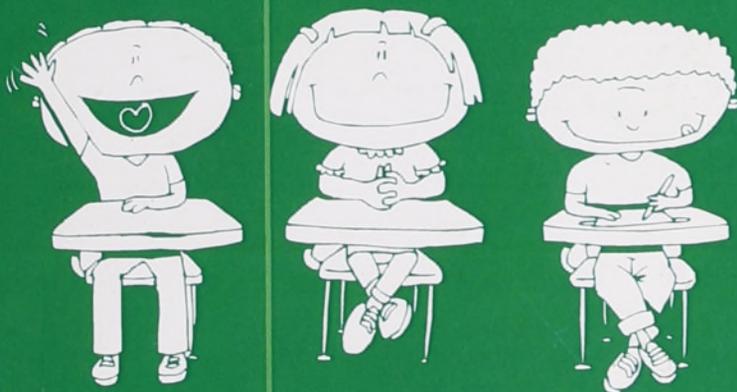


A Historical Pedagogical Investigation of

# *Infant* Education



T L Verster (ed)

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*Infant*  
Education

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University of South Africa, Pretoria

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## PREFACE

For every person who is involved in the education of an infant, there lies within the history of infant education a treasury of educative truths and educative directives which have remained so valid that they may in fact be considered to be unchanging. These educative truths and directives represent a vital link between the educative past, present and future which could not be severed without dire consequences.

Many of the unchanging educative truths and educative directives regarding infant education have been combined in this publication without attention being specifically focused on them. Their identification remains a pleasure and privilege to which the reader who is a seeker after knowledge, and a questing thinker, can look forward.

Without depriving the serious reader of the privilege of self-discovery, attention should perhaps be directed at a single educative truth and a single educative directive. Over many centuries these have been shown to be valid and correct yet the references to them on many occasions in this work may tend to be too cursory. The ideal educative environment for infants is not primarily a (formal) infant school, but always remains the secure educative space within the safe and happy family circle. This is an immutable educative *truth* which may never be denied or disregarded. Infants should not be taught and trained to supply answers but should be invited, challenged and encouraged to inquire, to pose questions. Only then does it become possible to lead and assist them, also by means of play activities, to discover the answers to their questions for themselves as far as possible. This is an unchanging educative *directive*.

With these two statements in mind, reading and studying this work may contribute to a better understanding of, better evaluation of and more meaningful participation in contemporary infant education in the RSA.

T. L. Verster (ed.)

# CHAPTER 1

## An overview of the field of study

*J.J. Booyse*

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## 1.1 **Introductory remarks**

In contemporary society – which is characterized by rapid change, extremes in living conditions, an increase in working mothers and one parent families, as well as intense conflict between opposing ideologies – educators (parents and teachers) are experiencing an ever increasing need for guidance with regard to the education of the child or children entrusted to their care. In the distant past the intuitive experiential knowledge of the educator was sufficient to lead the child towards recognizing, accepting and fulfilling his task; it was enough to guide the child in such a manner that it was eventually possible for him to reach proper adulthood and to become a worthy member of his society. The demands and circumstances of contemporary society are, however, of such complexity that many educators today are confused and feel uncertain about the way they should set about their educative task. For this reason the provision of supportive guidance in this respect has become essential.

This type of supportive guidance to adults would, nevertheless, be of limited value if it were to consist merely of transmitting a number of fixed "recipes" which at some stage in the past proved successful for some or other person (every human being is, after all, a unique being and no two educative situations can ever be identical in all respects). Meaningful supportive guidance in fact implies that the educator should be informed, guided and in particular be supplied with scientific knowledge to enable him to make judicious decisions in every (unique) educative situation; decisions which are pedagogically accountable and which would create the possibility for unfolding the full potential of every individual child to the fullest extent.

*A historical pedagogical investigation of infant education* aims at supplying information and guidance as well as making scientific knowledge available concerning a specific aspect of education, namely in-

fant education and teaching, to educators who are involved in, or are particularly interested in, the guidance of pre-school children.

Scientific knowledge in respect of a particular matter in the human sciences is seldom derived from *only one* field of study. In other words, when the investigation concerns, for instance, infant education and teaching, a wide variety of study fields would be able to make meaningful contributions to the investigation. For this reason, whenever scientific knowledge is the topic under discussion, specific scientific views will always be put forth: the first question to be posed will *always* and *in the first instance* be from which scientific perspective this scientific knowledge was compiled and/or presented. Only when seen against this background can its true value be estimated. For the sake of orienting the reader it becomes necessary to pay attention to the *particular field of science* (Pedagogics) of which this work forms part as well as the *specific part-perspective* (History of Education) which is of interest here.

## 1.2 Pedagogics (The Science of Education) and its part-perspectives

### 1.2.1 *The phenomenon of education – the point of departure in Pedagogics*

The concept of *education* implies the purposive and responsible manner in which a morally independent adult constitutes an inter-human relationship with a child in need of support, who is on his way to adulthood, leads him and has an uplifting influence on his life. As a universal and characteristically human mode of life, this phenomenon of reality (education) must not be seen solely as a preparation for a normative life somewhere in the future, it must be seen as life itself.

From the above definition it becomes obvious that education encompasses a particular action or event. And as education thus presupposes an *activity*, there can be no fear of contradiction in stating that education is a *practical matter*; it is a *practice*.

In the same way that education is a characteristic of the human mode of existence, it is also characteristic of man that he lives rationally and thus always strives to acquire knowledge of himself and the world. As a being who is able to experience, think, judge and reflect, man strives to understand his own life-world, to know exactly what is happening in, around and to him.

It is therefore inherent in man to wish not only to *exist* but also to increase his *understanding*. For this reason man not only educates (as a *practical matter*) he also analyses, studies and reflects upon education (a *theoretical matter*).

This theoretical reflection of man concerning education is not a haphazard matter, it occurs according to fixed and goal-directed methods. Rationally accountable knowledge is methodically sought in reality.

Eventually when this knowledge has been carefully verbalized and organized, it can contribute to an understanding of the true nature of the phenomenon of education. Methodical reflection about and the search for rationally accountable knowledge may be termed *scientific practice* and the ordered systematically verbalized knowledge is of a *scientific* nature.

In order to grasp the phenomenon of education adequately, it is essential that cognizance must be taken of the fact that education is the practice in which the actions of the teacher are directed by his experiential knowledge (a type of intuitive knowing) and education is also the object of *theoretical* examination, reflection and description.

The science which is essentially concerned with a theoretical investigation of the phenomenon of education, is Pedagogics or the Science of Education.

### **1.2.2 Part-perspectives of Pedagogics**

Education is not a simple, singular phenomenon; it (the phenomenon of education) is many faceted and because it encompasses so many different aspects, it also needs to be examined in different ways and from different angles/points of view. Education is also such a "vast" phenomenon that no scientist could hope to study all its aspects thoroughly and describe them – the limitations inherent in man's abilities precludes this. The complicated and complex nature of the phenomenon of education thus demands "differentiated" examination.

In view of this, with the passage of time and according to the areas of investigation which were suggested by the phenomenon of education itself, a number of part-perspectives or part-disciplines evolved within the boundaries of Pedagogics as a science and each of these examines the education reality from its own angle. Although each perspective lays claim, amongst others, to relative autonomy, its own field of study, methods, subject terminology and own basic premises, each perspective cannot be seen as a different independent science: all eventually share the same point of departure, namely (certain aspects of) the *education phenomenon*. They do all proceed *scientifically* and the knowledge collected in this way does qualify as *scientific* insight, but as each branch of knowledge examines only an *aspect* of the same phenomenon, each one becomes merely a particular *perspective* of the science, *Pedagogics*.

The phenomenon of education is examined from *four* main perspectives or *main* disciplines, namely Fundamental Pedagogics, Empirical Education, Didactics and History of Education. For the purpose of orientation a short description of each as a particular *perspective* will now be presented.

**1.2.2.1 Fundamental Pedagogics** is concerned with the basic principles, norms, values and aims of education. This part-perspective is characterized by its seeking for, amongst others, the true essence of being human and of education, the reasons why education is not only possible amongst human beings but also essential, the meaning and significance of being human as well as the destination of the child (that towards which the education of the child should lead). The strongly philosophical leaning of Fundamental Pedagogics is, therefore, self-evident. One of the most important tasks of Fundamental Pedagogics is the search for and description of pedagogical norms and criteria in terms of which pedagogically accountable judgements may be pronounced.

Thus, Fundamental Pedagogics seeks to discover and reveal the essential core of the phenomenon of education and to describe, amongst others, what education truly is.

**1.2.2.2 Empirical Education** is concerned with the collection and description of *facts* regarding the child with the aim of:

- supplying a universally valid image of a "normal" child in terms of which an educator may measure and accordingly direct the progression towards adulthood of a particular child;
- deciding on the position of the particular abilities (sensory and motor skills, memory, reasoning, will or emotions) of the child on a specific level of progression towards adulthood and also on how these abilities may gradually come to full realization;
- acquiring insight into the individuality of the child, with reference to such aspects as, for instance, differences in potential, intellectual abilities and giftedness;
- getting to know "how" human beings learn and the factors by which learning may either be enhanced or inhibited, and
- gaining knowledge about the child in his involvement with other human beings.

The truths concerning education which are of interest to Empirical Education are those which may be *determined experimentally*, which can be *observed, measured and/or described*. The concern is here not the nature and role of norms or philosophical anthropological questions as is the case in Fundamental Pedagogics, but specifically with "the existing, the reality that is" (Oberholzer, 1954:70, author's translation).

**1.2.2.3 Didactics** is the part-discipline which, on the one hand, is responsible for the implementation in *practice* of the insights arrived at by all the other perspectives, and on the other hand, is also called upon

to establish its own *theory* regarding the transfer of knowledge and skills.

Didactics is concerned with instruction, learning and education in the school situation, with institutions for formal and non-formal teaching and also with instruction in informal educative situations. This would thus imply that Didactics encompasses both the *science of teaching* and the *science of education*. As the science of teaching, Didactics interests itself in the *way* in which specific *content* is taught, and as science of education it is concerned with the *foundations* upon which teaching as educative activity rests.

A distinction is normally made between a *general* and a *particular* field of Didactics. The general field includes examining the universally valid principles of such aspects as ways of instruction and learning, evaluation and an accountable curriculum – *principles which are valid for all teaching and education*. The particular field, by contrast, is a reflection on specific content and methods which are *only valid for a specific field of knowledge*.

To summarize it may be postulated that Didactics is concerned with a systematic examination of all aspects involving the purposive transmitting of knowledge and skills to a learning person and the turning into practice of acquired insights.

**1.2.2.4 History of Education** is the perspective which achieves the synthesizing or binding together as well as elucidation of all the other part-disciplines of Pedagogics. The feature which clearly distinguishes it from all other perspectives, is the fact that History of Education always views the phenomenon of education within its *time perspective*.

This implies that History of Education is concerned with the time triad, that is the triadic unity of *past*, *present* and *future*. From this perspective knowledge concerning the educative practices and theories of the *past* is systematically and scientifically collected, described and explained. This brings about a proper understanding of the *present* educative reality so that in terms of this scientifically acquired knowledge, and with the necessary far-sightedness, it may become possible to plan an adequate educative practice for the *future* in a changing world.

History of Education as perspective is primarily concerned with *making facts comprehensible* and it should never be seen as a mere recording of history. For the practice of History of Education to be valid, facts about the educative practices and theories of the past must be *analysed, interpreted, integrated* and *evaluated* from a *pedagogical* perspective by a *pedagogue*. This implies, for instance, that in History of education:

- attention will be given to the often divergent answers given by different people or societies *in the past* to important and *ever vexing*

questions concerning education. By means of this an attempt will be made to arrive at a more profound understanding of each of these educative questions and to eventually suggest corrective measures in this respect;

- a search for certainty about what *education* really is, in other words, what the true essences of *education* are will be made;
- great value will be attached to the dynamic, changing nature of education, but above all to the constant, the universally and ever valid aspects. Education did not remain exactly the same throughout the ages, yet there are certain established essences which always remain constant. It is in fact the search for, the discovery of and the revelation of these consistencies which have made it possible to see changes in perspective and to evaluate them scientifically;
- the focus will be on educative *practice(s)* as well as educative *theories* of the past, which have influenced and determined the development of different aspects of education up until now; and
- the scientist is eventually expected to take a stand; he may not remain completely "neutral, colourless and cold" towards the data collected by him – the pedagogician in History of Education is required to present as true and scientifically objective an image of his field of study as is possible, yet because pedagogic *evaluation* is expected of him, it is important that his task should include an evaluation of the facts in terms of norms (which of necessity will be determined by his personal principles and point of view).

History of Education is, therefore, a Pedagogic perspective concerned with time. It not only aims at providing a more profound insight into the present educative reality, but also makes an essential contribution to the planning of an educative practice for the future by reflecting on, collecting, describing, comparing, explaining and judging historical data. This claim may be more clearly illustrated by a discussion of the nature and essence of History of Education.

## 1.3 The nature and essence of History of Education

### 1.3.1 Clarification of concepts

To date authors writing about the subject philosophy of History of Education have usually avoided giving a clear indication of the difference between the *nature* and *essence* of this field of study. A differentiation of this nature may, however, contribute to better insight into the activities and structure of History of Education.

The word *nature* (as used in this chapter), according to Geddie (1962:712), is derived from the Latin *natura* and denotes the "inevitable qualities" or "characteristics" of something, also a person's "innate qualities" or "character". The meaning of "in-born character or disposition" is also given and Fowler & Fowler (1964:803) describe the meaning of *nature* as "inherent, impulses determining the character or action". When the *nature* of History of Education needs to be described it may thus be said that it is the "way or manner" in which this perspective "acts" or "conducts its actions". It is, therefore, concerned with the "disposition" or the "dynamic possibilities for action" inherent in this part-discipline.

The *essence* of History of Education can only be understood if the word *essence* is examined more closely. Geddie (1962:364) describes the *essence* as the "quality which makes any object what it is" and as "necessary to the existence of a thing". Sykes (1983:329) refers to *essence* as an "abstract entity; reality underlying phenomena". From these definitions it may thus be said that the *essence* is the essential, fundamental, indispensable "core reality" of a matter. When referring to the *essence* of History of Education, it would thus imply the "main components", the "different elements" of which this perspective consists or which come to light in the practise of History of Education.

A closer examination of the boundaries of the above clarification of concepts clearly brings to light that it is virtually impossible to reflect on the nature and essence of History of Education without also touching on aspects which could readily be incorporated under different headings (such as, for instance, the *function, task or field* of History of Education). It should therefore constantly be borne in mind that the exposition which follows often tends to make artificial distinctions. In reality the different aspects enhance each other, they overlap and are dependent on each other – they form an integrated whole.

### 1.3.2 *The nature of History of Education*

**1.3.2.1 History of Education collects and describes facts concerning the different ways in which education was manifested in the past:** History of Education, like any other science (or part-perspective of a specific science), makes use of accountable methods to gather facts concerning the object being studied and then to describe its findings. It is exactly in this resemblance between History of Education and other forms of scientific practice that History of Education exhibits its own nature: this part-perspective has as its primary *field of study* the *educative past* and *education* (or aspects thereof) as its *point of departure*. It employs *distinctive scientific methods* to gather and describe these data from a *unique angle* (or perspective), namely from a *time per-*

spective. The ideal of History of Education is to describe the story of the coming into being, or the history of development, of the phenomenon of education in all its aspects, scientifically and as completely and accurately as possible.

**1.3.2.2 History of Education arranges, synthesizes and reconstructs the educative past:** It is obvious that what happened in the past is irrevocably past and that it is only by means of reconstruction that it can be brought back to the present again. This reconstruction of the past (in History of Education: of the educative past) must of necessity depend on data which is gleaned from the "footprints of the past", such as ancient documents, oral recall of traditions or the relics of earlier eras. There is, however, a very real possibility that the researcher may lose himself in the multitude of facts available for reconstruction unless he sets about his task selectively, purposefully, systematically and by *arranging* these facts in an orderly manner. It would also be unrealistic for him to believe that he could possibly reconstruct all the finer details of the past. That which History of Education wishes to investigate demands of the pedagogician in History of Education that he choose and arrange his historic data in such a way that it constitutes a significant whole. Combining the different elements of a matter into such a "new" unit (thus arriving at a synthesis) often also gives rise to "new" insights. This is precisely the purpose behind practising science: to gain *insight* into a certain phenomenon. It is, of course, important to remember that arranging and synthesizing also imply *reduction*. Only what is of significance for the theme of investigation is taken into consideration during reconstruction.

**1.3.2.3 History of Education interprets (respectively, explains, elucidates, renders) the phenomenon in terms of its historicity:** The educative phenomenon is as old as mankind and not a single aspect of education can claim to be without a history. This also proves that there is not one single aspect of the phenomenon of education which cannot, or may not, be investigated from an historical point of view. If, however, History of Education should set out merely to describe this history for the sake of its antiquarian value, the description might as well have been undertaken by the practitioners of History as a subject and History of Education would no longer have any claim to being a science. It is in fact characteristic of History of Education that it is primarily concerned with an *interpretation* of the *current* educative phenomenon and that in order to control and verify the validity and reliability of its interpretations it makes use of historical facts.

**1.3.2.4 It is characteristic of History of Education that it evaluates present theories on education and educative practice(s):** History of Education is of an evaluating nature in the sense that it does not only give an account of the development of (a specific aspect of) education, but also attaches a normative evaluation to it. Because History of Education is not only a chronological collection of historical realities, but is in fact concerned with understanding existing theories on education and educative practice(s) in terms of the history of their development, pedagogicians in History of Education attempt to judge the data gleaned through research and, by approval or disapproval, to give meaning to these historical facts. This evaluation implies the existence of norms or standards of judgement. Paragraph 1.3.3.8 will deal with this matter.

**1.3.2.5 History of Education determines relativity and is of a corrective nature:** Saying that History of Education determines relativity implies that, because the fact that comparison, amongst other things, forms part of its method, History of Education attempts to comprehend and evaluate two opposing points of view or actions without necessarily accepting either one unconditionally. This is possible as History of Education commands the inherent ability of distancing itself from the educative events of the past. This enables it to review and judge these events while taking into account all those factors which might have influenced them. However, History of Education is not merely an academic theoretical matter. By studying points of view or actions relative to each other, History of Education creates the possibility of arriving at new insights and, by these means, playing a practical, corrective (respectively improving, directive) role in respect of contemporary educative practice.

**1.3.2.6 History of Education is both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary:** In the same way that the different part-perspectives of Pedagogics share many points of interest, Pedagogics (and History of Education as one of its part-perspectives) also has much in common with the other human sciences such as, for instance, Psychology, Sociology, Criminology and Anthropology. Each of these sciences, in fact, makes a study of *man* – the only difference being that in each instance the emphasis is on a different aspect of being human. It would thus be unwise to attempt to practise any science in isolation and therefore there is nothing unusual in History of Education depending on inter- and multidisciplinary cooperation. *Interdisciplinary* implies that it has points of view in common with the other perspectives of Pedagogics and *multidisciplinary* indicates that it shares insights with other sciences. History of

Education does not only take cognizance of the relevant facts supplied by other disciplines but also makes a deliberate effort to make historical educational data available to others when applicable.

**1.3.2.7 History of Education is pre-eminently a grounding perspective:** When taking into consideration that History of Education is a field study which is directed at the source and development of existing educative activities and thoughts, it is obvious that this part-perspective is basically a grounding perspective. Although research into the aim is not excluded, History of Education is characterized in particular by its grounding (basic) research with its most important driving force being the search for truth.

**1.3.2.8 History of Education demands and enhances both a critical attitude and sound evaluation:** Progress in any sphere of being human is impossible without a healthy scepticism and clarity of judgement on the part of the people involved. Due to the scope of the investigation undertaken by History of Education (as indicated in par. 1.3.2.3, no single aspect of education falls outside the bounds of History of Education) as well as the particular distantiating from the phenomenon of education, there is probably no other perspective of Pedagogics which is better equipped to form critical thoughts and make discerning decisions. History of Education ". . . is particularly well adapted to helping the student of education examine . . . theories and practices in terms of their historical developments, test their results . . . make comparative evaluations . . . and gradually arrive at some personal theoretical convictions. To be unaware of (the) past is to remain a child." (Nakosteen 1965:16 & 18 – author's emphasis.)

**1.3.2.9 History of Education is not prescriptive:** Any problem in education has more than one solution and can be dealt with in more ways than one – the educative past bears witness to this. For this reason History of Education makes a study of the different educative theories and practices of the past in an attempt to draw up a summary of the different alternatives which are available in order to solve a contemporary educative problem.

History of Education strives, among others, to point out the dangers or detrimental outcome of a specific alternative in an attempt to avoid making the same mistakes as were made in the past. In this respect History of Education can become a basis for decision making, but it can never supply the educator with "recipes" which have withstood the test of time.

**1.3.2.10 History of Education is a dynamic, open, ever-developing field of knowledge:** History of Education was the first, and is therefore the oldest, part-discipline of Pedagogics. As a science (and not a doctrine of education) Pedagogics only came into being towards the middle of the nineteenth century in Germany, the USA, the Netherlands and Belgium. Even so, History of Education, as a separate and autonomous part-discipline, did not really come into its own in these countries before the thirties of the twentieth century (cf. Theron 1984: 226-238). In South Africa, as late as 1934, McKerron remarked that "(u)ntil a few years ago the study of the history of education in this country (South Africa) was almost completely neglected" (McKerron 1934:7). It may thus logically be assumed that the origin and development of all aspects of education have certainly not received attention in History of Education during the course of the past approximately fifty years and that this field offers wide scope for research. Also: education is not a static event. Its history grows with every passing moment of the day. In concurrence with Pulliam (1982:7) it may thus be averred that History of Education is ". . . a developing rather than a finished area of study".

The above exposition of the *nature* of History of Education clearly indicates that History of Education in some respects manifests a very unique nature, yet that its nature also in various aspects resembles that of other fields of study. It is, however, an exposition of the *essence* of History of Education which really brings to light the uniqueness of this field of study.

### **1.3.3 The essence of History of Education**

*Essence* was previously defined as the core element of a matter or that which (as is the case with History of Education) comes to light during its practice. In this light History of Education may be described as a scientific discipline concerned with:

**1.3.3.1 The pedagogic:** As part-discipline of the Science of Education (Pedagogics), History of Education is certainly not merely a *history* of educational and educative matters. It is *pedagogical practice* aimed at studying, describing and evaluating the education and teaching of the past in terms of pedagogical criteria which may also be discovered in the past itself. This is done with a view to enriching, explaining and evaluating the *present* situation in education. Although attention is paid to, for instance, political, socio-cultural, economic and ideological factors, influences and circumstances, in *as far as these lead to better insight into a particular educative problem*, the basic point of departure in any investi-

gation in History of Education is always the phenomenon of *education*. Apart from its study of the pedagogic, History of Education also fulfils a pedagogic function in the sense that it does not only provide guidance to educators on how accountable education should be implemented, but it in fact supports educators in their personal progression towards becoming more fully adult.

**1.3.3.2 The historical:** The very name of this part-discipline in itself indicates that the field of study of History of Education lies within the sphere of the historical. The historical cannot, however, of its own become a goal – only those thoughts and deeds from the past which are of significance to the educative thoughts and practice of the present, are of importance to the pedagogician in History of Education, who employs them as *aids* to arrive at better insight into the present phenomenon of education. The historical is thus the *source* from which History of Education derives its primary material (facts concerning the pedagogic within the historical context).

**1.3.3.3 The temporal:** The practice of History of Education essentially implies finding solutions to pedagogic problems from a dimension of time. Temporality (not temporary in the sense of mortality) is one of the most important aspects of concern to History of Education. This is particularly true as man, as well as the phenomenon of education (as mode of human existence), can only be fully grasped in terms of their temporality. It is assumed that the educative past constitutes a never-ending actuality for the educative present and future, and that a goal directed study of the educative past is a precondition, not only for a fundamental understanding of the present manifestation of education or theories on education, but also for well-founded pronouncements concerning the future of education.

**1.3.3.4 The spatial:** Time implies space, and space without time is inconceivable. This close bond between time and space and the fact that education cannot take place in a vacuum but is always confined within the boundaries of a specific space, lends particular pedagogic importance to the spatial as far as History of Education is concerned. The spatial is thus seen and studied as a precondition for being human, on the one hand, and on the other for education in its three dimensional time aspect.

**1.3.3.5 The variable:** A very important focal point for History of Education is the variable nature of the phenomenon of education; in fact,

the particular identity and right of existence, but simultaneously the particular limitations and dependency of this part-perspective, lie mainly in the dynamic or variable aspect of education. Being directed at change, the pedagogician in History of Education strives, (with the emphasis on a cause-effect-relationship) to indicate how educative theories and practices have changed through the course of the centuries, at what rate these changes occurred, to what causes these changes could be attributed and to what extent man was influenced by the powerful progression of these scientific laws. In order to attribute significance to this progression of change in the field of education it is essential that these changes must be evaluated critically and related to the current manifestation of the phenomenon of education.

**1.3.3.6 The social (influences of society):** Education and teaching always occur within a social context (or space) and have changed continuously throughout time, to comply with the demands of the developed or developing society (community) for which they were intended. The way in which education and teaching took place was, nevertheless, not unilaterally determined by the community as *mutual* influencing occurred. Society also underwent changes *as a result of* the influence and current structure of education and teaching. If it is accepted that History of Education has the right to involve itself in the *pedagogic* (cf. par. 1.3.3.1) and the *variable* (cf. par. 1.3.3.5) it is logical to contend that it may also pronounce its views in respect of the unique interaction between society and education and teaching.

**1.3.3.7 The relationship between education and culture:** Education is part of the culture of any society, and the educative aim in particular is rooted in the culture. Culture has always been embodied in, conveyed and kept intact by education and teaching. The indications are that education was responsible for ensuring cultural continuity and also played an important role as means by which it was possible to keep up with cultural change. This interaction between education and culture, as was also the case with the social, clearly admits the cultural within the spectrum of the interest and responsibility of History of Education.

**1.3.3.8 The normative:** In his *interpretation* (cf. par. 1.3.2.3) of aspects from the educative past the pedagogician in History of Education will, among others, attempt to understand which values and norms determined certain educative activities. In other words, he will attempt to establish which values and norms supported man's attempts (by means of education) to lead his fellowman to a dignified, morally civili-

zed existence. Education is, in the final instance, never a solely extrinsic activity but always derives from and is directed at man's spiritual core. The pedagogician in History of Education may never lose sight of this when he indicates which specific values were significant for meaningful human existence in the past.

In History of Education norms and values are not merely seen as subject-object: they also affect the activities of this field of study (cf. par. 1.3.2.4). Based on, amongst others, his study of the status and origin of different norms and values which applied to life and education in the past, it is expected of the pedagogician in History of Education to establish criteria according to which contemporary educative theories and practices may be evaluated. He will also be expected to make pronouncements concerning the validity or non-validity of existing norms and values.

**1.3.3.9 The human (the anthropological) and human existence (the existential):** The statement that education is a typically human phenomenon aimed at increasing progression towards adulthood, leads to a number of questions concerning the "ideal" image of man. This will include questions such as: What is man? What are his possibilities? How can these possibilities be realized by means of education and teaching? History of Education, in common with all the other part-perspectives of Pedagogics, is confronted with these questions and has to respond, specifically from an historical point of view. In History of Education the concern is therefore, in conjunction with aspects already named, the nature and essence of being human and how man exists as man (how he achieves self-realization). What this amounts to is that the different views of man as he is and as he ought to be are examined in time perspective; that the educative past is studied with a view to arriving at an idea of how man:

- developed and ought to develop towards higher forms of existence;
- realizes and ought to realize himself in his specific situation;
- gave account, and ought to give account of himself to his God, the world and his fellowman;
- cohabited and ought to cohabit with other human beings in a social setting.

**1.3.3.10 The relationship between education and language (the linguistic):** Language is essential for thought and specifically for conveying thought. Language does not merely create a meaningful space in which man may live and learn, it also permits man to give expression to his thoughts and (in the form of writing) to communicate with other

human beings across the boundaries of time and space; in fact, language could claim to be a precondition for life and education. A very close relationship thus exists between language and education. On account of this, History of Education is particularly interested in this relationship between language used in education. By observing the language which was used in the past in and in connection with education, it becomes possible to gain more profound insight into both man and his educative mode of existence.

#### **1.3.3.11 Important personalities from the past (the personal):**

The development of education and teaching in the educative past was often stimulated and borne by important philosophers of education – by creative individuals. Through a study of their thoughts and deeds it is possible to gain insight into the spiritual climate or period in which they lived and it is even possible that their thoughts (sometimes in adapted and altered forms) may still have relevance for modern educative theory and practice. The views of such prominent historical figures may, however, never be adopted uncritically and indiscriminately as such a step may hinder renewal in education and teaching and impoverish ideas on education.

#### **1.3.3.12 The antinomic (opposing):** Due to its ability of determining relativity (cf. par. 1.3.2.5), History of Education is highly interested in contradictions (antinomies) between different laws or principles.

These antinomies are, however, not only present in the historical data of a specific theme of investigation (in other words, they are not only relevant to the object of study or content being studied) but they are also characteristic of the manner in which History of Education is conducted. It is, nevertheless, not permissible to create the impression that the latter type of antinomies are such that a choice has to be made and that only the one or the other can be "correct". The intention is to indicate that these methods of approach represent opposing poles of a continuum between which the pedagogician in History of Education may move at will. In reality they complement each other and the method of approach is determined by the nature of the theme of investigation. The following are examples of this type of bi-polarity of History of Education:

- In History of Education an *ideographic* approach is sometimes employed (thus seeking for unique, separate characteristics of the phenomenon of education) and at other times the approach is *nomothetic* (in which instance an attempt is made to describe universal principles or regularities concerning the phenomenon of education).

- It is the task of the pedagogician in History of Education not only to describe *historical facts* but also to analyse, explain and evaluate these facts *theoretically* or *systematically*. His task therefore encompasses both the objective scientific facts and a philosophical interpretation of these facts.
- Both the *individual* (cf. for example the personal, par 1.3.3.11) and the *collective* (cf. for example the social, par. 1.3.3.6) is studied. Sometimes the educative events and development in the past are viewed as the result of the influence of an individual. Often, however, it is seen as a communal achievement.
- Particular attention is paid to the interaction between the *actual* educative reality (that which really is) and the *ideal* educative matters (that which ought to be), in other words, to the *practice* and *theory* of education.

**1.3.3.13 The religious aspect of human existence:** The religious beliefs of a community, or lack of belief, play an important role in determining the educative aims. The aim of a matter in its turn determines, for instance, the content and method by means of which it will be attempted to achieve these aims. Whatever is said or done about education, can thus be traced to the religious beliefs which underlie it. For this reason a study of the religious aspect of human existence is a component without which it would be impossible to practise History of Education. Even more important, the religious aspect fills a directing function in the life of every human being and as such directs all man's life functions. The way in which he practises science is not excluded from this control. However much the pedagogician in History of Education strives to be "purely scientific" or "totally objective" in the practise of his part-perspective, his work will always, whether intentionally or unintentionally, reflect his philosophy of life (his judgement of the meaning and aim of human existence which is embedded in his religious outlook). This is yet another reason why man's philosophy of life or religiosity is considered to be an essential component of History of Education.

This cursory exposition of the nature and essence of History of Education ought to enable the reader to see the data in this book in the correct perspective and to understand the content fully. There is, however, a matter which may not be ignored: man is by nature a being in search of meaning. He is always questioning and in particular seeking the meaning of the task which he must or wants to undertake. Only when he is able to detect its meaning will he be able to become fully involved in its execution. When a realization is arrived at of the value and practical possibilities of an investigation by History of Education into infant education and teaching, all activities with and concerning children/small children/infants/preschoolers etc. will acquire more meaning

and significance. In this light a few brief observations concerning the value and practical possibilities of History of Education will now be attempted.

#### **1.4 The value and possibilities for application of History of Education**

History of Education is a subject which provides grounding and of which the value can only with great difficulty (if at all) be expressed in measurable and/or indisputable prescriptions or methods of implementation (which are for instance directed at the effective "execution" of education and teaching). History of Education is rather and particularly concerned with the sphere of increasing adulthood, of a search for meaning, attributing meaning and finding meaning. When an attempt is made to describe the value and possibilities for application of History of Education it is thus necessary to avoid the modern tendency of wanting to measure every conceivable matter against the goal oriented criteria of present pragmatism.

In broad terms History of Education provides an overall perspective on the phenomenon of education which permits the educator to make considered decisions concerning education. This implies that History of Education provides the necessary background against which the present educative theories and practices may be understood. The better man understands that with which he is involved, the better he is equipped to deal with it.

This background knowledge which is supplied by History of Education, obviously leads to a broadening of the horizons of knowledge and an enriched life experience. It also forms the basis in terms of which disciplined scientific thought may be enhanced and sound judgement achieved.

As the only part-discipline which contributes to every possible aspect of education and teaching, History of Education plays a very important role in the co-ordination of the science of Education. History of Education is pre-eminently the part-perspective which is capable of integrating the insights of all the other perspectives.

This is, however, not yet the last of the practical application possibilities of this subject. Due to its particular methodology, History of Education makes an important contribution to the forming of capable researchers in Education, the preparation of students for specialized study of the science of education and in improving personal potential for observation. History of Education also ensures that responsible planning of future educative practice will be undertaken and that the mistakes of the past are avoided.

In the final instance the greatest value of History of Education lies in

its ability to create and form particular attitudes. During research into or investigation of History of Education the researcher or student (and this does not only refer to the student who is formally enrolled!) does not only gain insight into a variety of answers to questions concerning his own humanness and the educative help of others, but he also, without being aware of it, formulates his own unique answer to each of these questions. Eventually he is able, as a "more complete" adult, to answer more adequately to the personal questions life poses.

In the introductory paragraph it was emphasized that this work is concerned with *scientific knowledge* and this has led to a brief overview of the Science of Education and its various part-perspectives (in particular History of Education). Scientific knowledge does not, however, imply that the phenomenon was approached from a specific scientific perspective, but also (among others) that this knowledge was assembled and arranged according to specific principles of arrangement. In other words: the *attitude towards or method of approach* of a science, in terms of a phenomenon to be studied, often plays a determining role in the way in which scientific knowledge is collected and described. Thus, in conjunction with what has previously been said about the nature, essence, value and also possibilities for application of History of Education, it is also essential to pay attention to a few of the methods of approach in this part-perspective.

## 1.5 Methods of approach in History of Education

The vast number of methods of approach which may be used in research and according to which the research results may be presented in an ordered manner has already become characteristic of works in History of Education. It is interesting to note that it seldom happens that only one method of approach is employed. It appears that the various methods of approach are often used in conjunction and/or alternately. This necessitates a brief reflection on the most important methods of approach (or attitudes) which are commonly used in History of Education and have been employed in this book.

### 1.5.1 *The personal approach*

In the personal, also known as the *monumental or person directed* approach, attention is focused on the contributions of eminent educators or educationists throughout the ages. It is assumed that important figures of the past determined the progression and the direction of education through their particular educative theories and practices. They are seen and presented as "sources" of inspiration and knowledge.

In compiling a work in terms of the personal method of approach, the emphasis will be on the views and/or actions of a specific person (cf. the involvement of History of Education with important personages of the past, par. 1.3.3.11).

### **1.5.2 *The chronological approach***

It is obvious that in presenting facts chronologically, the *order of time* is of the utmost importance: an attempt is then made to present as much historical pedagogical data as possible concerning one or more aspect of education, according to their *sequence* of occurrence. Very few works exist in History of Education in which the chronological approach does not fulfil a function.

In recent times the concept of chronological approach (also known as the *collecting, preserving or descriptive* approach) has undergone a shift in meaning and for some scientists in History of Education it implies merely the *writing of history* which to a greater or lesser extent remains in contact with the phenomenon of education. Seen in this light, the chronological method of approach represents an attempt at presenting the entire educative history in detail. Often only exact facts concerning the educative past are presented. Pronouncements or decisions concerning modern problems in education are seldom encountered. This leads to this educative narrative being no more than a type of "databank" for other researchers to enlarge upon.

This latter description of the chronological approach is, however, not viable as it is not compatible with the nature and essence of History of Education. No part-discipline which is concerned with evaluation, interpretation, and correction, or is intimately involved in, amongst others, all the dimensions of time, norms and the religious aspect of human existence can, after all, permit the practising of this subject to become exclusively focused on a mere factual description of the educative past.

### **1.5.3 *The period orientated approach***

The period orientated approach is also known as the *epochal* approach. Certain periods in history often share specific characteristics which are of vital importance to education. It is found, for instance, that the unique attitudes to life and political or religious views which were prevalent during a particular period (or epoch) forced education to take a certain direction or form. It is also interesting to note the powerful influence of such drastic events as war and revolutions on the beliefs and systems of value of people, groups or nations in the past and consequently also on educative practices and theories. The *spirit of the time* can therefore assist the researcher in his understanding of certain phenomena in educa-

tion. Pedagogicians in History of Education who emphasize the influence of *distinguishable periods* in the history of education, in their interpretation of the facts, are basing their research upon the epochal approach.

#### 1.5.4 *The problem historical approach*

Most modern pedagogicians in History of Education employ the problem historical approach as it is one of two methods of approach which are eminently suitable for conducting a *pedagogical* investigation into and description of the educative past (the other being the thematological). Proponents of this approach believe that scientific knowledge cannot be arrived at by merely assembling any historic facts concerning education. The educative past can only be revealed by means of questions arising from *current problems in education*. A *problematic matter* in present educative theory or practice is therefore the point of departure and the educative past is searched for solutions which were presented for similar problems in the past. The entire research is centred in the problem which is posed, which means that it is of a fairly limited scope.

#### 1.5.5 *The thematic approach*

In contrast to the problem historical approach where a *problematic matter* (a head-ache, a bottle-neck, a problem which prevents education from taking place as it should) initiates research and description, the research and description in the thematical approach centres on a *theme* (a chosen subject, a sphere of interest, a field of study which does not necessarily have a "negative" effect on education). A problem may thus also be a theme, but a theme is not necessarily a problem. The basic question is, therefore, whether the matter being investigated is in any way hampering education and thus demands research in order to resolve the problem – in which case the research would be considered to be of a problem historical nature. If the research is based purely on man's desire to know, or arises from his inherent wonder concerning phenomena he does not fully understand, the approach would be thematic.

To illustrate this: the people of South Africa possibly consider it one of the tasks of the school to counteract and forestall the effects of the dreaded disease, Aids, by means of instruction. As the school is an institution established by the community, amongst others, to promote the interests of the community, the latter may also be demanded from the school. Until recently the school has never provided formal instruction in matters concerning sex and it now requests guidance in this respect. A *problem* (i.e.: how was this instruction given in the past and what instruction should be given now and in the future in order to prepare chil-

dren for the battle against the Aids virus?) exists and demands an urgent solution (or answer). The approach will therefore be the problem historical approach.

The researcher who is only interested in, for example, distance education, and decides to investigate the history of the origin of an institution for distance education, such as the University of South Africa, will enter upon a field of study which although it is concerned with education, does not represent an "urgent crisis". He will therefore employ the *thematical* approach in his investigation. His search in the educative past will be solely concerned with facts which are related to his theme and he will present these facts, in the same way as the researcher into the Aids virus will confine himself to facts concerning his problem.

It is obviously possible for the researcher to convert any *theme* into a *problem* by artificial means, but this is seldom considered necessary or advisable.

### 1.5.6 Other approaches

Although the above five approaches are the *most important*, they are not the *only* means for discovering and presenting facts in History of Education. For the purposes of this chapter no further exposition of approaches is necessary, therefore only the names of a few other approaches will be given: the critical, philosophical-anthropological, social or cultural-anthropological, phenomenological, metabletic or dynamic, existential and life forming approaches.

## 1.6 Clarification of a few essential concepts

In practising science (and in particular in the recording of the research results) a uniform understanding of core concepts is extremely important. The last aspect of which the reader still needs to take cognizance in this chapter, is thus the meanings which will be attributed in this work to the concepts of *formal*, *non-formal* and *informal* teaching (instruction).

**1.6.1 Formal teaching** is described as highly institutionalized, chronologically graded teaching which occurs within the framework of a hierarchical educative structure. This stretches from primary school up to university level and provides for academic studies as well as a number of forms of professional and technical training. This indicates that formal teaching implies the type of teaching which is presented within a purposely created organizational structure and which exhibits a goal-

directed, systematized nature. It is also future orientated, continues for a relatively protracted period and does not make provision for simultaneous professional activities of pupils (formal teaching therefore occurs on a full time basis). The subject matter is standardized and its presentation is mostly teacher orientated (the emphasis is on teaching). Formal teaching is centrally controlled. Formal teaching is chiefly of a generally formative, abstract and theoretical nature and has difficulty in keeping abreast of the changing needs of society, which implies the changing needs of teaching.

**1.6.2 Non-formal teaching** implies any organized instructional activity occurring outside the structure of the formal teaching system. It is aimed at enabling a selected group of learners to achieve clearly identifiable learning objectives in a systematic way.

Non-formal teaching includes such activities as clubs and societies which were founded with a view to promoting culture, sport and other forms of recreation, as well as agricultural training programmes, systems of apprenticeships and literacy classes for adults. In the same way as formal teaching, non-formal teaching is also concerned with planned, systematic instructional activities, but it differs from formal education in that it can occur in any place (eg. on the sportsfields, place of occupation or even at home) and it is learner orientated (with more emphasis on learning with an immediate short-term aim). The duration of non-formal courses may vary from one day to a year or more and may be attended part-time. Learners may thus partake in productive or occupational activities while receiving instruction. Being learner orientated implies that non-formal teaching is highly practice oriented and very specific. As non-formal teaching is not centrally controlled, it is characterized by variety, suppleness and adaptability of its learning content.

**1.6.3 Informal teaching** is described by Vermaak (1984:45) as ". . . that learning situation which originates when either the learner or the source of information, but not both, is striving to promote the learning process" (- author's translation). This implies that informal teaching occurs, for instance, when a child asks another child how a certain piece of apparatus works and the latter supplies the necessary information. Informal teaching also occurs on a daily basis by means of, for example, the media (radio, television, newspapers, magazines): a child who either listens to and/or looks at any of these learns without any purposive intention and in fact even without being aware of learning.

Informal teaching therefore is a lifelong occurrence by means of which man (the child) acquires knowledge, attitudes, values and skills through everyday experiences by being exposed to the influences of his immediate environment.

The child receives his very first instruction (in the form of informal teaching) from his parents, but as he grows older he becomes more and more involved in the informal teaching situation outside the boundaries of his family life. When he eventually also becomes involved in formal and non-formal teaching, the quality and breadth of the informal teaching which he received (particularly during the preschool years) will determine the value which formal and non-formal teaching will have for him.

In the following chapters the origin and development of infant schooling will be described and there will be some attempts at indicating the presence of all three these types of teaching (informal, non-formal and formal) in the educative past and how they contributed to each other.

## 1.7 Summary

A *brief* attempt was made in chapter one to orientate the reader in respect of the background against which *A historical pedagogical investigation of infant education* was composed. It was indicated that Pedagogics is the science which investigates the phenomenon of education, that History of Education is one of the part-perspectives of this science and then cursory attention was given to the nature, essence, value and possibilities for application of History of Education. To assist the reader to place the particular manner in which facts will be presented (reconstructed) in each of the following chapters into proper perspective, the most important methods of approach in History of Education were briefly sketched. The final paragraphs of this chapter touched on the concepts of formal, non-formal and informal teaching.

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