

The Evolution of Audiology

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AUDIOLOGY IN THE USA

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The Evolution of Audiology

- From one discipline to two professions
- From education/rehabilitation to healthcare profession
- From certification to licensure
- From Masters/educational model to Doctoral/healthcare model of education

From Communication Disorder Discipline to Hearing Profession

- In the old days:
 - The strength was in the discipline
 - Professional distinction was emerging
 - Audiology linked to SLP profession with mismatched education model and political agenda

From Communication Disorder Discipline to Hearing Profession

■ Today:

- SLP and A have evolved into distinct professions with distinct needs
- Politically, the profession is becoming more powerful in setting its own agenda

From Communication Disorder Discipline to Hearing Profession

- What remains to be done:
 - Ensure that the profession of audiology speaks in an independent and unified voice
 - Continue to decouple A from SLP
 - Begin to build new, more natural partnerships

From Education/Rehabilitation to Healthcare Profession

- In the old days:
 - Practice of audiology evolved out of the classrooms and therapy rooms into hospitals, clinics, and private practices
 - No single degree designator
 - The profession did not have a well-set place at the healthcare table

From Education/Rehabilitation to Healthcare Profession

■ Today:

- A single designator, the AuD
- Direct access in some 3rd-party systems
- Enhanced visibility on Capitol Hill
- Enhanced status with CMS
- A seat at the table?

From Education/Rehabilitation to Healthcare Profession

- What remains to be done:
 - Win the direct-access fight
 - Re-define audiologists as “physicians” under the CMS guidelines

From Certification to Licensure

- In the old days:
 - Graduation was not the end - degree was not designed to ensure competence
 - Designation of who was an audiologist followed a compulsory fellowship year
 - Slowly developing system of state licensure

From Certification to Licensure

■ Today:

- We have our own designator, the AuD, that distinguishes who is an audiologist
- Licensure is a reality throughout the country
- Once you earn an AuD and pass a national exam, you are granted the privilege to practice without a certificate

From Certification to Licensure

- What remains to be done:
 - Systematically fix every state license to add AuD and delete reference to certificates
 - Get a vision for board certification

From Teacher-training Model of Education to Healthcare Model

■ In the old days:

- Model was one of classroom education with student-teaching assignment
- Large chasm between the theoretical and practical
- Clinical education, and those who provided it, were systematically and consistently undervalued
- Launch of our careers depended on luck of finding a decent CFY

From Teacher-training Model of Education to Healthcare Model

■ Today:

- Model of education fits the desired outcome
- Great strides in integration of classroom and clinical education
- Increased value placed on clinical education and those who deliver it
- Renaissance in audiology education worthy of the title “Doctor of Audiology”

From Teacher-training Model of Education to Healthcare Model

- What remains to be done:
 - Contend with program proliferation
 - Fix the 4th year
 - Build a system for measuring outcome
 - Continue to raise the standards

The End

