

Task Force 2:

Roles Played by Audiologists

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Although the roles played by members of this committee vary widely—a professor of audiology, an HEW specialist, a private practitioner, and a professor playing school audiologist, their response to the chairman's enquiry was not. By "not" is meant that only one of the committee members responded in writing, one promised to and didn't and the chairman never did hear from the other. If ARA will accept this as a chance report, the following will apply.

The one common thread that should hold all audiologists together is their practice and engagement in the rehabilitative process. Regardless of their specialty, be it clinical, academic, research, administrative, commercial, governmental, educational, or political, the surname is still audiologist. It may well be that the modifier may eventually specified by law. We are hopeful now that the new position created by the executive board of ASHA, the new associate secretary of Audiology, will be one to keep us informed of the legality of such matters. We may go the way of psychology or medicine and create boards or societies that will define the varied roles that audiology may play in the future.

An analysis of the present membership of ARA by members preferred designation (role?) shows the following:

Designation	Frequency
Administrative (directors, coordinators, etc)	47
Clinical	8
Academic	31
Governmental	3
Private practice	2
(Not designated)	3
Total	94

The temptation to call ARA "elitest" is great, but the fact may well be that administrators and college professors that make up approximately 75 percent of the membership are generally interested and economically available for organizations such as ours. Too, this majority has undeniably gone through the "practitioner" phase of professional existence. This matter may require further discussion.

The traditional roles of the teacher, the clinician, the researcher, and the administrator are known as is their area of responsibility. The commercial, the educational or school, the private practitioner, and the political audiologist are still grey areas to the traditionalist. With the emergence of audiology in the hearing aid dispensing business, consultation involving noise pollution, active participation in the public schools, and actual involvement in public assistance

programs, the roles are poorly defined. Task Forces 3 and 8 may cast some light on two of these areas. Unfortunately we have no committee on school audiology, which may prove to be one of the largest specialties, though probably not the most lucrative, in our total field.

The very fact that these grey areas are in existence suggest that preparatory programs be re-evaluated. Too, involvement of supportive personnel in these programs will require that the role of the audiologist be specified. It may well be that community colleges should take an active role in the preparation of technical specialties related to audiology. A national movement by a committee within the ranks of the hearing aid dispensers is underway to specify the educational requirements for young people going into the hearing aid business. What will the role be for the audiologist, if asked to aid in this training? A current concern of the Audiology Committee of the California Speech and Hearing Association is their role in such a curriculum. A program in the form of a "college" is already in existence in West Germany.

Summary

The varied roles performed by the audiologist are formed and often jelled in the preparatory programs, usually in colleges and universities. New areas have opened up for the audiologist that require revised proficiencies. ARA should investigate and discuss these new areas in depth, especially those related to the commercial field and in public school education. ARA should continue to inform ASHA through the legislative council, appropriate committees, and the new associate secretary of its concern that, regardless of specialty, the rehabilitation of the person and society is the goal of our profession. Roles as such should also be conveyed to the grass roots level—most appropriately through state associations.