

The Angle Orthodontist

*A magazine established by the co-workers
of Edward H. Angle, in his memory. . . .*



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JULY AND
OCTOBER

Editorial Department

1946

Postgraduate Study

Many orthodontists have been looking down their noses at postgraduate study in orthodontics. Their contempt springs largely from the unsavory aroma which still hovers over the field from the effect that short courses had upon the development of the specialty when used to bridge the gap between undergraduate education and the practice of orthodontics.

The short course no longer has a place in the fabric of fundamental training for the practice of orthodontics. The validity of this statement needs no more substantiating evidence than an analytical survey of the accomplishment of representative samples of practitioners who have taken on the one hand, graduate courses of study (or academic discipline of equivalent nature) and on the other hand, those who followed the short cut through one or more intensive courses in technical instruction. If further confirmation is needed, a review of the attitude of sound educational institutions as reflected in their programs of study leaves small room for controversy.

It is time now to sound a note of warning to those who have taken upon themselves a smug cloak of complacent satisfaction after completing a regimen of basic theory and good mechanical technics. The field of health service, the knowledge of biologic and physical science and the realm of mechanics are by no means static. Even as the orthodontic profession today is studded with brilliant and occasional examples of individuals who by industry, intelligent

observation, and persistent study have made their mark in competition with their academic contemporaries so must the practitioners who gained their entry to the field of orthodontics through the threshold of the university continue their learning to avoid oblivion as the science moves on.

To those who hold degrees and certificates, as well as the self-trained, the avenue of postgraduate education holds a solution. The stigma attached to the short course that was offered a decade or more ago should not persist when content, purpose, and application have been modified. One might say, in other words, that while the short course is not the favored method of entering the profession of orthodontics, it may be an effective method of maintaining an enviable position in the specialty.

There are many forms of postgraduate education. Short intensive courses of group instruction within limited fields superimposed upon broad and sound foundation and experience; group study of earnest individuals carried over protracted periods; occasional seminars conducted under the inspiring leadership of practitioners and scientists in related progressive fields of knowledge; systematic reading and discussion of the current literature; the conduct of clinical and pure science research; all have their places. No one is self-sufficient.

With modern means of transportation and communication no region is so bounded that many or all of these means are denied orthodontists in any geographic area. The day when the practitioner could keep abreast of his profession by occasional indolent attendance at lectures given in dental society meetings in stuffy smoke-filled rooms is passing. While stimulus may come from these gatherings, the orthodontist today must take advantage of mechanisms already in existence and create new agencies where they are lacking if he is to keep pace with the times.

If he will do so he will not only contribute to his own advancement but in doing so will augment the momentum which the science of orthodontics has gathered in a half century of phenomenal progress.

H.J.N.