

# CHAPTER I

## FROM REALITY TO SCIENCE

### 1. REALITY AS POINT OF DEPARTURE

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

In life reality, **educating** comes to the fore in **everything** which occurs between adults and children **and which has a child's becoming adult as its aim**. There is no doubt that educating is a comprehensive and complex phenomenon. Thus, the first question of concern which a scientist encounters regards a **method** which will allow him/her to penetrate and describe this phenomenon in its essentials.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **2. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD**

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

Since **phenomenology** is a scientific activity directed to disclosing and verifying essences (Landman, 1980, p 3), it is a method which is appropriate for use by an educationist. Nel (1968, p 1) indicates that, from the beginning of the 20th century, it is evident that the phenomenological method is the most effective for fathoming being human. Also, Landman and Roos (1973, pp 14-15) say that it is only through a phenomenological attitude that being human can be understood in its totality. According to them, an authentic pedagogical perspective on reality is only possible if it is a phenomenological one. It is only when the educationist is prepared to clarify the **reality of educating** by taking it as his/her point of departure, and is ready to perceive, describe, and explain that **reality** as what it essentially is that the scientific and autonomous character of pedagogics emerges as a possibility.

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

A **phenomenological study** of the reality of educating means that several **steps** are followed (Landman and Gous, 1969, pp 31-33; Landman and Kilian, 1972, pp 83-90): After he/she delimits this phenomenon within the totality of reality as his/her point of

departure and area of study, he/she begins a search for (1) **general, essential characteristics** (essences) of the phenomenon, as what always holds true anywhere and anytime. To do this, he/she must (in thought) penetrate as large a variety of educative situations as feasible and describe the seeming essentials which he/she discovers. Then he/she must (2) determine whether these apparent essentials he/she describes are **necessarily true** (valid) for each educative situation. Finally, he/she must also (3) determine the **relationships** among the different essentials to clarify their educative significance and structure.

Essentially, the phenomenological method is several **reductive steps**, i.e., **phenomenological, eidetic, and transcendental reductions** (for a full discussion see Landman, 1980, pp 12-25), and each of them is carried out as **steps of thought** to disclose the **structure** (or universal form) of educating and describe it as such. After this, an educative event can be returned to and improved, if necessary, in the light of these scientific findings.

### 3. PEDAGOGICS AS SCIENCE

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

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

As mentioned, educating is a **human** activity which comes to the fore in everything which occurs between adult and child, **and** which has the child's becoming adult as its aim.

From the above, **pedagogics is the science which studies everything regarding educating, as what appears and is actualized between adults and children, and which reveals and describes what is essential to it.**

### 3.1 The underlying anthropology

Before the part-perspective of psychopedagogics is reflected on, there is a brief indication of the **philosophical anthropology**, or **child anthropology** (view of the nature of being human), underlying pedagogics and, thus, its part-perspectives.

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

Since psychopedagogics focuses on a person, and particularly on a child in an educative situation (see further on), the primary scientific findings of psychopedagogics also are rooted in its underlying philosophical anthropology.

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

Further, a person is viewed as **openness**, which implies that he/she stands open to the world. He/she does not merely react to the things in his/her world but he/she **answers** by making choices, discovering new values, and especially by attributing **sense and meaning** to his/her world. He/she also is **intentionality**, which has his/her **openness for** as one pole and his/her **directedness** to his/her world as the other pole. By means of his/her intentionality, he/she goes out to reality, is actively involved with it and comes to know more of it. To direct him/herself to his/her world implies that he/she is also **potentiality** (possibility). Nel (1968, p 13) says a person continually manifests him/herself in new forms and, therefore, he/she is **not finalized** but is continually **changing**. He/she is incomplete, unfinished, and unpredictable (Sonnekus, 1973, p 5). Indeed, he/she enters the world as potentiality, and to become adult, his/her potentialities must be actualized.

To actualize his/her potentialities, he/she must be involved with reality. He/she can be involved because he/she lives in the world through his/her **body**, which also is the **center** from which he/she lived experiences the world around him/her. Thus, a child is **corporeality** since he/she actualizes his/her potentialities in and through his/her body. However, he/she is not completely controlled by or surrendered to his/her physical being. The driving power behind his/her bodily involvement in the world is his/her **personal core** (Nel, 1968, p 19). To the question **who** and **what** is a human being, it is answered

that he/she is a **person** (Van Niekerk, 1976, p 25). In his/her deepest being, a person is a **spiritual** being, which implies that he/she has a **spiritual core** out of which personal actualization occurs. Thus, the concept “person” points to this core of being human and besides being corporeality, he/she is **spirituality**. Without a penetrating discussion of this matter, it is said that person indicates that a human being is a “**someone**” and not merely an “**it**” (a thing, object) (Engelbrecht et al., 1982, p 16). A child is born a person, but at birth his/her being a person is present as **potentiality** (Nel, 1968, p 19) and it is especially through his/her parents' intervening and his/her own involvement in his/her becoming adult that person-forming thrives. Hence, as person, he/she transcends the merely physical. However, bodiliness, psychic life (see further on), and spirituality are closely intertwined. A child directs him/herself as a **totality** to his/her world and, thus, personal actualization implies an act which involves the totality of his/her potentialities. Here totality does not refer to the sum of body, psyche, and spirit, it refers to being human in the broadest sense of the word, such as his/her **relationship** to his/her world. It is especially because of this totality which educating is at all possible, because it provides the opportunity for an **educative relationship** between adult and child.

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

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

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

As already mentioned, pedagogics, along with its different part-perspectives, has its point of departure and area of study in the phenomenon of educating as it occurs within the primordial reality of educating (as family upbringing). Each of the part-perspectives projects its own perspective on the **totality** of this reality. Or stated otherwise, each directs its own questions to the educative phenomenon which it then tries to answer through a phenomenological study of the reality of educating. Thus, for example, **fundamental pedagogics** asks about the **essentials of and preconditions for educating** and **didactic pedagogics** about the **essentials of teaching** in an educative situation while **orthopedagogics** is directed to **disharmonious educative events** and the correlated **restrained becoming adult** of a child. Without elaborating on the other part-perspectives, subsequently, attention is given to the perspective of or questions asked by psychopedagogics.

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

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

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

As one of the constituents of the educative situation, a child him/herself necessarily also has a share in his/her personal actualization. In agreement with Langeveld, Engelbrecht et al. (1982, p 10), say in this respect that a child **him/herself** is the most important pilot of his/her own growing up. Surely, it is always a child in an educative situation who must become adult and, from an anthropological view, he/she has the potentialities to gradually change from a child to an adult. However, psychopedagogics wants to know **how** he/she actualizes his/her potentialities, **how** he/she changes, **how**he/she acts, **how**he/she responds to the accompaniment of the adults, etc. Thus, there is a search for the **essentials of personal actualization** to obtain an image of how becoming adult occurs.

Phenomenologically, it is found that the child's share largely resides in the fact that, under adult accompaniment, he/she **gives sense and meaning** to his/her being educated and, in this way, he/she **actualizes** his/her **potentialities**. Hence, he/she changes or his/her **becoming** takes place. Hence, **giving meaning** is at the foundation of a child's own share in his/her personal actualization and, hence, psychopedagogics is particularly interested in **how** personal actualization occurs by a child giving meaning within an educative situation.

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

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

#### 4. PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

In the above discussion a concise overview is given of the primary method used to scientifically study educating. As indicated, this approach has its point of departure in the **reality of educating** and, especially with the help of the **phenomenological method**, this reality is investigated to disclose and **describe** its structures and, in doing so, this gives rise to a science of education or pedagogics. Pedagogics itself is further refined by several part-perspectives, of which psychopedagogics is one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. REFERENCES

- Behr, A.L. 1980 **Psychology and the school**. Second edition. Durban: Butterworths.
- De Wet, J.J., Montieth, J.L. de K., Steyn, H.S. and Venter, P.A. 1981 **Navorsingsmetodes in die opvoedkunde**. Durban: Butterworths.
- Engelbrecht, C.S., Kok, J.C. and Van Biljon, S.S. 1982 **Volwassewording**. Durban: Butterworths.
- Jacobs, L.J. and Vrey, J.D. 1982 **Selfkonsep, diagnose en terapie**. Pretoria: Academica.
- Kachelhoffer, P.M. 1983 Die verband tussen leerdoelwitte en evaluering. **UP-dosent**, vol. 4, no. 1.
- Landman, W.A. 1983 Leer gesien vanuit fundamenteel-pedagogiese perspektief. **Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Opvoedkunde**, vol. 3, no. 1. **English translation:** [georgeyonge.net/node/15](http://georgeyonge.net/node/15)
- Landman, W.A. (Ed.). 1980 **Inleiding tot die opvoedkundige navorsingspraktyk**. Durban: Butterworths.
- Landman, W.A. and Gous, S.J. 1969 **Inleiding tot die fundamentele pedagogiek**. Johannesburg: Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel.
- Landman, W.A. and Kilian, C.J.G. 1972 **Leesboek vir die opvoedkunde student en onderwys**. Cape Town: Juta and Kie.
- Landman, W.A. and Roos, S.G. 1973 **Fundamentele pedagogiek en die opvoedingswerklikheid**. Durban: Butterworths. **English translation:** Ch. 1 [georgeyonge.net/node/113](http://georgeyonge.net/node/113)
- Nel, B.F. 1968 **Fundamentele oriëntering in die psigologiese pedagogiek**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.
- Nel, B.F., Sonnekus, M.C.H. and Gerbers, J.G. 1965 **Grondslae van die psigologie**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.
- Poggeler, T. 1966 **De Mondige mens**. Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel.
- Sonnekus, M.C.H. 1971 Die verhoudingstrukture van die pedagogiese situasie in psigopedagogiese perspektief. Publication of the University of Pretoria, **Nuwe Reeks**, number 59.
- Sonnekus, M.C.H. (Ed.). 1973 **Psigopedagogiek: 'n inleidende oriëntering**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.
- Sonnekus, M.C.H. and Ferreira, G.V. 1987. **Die Psigiese lewe van die kind-in-opvoeding**. Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.
- Van der Stoep, F. 1975 Foreword to Sonnekus, M.C.H. **Onderwyser, les en kind**.

Stellenbosch: University Publishers and Booksellers.  
Van Niekerk, P.A. 1976 Problematiese **opvoedingsgebeure**. Stellenbosch: University  
Publishers and Booksellers. **English translation:**  
[georgeyonge.net/node/132](http://georgeyonge.net/node/132).  
Vrey, J.D. 1979 **Die Opvoedeling in sy selfaktualisering**. Pretoria: University of  
South Africa.