are important for the acquisition of later skills such as reading and writing. It is also for this reason that parents encourage and stimulate the skills their child should master in the course of their educative involvement. They also try to integrate these skills in, for example, a child's perceiving and attending. A teacher continues these activities of the parents in the school in a highly systematized manner.

Skills are considered to be very important in the school and they are one of the most important aspects of a teacher's involvement with a child until the day he leaves school. These skills are refined and differentiated in a wide variety of learning situations provided for in science laboratories, art classes, manual work centers, domestic science centers, etc. It is important for a teacher that a child possesses certain skills because they are the basis for him to eventually arrive at self-realization. Where skills are ignored in the teaching situation, the learning event is distorted. In this context, one must realize that a teacher is particularly interested in the quality and level of a child's skills when assessing and evaluating his progress.

Although skills are not necessarily the primary focus in the didactic situation, a child's insight into and thinking about the contents is largely carried or mobilized by the skills related to specific school subjects. It is also true that the majority of pupils in the secondary school will eventually find employment in the technological culture outside of the school where specialized skills are of decisive importance. This means that the school must literally undertake pre-vocational training in order to equip this child adequately for the vocational world. For this reason the focus of vocationally directed schooling is on the harmony between knowledge and skills that are directed to a child's eventual independence. Generally speaking, didactic form cannot be considered in isolation from the conscious and direct planning for improving skills in the didactic situation.

### **6.3 Social discipline**

A child exists and lives as a person and a human being among other people. In this sense he finds himself in a social situation from the day of his birth. As he becomes older and larger his social world expands and in addition to family members other persons also are in his experiential world. The social or societal factors which in time become more prominent in his life world are subject to a certain hierarchy or order. It is expected of the members of a certain society to obey its norms and values to preserve the order of the community.

The implication of the above for a child is that he is a human being who lives with other people who have the same rights and for this reason his actions may not harm other members of the group, including in the family or classroom. This means that a child, on his way to adulthood, is continually confronted with the norms of the community that he eventually will obey unconditionally. During the course of a child's education the adult continually confronts him with religious-moral, social-cultural, and judicial-economic norms. However, because he moves outside of these norms during his childhood (he has not yet attained adulthood), it is the task of a teacher, and adults generally, to orient him in terms of the demands of these norms. Because the school really represents the life world outside of the home, the demands of the norms are especially valid in the school.

The form of teaching cannot be considered without taking into account the social discipline to which a child is subjected. In the final analysis, this is very closely related to the totality of the aims of educating. The implication is that the didactic form used by a teacher is not meaningful outside of the question of social discipline. This holds in helping a child to unconditionally obey authority—also the authority of the learning material because ultimately this content is reality. A teacher's possibilities of choice of form are somewhat limited by this when he makes didactic designs, but on the other hand, this also prevents arbitrary mutual relations among the pupils and among the group of pupils and the teacher himself that might arise. Therefore, it is not possible for a teacher to act in the didactic situation without social discipline. Thus a teacher is obligated to present in responsible ways particular contents to a child.

## 6.4 Expression

It is essential that in the didactic situation a child is given the opportunity for self-realization. This means that he must have the opportunity for self-expression. In terms of what was said above about social discipline, a child must be able to express his knowledge, experiences, perceptions and objective point of view without overstepping the boundaries (demands) of social discipline. In this way he broadens and deepens his relationship to reality and both qualities become evident in his expression.

Where a teacher creates opportunities for expression, he in fact closely relates his teaching to a child's lifestyle as well as to his spontaneous tendencies to act. Because a teacher chooses specific forms of teaching to give a child the opportunity to express himself, the circumstances are created for variations in teaching for vitalizing the situation and especially for providing a child with the opportunity for direct experience. Teaching activities in the school are aimed at the eventual self-realization of the child; it is obvious that this is important. To offer a child the opportunity to express himself in a didactic form means to close the distance between him and the teacher that all too often exists in the classroom. One must understand that the form in which expression is realized does not only manifest itself in forms of activity: language is always the most important form of expression.

However, one must guard against using language as the only form of expression (for example the narrative method). Over-use leads to a soul-destroying practice that offers a child only a limited opportunity to express himself. The very real danger is that a teacher can give too much prominence to the forms of expression in the adult world. The usual result is that a teacher's presentation becomes rigid and that his presentation, furthermore, is beyond the children's understanding. The implication is that a teacher must identify forms intrinsic to a child's life world that are capable of conveying the child's expression.

## 6.5 Intentionality

A child's directedness to learning that is awakened and directed by the parents in the home is purposefully striven for and refined in the school. As far as this is concerned, forms of teaching must be designed for the didactic situation that will help a child realize his eagerness to learn as well as give direction to his learning intention (directedness to learn). For this reason, a teacher chooses certain forms of teaching that will strongly appeal to a child's eagerness to learn. When a teacher uses didactic criteria at the end of the lesson or at the end of a series of lesson to evaluate a child's achievements, the quality of his teaching also is evaluated by the didactic criteria. However, when it happens that a teacher does not evaluate his didactic forms in terms of didactic criteria and where self-criticism in this regard is absent, he repeats a particular form of teaching throughout his entire career. Such a teacher at his retirement has had only one year of teaching experience [repeated numerous times]. This means that a teacher continually evaluates and chooses particular contents to present to a child in such a way that his intentionality to achieve can thereby be stimulated and directed. A child's learning intentionality should be the basis for a teacher's lesson design because (taking the nature of the learning subjects into account) it is the most important single factor that will help determine his progress in the teaching situation.

The five factors mentioned above are not the only ones that influence the form of teaching. Because the other factors have been extensively described in the didactic literature, these five have been chosen as examples of what a teacher considers when choosing specific forms of teaching.

## 7. SUMMARY

This chapter provides an overview of the primary aspects of didactic theory. It was indicated that the point of departure for such a theory is of decisive significance since the pronouncements made from such a theory must satisfy the demand of universality. This point of departure is the original experience of educating. A view of the essences of this original experience discloses categories that describe didactic practice in its essences. The didactic categories bring to light the essences of the didactic situation. Because the point of departure is the original experience of educating, the

relationships of the pedagogic categories with the didactic ones are indicated. However, if the didactic situation must be repeated, a necessity, especially of the formal didactic situation, is that it must be evaluated so that it can be.

From the didactic categories certain yardsticks are derived that can be used to evaluate the situation. In this way, didactic criteria are brought to the fore.

The didactic categories express what is constitutive of (essential to) the didactic situation while didactic criteria evaluate its course and effect. Irrespective of the didactic categories and criteria, a penetration of the original experience of educating shows that with respect to activities, as such, there are particular principles that can somewhat guarantee their quality. The principles that are disclosed in this way are offered as examples and are called didactic principles.

In later chapters the general and specific didactic principles (as discussed in this chapter) are considered again. In the lesson structure the didactic principles give a flavor to putting the didactic course into motion.

Ordering and classifying the didactic principles discussed here can be done in terms of the broader concepts of activity, individualizing, socializing and tempo-differentiation. In this respect, the accent of the didactic principles is on establishing a harmony between the child and reality in terms of a particular course of teaching. Because contents are continually mentioned theoretically, the question of learning material is merely mentioned in this chapter. During this discussion there was continual reference to the relationship and harmony between form and contents and there also was reference to the immediate function of the contents in the teaching situation whose ultimate meaning is in the pedagogical.

Because the form is an aspect of the harmony mentioned, the factors that primarily influence the didactic form also were briefly broached in this theoretical discussion. Though not the only ones, the five factors essentially influencing didactic form were considered to orient the reader about considerations in choosing a

particular form that then must fulfill a specific function in the didactic situation. With this, the point is reached where somewhat formal pronouncements must be made regarding the structure of the possible didactic ground-forms. This is the theme of the following chapter.