Preface

After graduating with my doctorate degree a number of years ago, I entered my first (and only) full-time teaching position at Central Missouri State University in Warrensburg, MO. One of my responsibilities was to teach the graduate course in amplification. At that time, this was a one-semester course. As you can imagine, it was impossible to teach my students all that I felt was necessary in order for them to be prepared for their CFY position. Even back then, I was an advocate for a minimum of two graduate courses in amplification. I simply was not comfortable with the notion that my students would supplement their knowledge about amplification from their internship experiences. It seemed to me, we were shirking our responsibilities to our students and passing along this responsibility to other professionals who might have had another viewpoint on the purpose of an internship.

Currently, I am the director of a large clinical program at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO. We have one main office and two satellite offices. All three offices are heavily involved in dispensing conventional, digitally programmable and digital hearing aids. Approximately 70% of our fittings are digitally programmable or digital amplification. From time to time, there is a need to hire new staff members due to program growth or current staff members leaving for one reason or another. I am constantly surprised at the number of applicants from around the country who recently received their graduate degrees from a variety of universities whose skills in the area of amplification are minimal. It is nearly impossible to find recent graduates having any degree of measurable experience in selecting and fitting any of the digitally programmable or digital hearing aids. Occasionally, we will receive interview applicants having no experience in dispensing any form of amplification! At a time when clinical programs are finding it difficult to maintain profitability due to changes in reimbursement models, it is essential for graduate programs to recognize the role hearing aid dispensing plays in the ability of programs to maintain profitability. Students knowledgeable in amplification have a significant edge over those students who are not as knowledgeable!

This issue of *Trends* provides a comprehensive overview of a two-semester graduate course in amplification. This issue should be of considerable interest to any professor currently involved in teaching graduate courses in amplification. The content within this issue should also be of interest to any doctoral student considering teaching and being involved in hearing aid research as their career goal.

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