

THE EXPERTISE AND SKILLFULLNESS OF THE ORTHOPEDAGOGUE*

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1. Introduction

Orthopedagogic practice is attuned to assisting a child who manifests problems in personal becoming and learning. By means of special methods, such as pedotherapy, family therapy, and “remedial” teaching, an attempt is made to eliminate these children’s problems.

A historical exploration of the intervention with children who are restrained in becoming and learning, shows that this has occurred from a variety of perspectives and approaches, which vary from the naturalistically to the phenomenologically oriented. Depending on where the accent is placed in this interest in the “deviant” child, this assistance is viewed as a technique, as an applied science, or as an art.

As empirical sciences, psychiatry and psychology have taken the lead with respect to the child with behavior and/or learning problems, and the sporadic interest of educators contributed to reserving (also statutorily) the professional intervention with the child restrained in becoming especially for psychology.

From psychology, several explanations gradually arose of “personality development” and of “personality deviations”, and how to promote or eliminate them, respectively, in practice. These theories then served as a basis for establishing several models for designing practice. In due course, this contributed to an extensive knowledge structure on deviancy arising which, however, is deficiently grounded scientifically. This also contributed to the fact

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that a conspicuous characteristic of professional intervention with the child who is deviant or restrained in becoming, was a lack of a unitary approach regarding explanatory models and designing practices.

The directedness of an occupational field demands **expertise** and **skillfulness** of the professional functionary. Expertise refers to scientifically accountable **knowledge** regarding that with which the practical intervention is concerned; and skillfulness indicates that there are correct and efficient procedures.

The professional orthopedagogue's directedness to helping the child restrained in his/her becoming, demands of him/her that he/she have at his/her disposal scientifically founded knowledge regarding the child's **humanness** who, as a **person**, gives meaning to his/her world, as intentionality, as feeling, as attending, as perceiving, as thinking, etc. in terms of the event of becoming. This requires much more than merely the acceptance of theories in this regard; **skillfulness** also embraces not only the **application** of theories in terms of a flexibility in a few devices, which are applied as recipes.

From the above, practitioners of orthopedagogics, as a science directed to practice, must be able to conscientiously account for their expertise and skillfulness.

2. The expertise and skillfulness of the orthopedagogue

2.1 Introduction

When the numerous divergent, and often contradictory models and approaches which lack orthopedagogic accountability are considered, it is understandable why superficial theorists and credulous practitioners so readily hold the optimistic view that the terrain of aiding the deviant child is an autonomous discipline with its own knowledge structure and identity. However, the diversity of views which they show, clearly reflect the fact that they are not birds of a feather, and the question arises whether some swans and ugly ducklings perhaps ought not to change places or, at least, the pen ought to share a greater mutual acceptance of each other's ignorance, and acknowledged awkwardness, because the demands of

expertise and skillfulness present pertinent preconditions to those who will make claims about providing this assistance.

2.2 The demand of expertise

Expertise implies that a grasp has been attained of the essences of the phenomenon, as it shows itself. Deviancy or degeneration in a child requires an understanding of personal becoming. Today, there is no longer any doubt about becoming and educating being intertwined. An evaluation of the contemporary state of the pedagogical shows, without a doubt, that pedagogical pronouncements nowadays are formulated child-anthropologically, and the child is respected as a meaning-attributing person. As a basic science, pedagogics reflects on the reality of educating, analyzes, and describes it categorically (essentially). Many essences of educating have been disclosed, and their relation to a child's personal actualization and becoming have been shown. The reality of educating has been penetrated macro structurally, and accountably described from various pedagogical perspectives and, today new insights are still being added.

The so-called **basic** pedagogical perspectives have shown beyond any doubt which structures continually are and **must** be actualized to make a situation an educative one. Through actualizing these structures, possible actions momentarily become real actions when the educator and child participate together in the event by means of the active realization of the educative relationship, sequence, aim, and activity structures which are continually **given meaning** by the child.

By means of **activities**, the educator and child stand together in educative relationships by which the adult presents his/her unique manifest person, and creates a climate which can promote or dampen the child's personal actualization. However, the child him/herself also contributes to establishing this relationship, the climate, and the handling of the situation. Hence, there is a **functional** occurrence which points to the **effect** of **both** party's **activities** on the child's emotional, knowing, and normative attribution of meaning. This **educative functionality** always figures when the structures of educating go into motion.

This going into motion (actualization) of the essences of educating is qualified as the **dynamic of educating**, and this refers to the interaction between the child's and the educator's personal actualization, including their physical association, and results in the child attributing meaning on a higher level.

It is generally known that the structures of educating can be actualized disharmoniously in an educative situation, since a child's personal becoming does not occur automatically because, among other reasons, the dynamic of educating implies separate activities of the educator and the child being performed in unison. The child's personal flourishing is threatened by a dynamic of educating which is disharmonious.

The disharmonious dynamic of educating is described as that event in which the child's personal actualization and becoming occur inadequately under the guidance/accompaniment of the adult, and he/she appears conspicuous because his/her behavior harmonizes with the unfavorable meanings he/she attributes to him/herself on an emotional, knowing, and normative level, along with the [inadequate] actualization of the structures of educating, and the life contents, and is not in harmony with the behaviors which can be expected of him/her, in accordance with his/her level of becoming and personal potential.

The categorical structure of educating provides the indispensable basis for implementing orthopedagogic practice with respect to the disharmonious dynamic of educating. There is no educative situation where the essences of educating are not simultaneously brought into motion by educative activities, because each educative situation is a specific one in which the adult and the child participate in the event in certain ways, and act in personal ways.

Expertise regarding disharmonious educating also implies that the emphasis be placed on the scientific work connected with this, and it also refers to the attitude held, and the methodology followed in this regard. Consequently, this expertise also must continually fulfill the demands of being scientific and, in addition, the practice of science implies a continual "extension" of what one knows about

eliminating confusing activities with respect to the disharmonious educating. This always requires abstracting, determining strategies, constructing means, and much more.

Thus, the orthopedagogue is confronted with the task of first understanding, and explaining disharmonious educating, by using pedagogical categories to determine the quality of how the structures of educating appear. He/she also is obliged to take note of new categorical, criterial, and structural designs in the other pedagogical perspectives to interpret them in terms of their usability and specific relevance for the disharmonious dynamic of educating, and to incorporate them into his/her orthopedagogic theory.

This does not imply that the so-called basic pedagogical perspectives (similarly psychology) merely provide only the theory for the practice. The orthopedagogue must develop his/her own “theory”. As a pedagogue, and with reference to the pedagogical categories, the orthopedagogue is called to thoughtfully develop and order **relevant** data with respect to eliminating the problems connected with personal becoming and the educative **activities**.

To be able to penetrate to the essentials of a child’s becoming and learning deviations, the real **effects** of educating on the deviations are shown in terms of a macrostructural specification of how unfavorable attunements, defective learning effects, or deviant behaviors arise in children with reference to the acknowledgment of their basic personal becoming and learning needs.

This obligates the orthopedagogue to start from a convergence of the **relevant** insights from all the pedagogical perspectives. Everything which has relevance regarding the child’s personal structure, becoming and learning must be determined, explained, and interpreted by him/her.

As a perspective **aware of essences**, orthopedagogics itself continually ascertains the validity of the proposed macrostructure by linking up with the various “basic” perspectives to attain the required mobility, or refinement of it in his/her own explanations, and specialized practice. Such a macrostructural convergent

description, however, includes little more than generalized insights, which confronts the orthopedagogue with the task of eliminating vagueness from his/her own **particularizations**. Both the child's being restrained, and the deficiencies in educating must be particularized in their dynamic relationship and, e.g., aggressiveness, insecurity, emotional disturbance, defective learning, etc., as well as overprotection, rejection, lack of trust, deficient teaching, etc. are interpreted in this light.

This scientific work elevates the orthopedagogic to a full-fledged perspective, alongside the other practically directed pedagogical perspectives. As part of his/her theoretical work, the orthopedagogue also must show how he/she is able to arrive at a reliable selection of macrostructures to determine what is relevant to the under actualization.

Within the framework of this particularization, the distinction between orthopedagogic theory and practice can be correctly indicated. To the extent that the practicing orthopedagogue addresses him/herself to practice, he/she appeals to him/herself to particularize the macrostructures of educating. Therefore, he/she must be well acquainted with the pedagogical categories as such, and how they are reciprocally related, and also be able to show categorically how the child's personal actualization, becoming and learning are influenced by the actualization of educating and teaching.

Also, it is for these reasons that the orthopedagogue cannot ignore psychological categories. Especially regarding the child's personal potential and actualization, psychology, along with psychopedagogics, has established many insights, and have built up an extensive literature regarding child deviancy. The practically directed psychological perspectives have established a variety of sophisticated procedures of evaluation, diagnosis, and intervention which are an indispensable component for understanding and eliminating personal deviancy.

The orthopedagogue need not fear that he/she will jeopardize his/her own autonomy, if he/she recognizes accepted psychological procedures as such, since the mere adoption of these insights and

procedures alone is not sufficient to explain or eliminate child deviancies; first, they **must** be put in the context of the disharmonious educating or teaching. Similarly, one cannot provide a conclusive explanation of the disharmonious dynamic of educating or teaching from a specific “basic” pedagogical perspective [e.g., psychopedagogics]. Hence, it also is not the primary task of the orthopedagogue to verbalize valid pedagogical categories, but rather to express the nuances which these categories manifest in their inadequate appearance.

For example, the educationist who discloses the essences of educative relationships and expresses them categorically is a fundamental pedagogue; the educationist who expresses the psychic life of the child [in educating] categorically is a psychopedagogue; the educationist who reflects on ways of allowing these categories to be effectively set into motion in practice is a professional pedagogue; the educationist who reflects on how these categories can be effectively actualized in a teaching situation is a subject didactician. If the orthopedagogue contributes in this respect, he/she does so, not as an orthopedagogue, but as a fundamental pedagogue, psychopedagogue, didactic pedagogue or subject didactic pedagogue. His/her primary task is to analyze, from a grounded pedagogical macrostructural base, the role of the educator **and** the child as an integrated matter by describing, in his/her own concepts, the unsatisfactory **quality** of the actualization of the various essences of educating, with special reference to the **activities of educating** as such.

Basic knowledge regarding human deviancy does not fall only within one subject area, which suggests that a combination of subject areas can serve as a basis, especially where differentiated aims are formulated.

The orthopedagogue, who makes pronouncements with authentic expertise, however, is compelled to link these basic scientific pronouncements to an explanation of what a **person** is as a totality in his/her establishing relationships with reality. Here, it is especially the educationist and the psychologist who enter the foreground, because both study the human being as a becoming **person**. It also would be a mistake to view just the psychologist or

just the educationist as the primary provider of fundamental pronouncements regarding a person's becoming.

Reference to educational and also psychological pronouncements, however, does not imply that all pronouncements can be accepted as they stand. The **orthopedagogue** must reflectively and accountably incorporate these insights into his/her own theoretical referential framework, and his/her mobility in this connection will mainly determine his/her degree of expertise.

It cannot be denied that this expertise often shows many flaws. For example, it is not sufficient to declare **that** the pedagogical contributes to restraints in becoming and learning without showing the precise relevant connections! Therefore, even today, the fact is that, in many person images, the educative component is omitted by "pedagogues" in practice, and equally so by psychologists, because the educative component merely figures as a "detached" matter where there is no reference to the **dynamic** relationships among restrained becoming and learning, and the actualized essences of educating.

Therefore, the orthopedagogue has the task of making **pedagogically** acceptable descriptions of the disharmonious dynamic of educating and of teaching, and to design **pedagogically** valid and reliable evaluative, diagnostic and intervention procedures to adjust what is disharmonious. How well he/she succeeds at this determines his/her degree of expertise.

2.2 The demand of skillfulness

Skillfulness is related to designing an effective practice. Therefore, it is necessary to find a connection between the essentials of being deviant and the disharmonious educating or teaching and, in addition, to have at one's disposal knowledge regarding the design of practical strategies.

Ways and means must be designed and implemented to determine with confidence how the child's educative involvement restrains his/her personal becoming in terms of the inadequate acknowledgment of his/her basic personal and educative needs,

such as a lack of trust, misunderstanding, dependence, and more. **What** the effect is when there is a failure of the educative in meeting a unique child's needs must shown. The cardinal task is to reliably gauge the **controllable** and **abolishable** personal disturbances, and moments of interference, and design ways to neutralize or correct them.

The determination of the essences of a unique child's deviancy occurs via diagnosis, by which is specified the essences of educating which appear confused, and where they appear confused in relation to the child's **personal essences**.

This requires of the orthopedagogue that first, by means of using [essences as] criteria, macrostructural guidelines are drawn, or boundaries are demarcated within which this unique child's personal deviancy can be interpreted, and intercepted. With the emphasis on the disharmonious, he/she analyzes the **essences** of the miscarried educating, and of the deviancy of the unique child.

The orthopedagogue must be extremely mobile in the variety of techniques and procedures which figure during diagnosis, and also he/she gradually contributes to designing better and more effective methods, for example

- to particularize moments of personal deviancy in their essential nature,
- to determine **where** the personal and educative essences appear confused,
- what** they are, and
- to what degree do they appear confused, and
- to gauge the quality of the educator's actualizing his/her educative activities.

Furthermore, the orthopedagogue must be extremely mobile in strategies and techniques for giving assistance; this requires that he/she be well acquainted with all relevant therapeutic and teaching procedures.

The orthopedagogue must always show, beyond any doubt, that his/her "specialized" interventions with the personally deviant,

becoming, and learning restrained child is not based merely on devices and recipes which are accepted in good faith, but rather on scientifically founded views for designing his/her practice, and where he/she is grounded in procedures which are accountable.

He/she is confronted with the task of opposing any approach where theory and practice still figure separately. A solid theory alone is not enough; it must figure in designing real practice. Then, the mistake of designing some “specialized” practices on the strength of one or another specific psychological theory of a conspicuous symptom will become exposed by the practice itself. Then, the many fortuitous successes and failures, which still often characterize orthopedagogic practice, will be eliminated because then there will be a more coordinated contribution to an authentic **orthopedagogic** model.

2.4 Synthesis

From the above, today more than ever before, the orthopedagogue is faced with the task of very clearly distinguishing between theory and practice, in observance of our contemporary social composition, educational system, economic limitations, and more.

Via the particularization of pedagogical macrostructures, in their dynamic contexts, the orthopedagogue proceeds to a microstructural description of the specific “types” of educative situations, where specific essences of educating figure prominently as components of the disharmonious dynamic of educating or teaching. Only then can one arrive at an essential description in authentic orthopedagogic terms of, e.g., overprotection, insecurity, affective lability, and more.

Notwithstanding a categorical description of disharmonious educating in terms of the disharmonious functioning of specific educative and teaching structures, the investigation also must specifically be directed to a disclosure of the essences of the dynamic of the specific disharmonious phenomena of educating.

In addition, a refinement of the evaluative and diagnostic procedures must occur with the aim of incorporating converging insights into the functionality of educating and teaching.

The orthopedagogue must conscientiously respect the subtle differences between the practical orthopedagogic, and educative aims, i.e., the modification of meaning in contrast to broadening meaning, since it is precisely the disharmonious dynamic of educating which underlies the unfavorable affective, cognitive, and normative meanings of the child restrained in becoming and learning, since this change in meaning goes hand in hand with the elimination of the disharmonious dynamic of educating. Consequently, effective “remedial” teaching also can never be equated with a hastily designed beginning instruction.

Just as there must be continual cognizance of the latest insights of the didactic and subject didactic terrains because therapeutic guidance is not fundamentally different from teaching, there also must be cognizance of improvements in psychotherapeutic methods, which always must be orthopedagogically interpreted and justified.

In the search for the essences of disharmonious educating and teaching, empirical research should concentrate on elucidating **where** and **how** the essences of educating, in their relations with each other appear confused such that they underlie a certain “type” of deviancy. Extensive empirical research also is necessary for the effective design of orthopedagogic diagnostic, pedotherapeutic, family therapeutic, orthodidactic, and other such procedures.

Vague generalizations and popular clichés must be guarded against. For example, it must be shown **what**, indeed, is the emotional fallout of overprotection, marital problems, alcoholism, physical problems, deficient learning, etc. as disharmonious dynamic of educating. An interpretation of the **essences** of unsuccessful educating in terms of a qualitative description of the inadequate actualization of the essences of educating and teaching and their relationships to the child’s personal actualization in terms of restrained becoming and learning remains the aim of the orthopedagogue, as theoretician and practitioner.

This confronts him/her with the relentless task of converging his/her theory and his/her practice if he is not to be guilty of fragmenting and offering simple causes for behavior and learning problems which are presumed to be situated only in the child or only in the family setup.

Thus, the orthopedagogue is obliged to link up with disciplines other than the pedagogical, and to be cognizant of the extensive literature which is available. However, he/she must continually account as an “educationist” for the theory he/she uses for interpreting the phenomenon, and which serves as the “basis” for designing his/her practice so that he/she can arrive at generally valid orthopedagogic conclusions regarding the overwhelmingly great variety of explanations, modes, and techniques which are available today. In his/her own reflecting, disclosing, and designing strategies, he/she also must ascertain whether the view of humanity underlying the findings and conclusions is free of any metaphysical constructions.

AUTHOR’S ENGLISH SUMMARY

EXPERTISE AND SKILL IN ORTHOPEDAGOGY

Competence implies scientifically sound knowledge concerning the relevant field of practice, whereas skill refers to correct and efficient procedure.

The orthopedagogue is confronted with the task of illuminating and explicating dysfunctional educating and teaching in terms of the qualitative realization of pedagogical structures. This necessitates a convergence of relevant insights selected from the various pedagogical perspectives. However, these general structures should also be described in terms of specific situations. Furthermore, the orthopedagogue’s claim to competence demands that he/she has knowledge of other scientific disciplines which study the becoming person, e.g., psychology. It is, however, imperative that this knowledge should be pedagogically accountable.

Secondly, the orthopedagogue’s task includes designing pedagogically valid procedures for diagnostics, and assistance

to rectify dysfunctions. This constitutes the skill and stands in direct relation to the effectiveness of his/her practice. The orthopedagogue should be current with the procedures necessary to diagnostics, as well as the strategies and techniques of assistance.

A scientifically accountable approach by the orthopedagogue naturally implies the convergence of theory and practice.