

ORTHOPEDAGOGICS*

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1. Introduction

At the University of Pretoria, concern for and thinking about a child with problems developed hand in hand with the activities of the Child Guidance Institute that was established in 1929 in the Department of Social Work. In 1949 after the Institute was assigned to the Faculty of Education under the direction of B. F. Nel an exceptional period was ushered in during which the pedagogic foundation was laid on which orthopedagogics could be built as an identifiable pedagogic perspective. Until his retirement in 1970 Nel was the propelling force behind thinking about the **deviant** child and he had shown unambiguously that intervening with these children is primarily a pedagogic matter, and indeed he accomplished this in a period when it was generally accepted that this intervention was an extension of medical, psychological, sociological and psychiatric work.

Especially since the 1960's a large number of publications have appeared by persons connected with the Institute in which it is shown how one has to set about helping a child in educative distress. There were relevant questions about the role of the educator in helping a child who for one or another reason is "conspicuous". The child's educational situatedness was taken as the point of departure and thinking about a child with problems was strongly influenced by the prevailing pedagogic thought of the time.

2. The deviant child as educationally situated

With reference to a philosophical-anthropologically founded pedagogic thought, especially after World War II, particular attention was given to both the disabled child and those with

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learning and educative difficulties in general. With the conviction that giving assistance to these children has to take place within an educative situation, a pedagogical-psychological approach was advocated that rests on a personologically oriented view according to which a child is seen as a somatic-psychic-spiritual being. Nel refers to a "modern direction of thinking in the pedagogics that the Faculty of Education is developing and which now links up with the anthropological-pedagogical views that have developed in Europe, especially in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland and France where the pedagogic situation is the starting point"^(30:1).

He explained in exquisite ways how an accountable "psychological pedagogics" arose within which the **existential-human** is brought to the foreground, and he says that only a psychology and pedagogy that are rooted in a "**modern philosophical anthropology**" are in a position to understand^(28: 5) persons in their totality, i.e., in their world involvement and to study them in their existential situations.

In orthopedagogic thought, the emphasis was placed on the fact that a child with problems has to be approached as he "announces" himself within an educative situation in relationship to an adult to whom he is committed for help and support. Thus, there is a search for the essentials of a child, that is an accountable child-anthropology, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a taking account of the fact that a child himself establishes relationships in which he encounters things. This implies a grounding of these essentials in the world established by a child with problems, i.e., as a child who is committed to being educated^(49: 32).

From this point of departure it was obvious to Nel that the orthopedagogic "has to function as a **part-science within the framework of pedagogics**"^(28: 4). Starting from Langeveld's statement that a person is the only being who educates, is educated and is committed to education and also from his moments of development, namely, the biological, that of helplessness, safety and security and emancipation, Nel indicated that a restrained child **in particular** is committed to being educated on the basis of his greater helplessness and seeking help, his need for sympathetic, authoritative guidance and the adult's responsibility to support him to become morally independent. For Nel the basic pedagogic and

orthopedagogic aim is forming a child's conscience^(28: 5) and he generally finds it "difficult to determine the boundary between current pedagogic and orthopedagogic assistance"^(28: 5).

3. Accent on the "disabled" ("handicapped") child

Since the 1950's European "orthopedagogues" such as Van Gelder^(58: 59), Vliegthart⁽⁶⁹⁾, Rienstra⁽¹⁰⁾, Hanselmann⁽¹⁷⁾, Asperger⁽¹⁾ and Grewel⁽¹⁶⁾, child psychiatrists such as Vedder⁽⁶⁶⁾, child psychologists such as Hart de Ruyter⁽¹⁸⁾, and medical doctors such as Valk⁽⁵³⁾ and Schenk⁽⁴⁵⁾ exercised a significant influence on thinking about children with problems.

During this time, orthopedagogic thinking was particularly directed to the **disabled** child although the practical assistance given in the Child Guidance Institute had a strong foundation in clinical child psychology and was specifically provided to children with "character flaws" and learning problems. Nel indicated that a restrained child, as does a normal child, always finds himself in a pedagogic situation and thus is subject to everything pedagogic (including the moments of development) and that the aim is to potentialize and activate a child's spirituality in terms of forming his conscience. He identified himself with Dumont's description of the orthopedagogic field of work, namely that "educating a deviant, handicapped child, a child in educative distress (Van der Zeyde), in orthopedagogics remains in principle the same as educating an ordinary child except that the contents will be relativized by the limits imposed by the diminished educability ... The difference between pedagogics and orthopedagogics lies in the difference in the means of educating among which the most important is the orthopedagogue's attitude toward education. The difference is that the **same** means are used **differently**, that is, more frequently, with more or less emphasis, for a longer or shorter time, with more nuances or more deliberately"^(9: 148-149).

Thus, for Nel the aim of education and of orthopedagogics is the same. Also he^(28:11) embraced Valk's view that "where ordinary educationists take adequate steps to achieve this aim one speaks of

pedagogics. Where extraordinary steps are followed one speaks of orthopedagogics"^(53: 247).

Until the beginning of the 1970's the **disabled** child remained the point of focus. In addition, there was agreement with Vliegthart's⁽⁶⁸⁾ overarching orthopedagogic theoretical scheme regarding the large variety of forms of child disturbances. The emphasis was especially on a child's disturbance and the correlated **being different**, which is a **fundamental category** in orthopedagogics. In this connection, Pretorius⁽³⁸⁾ refers to the following moments:

- * All disturbed children are committed to education;
- * all are impeded in attaining adulthood, and because of these impediments, they attain a lower level of adulthood and at a later time than they would without the impediment;
- * there is a loss of obviousness (they are "conspicuous");
- * the differentness of these children is central.

Research was directed to the disabled child and to specific forms of disturbances; the steps to be taken to best help such a child were placed in the spotlight. A considerable number of publications by faculty and students had one or another specific disturbance as a theme, e.g., the child with cerebral palsy, brain-damage, poor vision, hardness of hearing, epilepsy and mental retardation. In 1970 an international symposium was organized by the Faculty on the **destitute** child and his insertion into society⁽⁴⁸⁾.

4. Pedagogic diagnostics

With the aim of better understanding the deviant child, excellent progress was made in establishing a **pedo-diagnostic practice**. The concentration was on establishing a person image, i.e., a learning-, lived-experience-, and language-image of restrained children and those with behavioral and learning problems⁽³³⁾.

The attempt was to **understand** a child in his **wholeness** (as a totality), and, by means of methods of "understanding", to establish a totality image of his personal structure^(27: 3). The prominent place

held by diagnostics was seen in the fact that since 1972 equivalent degrees in "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics" were offered in addition to specializations in Clinical Child Psychology and Mental Health Care on the B. Ed., M. Ed. and D. Ed. levels. Also accentuated was the fact that pedodiagnosics occurs in an educative situation^(27: 10) and clear guidelines were established for designing such a diagnostic practice.

The unaccountability of a naturalistically oriented explanation of a child's problems, as noted from experience^(30: 1), which is directed at isolating, controlling and measuring psychic characteristics with psychological tests and measurements, is exposed in convincing ways by Nel⁽²⁷⁾, Sonnekus⁽⁴⁹⁾, Gouws⁽¹⁵⁾ and others. The publication series of the Work Community for the Advancement of Pedagogy as a Science, helped introduce methods and media^(8;14; 19; 21; 31; 32; 33; 52; .65; 70) for acquiring a person image.

From psychological and pedagogical perspectives there was remarkable progress in expanding fundamental and empirical methods through a phenomenological approach. Diagnosis had acquired the stamp of a subjectivizing approach to children with problems that involved further expansion, systematization, differentiation and refinement of particular essentials of educating. A unique combination of quantitative, qualitative and pedagogic evaluation was designed. According to Nel^(27: 13) an exhaustive and thorough personal image not only provides a clear picture of the various aspects of a child as a person but also shows what has led to the distorted personal image.

The following is an example of the particular information included in a personal image^(29: 33):

This child is affectively disturbed and has a qualitatively good intelligence. He finds school to be an unpleasant place, hence his attitude of resistance and friction at home. The basis of his affective disturbance leads him to feel insecure, anxious and tense along with being depressed. He does not explore his school work and does not concentrate or persist in attending; he is not able to penetrate the symbolic character of language and thus does not explore language. His deficient education at home lacks loving care by his mother;

divorce and his being flung about among his parents and step-parents intensifies his insecurity; there is no father-identification by which he can acquire guidance and a course in his life; there is no father who can exercise consistent authority over him. It is concluded that he is growing up in a distorted educative situation such that he is not able to live closely with his parents in a relationship directed to his adulthood.

Such a personal image clearly indicates how a child lived experiences his world (with security or insecurity, etc.) and what the condition is of his exploration^(12: 98).

Orthodidactic diagnosis is built on pedagogic diagnosis and aims for a "total image" of the learning world of a child with learning difficulties that, according to Sonnekus^(49: 39), is differentiated on two levels, namely, an image of the life world, as experiential world, which a child constitutes for himself based the modes of learning and an image of lived-experiences in terms of learning relationships with, e.g., the learning material or the learning task, with other children and with adults. On the other hand, the image depicts a structural image of the forms of the course of learning or the activity structures that are at the foundation of the child's difficulties with a subject matter (e.g., arithmetic) in terms of globalizing, analyzing and synthesizing or concretizing, schematizing and abstracting.

In a 1962 M. Ed. thesis on **Die antropologies-pedagogiese agtergrond van ortodidaktiek** [The anthropological-pedagogical background of orthodidactics] S. J. L. Gouws⁽¹³⁾ indicated that finally there is a breaking away from a mere analysis of errors and a remediation of symptoms and the activity structures of learning (i.e., globalizing, etc.) and deeper-lying educative problems are taken into account. For example, it is determined whether a child works systematically in his handling and activation of methods of solution; if he works independently; how his insights and plans of action seem to be; if there is a rise in the course of his learning and thinking. A structural image of the pathic (affective) and gnostic (cognitive) lived-experiences are acquired and there is a continual accounting of the child's educability^(49: 38) that is linked up with the sort of educating he can participate in. In this regard,

Sonnekus^(49: 35) says, for example, that a defective affective educating can so restrain a child's pathic (affective) lived-experiences of the learning event that he is not able to distance himself to a cognitive level of learning. Such a child is blocked or even flooded by his own vital-pathic lived-experiences and this hinders him in establishing a life world in accountable ways.

The diagnostic practice for determining the pedagogically achieved in relation to the pedagogically achievable level^(49: 36) was placed on a solid foundation. Effective use was made of particular pedagogic criteria. Especially psychological-pedagogic (and later psychopedagogic) criteria figured prominently and mainly this was **psychological-pedagogical** diagnostics. This especially involved a search for essentials of a child's lived-experiences that includes the state of his pathic (affective), gnostic (cognitive) and meaning-giving (normative) lived-experiences. For example, it is determined whether a child, because of his lived-experiences of particular behavioral or learning problems, is flooded by his affective lived-experiences and, therefore, is restrained at the expense of the cognitive.

There was a search for the essentials of a child's experiential and learning worlds that is in contrast to diagnosing symptoms. However, the emphasis had not yet fallen on the real **underactualization of the modes of learning and the modes of actualizing the psychic life**. Why the being-together of adult and child gives rise to deviancy when the essentials of educating are implemented inadequately was not yet specifically shown. What was included was establishing a **psychic image** with the accompanying statement that the particular child " ... does not live in a close relationship with his educators that is directed to his adulthood"^(29: 33).

On this basis, however, one can successfully build an authentic orthopedagogic diagnostics that involves determining the **problematic dynamics of educating**, as such, and not merely determining the level of adulthood already attained by a particular child.

5. Therapeutic intervention with a deviant child

Also the therapeutic intervention with a child had acquired a clearly **pedagogic** flavor grounded on the primordial ways of educating by purposefully striving to implement particular essentials of educating in the therapy.

Because the emphasis fell especially on **re-educating**, **pedotherapy** also dealt with promoting values and with spiritual forming. For Nel^(27: 9) **pedotherapy** is an **act of re-educating** because with the ordinary means of educating and teaching the restrained child is not able to attain the highest form of adulthood of which he, with his restraints, is capable. Therefore, for him^(28: 9) orthopedagogic assistance includes two inseparable aspects, namely, the **spiritual-formative** aspect where the accent falls on activating and potentializing the spiritual dimension of a restrained child, and the **orthodidactic** aspect where particular and specialized "learning methods" are applied to try to overcome the learning difficulties which the restrained child experiences.

Pedotherapeutic research was especially directed to its improvement and particular attention was given to procedures for doing this. However, it was still very **generally** directed to help with meanings with the aim of **conscience forming**. Also, there was a conspicuous separation between a child's role and that of an adult because evaluating a child's role during the diagnosis was still "isolated" and fairly speculative and the role of the adult also was reflected on speculatively.

Nel^(27: 6-7) says that when a child manifests a disturbed personal image and thus the usual methods of **educating** cannot be followed, special methods then have to be applied so his personal image can again be corrected, re-formed, transformed, re-educated to make him again receptive for being educated in the usual ways. He^(26: 57) calls this application of specialized methods **pedotherapy** because it involves an adult-child situation where a child has to be brought to the correct psychic-spiritual attunement. The aim is to make a child free to discover himself and to assume his responsibility for life, says Vorsatz^(70: 60).

In this light, until the beginning of the 1970's pedotherapy was really mainly an applied logotherapy, which qualifies as **pedotherapy** because it occurred in an educative situation. By means of pedotherapy, especially by using play, imagery and conversation, a child is assisted out of his helplessness in a safe, life-certain and secure milieu to explore his world in normal ways and make contact with other persons in his world. There was less concentration on direct prohibitions and limitations of a child's manifest behaviors of a deviant nature since this only would lead to greater and stronger compensatory deviant patterns of behavior^(70: 75). Subsequently, it was attempted to bring a child to a trusting relationship so he purposefully will explore further his own world and thus be amenable again to the educative aims of his natural educators.

The following are examples of pedotherapeutic aims more or less applicable to each deviant child^(12; 98):

- * Readying him to accept his situatedness;
- * Preparing him for self-acceptance;
- * Re-establishing his affective and temperamental life;
- * Improving his use of language;
- * Releasing him from anxiety and threat;
- * Readying him to explore his world;
- * Preparing him to accept safety and authority;
- * Acquiring insight into the demands of propriety.

6. On the way to an accountable orthopedagogics

Especially in the 1970's, orthopedagogics settled in and an authentic foundation was laid on which it could be developed further.

Problematic educating, however, was not yet at its center and until the 1970's there was only a vague reference to the quality of implementing educative essentials in their mutual inter-relations.

It had gradually become clear that orthopedagogics not only involves a **disabled** child but also a child who is **different** from an ordinary child.

Although from the beginning, Nel and his co-workers had the idea that thinking about children with learning and behavioral difficulties constitutes a "separate and unique area"^(27: 7) under the dome of the pedagogic, and which announces itself as a **part science** of the pedagogic, research and pronouncements about a child with problems was still mainly done from a general **pedagogic** and **psychological** perspective. Real specialization was still lacking and until late in the 1970's specific psychological and pedagogical insights were applied as psycho-orthopedagogic pronouncements about the problematic educating and the child's deviancy was explained accordingly.

The **integrated** role of the child and adult in the problematic educative event was still not clearly noted. Post-graduate training attuned to intervening with the "deviant" child fell into two categories, namely, specializing in special education, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, specialization in assisting children with learning difficulties and behavioral deviations. Additional academic and professional qualifications in this regard resulted from acquiring an M. Ed. and D. Ed. degree in "Educational Psychology". Since 1962 some M. Ed. and D. Ed. degrees were also given in "Clinical Child Psychology and Mental Health Care", and from 1970 to 1972 also in "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics" which in 1975 was changed to "Orthopedagogic Diagnostics and Pedotherapy", and that subsequently was replaced by a specialization in "Orthopedagogics".

There was further refinement in acquiring a learning image but the interaction between the inadequate actualization of the essentials of educating and the under-actualization of the modes of learning, as such, were still vaguely shown. The focus was mainly on establishing a **learning effect image**, and a child with learning problems was still mostly viewed as someone who learns inadequately because of defective learning modes such as perceptual-motor or auditory-verbal loss, or because of educational difficulties **in general** rather than because of a **particularization** of the **problematic dynamics of educating** regarding a particular child with learning problems.

Consequently, there was little evidence of a founded orthopedagogic perspective because of its "dependence" on and intertwining first with psychological pedagogics and later with psychopedagogics, and the order of the day from this perspective was mainly that orthopedagogics was an area of application for their ideas.

Even though there was reference to the prevailing pedagogic thought, particular psychological trends were also leaned on heavily --especially the German psychology of thinking^(42: 72-78), the child psychology of Hart de Ruyter⁽¹⁸⁾, the child psychiatry of Vedder⁽⁶⁶⁾ and others.

That Nel's orthopedagogic thinking was constrained by the absence of an authentic and clear pedagogic macro-structural launching pad [i.e., a pedagogic perspective] is clearly reflected in the conspicuous separation that he made between the psychological and the pedagogical and in his description of orthopedagogics as a complex scientific structure in the midst of the pedagogic^(28: 8). He attributed this complexity mainly to the fact that orthopedagogics deals with a child in his pedagogic situatedness, for which reason it also requires knowledge of theoretical pedagogics and all of its part-sciences, in particular, psychological pedagogics, didactic pedagogics, social pedagogics, etc.; in the second place, it is involved with a **disabled** child and knowledge of a child with defects in his physical or psychic-spiritual structure is important. With reference to Dutch orthopedagogues of the time he described^(28: 9) orthopedagogics as **educative activity** on behalf of a child who because of his psychic-spiritual and organic structure is seriously impeded in offering him ordinary education.

Thus, for Nel the deviancy or disability along with the educational occurrence of this child are primary rather than the **underactualization of his psychic life potentialities** in terms of a problematic educative event that has been actualized by the child and/or adult.

It was not until the late 1960's and early 1970's that clear structural, categorical and criterial schemes were established in didactic pedagogics^(54; 55; 56), fundamental pedagogics^(22; 23; 24; 35)

psychopedagogics^(47; 50; 51) and sociopedagogics and figured in the description of a particular problematic educative situation in terms of the quality of the implementation of these essentials [e.g., structures]. The desire for an "independent" orthopedagogic perspective now clearly was pushed to the surface.

7. The orthopedagogic as a pedagogic perspective

Since the beginning of the 1970's increasing emphasis was placed on **problematic educating**, as such, and although a child's physical, intellectual and other disabilities still figured prominently, orthopedagogic thinking began to concentrate increasingly on the problematic educative **dynamics** as such. This increasingly revealed the necessity for a distinction between a problematic educative **situation** and a problematic educative **event**. A problematic educative **event** is related directly to inadequate educative **activities** where a child continually is **restrained** in becoming adult or in learning, and his personal potentials are under-actualized-in-education^(60: 37). In a problematic educative **situation** there are **aggravating circumstances** regarding the course of educating, e.g., disabilities, poverty and more. However, these aggravating circumstances, in themselves, cannot qualify as a **problem in becoming adult or in learning** since they do not force a child to **inadequately** actualize his personal potentialities. Essentially, the becoming and learning of a disabled child are no different from those of another child; however, there is a **differentness** in their quality that can be **restraining**^(60: 39).

In 1973 a systematic search was begun to uncover the problematic educative dynamics underlying a unique child's being restrained. The practical direction of orthopedagogics, aimed at neutralizing these dynamics, also became more compelling. With the establishment of the Department of Orthopedagogics as an independent academic department in 1977, specific attention was given to disclosing the essentials of problematic educating^(60:39) as such, and neutralizing or eliminating the problem on the basis of authentic orthopedagogic insights.

Irrespective of the categorical description of problematic educating, research also was directed to exposing the essentials of the

dynamics of particular problematic educative phenomena^(3; 6; 7; 20; 41; 42; 44; 46). In particular, the emphasis was placed on both the child's **inadequate** self-actualization of his becoming adult and of his learning potentialities and the **inadequate** guidance by the adults both of which constitute a **unitary event** in terms of a problematic educative event. The emphasis was placed on the **disconcerting** or **attenuated** appearances of the essentials of educating in a particular child's educative situation rather than on the type of restraint with which he has to contend or on general (vague) references to the appearance of educative essentials.

The meaningful development of pedagogic thinking at the University of Pretoria had also placed orthopedagogics clearly in perspective. The establishment of a categorical structure had provided the indispensable basis for orthopedagogics and was a necessary step for clarifying the status of orthopedagogics as a pedagogic perspective^(11: 63). These solid categorical structures established by pedagogues "invited" orthopedagogues to also implement them with regard to orthopedagogic problems.

It had become clear that pedagogics as a science also had a specific orthopedagogic function^(60: 37) that amounts to constructing an orthopedagogic theory and designing an orthopedagogic practice. Especially when Sonnekus and his co-workers⁽⁵¹⁾ proclaimed the area of study of psychopedagogics as the psychic life of a child-in-education, it was realized that orthopedagogics could be pursued only as supplemental to psychopedagogics or to any other particular perspective because **problematic** educating cannot be comprehensively identified by any other perspective than the orthopedagogic.

Initially a particularly strong emphasis was placed on so-called "joint perspectives". However, this entailed obvious problems and only resulted in a tendency for orthopedagogic questions to still be illuminated from that sub-perspective of pedagogics that was most appropriate for the investigator's aim rather than doing this from an **orthopedagogic** point of view. Thus, although there was a strong emphasis on implementing joint perspectives, the joint figuring of the various pedagogic categories was not yet realized

regarding practical educative problems. This still involved describing **distorted** essentials, especially with psychopedagogic and fundamental pedagogic categories by means of a so-called psycho-orthopedagogic study^(38: 72-74).

Although problematic educating was penetrated from more than one perspective by means of particular categories, criteria and structures, there was not a successful convergence of these structures and the dynamic of problematic educating, as a unitary event, was not illuminated. The particular task of convergence of orthopedagogic theory was not yet fully recognized as is evidenced from the following: "Along with the fundamental pedagogic there are two other part-disciplines of pedagogics that serve as the foundation for designing a pedotherapy, namely, psychopedagogics and orthopedagogics"^(40: 18).

The practical implementation of orthopedagogics makes it impossible to conclusively explain a problematic educative event from only one particular perspective. Therefore, there cannot only be, e.g., a psycho-orthopedagogic or fundamental-orthopedagogic or didactic-orthopedagogic or socio-orthopedagogic perspective. Hence, it is recognized that there are not particular orthopedagogic moments that can concentrate on the problematic educative event from a psycho-, fundamental-, didactic- or socio-pedagogic, perspective to prominently bring to the fore the appearing essentials of educating.

However, it was realized that an accountable disclosure of the essentials of problematic educating and their elimination require an illumination of **where** and **how** the educative essentials in their **relations** with each other are distorted^(60: 37). The two-fold task of orthopedagogics clearly emerged so that **constructing** a theory and **designing** a practice enjoyed particular attention.

An essential description of problematic educating now occurred with pedagogic categories, always in an overarching **ortho-perspective**. Orthopedagogic theory embraces a reflection on a situation in which a child faces an adult and where his becoming adult and learning are **underactualized** by the child himself, which also points to **inadequate guidance** by the adult.

Now the scientific disclosure is directed, on the one hand, to a **failing** educative event as problematic, and, on the other hand, to a child's giving inadequate meaning to the educative contents. This thinking task occurs in terms of all available but **relevant** pedagogic concepts. This relevant knowledge of the various pedagogic perspectives is thus integrated, synchronized and converged in relation to the problematic educative event^(60: 37).

Thus, an orthopedagogic theory is the result of a scientifically accountable penetration and description of the essentials of a particular educatively situated child who is restrained in becoming adult or in learning and, as such, this is knowledge of the essentials of problematic educating, i.e., of the attenuated occurrence of the essentials of educating.

Because problematic educating is still educating, orthopedagogics is rooted in the pedagogic and derives its "autonomy" as a pedagogic perspective from nowhere else^(61: 186). Therefore, the orthopedagogue is compelled to continually take note of new categorical, criterial and structural concepts of the other pedagogic part-perspectives and to interpret their specific usefulness for and relevance to the educative dynamics and to incorporate them into his orthopedagogic theory.

Thus, orthopedagogics clearly has to remain a perspective that is aware of the essentials that are disclosed by the other pedagogic perspectives and it obviously has to correctly consider them in its own specialized practice with the obvious aim of adapting or refining them to it. This scientific work also elevates orthopedagogics to a full-fledged pedagogic perspective equivalent to the others^(11: 70).

Now orthopedagogics also is clearly a convergent pedagogic perspective because the orthopedagogue has to be able to select the relevant restraining moments in terms of each different pedagogic perspective and allow them to be practiced in the intervention with a child restrained in his becoming. The macro-structural description of the (problematic) educative reality provides the guideline for an orthopedagogic practice in the sense that it

indicates particular tendencies for planning and draws the boundary within which a particular problem can be intercepted^(64:7).

Since the 1940's orthopedagogic thinking at the University of Pretoria progressed beyond the initial notion **that** orthopedagogic work is a pedagogic matter by describing it **as** educative work in light of the current reflections on the problematic educative dynamics with the aim of designing an effective practice to eliminate the problem. The authentic macrostructure that is relevant for a particular orthopedagogic situation as a general guideline is continually particularized and reinterpreted and made into a practice, and it appears there is little mention of haphazard successes and failures.

Because the orthopedagogic task of particularizing also requires penetrating empirical research, particular attention was given to this. From the pedagogic, as a macro-structural basis of knowledge, particular fields of educative problems were disclosed and research was directed to specific areas.

Since orthopedagogics is practice with the main aim of eliminating concrete problematic educating, theory is also always functioning in **orthopedagogic practice**.

8. Orthopedagogic practice

8.1 Orthopedagogic diagnosis

Orthopedagogic practice falls into a few distinguishable components: diagnosing, pedotherapy and guiding the deviant child's parents.

Since 1975 an already sophisticated, widely accepted and orthopedagogically founded practice has been developed further. Regarding diagnostics, clear guidelines were established and particular functional activities were precisely specified about how to gauge and describe in its essentials a problematic educative situation of a particular child restrained in his becoming and learning.

Formerly, behavioral and learning problems were interpreted from beginning to end in terms of a child and educative defects were related to his worlds of becoming and learning, as his experiential world. Today diagnostic research is directed to interpreting behavioral and learning problems with regard to **problematic educative dynamics** as a description of the nuances of the attenuated appearance of the essentials of educating. In particular, stock is taken of **how** the problematic educative dynamics and the disharmonious teaching dynamics can be effectively disclosed, in which connection the usability of available media and procedures are reevaluated^(46: 64).

By means of orthopedagogic diagnostics an image is established of a deviant child's inadequate relationships with life contents that he has created on his own initiative but under the guidance of his educators. This implies an image of the quality of the implementation of the essentials of educating with particular reference to a child's personal **meanings** and personal **attribution of meaning** in terms of his personal-actualization-in-**education**^(64: 50).

Until the beginning of the 1970's there was gradually greater concentration on establishing **that** there is a gap between a child's attained and attainable educative level; since then there also is specific concentration on the **nature** of this gap in terms of **inadequately** implemented particularized essentials of educating. In 1976 a week-long symposium⁽⁶³⁾ was arranged in the Department of Orthopedagogics where attention was not only given to the retarded child but also, in particular, there was reflection on the **restrained** child to show **who** a child is with learning problems and what the connection between inadequate educating and learning problems implies. Also, with the help of videotapes, specially produced in collaboration with the Audiovisual department of the University of Pretoria, it was demonstrated how orthopedagogic practice works to counteract a problematic educative dynamic, especially by pedotherapy.

8.2 Pedotherapeutic practice

In the early years, assisting a deviant child pedotherapeutically was characterized by a clearly defined aim and thorough planning. Where for a very long time pedotherapy was viewed mainly as enabling a child to live with his natural educators in a "relationship directed to his adulthood", and this is indeed shown to be an event actualized in an educative situation, and the effective use of play, image and conversation as well as other means of communication were refined, since the beginning of the 1970's it was shown that pedotherapy is mainly concerned with supporting a child to a re-lived experiencing, as a redefining, in the sense of attributing new, different, favorable meanings to his own situatedness⁽⁴⁰⁾. In this regard, Pretorius⁽⁴⁰⁾ says that when a child's lived-experiencing in the original educative situation is unfavorable to his becoming, in the pedotherapeutic situation he has to be supported to **re-define** it. He⁽³⁹⁾ shows that the pedagogic relationship-, sequence-, and aim-structures have to be implemented and pedagogic criteria have to be applied to evaluate the therapeutic actions^(40: 7).

Gradually there was a breaking away from an applied logotherapeutic oriented, a Rogerian and an existential child therapeutic approach and the views of Vermeer⁽⁶⁷⁾, Van der Zeyde⁽⁵⁷⁾, Lubbers⁽²⁵⁾ and Dumont⁽¹⁰⁾ were built on and a pedagogically accountable therapy was developed with the aim of supporting a child to **modify his unfavorable feelings, knowing and hierarchy of values.**

Consequently, pedotherapeutic practice implies a more refined and intensified educative practice that involves the **modification or correction** of meanings rather than the addition of new meanings. On this basis, pedotherapy is qualified as an **orthopedagogically founded** activity. The therapeutic event is always characterized by an "ethical-normative influencing, of aligning behaviors to norms, regulating, disciplining, relating, offering, confronting a child with the demands of reality, etc."^(40: 23), but always with respect to specific, soundly selected contents of reality connected with a child's **disharmonious** experiential world contents that have to be 'replaced' by specific, **harmonious** experiential world contents. This essentially assumes that the problematic educative dynamic has been **neutralized.**

In this light, nowadays the pedotherapeutic event is described as establishing an intensified educative situation in which an encounter occurs between the orthopedagogue and a child restrained in becoming and learning during which he is purposefully helped to change specific meanings regarding his unfavorable feelings, knowledge and hierarchy of values as a reconstituting of his experiential world.

Although the implicit aim of pedotherapy is re-educating a child to attain full-fledged adulthood^(40: 23), the explicit aim is **changing meanings** to such a degree that the child's meanings agree with those meanings that he, at this stage of life and according to his ability to give meaning, ought to have already given to himself and to life.

In contemporary pedotherapeutic practice the overarching educative aim thus is still pursued indirectly but there is always a specifiable, specific pedotherapeutic aim which is related to changing meanings: Special educative help is offered the deviant child which, in varying circumstances and in accordance with the immediate aim, is actualized on a differentiated basis.

The design of pedotherapeutic theory has clearly become a matter of particularizing the **general pedagogic** structure by taking account of the **particular problematic dynamics of educating**. The explanation and interpretation, the practice and evaluation stemming from this within the framework of the problem of becoming or learning are, however, an out and out **orthopedagogic** matter that can be pedagogically evaluated only in the general sense of the word. Therefore these days particular attention is given to the **orthopedagogic** founding of pedotherapy which aims to eliminate the defects that still remain^(6; 36; 42; 60). In addition an **indirect** as well as a direct approach is given a prominent place during the course of pedotherapy as an orthopedagogically accountable procedure.

With reference to the pioneering work done from the beginning in the Faculty, the procedures were continually refined. The necessity for thorough planning regarding the pedotherapeutic **contents** and

the **form** in which it is presented, is accepted today as the point of departure and there is a meaningful enlistment of didactic and subject didactic insights^(60: 146) because it is clear that pedotherapeutic guidance does not differ fundamentally from teaching, although there is clearly a functional difference specifiable in terms of the ways in which the didactic structure is used in pedotherapy. In particular, the importance of **contents for substitution** as a linking factor between pedotherapeutic **guidance** and the **changes of meanings** (re-orientation in terms of **actualizing** the psychic life) is shown in the pedotherapeutic situation with special reference to the reduction of the substitution contents, to stating the problem and to ordering the contents.

The course of the pedotherapeutic sessions shows a clear correspondence with the course of a lesson, and the haphazard success (and the talk of general vagueness) that often was a characteristic of earlier pedotherapy has largely been eliminated^(60: 147).

SUMMARY

The early development of orthopedagogics was closely related to the activities of the Child Guidance Institute that was established as early as 1929 in the Department of Social Work.

With the inclusion of this Institute in the Faculty of Education in 1940, under the initiative of Prof. B. F. Nel, a shift of emphasis occurred towards an educational orientation in dealing with the exceptional child. This was the origin of orthopedagogics as a sub-discipline of pedagogics. The boundary between pedagogics and orthopedagogics, however, was not clearly defined.

During the 1960's orthopedagogues based in Europe exercised considerable influence on the Institute's approach to the exceptional child. The emphasis fell strongly on the concept of handicap, although the Institute dealt more specifically with children with learning difficulties and character flaws. Assistance was geared toward attaining education aims and more specifically to molding a child's character. The orthopedagogic nature of the assistance is found in the extraordinary steps taken to achieve these aims. The

differentness of the exceptional child was an important point of departure for the orthopedagogics of that time.

In striving for a better understanding of the exceptional child, excellent progress was made with regard to establishing an orthopedagogic practice of diagnosis in which the wholeness of the child was respected and the diagnosis was aimed at elucidating a child's total structure of personhood.

The help given had a strongly pedagogic character. Pedotherapy was defined as re-education because it was aimed at correcting or reforming unsatisfactory aspects of a child's person-structure by spiritually molding him since this could not be achieved via the usual channels of educating. Therefore, pedotherapy was initially largely an applied logotherapy which qualified as pedotherapy because it was practiced within the framework of the pedagogic situation. Particular use was made of playing, drawing and discussing as forms of therapy.

Although orthopedagogics was established as a part-discipline of pedagogics in the 1960's, it was not until the late seventies that its specialized function became truly differentiated. Until then it drew on the insights of both psychological and pedagogical perspectives for its own theory and practice. It was the explication of categories and criteria of the pedagogic structure by didactic, fundamental, psycho and socio sub-disciplines of pedagogics that made it possible to reflect on the essential nature of a particular problematic situation of educating from an independent orthopedagogic perspective.

Since its establishment as an independent academic department, the Department of Orthopedagogics has attempted to reveal, in terms of categories and criteria, the essentials of a particular problematic situation of educating and to design a practice for rectifying what is problematic. Particular emphasis was placed on a child inadequately actualizing his potential and on the inadequate support and guidance provided by the adult. Problematic educating has been described and explained in terms of the distorted and inadequate implementation of the essentials of educating. The orthopedagogic approach also implies the identification of how and

where the pedagogic essentials are not properly actualized. Such a description of problematic educating requires a convergence of pedagogic insights gained from the various pedagogic sub-disciplines.

Orthopedagogic intervention to assist an exceptional child is a complex procedure in which diagnosis and pedotherapy are the most important components. Diagnosis is essentially concerned with revealing the problematic aspects of the dynamics of educating in terms of the quality of implementing the pedagogic essences. This also implies that the nature of the retardation of a child's progress toward adulthood be specified.

In pedotherapy, an indirect approach is used with a view to changing the unfavorable meanings with which a child has invested his personal world of feelings, knowledge and values. Didactic insights are enlisted in planning the form and contents of pedotherapeutic sessions.

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