

THE EXPERTISE AND SKILLFULLNESS OF THE ORTHOPEDEGOGUE*

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1. Introduction

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

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

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

From psychology a number of explanations of "personality development" and "personality deviations" and how to further or eliminate them, respectively, in practice, gradually arose. These theories then served as a basis for establishing a number of models for designing practice. In due course, this contributed to an extensive knowledge structure on deviancy arising that, however, is deficiently grounded scientifically. This also contributed to the fact that a conspicuous characteristic of professional intervention with

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the child who is deviant or restrained in becoming was a lack of a unitary approach regarding explanatory models and designing practices.

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

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

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

2. The expertise and skillfulness of the orthopedagogue

2.1 Introduction

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

preconditions to those who will make claims about providing this assistance.

2.2 The demand of expertise

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

educating. This always requires abstracting, determining strategies, constructing means, and much more.

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

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

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

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

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

generalized insights that confront the orthopedagogue with the task of eliminating vagueness from his own **particularizations**. Both the child's being restrained and deficiencies in educating must be particularized in their dynamic relationship and in this light, e.g., aggressiveness, insecurity, emotional disturbance, defective learning, etc., as well as over-protection, rejection, lack of trust, deficient teaching, etc. are interpreted.

This scientific work elevates the orthopedagogic to a full-fledged perspective along side of the other practically directed pedagogical perspectives. As part of his theoretical work the orthopedagogue also will show how he is able to arrive at a reliable selection of macrostructures to determine what is relevant to the underactualization.

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

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

The orthopedagogue need not fear that he will jeopardize his own autonomy if he recognizes accepted psychological procedures, as such, since the mere adoption of these insights and procedures alone is not sufficient to explain or eliminate child deviancies; first

they **must** be put in the context of the disharmonious educating or teaching. Similarly, one cannot provide a conclusive explanation of the disharmonious dynamic of educating or teaching from a particular “basic” pedagogical perspective. Hence, it also is not the primary task of the orthopedagogue to verbalize valid pedagogical categories but rather to express the nuances that these categories manifest in their inadequate appearance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2 The demand of skillfulness

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

Ways and means have to be designed and implemented to determine with confidence how the child’s educative involvement restrains his personal becoming in terms of the inadequate acknowledgment of his basic personal and educative needs such as a lack of trust, misunderstanding, dependence, and more. **What** the effect is when there is a failure of the educative in filling a

particular child's needs has to be shown. The cardinal task is to reliably gauge the **controllable** and **abolishable** personal disturbances and moments of interference and design ways to neutralize or correct them.

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

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

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

- to particularize moments of personal deviancy in their essential nature,
- to determine **where** the personal and educational essences appear confused,
- what** essences appear confused,
- to what degree do they appear confused, and
- to gauge the quality of actualization of the educators' educative activities.

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

The orthopedagogue must always show beyond any doubt that his "specialized" interventions with the personally deviant, becoming and learning restrained child is not based merely on devices and recipes that are accepted in good faith but rather on scientifically

founded views for designing his practice and where he is grounded in procedures that are accountable.

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

2.4 Synthesis

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This confronts him with the relentless task of converging his theory and his practice if he is not to be guilty of fragmenting and offering

simple causes for particular behavior and learning problems that are presumed to be situated only in the child or only in the family setup.

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

AUTHOR’S ENGLISH SUMMARY

EXPERTISE AND SKILL IN ORTHOPEDAGOGY

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

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

Secondly, the orthopedagogue’s task includes designing pedagogically valid procedures for diagnostics and assistance, in order to rectify dysfunctions. This constitutes the skill, and stands in direct relation to the effectiveness of his practice. The orthopedagogue should be *au fait* with the procedures necessary to

diagnostication, as well as the strategies and techniques of assistance.

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