

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF ORTHOPEDAGOGIC-ORTHODIDACTIC EVALUATION AND ASSISTANCE: A THEORETICAL FOUNDING

M. C. H. Sonnekus

1. Introductory comments

For a long time, the problem of learning difficulties in children has received special attention overseas as well as in the Republic of South Africa. Equally known is the practice of "Remedial Teaching" which occurs in one form or another in various countries. In Afrikaans, the concept "remedierende onderwys" is a direct translation of the term "remedial teaching" as used in Anglo-American schooling in the form of "remedial classes" organized in elementary schools for children with learning difficulties. For the sake of clarity, it is mentioned that, all over the world, the current understanding is that "remedial teaching" involves children of normal or above-normal intelligence, i.e., whose IQ's are above 90.

Well known is the unique system of schools in the Netherlands for children with learning and educative difficulties (the L. O. M. schools--Leer-en Opvoedingsmoeilikhede).⁽¹⁾ In the Republic of South Africa, the term "remedial teaching" also acquires its "flavor" from various departments of education and some universities. Evidence for this is the orientation courses offered by education departments, the establishment of "remedial" teaching clinics, the training and appointment of so-called "remedial" teachers, etc.

Immediately the question arises as to what is meant by "remedial" teaching. This question is considered in detail in the following section. Yet, in a preliminary way in accordance with the current understanding of this term, it is a form of specialized teaching of children with reading, spelling, arithmetic and other learning difficulties with the aim of "remedying" these difficulties, i.e., to "cure", eliminate or correct them. However, such a definition compels us to investigate the essentials of current "remedial" teaching; then there is a search for an accountable pedagogic founding of it.

2. The current understanding of "remedial" teaching

A typical definition of the current practice of "remedial" teaching is provided by Bernard and Cronje: "If a pupil achieves less than his potential in a **particular subject or part of it**, or if he compares unfavorably with other children his age, he is scholastically retarded in that subject or part of it. This pupil, then, shows a partial or specific deficiency in his learning and, consequently, needs to receive remedial teaching in this subject or part of it."⁽²⁾ This definition will suffice, and the question posed is what fundamental child anthropology is at the basis of this accepted practice?

To try to obtain a true perspective on the essentials of "remedial" teaching, it is necessary briefly to attend to its anthropological foundation. Then it also will be possible to evaluate its accountability. An overview of these essentials allows the critical reader to see that it is based on a less than accountable child anthropology. This anthropology is characterized by substantialistic thinking based on isolating the object of study, dividing it into so many aspects or functions, measuring these functions and "remedying" any of their defects or deficiencies.

It is clear that this line of thought is based on a natural science oriented view of a person that sees him as an extension of an animal; thus, a person is placed in a hierarchical order of animal organisms. Also, he is viewed as living in a closed world and is surrendered to hereditary and environmental influences; he has to "adapt" himself to life circumstances. Strasser calls this view of a person a fundamentally scientific naiveté⁽³⁾ and rejects it outright. Also, Erwin Straus⁽⁴⁾ shows the untenability of the substantialistic thought advocated by Descartes and, therefore, rejects the fundamental view that human relationships are stimulus-response outcomes. An approach contrary to this scientific, substantialistic view is stressed below.

Current "remedial" teaching also is characterized by isolating the object of study, particularly by means of diagnosing symptoms in a particular subject matter or part of it (compare Bernard and Cronje, above). For example, reading and spelling are isolated from each other while both are dissociated from their linguistic context. Thus, the concern is with reading and spelling problems and not with language problems in relation to human existence. Also, arithmetic problems are separated from language problems while, in truth,

there is a close connection between language and arithmetic.⁽⁵⁾ The so-called analysis of errors in "remedial" teaching also is a direct consequence of this naturalistic-substantialistic line of thought, as is diagnosing by "measuring" "scholastic retardation" by applying standardized scholastic and diagnostic tests. Below, comments are made regarding an accountable use of exploratory media ("tests"). However, the danger lies with the isolated use of these tests that leads to the diagnosis and treatment of symptoms.

Also, it needs to be shown that "remedial" teaching, as currently practiced, still is strongly influenced by a medical model or approach that, equally, is naturalistically oriented. Without going into detail, this can be indicated by referring to the term "partial defect" used by Vedder⁽⁶⁾, as well as the terms aphasia, dysphasia, agnosia, apraxia, alexia, dyslexia and logasthenia⁽⁷⁾. Nanninga-Boon,⁽⁸⁾ Maria Krabbe,⁽⁹⁾ and Leischner⁽¹⁰⁾ use the term "word blindness" which also has a medical flavor and points to a particular isolated defect or loss, while Bladergroen, who also is strongly influenced by a medical approach, pleads for a diagnosis and treatment of a so-called "deficient structural sphere"⁽¹¹⁾. Also, she talks of a "multidimensional diagnosis" but understands by this a conglomerate of medical, psychological and pedagogical aspects. The position considered below is in contrast to this.

Vliegthart⁽¹²⁾ and Rienstra⁽¹³⁾ are both critical of these medically oriented interpretations. Along with Van Gelder, Vliegthart indicates that too much emphasis is placed on a one-sided congenital causality, and that this approach is incomplete; he states that the pedagogue also has his own area of research regarding the child with learning difficulties. The approaches of Nanninga-Boon and Bladergroen concerning word blindness as a deviation in a "basic structure" are unacceptable to Vliegthart. He indicates that in this way use is made of **partial structures** (partial defects) as the basis for learning difficulties while their "remedial" treatment amounts to "patching up these part-structures". Viewed overall from a phenomenological-pedagogical perspective, the preliminary conclusion is that the current practice of "remedial" teaching is unacceptable because too often it views learning difficulties as isolated defects without considering them in terms of the child in his unique primordial relatedness. As indicated, this practice stems from an equally unacceptable naturalistic anthropological conception of being-human and being-a-child.

3. "Remedial" teaching as an orthopedagogic matter

a) Introductory remarks: We begin by raising and considering the question of an accountable approach to the entire matter of "remedial" teaching in contrast to the current naturalistically oriented approach discussed above. This question means a search for a grounding in a two-fold dimension (child anthropological and pedagogical) of a child with learning difficulties, and especially a grounding of the essentials of being-a-child in his primordial relatedness. This latter is a search for the primordially given categories of being-human in which the child in his being-a-child is rooted and founded. In other words, this is a search for the first or original reality in which the child in his being-a-child manifests himself to the scientist; that is, it is a search for an accountable (philosophical) anthropology of the child.

The phenomenological method is used here because its aim is to fathom the essentials and thus to attain essential knowledge of specific phenomena. Accordingly, a child with learning difficulties has to be approached from his primordial situation within his life world where he is in particular relationships with other beings (i.e., persons and things). These relationships do not arise haphazardly, but, on the contrary, the child himself establishes or constitutes them. Consequently, the question is who essentially is this child and what kind of world is he constituting? This question is addressed below.

However, in addition to the above, there is a search for a foundation of the essentials of this world constituted by the child with learning difficulties but, more particularly, as a child in relationship to an adult, thus, as a child who also is dependent on being educated. In other words, the concern is with essential knowledge of the phenomena revealed in this child's pedagogic situation. This is described in more detail below.

Overall this section is a search for an accountable understanding of the child in terms of the essentials of being-a child, that is, a search for an accountable philosophical anthropology of the child. In addition, this section has to do with founding the essentials of the pedagogical situation, that is, with uncovering the pedagogical structures in terms of pedagogic categories and criteria. This is because the child with learning difficulties has to be approached as

a child in his true form of child-being as he announces himself within an educative situation in relationship with the adults on whom he is dependent for help and support.

b) The child with learning difficulties in his primordial relatedness: a phenomenological fathoming

In contrast to the naturalistically oriented view of a person (where he is considered to be an extension of an animal living in a closed world), prominent phenomenologists see **openness** as an essential of being a person in his primordial relatedness. This means that from the beginning a child is possibilities and, as such, he is unfinished or incomplete. In other words, a child is someone who stands open for **and** is directed to the world, he is intentionality. Heidegger characterizes this primordial situatedness as **Dasein** (or existence), which means that a child, as possibility, can step outside of himself, distance himself from himself, and, owing to his self-consciousness, he can evaluate himself.

At this point, it is important to note that, as far as the child with learning difficulties is concerned, from the beginning he is openness and, thus, possibility; as such, he is not predisposed to learning difficulties. This is particularly true for children with "normal" or "above normal" intelligence quotients, the group for whom "remedial" teaching is considered. In other words, a child with a "normal or above normal" intelligence is fully openness and has the full possibility of optimally actualizing his intelligence⁽¹⁴⁾ and clearly is not disposed to learning difficulties. For these children, the origin of the learning difficulty needs to be sought elsewhere. If it does not have a somatic basis (if the child is physically healthy), in the great majority of cases, the origin lies on pedagogic ground, the details of which are considered below. Before taking a closer look at the pedagogic situatedness of the child with learning difficulties, the following is noted:

c) The experiential world of the child with learning difficulties: a psychology-of-becoming consideration

The previous comments regarding the phenomenological basis of the primordial relatedness of the child with learning difficulties means that he has to be approached from within his life world. (See Chapter III). The question now is how does the child, viewed from within his life world, announce himself to the investigator? In this

regard, Langeveld postulates as a fundamental axiom that a child announces himself "as someone who himself wants to be someone."⁽¹⁵⁾ Essentially, this means that he is someone who himself wants to **become** and who will participate in his own becoming. Becoming means becoming different as self-becoming; self-becoming means that the child's task is to repeatedly change the elevation of his dialogue with the world.⁽¹⁶⁾

Further, it is through **experiencing*** that the child's modes of self-becoming flourish and are given form. **Experience** is the intentionally determined, subjective, personal attitude of a child, as totality-in-function, in his communication with reality.⁽¹⁷⁾ This occurs on pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive⁽¹⁸⁾ levels but at the same time it is a normative **experience** of meaning. (See Chapter III).

The purpose of the preceding brief remarks is to bring to light that which emanates from the child's life world as a fact of child anthropology; that is, the ways he constitutes and forms his world occur through **experiencing** and a psychology-of-becoming view of it has to be considered. In other words, the child with learning difficulties needs to be studied from a phenomenological viewpoint by inspecting the essentials in his experiential world. (See Chapter III). These particular essentials are now considered.

d) The orthopedagogic situation as the point of departure for orthopedagogic evaluation and assistance

From the above, it follows that a child with learning difficulties has to be approached from within a pedagogic or, better, an orthopedagogic situation. In connection with orthopedagogics as a field of the science of pedagogics, only a few remarks will be made and the reader is referred to Chapter I by B. F. Nel.

Orthopedagogics, as an autonomous scientific field of pedagogics, is of recent origin, but it has been well received in the Netherlands and in the Republic of South Africa where it has undergone considerable development. Van Gelder⁽¹⁹⁾, Vliegthart⁽²⁰⁾ and Dumont⁽²¹⁾ all agree that the central category of orthopedagogics is

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

the **educability of the child**. Vliegthart offers the following modified definition of Van Gelder: "Orthopedagogics is the theory of the pedagogic actions for assisting a child who, because of his innate psychic or organic structures, seriously is handicapped in ordinary education." However, the problem here is not to reflect on and consider this theory as a scientific field of pedagogics. (For this, see Chapter I by Nel) but rather to reflect on the practice of pedagogic actions by which the child in educative distress is assisted by an adult (orthopedagogue). Without any claim of completeness, all pedagogic categories of the pedagogic situation serve as criteria and are applied here. The following are mentioned briefly:

A **pedagogic situation** is one in which an encounter takes place between an adult (as a mature, morally independent, responsible person) and a child (as a not-yet-mature, morally dependent, becoming-responsible person) with the aim that the adult will educate, help and support the child to adulthood (a way of being by which a person, in freedom, is able to make moral choices, resolutions and decisions on his own initiative).

Such an encounter between adult and child takes place on an **ethical-normative** basis as well as on a **pathic (affective)** level. These two modes of encounter are inseparably tied to each other and their courses are parallel. An encounter on an ethical-normative basis is a **way of being-together** of adult and child where, by means of discourse, an intimate relationship is created such that the child "opens" himself to the adult so that he **freely** is willing to be educated by identifying himself with the norms exemplified to him and making them his own. This means that the child himself changes (**his own way of being changes**) through the encounter, his way of **going out** to the world changes, that he reaches a **new valuation** of the world and of his own way of being. Encounter, thus, points to a change in the child as a person, a change of the self.

However, of equal importance is the fact that the encounter takes place in a pathic (affective) sense because this provides the possibility for an encounter in an ethical-normative sense. For this reason, Buytendijk views an encounter as an "emotional relationship of contact." By this is understood the **trusting** relationship between adult and child which is built on a **stable affective** relationship which, in turn, is cultivated by the stable emotional impressions (Langeveld) received by the child in his relationship of

helplessness which needs to be overcome to make room for **security**.

Finally, it needs to be indicated that the ortho-pedagogic situation essentially is the same as the pedagogic one as described above with the difference that the concern is with correctively educating a child who in one way or another has difficulty or problems with his becoming adult. Consequently, learning difficulties, of whatever nature, must not be viewed in isolation from the child in his world-constituting because he **experiences** this learning difficulty pathically-affectively and, gnostically-cognitively by giving meaning to it (see above).

The educative actions (encounters) described above can be directly responsible for a child's learning problems. Thus, a deficient affective educating (encounter) can so obstruct the child's pathic-affective **experiencing** of the learning event that he is not able to distance himself to a gnostic-cognitive level. Then he becomes blocked and even flooded by his own vital-pathic **experiences**, and this hinders him in establishing a learning world in a responsible way. Usually such a child is handicapped in his venturing attitude toward the cognitive, the abstract, the unfamiliar, the new; consequently, he will **experience** difficulties in his reading, spelling, written work and arithmetic. In other words, he will **experience** difficulties over the entire range of symbolic language. Also, he will have difficulty with all other subjects where he has to venture to the gnostic-cognitive. His typical symptoms are lapses in attending, poor concentration, daydreaming, little interest in schoolwork, apathetic learning, etc. As a rule, these children achieve below the level of their intellectual potentialities.

Also, with this, poor **ethical/moral educating** (encounter) will allow the learning task to miscarry further, especially since such a child does not show sufficient responsibility. Essentially, for such a child, **giving meaning** is deficient; the sense and meaning of the learning task, of work, of studying, of school and even of life dwindle.

In summary, from our fundamental anthropological axiom that a child is openness as possibility, which means he is someone who himself will be and become (thus someone who will learn) but who alone cannot do so properly (but rather is dependent on the help and support of adults), it follows that deficient educating will allow

the actualization of this given possibility to miscarry. Thus, educating can directly promote or hinder a child's learning; indeed, a child's learning responsibly is a task of educating. Consequently, the task confronting the orthopedagogue in evaluating and assisting a child clearly is an **orthopedagogic** one and not a matter of "remedying" symptoms. The particular nature of orthopedagogic evaluation and assistance are discussed next in sections **e** and **f**, respectively.

e) The orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation of a child with learning difficulties

i) The aim of orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation

According to Van Gelder⁽²²⁾, the aim of any orthopedagogic evaluation is to determine the level of what has been achieved pedagogically in relation to the level which is achievable. In other words, the concern is with the level of adulthood which the particular child already has attained in relation to what is pedagogically achievable (i.e., taking his potentialities into consideration). This is not a matter of measurement by scholastic tests but rather is a pedagogic evaluation in accordance with the criteria referred to above. It is clear that only a phenomenologically trained pedagogue, as an orthopedagogue, can do such an evaluation.

ii) The nature of orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation

a) Establishing a learning image as image of the lived experiencing of a child with learning difficulties

Here the concern is with a phenomenological view of the learning world of the child with learning difficulties, seen as his experiential world.⁽²³⁾ In agreement with the above thoughts about the child's experiential world, in particular, such an evaluation means that there will be a search for the essentials of the child's lived experiences, including the level/quality of the pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive as well as his attributing meaning on a normative level. More specifically, the question is, what do the child's pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive modes look like? For example, owing to his **experience** of a particular learning difficulty, is he flooded (overwhelmed) by his resulting vital-pathic

experiences and, therefore, restrained by them at the cost of the gnostic-cognitive to which he needs to be able to move in his learning world? In answering this question, it is briefly mentioned that children with learning difficulties **experience** them pathically and with particular intensity; this is especially the case for those with reading, spelling and language difficulties. The reason for this is the close relationship between language and affectivity.

Also, generally children whose learning difficulties originate because of educative problems at home show a severe restraint and blockage in their pathic-affective **experiences** at the cost of the gnostic-cognitive. This pathic flooding usually is so intense that such a child's implementation of his intelligence is restrained by it and, consequently, underachievement is a typical characteristic of children with learning difficulties because even though they have normal or above-normal intelligence, they achieve less than what they are capable of.

An image of this learning world, as experiential world, also is necessary because the child's learning occurs by means of **experiencing**.⁽²⁵⁾ Hence, there is a direct search for the essentials in the child's learning world in contrast to diagnosing symptoms as referred to above. In addition, this image of the experiential world of the child with learning difficulties presents a total image of the learning relationships and modes of learning as essential phenomena of his learning world; this is in contrast to a "totality image" compiled from a list of causative factors (see above). The phenomenological method is employed for this, supplemented by psychological-pedagogical exploratory media⁽²⁶⁾ and pedagogic observation⁽²⁷⁾, the details of which can only be mentioned briefly:

This search begins with an historicity image of each child provided by his parents or guardians and which includes an image of the world relationships the particular child has constituted in the past. Particular attention is paid to the learning relationships of the past and his **experiencing** of them.

Secondly, different observation media are used, among which are the Wiggly Blocks and the Koh's Blocks, where the child is confronted with a task, and he is observed by the investigator. During this pedagogic observation, a pedagogic conversation with the child takes place in an attempt to obtain an image of the way(s)

he constitutes his learning world. Also of great importance is an observation of the methods he uses to constitute his learning task, e.g., whether he works systematically and whether he uses methods for solving the problem, whether he works independently or needs help, the quality of his insight into the task, whether his learning and thinking show a rising level or whether he falls back to his own level of errors, etc.

Thirdly, media especially are used to view the levels quality) of **experiencing** that the child attains in his learning world, i.e., the nature of his pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive **experiences**. The best medium for this is Rorschach's Inkblots⁽²⁸⁾ which, as an unstructured medium, gives a good image of both the pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive modes of **experiencing**.

It also is necessary to employ a number of thematic projective media which again present an image of the pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive levels of **experiencing**. Some language media also are used such as the incomplete sentences of Rotter, the Wartegg (see Kinget) drawing medium and graphic expression media. The ways these media are used cannot be fully dealt with here, and the reader is referred to the literature⁽²⁹⁾ on this and to Chapter V by Kotze.

The result of such an orthopedagogic evaluation is a learning image, as an image of the lived experiencing, of the learning world of a child with learning difficulties. This is an essential aspect of the total evaluation of such children; however, this has to be supplemented by an orthodidactic image.

b) Establishing an orthodidactic image of the child with learning difficulties

Nel defines orthodidactics as "that aspect of orthopedagogics which, by means of specialized, corrective didactic measures, is directed to correctively educating the child with learning difficulties, with the aim of guiding him through his learning activities to an effective, more acceptable world relationship on his way to adulthood." This definition is purposefully mentioned to show that orthodidactics is a part perspective of the science of orthopedagogics. Further, this is a science that reflects on, studies and orders scientific data concerning the **modes of correctively teaching** the child with learning difficulties. At the same time, it is clear that orthodidactics

is not the same as "remedial" teaching because it **reflects** on and has a **theory** about corrective teaching.

In this section, the specific concern is with the nature of orthodidactic action in an orthodidactic situation. This action is founded in orthodidactics as a scientific field that reflects on this action; therefore, it is an action different from "remedial" teaching which is more of a recipe treatment of symptoms. Now the question is what does this orthodidactic action involve? The answer is that it has two aspects, namely, orthodidactic evaluation and orthodidactic assistance. Both are founded in orthodidactics as a theory which, again, is a field of orthopedagogics and, therefore, is a field of pedagogics and didactics.

The following is a brief consideration of the essentials of orthodidactic evaluation by which an orthodidactic image of the child with learning difficulties is sought. (The essentials of orthodidactic assistance will be considered below). Obtaining a learning image, as image of lived-experience, elucidated above (i.e., orthopedagogic evaluation) is followed by an orthodidactic evaluation that is closely intertwined with the former. By the latter is meant obtaining an orthodidactic image as an image of the defects in the learning activity forms⁽³⁰⁾ that appear in one or more cultural systems, or, better, school subjects (e.g., an image of language problems in terms of the activity forms of globalizing, analyzing and synthesizing [concept formation] or also in arithmetic according to the activity forms of concretizing, schematizing [system forming] and abstracting).

The essentials of orthodidactic evaluation cannot be considered in detail here, and the reader is referred to the existing literature⁽³¹⁾ and to part B of this book. What needs to be mentioned is that orthodidactic evaluation primarily is concerned **neither** with applying a number of diagnostic reading, spelling and arithmetic tests **nor** with analyzing errors. Rather, it has to do with a search for defects in particular structural activity forms or activity structures by using particular orthodidactic media such as language and arithmetic media. At most, these media are means for penetrating the basic activity structures. Thus, it is necessary to use reading, spelling and written work, as well as dictation, all viewed as language media and as a means for fathoming the defects in the basic activity structures of language forms (e.g., reading, spelling).

The same is true for arithmetic; however, since there is a close connection between language and arithmetic, an investigation of arithmetic also uses language media.

iii) The results of the orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation.

Viewed as a unity, the result of orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation is a total image of the learning world of the child with learning difficulties which, although a total image, is differentiated into two levels: On the one hand, it is a total image of the learning world, as experiential world, as constituted by the child himself. In particular, this image is characterized by the child's pathic-affective and gnostic-cognitive **experiencing** via particular modes of learning such as his sensing, perceiving, thinking, actualizing intelligence and remembering; also, it is an image of the child's **experiences** of learning relationships toward the learning contents or tasks, toward other children and adults, among whom are his parents and teachers). For details regarding these modes of learning and learning relationships, the reader is referred to another recent work by the author.⁽³²⁾

On the other hand, this orthopedagogic-orthodidactic total image also includes a structural orthodidactic image of the learning activity forms or activity structures underlying the child's culture-form systems (school subjects or parts of subjects), e.g., the structure underlying his forms of language (reading, spelling, written work) and arithmetic activity forms. In this connection, the reader has been referred to several completed research projects; however, it also has to be pointed out that, as far as this field is concerned, there still is ample room for research. In part B of this book, the actual practice of this evaluation is dealt with in detail. Now we consider the other aspect of orthodidactic action with a child with learning difficulties, namely, assistance.

f) Orthopedagogic-orthodidactic assistance to a child with learning difficulties

At this stage, the question arises as to how assistance can be given to a child in light of the above-mentioned total image of the learning world and the learning activity forms? This is **differentiated** into orthopedagogic and orthodidactic assistance:

i) Orthopedagogic assistance or pedotherapy

This aspect of assistance means the corrective education of a child with learning difficulties as a person. It is important to indicate that this is not applied child psychotherapy of any kind, but it essentially is **orthopedagogics**, i.e., pedagogic actions directed to the corrective education of the child with learning difficulties. This action, or pedotherapy⁽³³⁾, occurs in a pedagogic situation (see above) in accordance with pedagogic criteria.⁽³⁴⁾ Thus, it has to do with correcting and revising the level that has been achieved pedagogically in relation to what can be achieved, toward achieving a pedagogically accountable level of adulthood.

The essentials of this orthopedagogic assistance are concerned with helping the child with learning difficulties accept and revise (assimilate) his disturbed learning world. For example, a child who is flooded by pathic **experiences** of his learning world needs help and support, in accordance with pedagogic criteria, to bolster and build up his feelings of safety and security and, thereby, his venturing attitude in order to try to help him establish (or re-establish) more meaningful, acceptable and accountable learning relationships. In this way, he will be able to constitute cognitive learning relationships in ways that are accountable. On the whole, he should then adequately make a transition to **experiencing** sense and meaning and thus achieve in his learning tasks more meaning-for-himself. Once again, it needs to be mentioned that we cannot go into detail regarding the essentials of this orthopedagogic aid or pedotherapy, and also there is much room for further research. However, what is obvious is that the essential category of orthopedagogic assistance (i.e., the educability of the child) is a pedagogic category and that such assistance only can be given by an orthopedagogue. In this regard, the reader is referred to Chapter VI by A. S. du Toit.

ii) Orthodidactic assistance

Because it is closely interwoven with the above orthopedagogic assistance, orthodidactic assistance is aimed at developing orthopedagogically-orthodidactically founded teaching means based on the orthodidactic evaluative images of particular children with learning difficulties. The aim is to directly link up such orthodidactic means with the nature of the existing structural

activity forms or activity structures in specific school subjects or parts of them with the aim of correcting them into didactically accountable ones. For example, didactic language means have to be developed to correct the activity forms of globalizing, analyzing and synthesizing (concept forming) which all have to link up with the defective activity forms.

In the case of arithmetic, similar didactic means need to be developed to link up with the defective activity forms such as concretizing, schematizing (system forming), abstracting (concept forming), etc. Regarding the practical implementation of these designed didactic means in language and arithmetic, reference is made to Chapters VI (A. S. du Toit) and VII (J. A. T. Wentzel and J. W. M. Pretorius), respectively.

Here it is emphasized that these orthodidactic means are not aimed at correcting errors as symptoms but rather at the basic structures or activity forms underlying particular cultural systems. Regarding this, very little research exists, and this leads to the need for pioneering work to be done in orthodidactics; otherwise, it will remain on the level of "remedial" teaching as the treatment of symptoms.

4. Concluding considerations

The aim of this chapter is to show that the problem of "remedial" teaching essentially is an orthopedagogic-orthodidactic matter. Earlier it was indicated that the current practice of "remedial" teaching is the result of a naturalistically oriented child philosophical anthropology that views a person (a child) as an extension of an animal. In addition, it has a strong medical model orientation and is based on the practice of diagnosing and treating symptoms. The child is overlooked in his primordial relatedness (as open for and directed to), as well as in his pedagogic situatedness.

Further, attention was given to an accountable approach to the problem of orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation and assistance that indicated that this is primarily a pedagogic matter, and, although in its infancy, already it is making great progress in the Netherlands as well as in the Republic of South Africa. At the same time, there is a large area in need of research in this field, and the development of orthopedagogics and orthodidactics will depend greatly on such research.

Where the primary concern here is with a phenomenological-pedagogical founding of orthopedagogic-orthodidactic evaluation and assistance on a theoretical basis, the reader now is referred to part B of this book that deals with the practice of this evaluation and assistance.

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