

EDUCATIVE - REHABILITATION SCIENCE ON THE SCIENTIFIC CONTINUUM

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received: september '96.
accepted: february '97.

Scientific paper
UDK: 376.001

The author first determines the concept of epistemology with the aim of utilizing its method to analyze the position of educative-rehabilitation science on the scientific continuum. This analysis is carried out according to the criteria of scientificness, i.e.: (1) science as a process, (2) methodology, (3) verification or refutation, (4) coherence, (5) nomotheticity, (6) predictability, and (7) general acceptability. On the basis of these criteria, the author determines paradigmatically the position of three sciences on the scientific continuum, beginning with psychology and psychoanalysis, and then dedicating the majority of the article to the position of defectology on the continuum. In addition, he comes to the conclusion that, although the position of defectology (or educative-rehabilitation science) on the scientific continuum is not especially high-it does not correspond to the position taken by the exact sciences-at least it is not lower, but in some cases higher (according to some of the criteria), than some of the traditional sciences. The author considers this type of analysis to be necessary in order to improve the position of educative-rehabilitation science in terms of those criteria of scientificness according to which its position is inadequate.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES

In this article the term *defectology* is used parallel to the term *educative-rehabilitation science*, although the author was aware of the negative connotations of the former. At the present time there is a justified tendency among us to replace the term defectology with the term educative-rehabilitation science. However, as long as the new term is not generally and officially accepted among us, I will use the term defectology as well.

The term defectology was adopted in Croatia many years ago, being certainly inherited from Soviet defectology. Some authors wrote about this several years ago (for example, see Kovačević, Stančić, and Mejovšek, 1988; Stančić 1989, etc.).

I would like to stress some substantial features of our notion of defectology:

1. It is not primarily special education, for it is constituted as an interdisciplinary, and even transdisciplinary, scientific field

which comprises many particular scientific disciplines in mutual permeation.

2. The transdisciplinary characteristic, by which defectology views the human being, including the human being with difficulties in social integration, as a whole (i.e., as a bio-psycho-social structure), became an important methodological principle. This way of conceptualizing the individual leads to the supposition that structural and multivariate research is a necessity for defectology (educative-rehabilitation science), and that the development of analytic methods using small samples is especially necessary.

3. In terms of the structural approach, it is understood that damage has neither attributive nor additive meaning for the

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