

THE DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION: GUIDELINES FOR ORTHODIDACTIC PRACTICE*

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1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In contrast to the accepted practice of approaching a child with learning difficulties, as an isolated entity, as someone robbed of his/her landscape, in the present study, learning difficulties are viewed against the background of a disharmonious teaching situation.

Despite the remarkable progress in constructing orthodidactical theory, and its gradual fruitful influence on practice, the latter is still hindered by obsolete ideas and unfounded activities. A reason for this probably lies in a conception of learning difficulties which is based on an unaccountable philosophical anthropology. In a period when medical-psychiatric-psychological intervention ruled the domain of learning difficulties with an almost absolute dictatorship, the idea took root that these difficulties are the result of inherent disturbances and deficiencies which can be neutralized or controlled by training specific functional disturbances. Without underestimating its importance, however, it is an irrefutable fact that an absolutist view of this kind seriously restricts and attenuates orthodidactic practice. This standpoint not only repudiates the didactic-pedagogical situatedness of a child with learning difficulties but, in fact, it reduces child existence to a stimulus-response process.

Because, in the recent past, the phenomenological establishment of categorical educative structures gave rise to different pedagogical part-perspectives (e.g., fundamental pedagogical, didactic pedagogical, and psychopedagogical), orthodidactics now is able to clarify the problem of learning difficulties in terms of them. An approach of this nature, by which a theme such as "learning

* [EDITED March 2023] *Pedagogiekjoernaal* (1982) Vol. 3, No. 2, 27-39.
For a detailed and documented discussion see Du Toit, A.S. (1980), **Die disharmoniese onderwyssituasie: Riglyne vir die ortodidaktiese praktyk**. Unpublished D.Ed. dissertation, University of Pretoria.

difficulties" can attempt to be interpreted and explicated from joint pedagogical perspectives, raises the question of the scientific status of orthodidactics.

2. THE SCIENTIFIC STATUS OF ORTHODIDACTICS

An approach which allows the orthodidactic situation to be interpreted and particularized in terms of the essentials of the part-perspectives of pedagogics gives rise to the following questions:

- * why is orthodidactics committed to particularizing and interpreting, by using the essentials of educating disclosed by the other part-perspectives?
- * why doesn't orthodidactics have its "own" categorical structure; in other words, why can't orthodidactics also reveal essentials of educating?

Because of their own awareness of essentials, fundamental pedagogics, didactic pedagogics and psychopedagogics disclose essentials of educating which provide a perspective on the reality of educating **in which pedagogical essentials are adequately actualized**. To view pedagogical essentials presupposes the presence of adequately actualized essentials, otherwise they wouldn't exist, and couldn't be viewed. Hence, the harmonious educative event is the "originator" of a disharmonious. Since an inadequate educative event is the focus of orthopedagogics (and an inadequate teaching event is the focus of orthodidactics), **their scientific aim cannot possibly be to reveal essentials**. Confused-appearing essentials cannot be revealed in their essentiality. No confused-appearing essentials can make the claim to orthodidactic categorical status simply because, from an orthodidactic perspective, they are distorted. Adequately actualized essentials are always the "originators", in the sense that they are viewed "earlier"; they first must appear in their adequately actualized form before an essential can be typified as confused, attenuated, or inadequate.

3. THE PROBLEM OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION

Specifying a lesson situation as disharmonious is possible only by making inferences and interpretations from a harmonious lesson situation. Experience shows unambiguously that an educative event takes its course by means of lesson situations. Educating occurs by means of lessons, as necessary formal implementations of a

sequence structure. This implies that educating is actualized by teaching and that the meaning of teaching is rooted in educating (Van der Stoep¹) because teaching exposes life contents in accordance with which a child is guided to proper adulthood.

Moreover, a child evidences his/her own participation in a lesson event by entering it in an act of unlocking (opening) him/herself to the life contents. Thus, a teaching event progresses by means of two clearly distinguishable acts, i.e., a guided-actualization and a self-actualization, for which the life contents (now learning contents) are the focus. If it is considered that pedagogical essentials are constitutive of the educative reality then, necessarily, the lesson situation is made possible not only by functionalizing the pedagogical essentials, as disclosed by the various part-perspectives of pedagogics, but they show relationships with each other, as they originate in practice. The relationships with each other these pedagogical essentials show through the essentials of the contents, are preconditions for a harmonious lesson situation.

A harmonious lesson structure is where there is harmony between form and content, as they are put into motion by the didactic modalities. This implies that guided- and self-actualization should harmonize with the lesson content. This is possible only if there is a balanced interplay among the lesson and learning aims, the principles of actualization, the teaching and learning aids, etc. Then, a child gains access to the elemental contents in such a way that they become changed to fundamental contents, and then there is an adequate learning effect. This further implies that the essentials of fundamental pedagogics, of teaching, and of learning are harmoniously actualized in a lesson situation.

Thus, the disharmonious, in fact, is a "degenerate" harmonious situation. Thus, orthopedagogics (respectively, orthodidactics) cannot be qualified as an essence seeking science. Indeed, orthopedagogics designs its own conceptual system which, in contrast to the normal course of educating, stresses particular qualitative accentuations, and refinements. Disclosing the structural, as an ontic fact, thus, is beyond the scope of orthopedagogics. Rather, its focus is on the ways the pedagogical constituents are put into motion in an orthopedagogic situation. Ter Horst² says, rightly, that orthopedagogics merely poses practical questions, and that it is an eminently practical science.

Considering the above, Van der Stoep's assertion acquires increasing value when he states that the task of orthopedagogics is two-fold, i.e., interpreting generally valid descriptions for an orthopedagogic situation, and research aimed at the modifiability of these descriptions in an orthopedagogic framework, as a particularized matter.³

4. A SEARCH FOR CONSTITUENTS OF A DISHARMONIOUS TEACHING SITUATION

A search for constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation must necessarily stem from an analysis of a few such situations within which children with different kinds of learning difficulties find themselves. The common particulars thus obtained, can be viewed as constitutive of a disharmonious teaching situation.

The following children with learning difficulties are discussed in the original dissertation as they find themselves in a normal didactic situation: the neurologically impaired child, the affectively disturbed child, and the child of low ability. By means of a macrostructural analysis of the situatedness of these three types of child with learning difficulties, viewed as examples of three frequently occurring causes of learning difficulties, several common particulars are revealed, are offered as possible constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation.

4.1 Disharmonious pedagogical relationship

No teaching event can proceed harmoniously when the fundamental pedagogical relationship appears to be confused or actualized inadequately. A disharmonious teaching situation is characterized by a feeling of mutual frustration. A child's inadequate learning leads a teacher to feel alienated, because he/she experiences a child's failure as a reflection of his/her own teaching. Therefore, he/she does not make him/herself available to a child as a trustworthy, authoritative, and understanding educator. Moreover, he/she is not prepared to direct his/her teaching to a child's specific learning. On the other hand, he/she fails to try to grasp and understand a child, in his/her being different. He/she doesn't notice a child's distress, and possibly is unaware of his/her specific deficiency in learning.

A child experiences the confused pedagogic relationship as contributing further to his/her distress. Possibly he/she experiences his/her teacher as an unapproachable, and unsympathetic authority figure who confronts his/her problem without understanding. He/she seems to be unapproachable because they do not trust and accept each other. Consequently, a child shows indications of anxiety, insecurity, tension, etc. by which he/she makes known his/her need for an adequate pedagogic relationship.

4.2 Affective distress

For a child, affective distress is always pedagogic distress because he/she experiences his/her educative situation as meaningless and threatening. The close relationships among affectivity, intentionality, and the cognitive imply that a labile affectivity wreaks havoc on his/her intentional directedness, as well as on his/her cognitive attunement. Sensing, as an affective, accompanying mode of learning, then shows a lability which necessarily impedes adequate learning.

4.3 Lived experience of being different

Owing to the direct and purposeful character of a formal teaching situation and, with this, a continual evaluation of his/her learning, a child with learning difficulties repeatedly finds him/herself to be a failing person in the eyes of others. He/she experiences him/herself as someone who cannot meet expectations, as someone who is being excluded. Therefore, a child with learning difficulties manifests a negative self-image, which not only contributes to a further under actualization of his/her psychic life but, especially, leads to an obscure perspective on the future.

4.4 Inadequate actualization of cognitive potentialities

Because of the particular relationships among the above constituents and the cognitive potentialities, it is not surprising that an analysis of such situations repeatedly shows that these potentialities are inadequately actualized.

4.5 Deficient learning effect

Although not a constituent itself, deficient learning is a necessary consequence of a disharmonious teaching situation. It must be clearly recognized that the effects of learning are not and cannot be limited to the cognitive. Affective concerns also are relevant as are motor-physical dexterities and versatilities which drastically influence him/her in a situation of "learning about living". In fact, the above do not qualify as constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation **until** there is evidence that the result of learning clearly is deficient. This means that there must be a history of failures which show a cumulative effect.

4.6 Incorrectly anticipated lesson plans

Incorrectly anticipating particularizations of didactic plans (i.e., an incorrectly judged aspect of teaching) constitutes a disharmonious teaching situation, to the extent that the lesson is not attuned to a level a pupil can attain. For example, a teaching aim is not adjusted to the pedagogically attained and attainable level: it is mistakenly assumed that a child is on a level of knowledge, and his/her actualization of learning, becoming, etc., and on this erroneous basis, specific aims are set. With respect to a child with learning difficulties, in practice, this amounts to each lesson activity, to some degree, progressing inadequately, and each phase of the lesson constituting a disharmonious teaching situation. Finally, it is emphasized that the essentials of a lesson structure, and the essentials of each phase of its course can be a constituent of a disharmonious teaching situation, if they are not focused on a child's actualization of his/her modes of learning.

5. SOME CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLANNING AN ORTHODIDACTIC LESSON

Superficially, it seems that the constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation, and the particularized orthodidactic actions are poles apart, and are not involved with each other. This is true, and yet both play a cardinal role in planning an orthodidactic lesson. That is, particularized teaching activities should not be considered separately from a penetrating analysis of the constituents of a disharmonious situation. In practice, among other things, this should involve an analysis of orthodidactic diagnostic data to determine a beginning level. In other words, in formulating a teaching aim, all the personal, social, situational, and school data must be considered.⁴

In this connection, it is emphasized that an orthodidactic lesson cannot be differentiated from an ordinary didactic lesson in its essential structure. After all, educating takes its course by means of lesson situations⁵ and, because orthodidactic intervention is nothing more than educating, it too is a lesson situation in the true sense of the word. However, **the orthodidactic flavor of such a lesson lies in its different approaches, nuances, and particularizations.**

Just as subject didactics is focused on implementing pedagogical essences, so does orthodidactics focus on ways of implementing them in an orthodidactic lesson situation. Subject-didactics is attuned to an adequately actualized lesson situation. In contrast, orthodidactics considers ways of eliminating a disharmonious educative situation. Both subject-didactics and orthodidactics form an academic bridgehead between pedagogical theory and practice in the teaching situation in school because they both are concerned with making the particularization of general essences practical.

Particularization means lifeless⁶ pedagogical essences come nearer to being explained in detail so that, in refined form, they can be integrated with other pedagogical essences and, thus, create a harmonious practice. Subject-didactical and orthodidactic formulations give a suppleness and mobility (flexibility) to concisely described pedagogical essentials which are considered along with the specific nature of the lesson contents, a child's preparation, and abilities, as well as the potentialities and teaching style of the teacher/orthodidactician.

The above indicate that subject-didactic and orthodidactic pronouncements are relevant to each other, especially in those situations where children mainly experience problems with the subject contents. If it is true that an orthodidactic lesson differs from an ordinary didactic lesson only in emphases and nuances, the question arises as to how and to what degree the lesson aim figures in an orthodidactic lesson.

5.1 The general aims of educating

Because educating is actualized in teaching, and teaching finds its meaning in educating (Van der Stoep), it is logical that the aim of educating always is included in the aim of teaching. The aim of educating is formulated by Landman⁷ as follows: the educand must

gradually live the norm image of adulthood to an adequate degree. This implies value possibilities which can and must be unlocked through pedagogic intervention. The aims of educating are raised in formal teaching and, from a subject-didactic perspective, are particularized and finely nuanced into teaching aims.

Orthodidactic assistance has nothing else as its aim than a child's becoming adult. Also, its teaching aim has the overarching quality of eventual adulthood in view, but with this difference: its immediate aim is to bring about adequate learning. This aim presupposes eliminating a child's educative distress, and the under actualization of his/her psychic life so that he/she can again be taught in ordinary ways. For this, it is necessary that the pedagogical aim be nuanced in such a way that it directly links up with **what is attainable for the particular child with learning difficulties.**

In this connection, the views of Vliegenthart⁸ particularly carry weight as he, following Langeveld, distinguishes an educative aid, and an educative factor. He indicates that children, in an orthopedagogic connection, often are dependent on aids for attaining an educative aim. Where, normally, the same aim is attained by educative factors, i.e., in the unaccented daily course of educating, in an orthopedagogic situation, it often is attained by means of purposeful pedagogic intervention. The view that the aims of educating not only are necessarily considered in orthopedagogics (and, therefore, also in an orthodidactic lesson) but also must be tailored to a specific child can easily be confirmed irrefutably.

In an orthodidactic lesson, the aims of educating often have the character of being attained to the near future. It must be remembered that attaining a particularized educative aim, in every respect, is a precondition for eliminating his/her problematic teaching situation. On the other hand, the educative aim ensures that the child is not delivered to all kinds of techniques and procedures but that the intervention will always be pedagogical in nature.

5.2 The orthodidactic teaching aim

The above discussion of the educative aim should be read in the context of the orthodidactic teaching aim. The corrective event necessarily occurs in a formal orthodidactic situation, and this

implies that the teaching aim formulated will indicate the aim and direction of the assistance. An orthodidactic program of assistance can include aspects where the emphasis falls more on a pedotherapeutic facet. It is even possible that restraining behaviors must be rectified beforehand by pedotherapeutic intervention because they will hinder effective orthodidactic assistance.

Consequently, the orthodidactic teaching aim does not have in view only remedying a child's deficient subject knowledge or learning effect. It also involves abolishing and/or preventing a child's inadequate learning so he/she can again resume being taught in an ordinary didactic situation.

In contrast to an ordinary didactic lesson, the teaching aim of an orthodidactic program is largely determined by the results of an orthodidactic diagnosis. This also implies that reducing the orthodidactic learning content, stating the problem, arranging the learning content, the didactic modalities, etc. will be co-defined by these results. For example, an orthodidactician should again reduce the learning contents, as an already presented piece of reality, but now in terms of the following considerations:

- (a) what the child shows he/she is lacking or deficient regarding his/her possessed knowledge of the subject;
- (b) the pupil's inadequate level of actualizing learning;
- (c) the pupil's resistance to the subject contents which he/she has built up.

The above examples with respect to designing an orthodidactic lesson, in general, are essential aspects of orthodidactic practice. Yet, these are not the only data an orthodidactician needs to set up an accountable practice: the choice from the lesson structure information in question must be based on the data from the learning image. An accountable orthodidactic diagnosis aims at uncovering a learning image, as a particularized lived experience image, of a child. Therefore, diagnosing a child with learning difficulties does not only involve applying diagnostic and scholastic media which, at best, can clarify symptoms. The child is approached with an arsenal of pedagogical media, which elevates an orthodidactic diagnosis to an orthopedagogic one. In this way, the aim is to gain insight into the "different" (inadequate) meanings in the experiential world of the child with learning difficulties. This

diagnosis also involves an acquaintance with the child's actual disharmonious course of becoming adult.⁹

At another time, several orthopedagogic-orthodidactic media are discussed, and it will be concluded that they offer clear and decisive interpretation-possibilities. They provide information from the whole range of self-actualization. This information is interpreted pedagogically with the aim of obtaining a learning image, as a lived experience image. This means that all the information regarding the cognitive, affective, volitional, bodily modes of functioning, etc. are judged and interpreted in terms of the disharmonious educative situation. Only in this way can an orthodidactician acquire an understanding and clarification of the learning and learning effects of a child with learning difficulties.

6. GUIDELINES FOR THE PRACTICE OF ORTHODIDACTIC ASSISTANCE

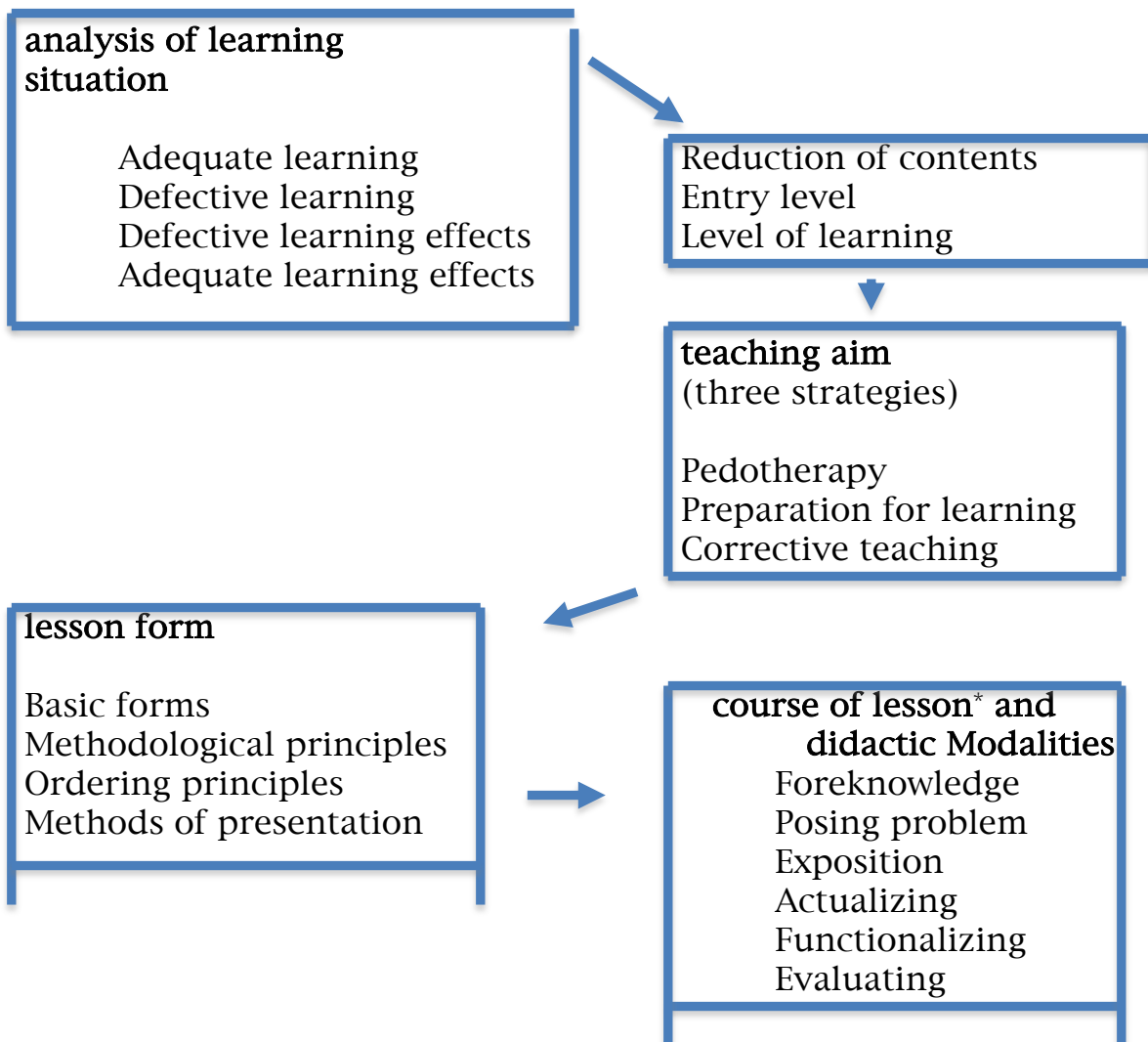
It is usually emphasized that orthodidactic assistance progresses by means of lessons, and that an orthodidactic lesson, in its essential structure, cannot be differentiated from an ordinary didactic lesson. Thus, "orthodidactics" is and remains "didactics", since a child with learning difficulties only learns inadequately, and not differently. Hence, the lesson structure contains the basic information needed for clarifying and designing an orthodidactic lesson.

The design of an orthodidactic lesson, at most, can be distinguished from an ordinary didactic lesson design in that its nuances and particularizations are attuned to the learning image of a specific child with learning difficulties. The lessons for the child are designed with the aim of by-passing certain under actualized modes of learning, of making greater use of adequately actualized modes, etc. to change a disharmonious into a harmonious teaching event. An orthodidactic diagnosis does not imply that it is merely necessary preparatory work; in fact, it is integrally united with designing an orthodidactic lesson.

Thus, for example, the analysis of the learning situation makes available, at least in reduced form, an image of the actualization of learning and, with this, an entry level for teaching. The orthodidactic teaching aim is based directly on these data and cannot be differentiated for a child without them.

Earlier, **educative distress** and an **under actualized psychic life** are shown to be possible constituents of a disharmonious teaching situation which result in an **inadequate learning effect** (or deficient learning effect). Thus, an orthodidactic teaching aim always includes a differentiation of these aspects. This amounts to three strategies, each of which is included in the teaching aim or which, in some circumstances, can be separately valid strategies, i.e., pedotherapy, preparation for learning, and corrective teaching.

Against the background of this cursory explication, the following orthodidactic model for assistance is offered, which also can be a guideline for a total orthodidactic practice:



* The first five phases of the course of a lesson are continually repeated; they also are characterized by checking and correcting.

7. REFERENCES

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