

# CHAPTER YYWO

## CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION

### 1. INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEMATIC EDUCATIVE SITUATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The conclusion is that a child who does not experience security in an educative situation, live experiences it as distressful. Several authors also indicate that educative distress is the most important criterion for determining a problematic educative situation:

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

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

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

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

In a problematic educative situation, however, the dynamic factors are attuned to each other without perspective and, thus, impede each other. For those involved in such a situation, this lack of

perspective gives rise to feelings of despondency, isolation, guilt, disenchantment, etc.,<sup>12)</sup> so it is rightly contended that a child is touched in his/her entire being-a-person.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Amidst these conflicting standpoints, theorizing about a problematic educative situation offers a very acceptable solution to this problem. As mentioned, two criteria for identifying a problematic educative

situation are educative distress and the under actualization of the psychic life. By indication, this means a child restrained in his/her becoming unquestionably is in a problematic educative situation, while a handicapped child is not necessarily in such a situation. Being handicapped, as such, does not necessarily constitute a problematic educative situation,<sup>22)</sup> but only when he/she lived experiences his/her being handicapped as a deficiency and, arising from this, educative distress is present, is he/she in a problematic educative situation. Obviously, there is then also an under actualization of his/her psychic life. The implicit meaning contained in this is that, despite aggravating circumstances, an educatively handicapped [child] can flourish to an optimal personal realization, [in the sense] that he/she can give form to that level of adulthood he/she is able to reach because of his/her personal potentialities.<sup>23)</sup>

In such cases, there is not a problematic educative situation, and a handicapped child does not appeal for orthopedagogic intervention.

Thus, in the present study, reference to handicapped children means he/she is a handicapped child who is in a problematic educative situation and, thus, is restrained in his/her becoming.

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

On the other hand, various kinds of factors can be present in a child which are at the foundation of a problematic educative situation. Talent, temperament, forms of disturbance, such as neurological, physical, mental handicaps, etc. often give rise to a problematic educative situation. For example, because these factors are often

somewhat concealed, a teacher does not acquire a grip on them, and then [a child's] behaviors become guesswork and errors of judgment can result.

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

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

Pedagogues of note cite weighty arguments to show that the pedagogic is constituted in the didactic. Van der Stoep's pronouncement that educating is realized in teaching, and that the meaning of teaching is in educating is often mentioned. This also implies that a lesson situation is a continual reconstituting of the original educative situation.

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

However, in its essential structure, there is no difference between the original [home] pedagogic situation and a reconstituted lesson situation [school]. *Hence, it is more correct to view the original pedagogic situation and a formal lesson situation as two types of situations, both of which have as their primary aim a child's becoming adult.*

A formal lesson situation is differentiated from the original lesson situation in that it does not have a haphazard character, that it is specific in its purpose and, as such, shows a great deal of plasticity;

it also has a systematic course, and it is characterized by orderliness.<sup>28)</sup>

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

His/her participation in the teaching is now a matter of self-unlocking, his/her response to the teaching appeal is a matter of a learning involvement with the contents; briefly, the situational imperative is a matter of a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of his/her participation by learning.

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

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

Hence, problematic educating is insinuated into a disharmonious teaching situation. That is, the constituents of a problematic educative situation reverberate in a disharmonious teaching situation—and yet, the two types of situations are not precisely equivalent. Therefore, by means of a few situation-analyses, there is a search for what calls a disharmonious teaching situation into existence.

### 3. A SEARCH FOR CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS

## TEACHING SITUATION

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

As discussed in chapter one, this is an orthopedagogic (respectively, an orthodidactic) unraveling and interpretation of disturbed appearing psychopedagogical, didactic pedagogical, and fundamental pedagogical essences. Disharmonious teaching situations are analyzed against the background of the lifeworld, as experiential world, of children with learning problems.

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

- a) Neurologically handicapped children.
- b) Affectively disturbed children.
- c) Mentally handicapped children.

### 3.1 The neurologically handicapped child

At this point in time, it appears as if neurological handicaps have become a prominent subcategory of learning and educative difficulties, especially because of the apparently greater scope this phenomenon has begun to assume. Without discussing in detail this apparent increased comprehensiveness, it is sufficient to consider, in passing, a few contributing factors which today are inclined to have increasing importance: A greater awareness of those children with learning problems who do not show conspicuous deficiencies or disturbances regarding the sensory, motor, emotions and intelligence has taken root from a variety of places. Interest in and concern about these [types of] children has led to purposive and intensive research from a variety of disciplines, the results of which are more refined and sophisticated, differential diagnostic procedures. Thus, children who previously had remained unidentified, and whose under achievements were attributed to a variety of other factors, have now become identifiable and,

nowadays, assimilated into the frame of the neurologically handicapped.

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

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

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

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

To acquire a grasp of the lifeworld of a neurologically handicapped child, we begin by touching lightly on a few typical behaviors.

### **3.1.1 Behaviors which influence the learning of a neurologically handicapped child**

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

that even hemiplegics show only a limited correlation with typical behavior problems.

Nevertheless, several authors, such as Cruickshank, Birch, Eisenberg, and others mention some typical behaviors which *can* be manifested by the neurologically handicapped.

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

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

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

### **3.1.1.1 Hyperkinesis or hyperactivity**

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

### **3.1.1.2 Attention disturbances**

A neurologically handicapped child is unable to limit his/her attention to what is important. Cruickshank<sup>37)</sup> describes the

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

### **3.1.1.3 Disturbed perceiving**

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

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

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

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

#### **a) Dissociation**

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

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

A neurologically handicapped child has trouble in bringing to what his/her attention is directed into an accurate mutual relationship with background data. Therefore, he/she is inclined to confuse foreground with background.

### c) Perseveration

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

### 3.1.2 Corporeality and learning

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

It is an indisputable existential fact that being-in-the-world is a bodily being-in-the-world. The body is the foundation, the preliminary outline of human existence as I.<sup>43)</sup> The body serves as an access to the world, as a springboard (Langeveld) for acquiring a grasp of the world. As such, a human being becomes bodily involved in the world such that the body can be viewed as a passage between a person’s spirituality and his/her involvement with what is objectifiable. And with this, it is not contended for one moment that the body is “nothing more” than a medium or instrument of existence. Bonekamp<sup>44)</sup> asserts directly that the body is experienced by the I. Linschoten<sup>45)</sup> concurs when he comments [In Dutch]: “Among all experienceable things, our body is the most our own”. I am present to myself to an entirely peculiar extent in my body members, by which I arrive at knowledge of the world.<sup>46)</sup> Therefore, if my hand gets hurt, it is *I* who hurts, and if the ear does not receive any sound, it is also *I* who does not hear.<sup>47)</sup>

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

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

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

A person continually finds him/herself in a world which is interspersed with fellow humans. Dasein is mostly *mitsein*:<sup>54)</sup> The world is that which I share with others, and it is a participation in the same world which constitutes being-with.<sup>55)</sup> A person, thus, gives sense and meaning within an existential field prepared by others and, therefore, existence is always co-existence. In truth, existence is only *real* existence (in contrast to possible existence) when one enters communication with another.<sup>56)</sup> Thinkers such as Camus, Sartre and Christoff also continually emphasize that the realization of a person must occur via the other, i.e., the world of fellow humans.<sup>57)</sup>

Contact with the other also occurs through the body. A person makes him/herself present through his/her body and, indeed, as

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the learning world, as experiential world, is viewed against the background of the above pronouncements, it suddenly seems that his/her corporeality, as a body-with-deficiencies, is a much greater obstacle in his/her constituting reality than can be inferred from the mere characteristics of a neurologically handicapped child. Namely, this involves not only the fact of bodily involvement and the resulting hindrance which the bodily deficiency brings about *but, as experienced corporality, this touches a child over the full range of his/her existence.* His/her body does not and can never have only instrumental value, but it also, and especially has encountering- and lived experiential-value.<sup>75)</sup>

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

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

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

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

It is known that lived experiencing on a labile-pathic level is not very conducive to adequately actualizing learning.<sup>78)</sup> When below attention is given to the actualization of the differentiated modes of learning by this child, it appears that the labile-pathic level of lived experiencing plays a predominant role in the act of learning.

### 3.1.3.1 The accompanying modes of learning

## a) Sensing

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

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

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

Thus, he/she is not able to continually elevate his/her level [of lived experiencing] because his/her objective attitude is deficient in his/her dialogue with reality. As a result of his/her hyperactivity, superficially speaking, it appears as if he/she explores his/her world adequately. However, on closer examination, it appears that, in terms of his/her experiencing, there is difficulty in an “intentioned turning to, an entering into, a dealing with, and an exploration of the things which constitute his/her immediate field of presence.”<sup>80)</sup> This serious defect in experiencing again gives rise to the inadequate realization of the essences of becoming.<sup>81)</sup>

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

A non-distanced and subjective way of lived experiencing is noted with these children, so it is accepted as evident that they will also not adequately differentiate and objectify.

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

#### **b) Attending**

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

Where sensing is the first being concerned with the contents, paying attention (attending) is a readiness to remain involved with them. Paying attention, thus, implies a sharpened learning intention, during which the totality of a child's learning potentialities are focused on the matter of relevance.<sup>86)</sup> In itself, this predisposes taking a gnostic-cognitive attitude because by willing, lived experiencing, experiencing and knowing, a child penetrates to the real essentials of the matter.

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

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

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

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

Considering his/her problematic educative situatedness is affectively distressful, the behavior pattern of a neurologically handicapped child acquires new significance, especially when it is interpreted from the perspective of lived experience. His/her hyperactive behavior and disturbed attending are now viewed as a desperate attempt to acquire a grip on reality by means of adequate attending. Bender<sup>92)</sup> expresses this as follows [In English]: "One may say the hyperkinesis may be understood as an effort continually to contact the physical and social environment, to re-experience and integrate the perceptual experiences in a continual effort to gain

some orientation in the world”. On the same matter, Ross<sup>93)</sup> asserts that hyperactivity, perseverations, distractibility, and impulsivity are results of an inability to selectively attend. He also says that, as a child becomes older and, thus, more able to selectively attend, hyperactivity correspondingly decreases.<sup>94)</sup>

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

### 3.1.3.2 The gnostic-cognitive modes of learning

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

*Perceiving*, as an instantiating, objectifying act of learning, which is especially directed to analyzing, comparing, ordering, and synthesizing, as necessary steps in solving a problem, is actualized with difficulty by such a child. If it is kept in mind that he/she continually struggles with problems of analysis and synthesis on both an auditory and visual level, it appears that a penetration to the essential nature of what he/she experiences perceptually is not adequately realized. Reversals, problems of sequencing, problems with the recognition of words and sounds are only a few indications of his/her inability to adequately realize perceiving as a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning.

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

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

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

From this, it is not surprising that authorities such as Johnson,<sup>101)</sup> Wepman<sup>102)</sup> and De Hirsch<sup>103)</sup> show that quantitatively and qualitatively, the language of a neurologically handicapped child is not up to standard. The previously cited research by Werner confirms the truth of this child's deficient grip of the abstract concept (in this case of "tools"). Tasks of defining and formulating,

as given to these children by De Hirsch<sup>104)</sup> also confirms that their language functions mainly on a concrete-visual level.

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

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

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

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

In summary, it is emphasized that learning is a unitary act, and that the various modes of learning are presented as mere distinctions in

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

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

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

In the following, attention is given to this child as he/she shows him/herself in a normal didactic situation.

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

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

When a neurologically handicapped child in a disharmonious lesson situation is focused on, this must occur against the background of the lesson structure. However, a complete analysis of all the essences of the lesson structure is not possible here. A few moments

in a lesson, which is designed for a nonhandicapped child, will be analyzed from a neurologically handicapped child's situatedness to show what is constitutive of a disharmonious teaching situation.\*

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

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

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

That the child question is given as a possibility to a neurologically handicapped child cannot be doubted in any respect. However, since the child question flourishes in parallel with self-differentiation, as an essence of becoming,<sup>116)</sup> and since he/she shows an inadequately thriving self-differentiation, it must be accepted that the child question, on its level of realization, does not appear on his horizon in an adequate way. His questioning attunement gives evidence of a deficient breaking through sensory lived experienced actualities. It is an indication of being unable to

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

break out of the immediately present, as pathically lived experienced sensing. Thus, the child question figures inadequately on a gnostic-cognitive level; the why-question, as a search for anticipated order, figures forth with difficulty and, thus, is a further indication of his/her vague and diffuse grip on life reality.

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

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

On the other hand, adequately ordered learning material offers security and stability to him/her and because of this, on the other hand, it offers an important foothold with respect to taking a more adequate cognitive attitude. Sonnekus<sup>118)</sup> views the ordering of learning material as ordering experiencing, willing and cognitive lived experiencing, and this holds true to a still greater extent for a neurologically handicapped child.

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

Myklebust and Johnson<sup>119)</sup> deem the *symbiotic* and *local lore principles of ordering* as extremely suitable for a neurologically

handicapped child. Because of his/her disorganization and confusion in unfamiliar situations, it is logical that a nearness to reality offers this child a foothold and these principles of ordering continually deserve close consideration.

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

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

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

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

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

Linking up with and supplementing the exemplary, a few comments are made regarding *learning and teaching aids*. In the case of the

neurologically handicapped child, the example plays a large and important role, especially because it can also be used as an aid to eliminate perceptual disturbances or to bring about understanding by structuring the “correct” perception. If in designing his/her learning and teaching aids, a teacher does not consider the perceptual disturbances of a neurologically handicapped child, the chance of a harmonious teaching event is slim.\*

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

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

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

Finally, it is emphasized that an adequate actualization of the *fundamental pedagogical relationships* is essential for establishing a

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

harmonious lesson event. Because of this child's labile pathic lived experience, which lead to insecurity, anxiety, and educative distress, it is a teacher's task, in presenting a lesson, to allow the fundamental pedagogical essences to harmonize with the contents and a child's actualization of learning. His/her task is that he/she must especially integrate trust, authority and understanding, in *nuanced* and *refined* form, into his/her unlocking.

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

## **3.2 The affectively disturbed child**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

At the beginning, it must be clearly stated that the aim is not to provide a comprehensive and penetrating discussion of the problem of affectively disturbed children. The primary purpose is to give an explanation and interpretation of an affectively disturbed child as situated in a problematic teaching situation with the aim of disclosing constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation. By disharmonious constituents of teaching is meant disharmonious moments of self-actualization which can result from or can be correlated with, or be the result of a disharmoniously guided actualization.

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

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

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

Second, affectively disturbed children do not show the same behaviors. The problem is so comprehensive that it houses a diversity of “types” or “syndromes”. Thus, for example, a child difficult to educate, a traumatized child, an educationally neglected, a “psychopathologized” child, a child unprepared for school, and even an autistic child, falls within the scope of “affectively disturbed”.

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

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

In addition, each description involves a value judgment<sup>130</sup>) which, strictly speaking, involves taking a personal standpoint, and one acquires insight into the extremely difficult problem of a general description of an affectively disturbed child. Paul<sup>131</sup>) states this thusly [In English]: “Emotional disturbance, perhaps more than any other handicap, interacts with the personal values of those who define it”.

Since an affectively disturbed child also lends him/herself to multidisciplinary intervention, especially from a medical and psychiatric perspective, there has been and is an inclination to view such a child as someone with an abnormality, a psychiatric deviation, or a pathological condition. Consequently, more than one attempt has been made to describe this child in psychopathological terms, and to make classifications accordingly. Here, Vedder’s<sup>132</sup>) classification of children with “disturbances in adjusting” serves as a good example, as he talks of psychotic, “psychopathologized” and neurotic children. Without denying that

some affectively disturbed children can, indeed, be housed within the scope of a psychopathology, from a pedagogical perspective, a strong position is taken against this direction of thinking. Labeling these children with images of illness would result in a child disappearing behind the image of illness, and that the possibility for differentiating and particularizing the provision of help can largely fall away. Laslett<sup>133)</sup> also makes objections against this [In English], "... because it has tended to deflect attention from the educational needs of maladjusted children, and it has tended to lead to an assumption that psychiatric disorders or pathological conditions are present in all these children and not only in some of them".

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

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

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

An affectively disturbed child with *retiring behaviors* is inclined to isolation and regression. His/her inconspicuous behaviors make him/her conspicuous. However, it is emphasized that this child is no less affectively disturbed than an aggressive child. This child withdraws into a world of daydreams and wild fantasies. He/she is anxious and shows unusual fears. He/she is selfish, oversensitive, and cries very easily. He/she has few friends. Moreover, he/she

brings on the anger of his/her fellow pupils because he/she is continually currying favors from his/her teacher.

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

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

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

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

### **3.2.2 The connection between learning and affect**

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

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

A caring association, thus, is essentially a sensitivity for things, an attuned being-there.<sup>139)</sup> As Bollinger<sup>140)</sup> shows, Dasein-space is primarily thrown open through an encounter with others and, as

Kwant,<sup>141)</sup> Jaspers<sup>142)</sup> and Bakker<sup>143)</sup> contend, the actualization of a person occurs via establishing meaningful relations with others, it is clear that the affect does not possess only a quality of reaction, but is a constituent of Dasein.

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

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

The attunement and original understanding may not be viewed under any circumstances as unconnected modalities.<sup>146)</sup> This original understanding is always present in the attunement, and all “Verstehen” is essentially attunement. “Befindlichkeit” and “Verstehen”, as such, are not only constitutive of the ground-structure of Dasein but, at the same time, they constitute the actualization of Dasein as an existential possibility.<sup>147)</sup>

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

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

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

Contemporary psychopedagogics underlines the mutual implication of learning and affect. Childlike learning means entering a dialogue,

as a dialogue elevation.<sup>149)</sup> Underlying the involvement in a dialogue is a confirmation of one of the primordial facts of being human, i.e., a wanting to be familiar with the world.<sup>150)</sup>

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

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

Learning and becoming, as equally primordial structures in the psychic life of a child in education, occur via modes of actualization. Sonnekus<sup>155)</sup> distinguishes sensing, attending, perceiving, thinking, imagining, fantasizing, and remembering as ways of actualization, or modes of learning.

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

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

By stable sensing is meant that a child has assimilated, via the modes of lived experiencing, his/her possessed experience to such an extent that he/she can break through [his/her sensing] and, in doing so, remain involved with the learning contents in an ordered way.<sup>160)</sup> This assimilation is possible only when a child experiences love, acceptance, security, encouragement, trust and understanding, i.e., when there is no educative distress.

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

His/her labile sensing and attending give rise to him/her not being directed to a search for the authentic sense and meaning of the learning contents. Distractive and hyperactive behaviors are common. Even so, this does not mean that he/she never finds him/herself in the world attending. Rather, because of a labile sensing, his/her attending can show inadequacies in its modes. In this connection, Ross<sup>161)</sup> mentions [In English] an “over-exclusive attention” by which he means a child is not attuned “... to focus on those aspects of a stimulus-complex which *carry the distinctive feature* (my cursive)... He is captured by one aspect of the stimulus and attends to it to the relative exclusion of all others”.

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

It is evident that the inadequate actualization of the accompanying modes of learning promotes an inadequate actualization of the gnostic modes of learning.

The above remarks imply that an affectively disturbed child’s *perceiving* is inadequately realized; apart from the fact that such a child *thinks* on a concrete-visual level, Hewett<sup>164)</sup> also mentions a

disordered and chaotic way of thinking, of an impulsive and uncritical approach to thinking; Leslett,<sup>165)</sup> Hewett,<sup>166)</sup> and others find an inadequate actualization of *remembering*; Shapiro<sup>167)</sup> finds that the *world of fantasy* of an affectively disturbed child, as shown in his/her play, is interspersed with anxiety, rage and feelings of shame. Sonnekus<sup>168)</sup> indicates that an affectively disturbed child seldom reaches the highest level of play, i.e., illusive play.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the above, it is noted there is an under actualization across the entire range of the psychic life of an affectively disturbed child. From lived experiencing a lacking sense of safety, which also is qualified as educative distress, he/she cannot learn adequately.

For a teacher to guide an affectively disturbed child to an adequate actualization of learning, he/she must consider the under actualized modes of learning. Hence, his/her lesson must be directed to eliminating and/or avoiding a child's labile-pathic emotional life.

To indicate some of the tasks with which a teacher is confronted in creating a harmonious lesson event with such a child, a few aspects of the lesson are referred to, after which the phases of the course of the lesson are put under a magnifying glass:

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

Since an affectively disturbed child is going to be weighed down by a labilized emotionality, from which he/she, on the one hand, has a

need for adequately actualized educative relationships and, on the other hand, he/she has difficulty realizing such relationships, a teacher is confronted with the task of breaking through these ambivalent feelings in presenting his/her lesson.

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

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

Are the parents too strict? And if so, in what respect, where and when? Are they too accessible? Are they available for him/her and do they accept him/her? Is there a harmonious marital relationship? Do the parents understand their responsibilities, also with respect to the demands of propriety under which they are placed? Etc.

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

disturbed child? Do I understand his/her involvement with the demands of propriety, which also can speak through the learning material?

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

This means that he/she must not only consider the reduced subject matter contents, but also the reduced “experiential world-contents” of a child, which he/she must moreover allow to harmonize with the subject matter contents. The lesson- and learning-aims must be nuanced because they also must incorporate pedotherapeutic aims, such as guiding a child to a readiness to learn, with the implicit imperative of stabilizing his/her emotionality.

Such a nuanced teaching aim involves placing a different emphasis on *reducing the learning material*. It will continue to involve disclosing the essentials in terms of the lesson aim, but now a teacher must identify affective footholds or hindrances in the reduced learning material to emphasize or avoid them, respectively. His/her reductions must also occur against the background of a child’s foreknowledge in terms of the lesson themes. He/she must anticipate to what extent the affectively disturbed child’s learning problems have enabled him/her to achieve adequate learning effects, etc.

*This amounts to an affectively disturbed child continually finding him/herself in a disharmonious lesson situation if the lesson design is not directed to his/her specific affective disturbance.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Where an affectively disturbed child gives evidence of an inadequate actualization of these [accompanying] modes of learning, a teacher should strictly attend to means for stabilizing a child's sensing and attending to allow remembering to be actualized adequately.

Thus, recognized stimulating means such as newness, surprise, change, complexity, etc.,\* must be implemented with caution. Because of this child's inclination to sense on a labile-pathic level, a teacher must be on guard against too broad a beginning regarding making a lesson stimulating. A purposeful lesson stimulation, presented in a trusting, safe atmosphere will contribute greatly to a pupil adequately attending and remembering and, thus, will actualize his/her foreknowledge.

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

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\* See Chapter Three.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An affectively disturbed child’s labile emotionality, and the correlated inadequate actualization of learning, therefore, necessitate an act of unlocking which also must occur in terms of psychotherapeutic principles. The positional nearness of a teacher, his/her structured and ordered presentation, the purposeful realization of the fundamental pedagogical relationships are all matters which must receive the closest attention.

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

A more concrete approach provides, on the one hand, a strong affective foothold to him/her and, on the other hand, it forms a basis from which he/she can eventually acquire a grip on the conceptual and abstract.

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

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

A stable sensing and attending always remain an essential condition for adequately actualizing thinking and, therefore, a teacher, with all pedagogical means at his/her disposal, must try to stabilize a child emotionally.

The phase, *actualization of learning contents* is of cardinal importance for an affectively disturbed child. Where this embraces the control of a pupil's insight into and grip on the unlocked learning contents, and where, because of labile sensing and attending, possible gaps in the mastery of the contents can arise, this lesson phase can not and might not be taken up lightly.

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

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

cautious middle course between an unnecessary verbose and a superficial control by which the essences of the lesson contents are not dealt with. Both extremes include the possibility of a labilized attending.

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

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

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

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

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

In as much as the evaluation of an affectively disturbed child does not differ essentially from the usual modes of evaluation, it suffices

to anticipate the same didactic principles, modes of learning and teaching and learning aids which normally are anticipated in this lesson phase.

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

### **3.3 A mentally handicapped child**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

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

Under the current approach [in South Africa] children are classified as mentally handicapped when their intelligence quotient falls between 80 and 90. Thus, they are somewhat less gifted than a child of average intelligence and, therefore, the actualization of their psychic life occurs more slowly.

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

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

To determine what a teacher must consider regarding a mentally handicapped child in his/her lesson design, his/her learning world, as an experiential world, is examined:

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

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

A mentally handicapped child is someone who eventually can succeed in abstracting (as an essence of adequate thinking), but he/she can never have at his/her disposal a flexible and supple mastery of what is abstract. In other words, an ordered cognitive attunement on an abstract level does not fall within his/her potentialities for mastery. Since the human surrounding world is permeated with abstract concepts, this means he/she cannot acquire a proper grasp of the world of meaning. In other words, a world of meaning does not entice him/her to respond adequately.

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

Mathematics requires rigorously logical acts of thinking in which the understanding of number is deemed to be of cardinal importance. Since Dumont<sup>188)</sup> proposes classifying and serial-ordering as

preconditions for understanding number, it is understandable that it is difficult for a mentally handicapped child to break through to understanding number. Therefore, in general, such a child views mathematics as his/her “most difficult” subject.<sup>189)</sup>

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

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

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

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

handicapped child, indeed, crosses the threshold, but still feels ill at ease in it.

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

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

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

In many respects, *reducing the learning material* is decisively important for establishing a harmonious lesson event. In the case of this child, it is so much the more so because the reduction must allow for such factors as his/her attenuated possessed experience, inadequate readiness to learn, as well as the ways in which his/her insights can be restructured.

As in the case of a neurologically handicapped child, the question arises about if and how the elemental appears on the learning landscape of a mentally handicapped child. Is he/she able to handle the elemental, especially considering that its real meaning can only come to its full fruition if a pupil has acquired all the related proficiencies relevant to it?<sup>192)</sup> Considering his/her labile affectivity, his/her deficient cognitive learning potentialities which, moreover, are under actualized, in each case, it seems that *should*

*he/she, indeed, be able to handle the elemental, this can only occur by means of carefully designed measures of guidance.*

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

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

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

In this connection, it is of cardinal importance that the statement of the problem flow from and link up with the lifeworld of a mentally handicapped child. It must be continually kept in view that his/her lifeworld—no matter how superficial and unstructured it might appear to an adult—provides a definite “foothold” for him/her. He/she is satisfied with what his/her world offers him/her, and he/she lives his/her world without asking questions about the essentialities of it. The design of stating the problem must find a connection with this, if it is to be in any sense meaningful to this child. By implication, this includes a *simple, singular, and concrete* question which must guide the child step by step to lived experience a problem.

From the nature of the matter, this lived experience of a problem must occur via stable sensing and attending and, therefore,

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

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

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

With a mentally handicapped child, because of his/her affective distress, there also is a labile-pathic sensing, but his/her unstructured rather gives evidence of a deficient grip in the essentials and an inadequate insight into the mutual relationships among contents.

In designing a lesson, a teacher must thoroughly allow for these gaps. Without wanting to discredit other principles of ordering—by the nature of the matter, a variety of factors determine the choice of a particular principle of ordering—indeed, it seems that the symbiotic, concentric, and linear principles have a particularly valuable role to play.

The *symbiotic principle of ordering* speaks for itself.

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

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

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

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

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

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

attunement to, anticipation of and pedagogic sensitivity for such a child's situatedness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

##### **4.1 Disharmonious pedagogical relationships**

No teaching event can progress harmoniously when the fundamental pedagogical relationships appear as disturbed or are inadequately realized. A disharmonious teaching situation is characterized by a feeling of mutual frustration. A child's inadequate learning result leads to a teacher feeling estranged because, among other things, he/she experiences a child's failures as reflecting his/her own teaching. Thus, he/she does not make him/herself available to a child as a trust-bestowing, authority-

bearing and understanding educator. Moreover, he/she is not prepared to direct his/her teaching to the actualization of learning of a specific child with learning problems.

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

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

#### **4.2 Affective distress**

With a child, affective distress is always educative stress. In essence, affective distress means a need for educative safety. A child in affective distress experiences his/her educative situatedness as meaningless and threatening. Therefore, a child with learning problems can only accept the disharmonious teaching situation in these terms.

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

### 4.3 Experience of being different

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

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

### 4.4 Inadequate realization of cognitive potentialities

Given the relationships among the above constituents, it is not strange that the analyzed situations continually show an inadequate actualization of cognitive potentialities. Whether this is now ascribed to endogenous or exogenous factors, teaching is seriously impaired in those situations. Understandably, this is related to the following aspect, i.e., that the level of achievement by which a learning result is interpreted under the different and more comprehensive concepts than “deficient learning results”.

### 4.5 Deficient learning results

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

#### 4.6 Incorrectly anticipated didactic lesson designs

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

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

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

As connecting factors between the lesson- and learning-aims, the *learning contents* contribute decisively in various respects to constituting a disharmonious teaching situation. The *amount* and *type* of contents also are of decisive importance. Too much or too little content, in some circumstances, can result in inadequately disclosing or even glossing over their inherent meanings.

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

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

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

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

## 5. SYNTHESIS

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

Since a teacher's lesson design is based on the assumption that each child learns adequately, that each has at his/her disposal a more or less homogeneous possessed experience (with respect to a lesson theme), and that each can adequately meet the general criteria for adulthood, it is not surprising that teaching these types of children proceeds disharmoniously.

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

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

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

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