

CHAPTER III

THE LEARNING WORLD OF THE CHILD WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AS AN EXPERIENTIAL WORLD*

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1. Introductory statement of the problem

The title of this chapter deals primarily with the learning world of a child with learning difficulties, a theme that in the first place aims to describe the child as a **learning** child. In this light, the problem can be formulated as follows: a child with learning difficulties basically is a child who has to **learn** and yet finds it difficult to do so. Before the essentials of his problematic learning can be fathomed, a clear understanding of what is meant by a child's learning has to be obtained because one's notion of it will influence one's understanding of a child's learning difficulties as well as how one evaluates and assists him.

In the author's opinion, in this chapter an accountable view of a child's learning, known as his learning world, is sketched after which the child with learning difficulties is considered in his learning world. To put the problem in the correct perspective, brief reference is made to the untenability of current views of learning, better known as "learning processes". This is followed by approaching the learning child from his life world with the specific aim of penetrating the essentials of the experiential world of the child with learning difficulties. In this way the essentials of the **learning phenomenon** are also fathomed as a child's way of **experiencing** in order to study the child with learning difficulties in his experiential world. Finally, a few pedagogic-didactic tasks are brought up, which will be considered further in later chapters.

2. The untenability of current views of the "learning process" and their application to the child with learning difficulties

It is not the aim of this work to give a complete exposition of current views of the "learning process". For an overview, the reader

* See footnotes in Chapter I regarding the translation of "beleweniswereld" and "belewing".

is referred to two of the author's contributions^(1; 2) where a phenomenologically-pedagogically founded criticism of them is presented. It is sufficient to briefly indicate some important assumptions of the adherents of psychological theories of learning, in particular their anthropological point of departure and foundation, and the untenability of psychological theories of learning resulting from psychological experimentation in so far as they are presumed to involve the phenomenon of child learning and address the implications of applying these theories to the child with learning difficulties.

First, it is widely known that the current approach to "the learning processes" holds that it is a stimulus-response process where external stimuli affect the "organism" and the result is an acquired "response". Almost all psychological theories of learning hold this view and therefore have a strong naturalistic orientation and are anchored in a biological anthropology or theory of being human which views a person as an extension of an animal which reacts according to cause-effect laws. Examples of these theories will not be considered here.

Second, the "learning process" stems from the current psychology of consciousness that has isolated consciousness itself as an object of psychological study. Consciousness consists of many "functions" each of which "reacts" according to stimulus-response laws. **Learning** is then characterized as an exclusively **cognitive** process and is carried by the totality of cognitive functions such as perceiving, imagining, thinking, remembering and intelligence.

Moreover, this learning psychology, as applied psychology, is carried over to current methodology that is accepted in teaching practice. Thus, psychological theories should be applied to teaching practice or, what is more, teaching practice has to be based on psychological theories of learning.

Within the limits of this chapter, it is not possible (and it is not the aim) to criticize the point of departure of current learning psychology and the reader again is referred to the two mentioned contributions by the author. It is sufficient to indicate that today a new view of being human or philosophical anthropology has come to the fore in the Western world,⁽³⁾ to a large extent in the U.S.A.⁽⁴⁾ and in South Africa which views a human being as Dasein

(Heidegger), openness, possibility, intentionality, etc. The current psychology of consciousness also is no longer acceptable because, according to Brentano, consciousness always is consciousness of something. Isolated functions of consciousness that respond to stimuli in the form of "reactions" is thus an obsolete view and contradicts the meaning "conscious of something", that a person as **subject** always consciously directs himself to something. Acts of consciousness are thus intentional acts and potentialities of consciousness such as perceiving, sensing, imagining, thinking, remembering, actualizing intelligence are ways of going out to the world, that is, they are psychic intentionalities.⁽⁵⁾ Thus, by no means is learning a purely cognitive matter. The particulars of this claim are not considered further because this is done in the literature mentioned. It has yet to be mentioned that a learning psychology as an applied psychology in the form of teaching methodology has become obsolete and that a new psychological pedagogics⁽⁶⁾ and didactic pedagogics⁽⁷⁾ now are the order of the day and that approach the child from his life world.

The above current views of "the learning process" and their untenability are briefly mentioned as an introduction to the problematic of the **learning world** of the child with learning difficulties, viewed in particular as his experiential world. This problematic is dealt with in the following pages. Now it has to be indicated, against the above background, that the previously mentioned current psychology of learning has not been ignored. Thus, current "remedial teaching" also emanates from a naturalistic oriented anthropology and basically concerns diagnosing and remedying symptoms. The untenability of this practice is shown in Chapter IV and is not considered further here.

At this stage, the question before us is what is understood by a child **learning** or, in other words, how does the phenomenon of child learning announce itself and how is learning actualized. The following section briefly presents an accountable image of the learning world of a child with the particular aim of penetrating the learning world of the child with learning difficulties.

3. The learning world of the child as an experiential world

Since a complete discussion of this matter can be found in a recent publication by the author⁽⁸⁾ under the title of this section, only a

brief picture of the main aspects of this topic are presented. The aim once again is an **introduction** to the learning world of the child with learning difficulties as an experiential world that is considered in the following section.

First, it is mentioned that the point of departure for exploring a child's learning world can be nothing other than his life world. Thus, Husserl sees in his concept "life world" the foundation and basis of all science. The life world is that world which is established and constituted by each subject in his relationships with all of the beings to which he directs himself (as intentionality). Thus, the life world is the primordial ground for his own life and is presupposed by all viewing, knowing and reflecting, i.e., by all sciences. This prescientific life world has to do with the child's primordial experiencing in his primordial situation. Practical examples of his life world where the phenomenon of learning announces itself are in his playing, acquiring language, his association with parents, other adults and other children.

But the child's life world is always a potential **experienced** (experiential) world and **experience** is described as the intentional, subjective, personal taking a position by a person, as a totality-in-function, in his communication with reality. Thus, **experiencing** means actualizing act-intentionality as an activity primarily in a relationship to being and meaning (Husserl). In addition, **experiencing** has a **momentary** character and varies from a subjective primordial level, as a pre-cognitive attunement in immediate communication with things, called **pathic or affective experiencing**, to a distanced, cognitive object-situated level known as **gnostic or cognitive experiencing** (Erwin Straus). The experiential world, then, means a momentary slice of the child's life world to which he proceeds momentarily via a pathic-gnostic or gnostic-pathic level of attunement. After thoroughly considering this phenomenon, Pretorius⁽⁹⁾ provides the following description: "Where the life world is the horizon of familiarity, within this horizon, the experiential world is the constantly changing, continuous, total reality (as **experienced** reality) with which a person is intentionally involved at a particular moment (as an **experienced** moment) which he takes a (pathic-affective/gnostic-cognitive/normative) position toward and gives meaning to."

Without going into details on this matter, the following needs to be mentioned: These pathic-affective as well as gnostic-cognitive

moments never arise in isolation but always as a complex structure of **experienced** moments; thus, **experience** forms the overarching attitude or act of taking a position by which a person constitutes his world. Hence, it can never be only pathic-affective or only gnostic-cognitive and following Heidegger⁽¹⁰⁾ human Dasein, on the one hand, is always attunement, thus is pathically-affectively initiated. (See Heidegger's views on "Befindlichkeit"). On the other hand, Dasein is directed by "verstehen" by which he means the original possibility to understand which then also makes possible all modalities of knowing. In this regard, reference is made to the following important conclusion by Pretorius⁽¹¹⁾ The close interwovenness of a child's pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive **experiences** is such that on the one hand all gnostic **experiences**, i.e., all cognitive activities, are disclosive and on the other hand in attunement original knowing is already present, i.e., all pathic-affective attunement simultaneously is a bringing-to-light.

At this stage the theme of this section has to be returned to, namely, the learning world of the child as experiential world and the problem then is, what is understood by his learning world when learning is viewed as a mode or modes of **experiencing**. Before pursuing this, it should first be stated that child learning cannot be described in a definition and it is just in this respect that the current psychology of learning has made a serious mistake by trying to reduce such a complex phenomenon to a fixed definition. Learning is a primordial phenomenon given with being-a-child and if it is fathomed from his life world, he announces himself in a variety of ways as a learning child that are ways of being or existing. **Actualizing** these modes of existing occurs by a child **experiencing**; in and through which he **learns**. Moreover, from the beginning, a child is attuned to learning, does learn and is involved in becoming someone. Thus, he is someone who wants to learn and initiators relationships through which he wants to be and become. Hence, the initiative to learn is the child's, and he does not need "stimuli" to "react" to as is advanced by current psychological theories of learning.

In addition, child **experiencing**, as ways of learning, is always pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive in nature. That is, on the one hand, a child learns pathically-affectively, and therefore it is an attunement that at the same time is always illuminating; consequently, he simultaneously is attuned to original understanding (see Heidegger's views on "verstehen"). On the other

hand, he also learns gnostically-cognitively and this **experiencing** is always pathically-affectively attuned. Though learning always is pathic as well as gnostic in nature, sometimes the pathic and sometimes the gnostic aspects predominate.

However, since learning is primordial and therefore an anthropological or existential phenomenon, this means that all learning is a search for sense and meaning and thus for a child it is an experience of meaning, hence it is normative in nature. However, this attribution of meaning occurs along the entire range of pathic-affective, gnostic-cognitive **experiencing** and now a deeper view of these **experiences** is demanded.

Before proceeding to this issue, although a child is someone who himself wants to learn and the initiative to learn is given with being-a-child, in his complex cultural milieu, he cannot responsibly actualize his learning alone and therefore is dependent on help and support from an adult; that is, an adult is faced with the task of intervening in the child's learning to let it run a responsible course. In this way, a child is placed in a didactic situation where the adult (parent or teacher) has to teach him so that his learning can take a responsible course. This matter will not be discussed further and the reader is referred to the recent literature.⁽¹²⁾ This intervention as a way of helping a child with learning difficulties, and known as orthopedagogic-orthodidactic assistance, is looked at more closely in Chapter IV.

In the following there is brief reference to a few of the **modes** of learning anticipated above and when closely examined it first is necessary to indicate that these modes are actualized within learning relationships. This has to do with how learning is **experienced** within particular **learning relationships** as well as with the **essentials** of these modes of learning.

In this chapter, this two-fold matter can only be discussed briefly because it has been fully considered in the recent work by the author already mentioned.⁽¹³⁾ Reference will be made to this work again when the learning relationships and modes of learning of the child with learning difficulties are raised.

Three sorts of learning relationships are distinguished, namely, those between the child and things, between the child and other

children, between the child and adults--including parents and teachers. Thus, it is understandable that from the beginning a child is involved in a relationship with things and that in his going out to the world of things, he **experiences** them pathically-affectively as well as gnostically-cognitively. Correspondingly, his sensory **experiencing** (seeing, hearing, touching, grasping, pointing) as well as his playing are good examples of learning in relationship to things. A child plays with things and in this way creates a new world for himself and in doing so distances himself from a pathic-affective to a gnostic-cognitive learning world. Later, on more formal levels, learning contents and materials, as well as the homework situation (where the child is confronted with learning material) take the place of things. The world of things also includes the school world, the classroom, the laboratory, etc.

But the child also **experiences** his learning in relationship with others among who are children. Much is written about this in the phenomenological literature. Thus, a child is not only Dasein but also Mitsein (Heidegger), i.e., a child also will always be with others and thus others are always co-travelers. Hence, children eagerly learn from each other, consult each other, converse with each other. Also of importance is the fact that a child learns "under the watchful eye of another", i.e., he **experiences** himself not as isolated but under another's view. This then also means that he is very sensitive to criticism, failure, punishment in the presence of his peers and that he will eagerly achieve and compete in relationship with them. Regarding a child with learning problems, it is just this learning relationship that is extremely problematic.

With respect to learning relationships with adults, it was already mentioned that this is a didactic situation, a situation that appears in relationships with adults at home, in the pre-primary, elementary and high schools. The particulars of these relationships will not be discussed. However, it is emphasized that they are primarily educative relationships, and that here a child finds himself in pedagogic situations where for the most part he has to be educated. Where this involves didactic intervention through teaching, it also involves the didactic-pedagogic⁽¹⁵⁾ and thus educating through teaching. This matter will be discussed further when the child with learning difficulties is considered. Also, the reader is referred to Chapter IV which primarily deals with providing orthopedagogic-orthodidactic assistance.

Now brief attention is given to the **essentials** of a child's **modes of learning** as actualized within the above learning relationships. For a complete discussion of this, the reader once again is referred to the author's work already mentioned.⁽¹⁶⁾ This brief discussion merely serves as an introduction to understanding the modes of learning of a child with learning difficulties. As mentioned above, each mode of learning is characterized by a pathic-affective as well as a gnostic-cognitive aspect although by one the pathic might predominate more than by another and the reverse.

Thus, a child's **experiences** of learning primarily are initiated by **sensing** which is the pathic origin, as the preformed field for all cognitive learning. At the same time, sensing also has gnostic aspects that simultaneously usher in **perceiving** as a more cognitive mode of learning. This gnostic-cognitive flavor of perceiving breaks through the pathic character of sensing and the child's horizon is shifted, is more distanced, is directed to the cognitive, to that which is, to what is universally known. A child also **experiences** his learning relationships by **imagining** and **fantasizing**, modes of learning by which he directs himself to an "irreal" reality with a preponderantly gnostic-pathic flavor. Compared to perceiving, these modes also means a still higher level of distancing where the child **experiences** reality as "exceeded", as "reality" at-a-distance (Sartre).⁽¹⁷⁾ These modes of **experiencing** are not yet thinking but make it possible. Fantasizing is an important dimension of imagination and is still more distanced than is imagining. It is known that a pre-school child lives strongly in a fantasy world but that a child in puberty lives in it on another level. These two intertwined modes of learning play an important role in a child's learning world of which the story is an example for a younger child as is an essay for an older one. The possibility also exists that a child can escape into his world of imagination and fantasy, an aspect that will be returned to in discussing children with learning difficulties.

Thinking clearly is a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning although it also has pathic-affective aspects. It also is an extension of perceiving and, as such, is a more distanced mode of learning. At its core it is involved with reality as a **problem** and thus reality is **experienced** cognitively by the child. This has to do with confronting reality via thinking where the child handles, plans,

compares and especially systematizes and orders to eventually arrive at a solution as a **synthesis** or **understanding** of it.

The task faced by a **thinking** child is to continually distance himself from his own primarily subjective, pathic sensing so that he is able to direct himself to objective reality. Thus, this has to do with breaking through the pathic to a higher level, although a complete separation from the pathic is not possible. In other words, this involves **stabilizing**, ordering and controlling pathic-affective **experiencing** so that it serves as a **support** and impetus for thinkingly-cognitively breaking through and distancing. A stable affective **experiencing** provides the basic preformed field, as an affective readiness, for distancing oneself to the gnostic. It is anticipated that a child with learning difficulties will have serious problems here, a matter discussed later.

Related to a child thinkingly going into his learning world is his doing so by **actualizing his intelligence** that is an important mode of learning. For a comprehensive discussion of the earlier views of actualizing intelligence, the reader is referred to the already mentioned work by the author.⁽¹⁸⁾ Since the aim of this discussion is an introduction to the problematic learning of children with learning difficulties, only a few main aspects are mentioned: from Heidegger's phenomenologically oriented philosophical anthropology, a person is **Dasein**, i.e., is being-in-the-world. In addition, he is **openness** and, therefore, possibility. One of his possible ways of existing is being intentionally directed through his intelligence. In the first place, then, intelligence is given only as a potentiality that has to be actualized through the subject's intentionality. This means that this actualizing clearly is a gnostic-cognitive way of going out to the world and, therefore, actualized intelligence is a gnostic-cognitive mode of learning. From the above description of **experience**, the gnostic-cognitive always has to be primed and supported by the pathic-affective, and depending on the latter's stability and ordered control, a child will be able to optimally actualize his intelligence or not. According to Langeveld⁽¹⁹⁾, intelligence is a **power to break through** at the child's disposal by which he is able to break through new situations which he encounters in his involvement with the world. This is actualized through pathic-affective support and a pathic-affective readiness to break through gnostically-cognitively. Here a pedagogic problem is alluded to which will not be gone into here.

However, it is anticipated that a child with learning problems will have serious problems adequately actualizing his intelligence, a matter that is brought up again later.

Finally, some observations are made regarding **remembering** as a mode of learning and **experiencing**. In contrast to previously accepted views of "memory" as a cognitive "function", here remembering is a person's act of intentionality and has to do with someone who remembers something. This "something" is closely interwoven with a person's past **experiencing** and thus with his historicity. In this regard, Erwin Straus⁽²⁰⁾ emphasizes that one does not remember everything but only what he can adequately distance from his own pathic **experiences** and about which he then can reflect, think, order and systematize. Thus, remembering is a gnostic-cognitive **experiencing** in the present what was **experienced** in the past. As far as the child's learning is concerned, it follows that remembering has an extremely important place in his learning world, particularly in his learning historicity. Depending on his past learning, he will be able (or not) to remember. It also follows that an adequate distancing from the pathic directly influences remembering. It is anticipated that a child with learning difficulties will have great problems remembering as will be indicated below.

4. The child with learning difficulties in his experiential world

From the above it ought to be clear that we want to view a child with learning difficulties as a **learning child** from his life world, more specifically from his experiential world. Here, the specific problem is what does the life world, as experiential world, look like for a child with learning difficulties. In particular, the concern is with determining the state of his pathic-affective and inseparable gnostic-cognitive experiential worlds and with his attributing and **experiencing** meaning. The concern also is with the "balance" between pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive **experiencing** or with pathic-affective **stability**, ordering and control. The question essentially is how the preformed pathic-affective field of experiencing appears and if it provides the child who has learning difficulties with enough support, direction and initiation to distance himself to the gnostic-cognitive. Consequently, this has to do with a learning **subject** whose **experiences** are vital for his gnostic-cognitive functioning.

In this regard, reference is made to the research by Kempster,⁽²¹⁾ Kotze,⁽²²⁾ Ferreira,⁽²³⁾ Botha⁽²⁴⁾ and Van der Merwe⁽²⁵⁾ who each have investigated a particular area of the learning world of children with learning difficulties. Their general finding is that these children are so **flooded** by their pathic **experiences** that they have difficulty while learning in distancing themselves to the gnostic-cognitive. Their pathic **experiences** appear so unstable and uncontrolled that they **restrain** rather than support entering the cognitive. Without going into these studies in detail, the results of each are mentioned briefly: In two studies of the difficulties of potential school dropouts and an understanding of their experiential worlds, Ferreira and Botha each found that they **experience** their difficulties such that they are imprisoned in their pathic experiential world and so flooded by the pathic that they were unable to take a gnostic-cognitive position in their **experiencing**. In addition, Botha found that the potential dropout, in opposition to the gnostic-cognitive demands of the school, created a predominantly pathic experiential world-in-opposition to serve as a space to escape into. This primarily pathic experiential world can take various forms in a high school child such as escaping into a fantasy world in the form of fantasies, establishing an irresponsible youth cult representing pleasure, external material possessions such as motorbikes and radios and extravagant clothing fashions and hairstyles. Also bodily **experiences** as a primarily pathic body cult were strongly in the foreground and variations in extravagant clothing fashions and sexual misbehavior were noted. In his research on brain-damaged children, Kotze found that their learning world, as experiential world, was predominantly pathic; indeed, the pathic was uncontrolled and chaotic because of their bodily **experiences** of a handicapped bodiliness. These children find it extremely difficult to function adequately on a cognitive level. Van der Merwe found in his research on actualizing intelligence in the retarded child that he also **experiences** his learning world as well as intellectual deficiencies, and his pathic flooding is such that he is unable to adequately actualize his limited intellectual potentialities. In a study of the learning world of "normal" children with learning problems, Kempster also found pathic flooding of their **experiencing** the learning situation and were frustrated in it. He writes, "Because of being confined to 'exercise' his mind largely on a pathic level as has been seen to happen in every one of these cases, the abortive attempts to do so on the abstract gnostic level cause

confusion and a sense of failure and frustration. This confusion that arises during abstract reasoning and thinking means that a continual ordered schematization does not occur and learning proceeds in a disorganized way . . ." ⁽²⁶⁾

From the above brief images of a few related studies of the child's learning world as an experiential world, it is concluded that the state of pathic **experiences** of these children is unstable, chaotic and poorly controlled, that this restrains their distancing to a gnostic-cognitive experiential world with the consequence that they reject cognitive demands and do not feel ready or able to function cognitively. On the one hand, this pathic flooding should be viewed in terms of the previously mentioned **experiences** within particular learning relationships (i.e., between child and things [learning material], mutual relationships between child and child as well as between child and adults (including parents and teachers). On the other hand, this predominantly pathic **experiencing** is actualized on an infantile-pathic level in and by actualizing the modes of learning: sensing, perceiving, imagining and fantasizing, thinking, actualizing intelligence and remembering. Here it is stressed that the predominantly pathic **experiences** on an unstable and poorly controlled level limit the child's sensing of things and relationships to others to an infantile level, that the pathic does not provide the required support and impetus to be able to enter the gnostic-cognitive. The importance of a stable, harmonious, well-controlled pathic-affective experiential world should not be minimized because all gnostic-cognitive modes of learning have to be built on it. Thus, the modes of learning mentioned all are dependent on this pathic-affective preformed foundation that should be stable and harmonious for their adequate and optimal actualization. In the case of children with learning difficulties, as generally found in the above studies, the cognitive modes of learning are exceedingly restrained or even stagnant.

A few remarks still need to be made about the child with learning difficulties attributing meaning. It is obvious that his giving and **experiencing** meaning will be very deficient. Because he is imprisoned in and flooded by the pathic and because of his impotence to function optimally on a cognitive level, he **experiences** the learning task as less meaningful, even meaningless and he also stagnates in his normative **experiencing** of the learning task.

Against this background, the aim of the following chapters is how orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation and assistance should proceed with children with learning difficulties. In anticipation, in orthopedagogic evaluation, a learning image, as **experience** image, has to be acquired for the purpose of fathoming the state of the child's pathic-affective, gnostic-cognitive experiential world. In addition, an orthodidactic image has to be acquired of the child's activity structures on a cognitive level. Also in anticipation, orthopedagogic-orthodidactic assistance has to be equally attuned to providing support to stabilize him affectively and support to help him adequately distance himself to a cognitive structuring. This matter is discussed in Chapter IV and is practically demonstrated in part B of this book.

5. The pedagogic-didactic influence of the child's learning world and its connection with the origin of learning difficulties

A pedagogic situation is one in which an encounter occurs between an adult, as a mature, morally independent, responsible person, and a child, as a not yet mature person who is becoming morally independent and responsible with the aim that the adult educate, help and support him to adulthood; it is a situation where the child is able to make moral choices, decisions and resolutions in freedom and on his own initiative. Within this educative situation, educating is actualized. Educating is direct and purposeful, a whole of activities stemming from an adult and directed to a child with the deliberate aim of helping and supporting him to independently and on his own initiative make moral choices and then to act accordingly. This amounts to directly influencing a child for his own good with the aim of making choices between good and bad, right and wrong. Thus, norms of morality are emulated by an adult to a child with the aim that he will appropriate them for himself, i.e., make them his own, at which time educating becomes "self educating". Examples of this purposeful educating are verbally admonishing, reproaching, moral lecturing, exercising authority, disciplining, etc. However, on the other hand educating also occurs indirectly and more functionally through the adult's actions, deeds and examples when a child identifies with and assimilates these behaviors of the adult and imitates them in his own behavior and when they have resulted in a change for the good of the child.

This identification with the adult as educator at first occurs externally, e.g., by identifying with clothing and conduct but essentially a child's identification with an adult means assimilating his norms and values. Thus, educating through identification means identifying with norms via an adult without him necessarily intending this and when these norms are accepted and appropriated by the child for himself such that this leads to an elevation of his moral decisions.

The above two-fold activity of educating functions as a unity and for the child it is an educative totality that can be differentiated into a two-fold, though inseparable, structure: On the one hand, a relationship of association has to be distinguished as a continuous, uninterrupted relationship between adult and child during which the desired educating does not necessarily occur. A relationship of association also is one during which the adult indeed is in a relationship with the child, e.g., walking, eating, chatting together without deliberately aiming to educate him by exemplify moral norms to him. Already it appears that educating can occur in the way indicated above: educating by means of identification occurs in a continuous relationship between a child and an adult.

However, in this regard, Langeveld⁽²⁷⁾ indicates that at any moment a relationship of association can become an educative one when the adult deliberately exemplifies norms to the child. Thus, deliberate, intentional educating interrupts a relationship of association during which particular educative moments arise and after which there is a return to association. Examples of such educative moments are when an adult purposefully addresses the child morally and presents norms to him as in a moralizing lecture, also when during a relationship of association the child transgresses and disturbs it and then the adult has to intervene and present norms to the child.

The above course of educative activities, according to the described structure, occurs further through encounters between adult and child which once again shows a unique type of structure:

By a pedagogic encounter Langeveld⁽²⁸⁾ means a being-with in which the adult is confronted with a child in his helplessness, neediness and vulnerability and in which he clearly is faced with the entirely personal task of educating. Certainly the adult has to provide the necessary help and support but also the child has to be docile and

obedient. Encountering also means entering the child's world that assumes participating in his inner life. Buytendijk also understands an encounter as a relationship of personal, emotional contact that has to be built up. A precondition for such an encounter is an acknowledgment of and regard for the child that, according to Langeveld, includes an understanding built on trust. In addition, an encounter is a dialogue, and in a pedagogic sense, a dialogue as a pedagogic conversation.

It is appropriate to note that this encounter between adult and child has an ethical-normative foundation and, at the same time, it occurs on a pathic (affective) level; these are two inseparable modes of an encounter that run parallel to each other.

An encounter on an ethical-normative foundation is a way of adult and child being together where, through conversation, an intimate relationship arises in which the child "opens" himself to the adult such that he is freely ready to be educated, thus is open for norms to be presented to him, for appropriating them for himself and for making them his own. Such an encounter also means that he is changed by it, that his way of being changes, that his way of going out to his world changes, that he now gives new meaning to his world in a normative sense. In addition, because of his self-awareness, he acquires a new appreciation of the world and of his own way of being. An encounter refers to the child changing as a person, a change in his Ego.

But equally important is the fact that an encounter occurs in a pathic (affective) sense, otherwise an encounter in its normative sense is not possible. For this reason, Buytendijk⁽²⁹⁾ views an encounter as "a relationship of emotional contact." The relationship of trust between adult and child is part of this contact and is built on a stable affective relationship between them which fosters favorable stable emotional impressions (Langeveld) and which the child assimilates into his relationship of helplessness that has to be overcome to make room for security.

With respect to the course of the educative activities described above, it should now be clear that successful educating depends on an intimate encounter that has to occur with affective and normative sufficiency. Sometimes this occurs discontinuously when the adult actually intervenes in the relationship of association while it also continues to occur through identification. It is important to

note that in the relationship of association there is a continuous encounter via identification bolstered by a trusting, affective relationship as a precondition for purposeful moral educating. Educating, thus, can be typified equally well as moral and as affective or emotional.

It still has to be added that the educative activities as well as the moral and affective structures described are actualized in at least two sorts of educative situations known as the primary educative situation, by which is meant the educative situation at home, and the secondary educative situation, by which is meant the educative situation at school.

At this stage the question arises about the essence of the earlier mentioned learning as **experiencing** in the adult-child relationship, now viewed as a pedagogic situation as described above. First it is noted that such a pedagogic situation can arise as a didactic situation in two ways: On the one hand, a child, by means of his modes of learning, can constitute a learning relationship on his own initiative and by means of identification-as-encounter, can learn or adopt something from the adult in the sense that he identifies himself with it and eagerly wants to learn in order to be and become someone himself. Such learning can occur without the adult being aware of it and also without intending it; the initiative for such learning comes exclusively from the child. With this the so-called primordial didactic situation arises and the child as open possibility is also open possibility to learn in his relationship with the adult. All teaching is built on this primordially given learning intention. Naturally, it also is possible that in his response to the appeal of the child-as-initiative, the adult can begin to actually teach which puts the primordial didactic situation in another dimension. Such primordial didactic situations often are constituted on the adult's initiative (mostly the mother) where he purposefully teaches something to the little child, e.g., how to eat, how to dress himself, a little prayer. The fact is that the primordial didactic situation in which the adult aims to actually teach already exists in the educative situation at home long before the child enters school.

At this stage the didactic situation deserves further mention: it is obvious that the teacher who re-constitutes teaching situations in school, in the first place, not only has to be acquainted with the structure of the educative situation discussed above but also

basically has to be a pedagogue. Courses in modern pedagogics as a science, which concerns itself with reflecting on the child in a pedagogic situation, frankly, are a requirement for every teacher-didactician. But also the above expresses clearly enough that the teacher-didactician has to be thoroughly grounded in modern didactics as a part-science of pedagogics, in particular also regarding the two-fold structure of the primordial didactic situation as discussed above.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that the role of the parent and teacher in a child's learning is a pedagogic one. Thus, it follows logically that cooperation of the parent and teacher is directly related to the child's learning. More particularly, this cooperation involves educating in its two-fold structure as presented above, namely, on the one hand, affectively educating and preparing the child for an **emotional readiness** to venture with learning tasks on a more **distanced, gnostic** level. In the first place, this has to do with educating him to stable affective relationships within the family, to security and to an exploration of the learning tasks. Examples are sufficient pampering paired with authority, discipline, punishment without spoiling or over-pampering, consistency in exercising educative authority, stable bonding among family members, i.e., a stable affective family structure. It is clear that when the opposite condition prevails, as well as in broken families or any form of family disparity, it will adversely restrain this pathic readiness to learn.

However, on the other hand, ethical-normative or moral educating in the family also directly influences the child's learning. Thus, the norms presented to the child, e.g., a positive or negative work relationship, study skills, a disposition to work and especially accept authority and responsibility, directly influence his learning. Thus, from an early age, and in particular in the elementary school period, an adult has to educate a child to accept responsibility, especially for his learning tasks. Consequently, children should not only be educated to study regularly and appropriately but also to discover the sense and meaning of what is studied so that he can attribute his own meaning to it. This normative educating to actualize his potentialities responsibly, e.g., his intelligence, is the foundation for his entire future course of study as well as for the course of his vocation and life. However, as important as this is, it has to be accompanied by the necessary **emotional educating** that is the foundation for his **affective** readiness to venture to the

normative attribution of meaning. Moreover, the teacher has to link up with this two-fold educative structure and build on it.

In the elementary school the beginner is still very close to the teacher and unconditionally throws himself open to her/him for help and support. Thus, this is a secondary educative situation at school that is extremely affectively colored. School beginners readily identify themselves so strongly with their teacher that they quickly view her/him as a "hero" at their mother's expense. Naturally, the course of this affective-pathic encounter depends greatly on the teacher's approach and her/his task is to provide the child with a secure space for learning.

In spite of the fact that he remains attuned on a pathic level of **experiencing**, the problem for the child with learning difficulties is that in confronting tasks of a more formal-cognitive nature he has to feel affectively ready to venture, e.g., to learn to read, spell, do arithmetic. Once again the teacher's task is to put the pathic first and allow such formal learning to occur in pathic-affective ways. Informal, playful ways of learning thus also have to figure forth sufficiently in his beginning gnostic-cognitive learning, i.e., by being playfully involved with learning materials such as blocks, rods, tops, beads as well as by pathically-affectively **experiencing** formal gnostic-cognitive learning content by means of a story.

It is concluded that in the beginning classes of the elementary school, the teacher especially plays an important role as a person, in particular regarding what the child's pathic-affective **experiencing** signifies to him. His "methodology" thus is not of primary importance but rather constituting a secure space within which the child is prepared pathically-affectively, helped and supported to gradually learn cognitively. At this stage the little child doesn't feel prepared to distance himself to the cognitive. The person with the right attunement who can bring about affective contact with the little child thus is preferable to someone who proceeds in a formal didactic way without taking into account the stage of the child's becoming.

In the senior group of the elementary school (approximately 9 to 13 years) there is a different relationship to the teacher(s) and here the child is much more matter-of-fact and formal. As mentioned above, now the child is more attuned to gnostically-cognitively **experiencing** the learning content and the teacher's task is

especially to **support him cognitively**. A well-prepared lesson, didactic engagement and lecturing, discussions between teacher and child, all directed to reality, to what is, are of the greatest importance. Now the child also places high demands on the teacher, judges his abilities and thus works in gnostic-cognitive-knowing ways. Obviously, the child still asks for pathic-affective **experiences**, but in his gnostic-cognitive search he asks for gnostic-cognitive support. Now he is very attuned to giving meaning on a cognitive level, wanting to attack problems, solve them and he asks for accountable didactic support. Thus, here a "good" teacher, viewed from a didactic point of view, is of greatest importance. Viewed pedagogically, now the child, via identifying with the teacher, clearly asks for authority, order and ordering and discipline. Boys usually prefer a male teacher while girls do not have a particular preference.

Pedagogically-didactically, giving homework here is strongly recommended because the child inquires about the gnostic. Thus, he now wants to perceive, think and remember on his own. However, this alludes to an important psychopedagogic as well as didactic problem. On the one hand, a child primarily deals in his experiential world with things (learning material) and thus in the homework situation the world of things is placed in the spotlight. Accountable study methods are equally important, particularly for the way he **experiences** the homework situation. On the other hand, the didactic preparation of such homework, as an initiative from the teacher, is of great importance.

Regarding the **experience** of the learning relationship of high school student with his teacher(s), he also has the same need for pathic-affective **experiences** to enable him to distance himself to the gnostic-cognitive, as reality, to which he will direct his cognitive abilities. But in comparison with his relationship to his parents, he is much more distanced from his teacher(s). His relationship with the teacher is more business-like and formal, yet at the same time a teacher can exercise a strong educative influence on the child via identification if there is a real relationship of trust between them. This revolves around the fact that the relationship between the puber and teacher(s) should not merely be a formal one on a cognitive level but indeed a pathic-affective relationship, although more distanced than in the earlier years, in order to provide support to the child for his gnostic-cognitive explorations.

When a child thus is attuned to the gnostic in the learning task he should have sufficient opportunity to exercise this attunement by, e.g., working on projects, independent assignments, reference work and laboratory work, in other words, he should explore the learning task by perceiving and thinking and remember what in the task is new.

The course of the educative activities of both the parent and the teacher described above, separately or jointly, can be directly responsible for a child's **learning difficulties**. Thus, defective affective educating can so restrain the child's pathic **experiencing** of the learning event that he is not able to distance himself to a cognitive level. Such a child becomes blocked or even flooded by his own vital-pathic **experiences** and this prevents him from constituting an accountable life world. Generally, such a child is handicapped in his venturing attitude to the cognitive, the abstract, the strange and the new and he usually will not do well in reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic, i.e., over the whole range of linguistic symbols. Also he will not do well in all of the other subjects where he has to venture to the cognitive. His typical symptoms will be wandering attention, poor concentration, vagueness, little interest in schoolwork, sluggish learning, etc. As a rule, these children underachieve.

In addition, poor moral (normative) educating allows the learning task to fail because such a child does not show sufficient responsibility. Essentially, such a child's attribution of meaning will be defective, the sense and meaning of the learning task, of work, study, of school and even of life disappears.

In summary, our anthropological axiom of child openness as potentiality implies that a child is someone who wants to be someone himself and wants to become and thus is someone who wants to learn but cannot do this alone and remains dependent on an adult for help and support; if defectively educated by both parent and teacher, this will allow the actualization of his given potentialities to fail. Thus, educating can directly promote or hinder the child's learning and for his responsible learning, a child clearly confronts the adult with this task of educating him.

In the following chapter orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation and assistance are discussed.

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