

BOOK REVIEW

REHABILITATION COUNSELING RESEARCH

by Brian Bolton

Baltimore Md.: University Park Press, 293 pp., 1979.

Brian Bolton's *Rehabilitation Counseling Research* will prove to be an outstanding and invaluable contribution to the professional training of rehabilitationists. Dr. Bolton, who has been involved with issues of teaching research to students of rehabilitation counseling for over a decade, believes that most standard traditional courses in research methods in the social and behavioral sciences do not prepare students to understand and use the results (of research) (p. XV-XVI). He advocates an emphasis on training future practitioners to be *research consumers*, as a means to advance and upgrade the practice of rehabilitation counseling.

Studies in rehabilitation should ultimately result in improved, optimal services to disabled clients. It is common to see research results reported in forms unsuitable for use by the average rehabilitation counselor (the primary link in the service process). One solution, says Bolton, which would improve services, is to prepare counselors to be intelligent consumers of current research.

Several assumptions underlie this approach:

- (1) A rehabilitation counselor's style should continuously evolve with increased knowledge.
- (2) Research produces knowledge usable in practice.
- (3) The use of research is an individualized matter, shaped by personal style, personality and philosophy.

The text lucidly explains difficult statistical procedures and computational intricacies (e.g. factor analysis and multivariate predictive techniques) in a manner which provides a clear conceptual understanding of basic research principles and design. Although Bolton has chosen material and examples for the selected interests and informational needs of rehabilitation counselors, students of other helping professions will find this book especially useful. The present volume is an extensive expansion of a previous book (by almost 70%), *Introduction to Rehabilitation Research* (Charles C. Thomas, 1974) but with an emphasis on counseling.

The book is composed of 10 chapters. The first four deal with the scientific method, basic statistics (i.e., scaling, norms, validity, reliability) and research design. Important concepts such as central tendency, linearity, and correlation, measures of dispersion and probability theory are treated succinctly, but with total clarity. Bolton does not fail to detail basic assumptions underlying inferential statistics, e.g., in ANOVA, nor in explaining, simply and clearly, the structural model, i.e., partitioning variance. The differences between statistical and practical significance and sample size were clearly explained with regards to the research consumers' needs. Chapter 4 (Research Design) assumes not only the importance of descriptive research as steps in producing a body of knowledge about the rehabilitation process and

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clients, but the necessity of establishing a cause-effect relationship as a scientific basis for practice, by experimental studies. Chapter 5 (Assessment of Outcomes) includes discussions of perspectives and dimensionality, as well as a section on approaches to inventory construction. In recognition of criticisms to the narrow focus on vocational adjustment as an outcome criterion, other aspects of client psychosocial and successful life functioning were examined. Approximately half of Chapter 6 is devoted to longitudinal followup studies assessing effectiveness/outcome since the goal of treatment is successful life adjustment of the disabled. An appendix of multivariate prediction techniques is most useful. Chapter 7 (Factor Analysis) offers the rehabilitation counselor an empirical conceptual framework for viewing client functioning. Appendices summarize the factor analytic rehabilitation studies and technical details. Chapters 8 and 9 are entirely new. The former (Rehabilitation Program Evaluation) was written by Dan Cook and Paul Cooper and the latter (Case Weighting Systems) co-authored with Jim Harper. Both are insightful contributions especially in light of accountability and the unsuitability of "numbers of vocational rehabilitations criterion" (See Chapter 5). Chapter 10 (Research Utilization) has been greatly expanded to incorporate recent developments; it provides useful closure to the previous work.

In reflection, there were 3 specified goals of the book.

(1) To enable the practitioner to understand, critically, published literature, by developing greater understanding of statistics, psychometrics and design.

(2) To enable the practitioner to translate empirical findings into usable forms in practice.

(3) To encourage practitioners/researchers in agency settings and to foster positive attitudes toward the use of research in social service arrangements.

This book should contribute significantly and admirably toward these ends. Each chapter is supplemented with summaries, appendices, a glossary of frequently encountered terms and relevant examples.

E. R. Blomgren
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