

# CHAPTER I

## FROM REALITY TO SCIENCE

### 1. REALITY AS POINT OF DEPARTURE

Educating has been and always will be a part of a person's lifeworld. Along with the mandate to reign over the world, a person also has the charge of reigning over the phenomenon of educating as a part of reality. This confronts an educationist with the task of making a penetrating investigation of this part of reality to know and master it.

In life reality, **educating** comes to the fore in **everything** that occurs between adults and children and **which has a child's becoming adult as its aim**. Educating is a comprehensive and complex activity. Therefore, the first question of concern that a scientist encounters regards a **method** that allows him/her to penetrate to and describe this phenomenon in its essentials.

Educating is a **human** affair that is found with people of all races and cultures, although its flavor and content might differ. Educating is activities emanating from an adult (parent) that are directed to making a child a full-fledged member of his/her society. Through educating, an adult helps, supports and accompanies a child so that eventually he/she can reach adulthood him/herself. A newborn baby is completely and entirely dependent on his/her parents (adults) and this educating begins with their physical caring of him/her and extends through his/her life as a child until eventually he/she can accept responsibility for his/her entire existence. Thus, educating extends over a broad area over many years and occurs in many situations.

The following are some examples of educating as it might appear in different situations:

\*A four-year-old boy is in a store with his mother. When she refuses to buy him a toy that he wants, he lies on the floor and kicks and screams. She picks him up and explains that this is not an acceptable way of behaving.

\*A family is sitting together watching a television program. It is a story about drug addiction. The father uses the story as a basis for explaining to his children the dangers and detrimental effects of drugs.

\*A girl in 10th grade asks her sewing teacher for help with her sewing project. The teacher explains and demonstrates how to do it. In this way, the teacher helps her improve her skills and compliments her on the preciseness of her work.

One can continue to give examples of educative situations and eventually it will appear that no two are identical. In this connection, what should the task of an educationist be? Mainly, it is to search for what is **necessary** or **essential** to educating and which appears in each such situation.

To illuminate what is fundamental or essential to educating, an educationist is expected to engage in research or scientific work because only then can he/she disclose the **order** of educative reality (De Wet, et al., 1981, p 5). Although it is not his/her task to describe every possible educative situation, he/she can do nothing less than take into consideration as many situations as feasible to highlight their common essentials. Thus, an educationist should take the **reality of educating** as his/her **point of departure** and **area of study** for his/her research.

To do research in an accountable way, an educationist should ascertain whether the procedures (methods) he/she will use are suitable for unlocking those aspects of reality he/she wants to investigate (Landman, 1980, p 6). Therefore, he/she should be knowledgeable about the different scientific research procedures available. Only in this way can he/she contribute to education or pedagogics as the science that investigates the phenomenon of educating.

## 2. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD

An educationist has the task of fathoming, reflecting on, ordering, systematizing and describing the reality of educating (Sonnekus, 1971, p 11). To do this, he/she needs a method to fathom the persons and their activities in an educative situation, disclose the essentials of educating and then express them in words.

Since **phenomenology** is a scientific activity directed to disclosing and verifying essentials (Landman, 1980, p 3), it is a method appropriate for use by an educationist. Nel (1968, p 1) indicates that from the beginning of this century it was evident that the phenomenological method is the most effective for fathoming being human. Also, Landman and Roos (1973, pp 14-15) say that it is only through a phenomenological attitude that being human can be understood in its totality. According to them, an authentic pedagogical perspective on reality is only possible if it is a phenomenological one. It is only when an educationist is prepared to clarify the **reality of educating** by taking it as his/her point of departure and is ready to perceive, describe and explain that **reality** as what it essentially is that the scientific and autonomous character of pedagogics emerges as a possibility.

Phenomenology is a method for describing the phenomenon of reality studied as near as possible to what the phenomenon itself would describe if it could do so (Landman and Gous, 1969, p 25). For this reason, phenomenology is directed to the primordial appearance of the object of study. For an educationist, this means that he/she must take as his/her **point of departure** the **phenomenon of educating** as this occurs in everyday reality.

A **phenomenological study** of the reality of educating means that several **steps** are followed (Landman and Gous, 1969, pp 31-33; Landman and Kilian, 1972, pp 83-90): After he/she delimits this phenomenon within the totality of reality as his/her point of departure and area of study, he/she searches for (1) **general essential characteristics** (essences) of the phenomenon, as what always holds true anywhere and anytime. To do this, he/she must (in thought) penetrate as large a variety of educative situations as feasible and describe the seeming essentials that he/she discovers. Then he/she must (2) determine whether these tentative essentials he/she describes are **necessarily true** (valid) for each educative situation. Finally, he/she must (3) determine the **relationships** among the different essentials to clarify their educative significance.

Essentially, the phenomenological method is a series of **reductive steps**, i.e., **phenomenological, eidetic and transcendental reductions** (for a full discussion see Landman, 1980, pp 12-25) and each is carried out as a number of **steps of thought** to disclose the **structure** of the phenomenon of educating and describe it as such. After this,

practice or educative reality can be returned to and improved in the light of these scientific findings.

### 3. PEDAGOGICS AS SCIENCE

Educating as a human activity comes to the fore in a series of situations within which an adult presents and demonstrates to a child norms, values, codes of behavior, dispositions and skills as content such that he/she learns them and eventually lives in terms of them. In essence, all educative situations consist of an **adult**, a **child** (or children) and **educative content** with the help of which an adult educates him/her and in terms of which he/she becomes adult. Thus, the **entirety of the educative event**, as it originates in the relationship between adult and child, is the **area of study of pedagogics** as a science.

By studying the educative phenomenon and its essentials phenomenologically, its complexity, multi-faceted nature and broad scope become very clear. Thus, to be able to study this phenomenon in its totality, it is necessary that it be illuminated from **different angles** (perspectives). This has led to contemporary pedagogics developing into different **pedagogical part-perspectives** such as fundamental pedagogics, didactic pedagogics, psychopedagogics, sociopedagogics, orthopedagogics and others. Each of these part-perspectives, in fact, studies the **total phenomenon** of educating but each asks its own **questions** and in doing so creates its own **perspective** on it. Thus, although different pedagogical part-perspectives exist, eventually they all merge into the one science of pedagogics (Van der Stoep, 1975, p xiii). Hence, within pedagogics there is not only a search for the essentials and their relationships as disclosed by each perspective, but there is a search for the connections among the findings of the different part-perspectives themselves. In this way, the complex phenomenon of educating is studied and described in its totality by these different part-perspectives.

Educating is a **human** activity that comes to the fore in everything that occurs between adult and child **and** which has as its aim a child's becoming adult. In light of this, and in terms of the above, **pedagogics is the science that studies everything regarding educating as what appears and is actualized between adults and children and that reveals and describes what is essential to it.**

### 3.1 The underlying anthropology

Before the perspective that this work deals with is reflected on, namely psychopedagogics, there is a brief indication of the **philosophical anthropology** or **child anthropology** underlying pedagogics and thus also psychopedagogics.

When there is a question of the essentials of educating, necessarily there is a query about the essentials of being human. Therefore, as a human science, pedagogics is closely involved with **philosophical anthropology** since this anthropology **queries and thinks about the essentials of being human**. Accordingly, being human is described in its essentials and with concepts [categories] suitable for this. Philosophical anthropology views a person as more than the sum of his/her different characteristics and he/she is seen as a person in his/her totality (Landman and Roos, 1973, p 5).

Since psychopedagogics focuses on a person and specifically on a child in an educative situation, the primary scientific findings of psychopedagogics also are anchored in its underlying philosophical anthropology.

In the first place, an existential phenomenological philosophical anthropology that underlies pedagogics and its part-perspectives views a person as **person-in-the-world** (Dasein) (see Engelbrecht et al., 1982, pp 10-18; Nel, 1968, pp 12-20; Nel et al., 1965, pp 102-116). Person and world are not thought of as separate from each other. It is in his/her world that a child comes to full development just because of his/her **involvement** with it. In the world, he/she is **in relationship** with others (Mitsein) and it is especially through **communicating** with others that he/she actualizes his/her potentialities. The world invites him/her to be involved and thus he/she is not **isolated** from but is in continual **dialogue** with the world.

Further, a person is viewed as **openness** which implies that he/she stands open to the world. He/she does not merely react to the things in his/her world but he/she **answers** by making choices, discovering new values, and especially by attributing **sense and meaning** to his/her world. He/she also is **intentionality** which has his/her **openness** as one pole and his/her **directedness** to his/her world as the other pole. On the basis of his/her intentionality he/she goes out to reality and is actively involved with it and thus

comes to know more of it. To be able to direct him/herself to his/her world implies that he/she is **potentiality** (possibility). Nel (1968, p 13) says a person continually manifests him/herself in new forms and therefore he/she is **not finalized** but rather is continually **changing**. He/she is incomplete, unfinished and unpredictable (Sonnekus, 1973, p 5). Indeed, he/she enters the world as potentiality and to become adult, the totality of his/her potentialities must be actualized.

To actualize then, he/she needs to be involved with reality. He/she can be involved because he/she lives in the world through his/her **body** which also is the **center** from which he/she lived experiences the world around him/her. Thus, a child is **corporeality** since he/she actualizes his/her potentialities in and through his/her body. However, he/she is not completely controlled by or surrendered to his/her physical being. The real driving power behind his/her bodily involvement in the world is his/her **personal core** (Nel, 1968, p 19). To the question **who** and **what** is a human being, it is answered that he/she is a **person** (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 25). In his/her deepest being, a person is a **spiritual** being which implies that he/she has a **spiritual core** out of which personal actualization takes place. Thus, the concept person points to this core of being human and, along with being corporeality, he/she is **spirituality**. Without entering a penetrating discussion of this matter, it is said that person indicates that a human being is "**someone**" and not merely an "**it**" (a thing) (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 16). A child is born a person but at birth his/her being a person is present as **potentiality** (Nel, 1968, p 19) and it is especially through his/her parents' intervention and his/her own involvement in his/her becoming adult that person-forming thrives. Consequently, he/she, as person, transcends the merely physical. However, bodiliness, psychic life (see further on) and spirituality are closely intertwined. A child directs him/herself as a **totality** to his/her world and thus personal actualization implies an act that involves **all** of his/her potentialities. Here totality does not refer to the sum total of body, psyche and spirit but it refers to being human in the broadest sense such as his/her **relationship** to his/her world. It is especially because of this totality that educating is at all possible in that it provides the opportunity for an **educative relationship** between adult and child.

To really understand a child in his/her relationship to his/her world, he/she also should be viewed as an **existential** being. Since a

human is a spiritual being, has a personal or spiritual core and therefore is a person, he/she is existence. This implies that he/she is **conscious** and also **self-conscious** (Nel et al., 1965, pp 114-115). Because he/she is self-conscious he/she can distance him/herself from him/herself and thus view and judge him/herself. He/she can step outside of him/herself and be with what he/she directs him/herself to because of his/her intentionality. In this way, he/she can determine his/her relationship to him/herself and the world (Nel, 1968, p 17). This means that **over the course of time** he/she builds up relationships with him/herself and his/her world. Thus, he/she is **historicity**. His/her past stays with him/her and everything he/she says, thinks or does is co-defined by the history of his/her world relationships (Nel et al., 1965, pp 111-112). From his/her historicity, a child also extends him/herself to what lies in the future and therefore he/she also is **futurity**. Because he/she is potentiality, he/she can design and actualize his/her future. This last point has implications for educating since his/her future is closely intertwined with his/her becoming adult. In this connection, the anthropological views of Langeveld take on particular significance, namely, "**a child is someone who himself wants to be someone**" and "**a child is someone who is committed to education**".

Viewed in the light of the above discussion, investigating the essentials of child-being culminates in his/her striving for adulthood and its achievement, neither of which should be considered apart from his/her own involvement in his/her education. Philosophical anthropology and pedagogics (and psychopedagogics) are closely intertwined. These sciences modify each other and are drawn together by the pedagogical question of the meaning of being human and because a person can become what he/she ought to be only through education (Poggeler, 1966, p 11).

### **3.2 Psychopedagogics: an introductory orientation**

As noted, pedagogics, along with its different part-perspectives, has its point of departure and area of study in the phenomenon of educating that occurs within the reality of educating. Each of the part-perspectives projects its own perspective on this reality. Or stated otherwise, each directs its own **questions** to the educative phenomenon which it then tries to answer through a phenomenological study of the reality of educating. Thus, for example, **fundamental pedagogics** asks about the **essentials of and**

**preconditions for educating and didactic pedagogics** about the **essentials of teaching** in an educative situation while **orthopedagogics** is directed to **disharmonious educative events** and the correlated **restrained becoming adult** of a child. Without in any sense elaborating on the terrain or perspective of the other part-perspectives, subsequently, attention is given to the particular perspective of or questions asked by psychopedagogics.

As a part-perspective of pedagogics, **everything** regarding educating falls within the domain of psychopedagogics--as is true of the other perspectives. Thus, psychopedagogics cannot delimit its terrain outside of the reality of educating. Also, psychopedagogics roots itself in the reality of educating and the question asked of this part of educative reality is: "**How does a child become adult?**" From a phenomenological perspective the task of psychopedagogics is to reflect on everything in an educative situation that is essential for a child's becoming adult. Specifically, psychopedagogics is interested in the **way(s)** becoming adult takes place. By answering this question, psychopedagogics can make statements about the **dynamics** or **movement** of a child in his/her becoming adult as well as about what occurs between adult and child.

Since an educative situation consists of an **adult**, a **child** and **educative content**, the above discussion implies that psychopedagogics should direct itself to each of these **constituents** and determine what is essential to each and **how** they influence a child's becoming adult.

It is self-evident that an **adult** (parent) as educator plays an important role in educating and thus also in a child's personal actualization. Without educating, a child cannot become a proper adult and, therefore, it is a necessary supplement of personal actualization (Sonnekus and Ferreira, 1987, p 33). The question that psychopedagogics should be concerned with in this connection is not so much the essentials of educating but rather **how** educating or **accompanying** should be actualized so that a child is allowed to prosper into a full-fledged person. Thus, the domain of psychopedagogics includes ascertaining **how** an educator's **accompaniment** should be carried out so that the essentials of educating are allowed to **function**.

As one of the constituents of the educative situation, a child him/herself necessarily also has a share in his personal

actualization. In agreement with Langeveld, Engelbrecht et al. (1982, p 10), say in this respect that a child **him/herself** is the most important pilot of his/her own growing up. Surely, it is always a child in an educative situation who has to become adult and, from an anthropological view, he/she has the potentialities to gradually change from a child to an adult. However, psychopedagogics wants to know **how** he/she actualizes his/her potentialities, **how** he/she changes, **how** he/she acts, **how** he/she responds to the accompaniment of the adults, etc. Thus, there is a search for the **essentials of personal actualization** to obtain an image of how becoming adult occurs. Phenomenologically, it is found that a child's share largely resides in the fact that, under adult accompaniment, he/she **gives sense and meaning** to his/her being educated and in this way he/she **actualizes** his/her **potentialities**. Hence, h/she changes or his/her **becoming** takes place. Consequently, **giving meaning** is at the foundation of a child's own share in his/her personal actualization and, therefore, psychopedagogics is particularly interested in **how** personal actualization occurs by a child giving meaning within an educative situation.

Educating and personal actualization cannot occur if there is no **content** in terms of which they can occur. Here reference to content means educative content because not all content is suitable for bringing a child nearer to adulthood. For example, when a child learns to be dishonest it, merely thwarts the educative aim. **How** content appears, i.e., its normative nature, also is of utmost importance for his/her becoming adult. When the topic of content is raised, thoughts of subject matter content and thus teaching in school necessarily spring up. Consequently, psychopedagogics asks questions about the **ways** school teaching contributes to adequate personal actualization.

Thus, **accompanying** (educating, teaching), **content**, **learning** and **becoming** are interconnected. Therefore, it is the task of psychopedagogics to indicate these interconnections and point out **how** they influence a child's **personal actualization**.

#### 4. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

In the above discussion, an attempt is made to give a concise overview of the primary method used to scientifically study educating. As indicated, this approach has its point of departure in

the **reality of educating** and, especially with the help of the **phenomenological method**, this reality is investigated to disclose and **describe** its structure and in doing so this gives rise to a science of education or pedagogics. Pedagogics itself is further refined by part-perspectives of which psychopedagogics is one.

However, the question of concern here is what really is served by this scientific work called psychopedagogics? In a pragmatically established world, an approach to knowing for the sake of knowing has long become passé. Therefore, it can be rightly asked if psychopedagogics can really say anything additionally new about **personal actualization, learning, and becoming adult** that has not already been said repeatedly.

As stated in the title, this is a textbook for student teachers and, therefore, it needs to be asked if psychopedagogics, as a **foundational** science of educating, can really contribute to teacher preparation. Can psychopedagogics show any relationships with the **applied** part-perspectives of pedagogics (e.g., didactic pedagogics, subject didactics and orthopedagogics) and in doing so justify its findings for teacher preparation without overstepping its bounds?

Psychopedagogics, in itself, is not a science directed to practice. That is, for the most part it is a theoretical reflection on educating from a particular perspective. Thus, can it contribute over and beyond didactic pedagogics, subject didactics and orthopedagogics to improving teacher preparation? Is psychopedagogical knowledge useful for teacher preparation and, if so, in what ways?

To address these questions, attention is given to the following matters:

- \*The preconditions for personal actualization;
- \*personal actualization by means of actualizing the psychic life and learning;
- \*the results of personal actualization;
- \*personal actualization and teaching practice;
- \*personal actualization during the different periods of life.

With the above brief introductory comments, the scope of this study is indicated in broad strokes.

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