

Discussion by Dr. Sam Weinstein

Dr. Baker's paper is essentially concerned with four interrelated questions:

1. Is there justification for numerical expansion of the training of orthodontists?

And its corollary;

2. Are we in a strong defensive position against the slings and arrows of outraged dental practitioners?

3. Does the contemporary graduate orthodontic curriculum pay due homage to the past and at the same time show a sensitivity to the relevance of today?

And its corollary;

4. Does today's professional-school student evidence any of the characteristics of awareness shown by the other segments of the student population?

In response to the questions with reference to justification for expansion of graduate orthodontic education, I would agree with his judgment of orthodontic education doing its fair share when based on a percent of total dental school population. But if the deep concerns expressed at both the Undergraduate Orthodontic Educational Conference (1966) and the University of Kentucky (1966) Orthodontic Workshop are sufficiently documented, i.e., Zwemmer's estimation of greater than nine million children with handicapping malocclusion plus a 20,000 plus incremental increase per year, and the growing evidence for increasing demands precipitated by the changing socio-economic scene, perhaps this percent baseline is the wrong "security blanket".

I would further question the statement, based on his personal observation, that a significant number of orthodontists are not working to capacity. Using the same kind of sampling technique at country clubs and stock brok-

er's offices, one might be led to somewhat different conclusions.

Certainly the increased intelligent use of auxiliary personnel must bear a directly proportionate relationship both to the number of patients serviced and to the income level of the practitioner. But, has it in truth, as suggested, reduced the cost to the patient?

In consideration of the last set of questions to which Dr. Baker's paper is addressed - the current graduate curriculum and changing student attitudes, his historical review is appropriate. The vacillating emphasis from the mechanical to the biological and return is reminiscent of the "round trip" some of us inflict on tooth movement. However, the relative importance of those areas in the curriculum, particularly as it pertains to "mechanics" has strong semantic implications. If by "mechanics" is meant trial and error gadgeteering, then the swing back from biological conceptualizing is no "giant step" for orthodontics. If, however, this new mechanical emphasis is to have a two-fold thrust, 1) an understanding of such theoretical mechanical concepts as force systems, equilibrium, and characteristics of appliance design as well as, 2) a continuing in-depth study of the total biological interaction, then history has served us well, and the appliance dictatorship has given way to a more relevant coalition. I would read this sort of meaning into Dr. Baker's cogent analysis.

He has given careful consideration to the role of "discipline" in the shaping of the final product of our educational milieu and our frequent demand that the student perform certain tasks whose meaningfulness will become apparent at some later date. As educators we might commit some honest soul-searching to this approach. If, indeed,

today's student is brazen enough to question, and is encouraged to at least loosen the shackles of an earlier dental school dogmatism, perhaps all of us might develop teaching systems that would significantly shorten the time gap between the monumental events of the handing down of the law and revelation.

I would suspect and hope that by "discipline" Dr. Baker is concerned more with the rewards of a regimentation of the intellect than those associated with wax carving or repetitive exercises in the spit and polish of plaster models.

One cannot take issue with the plea for training of orthodontic teachers and for the inclusion of courses in methodology of teaching.

The paper expresses concern over the heterogeneity of curriculum content from one school to another. Granted, there is strong need for conformity. But equally necessary is a mark of individuality for each program. This freedom of choice should filter down to the student within each curriculum. He should be encouraged to explore or enjoy, via electives, studies not necessarily and directly oriented to the "what can I take to the chair" syndrome.

Today's presentation pays considerable attention to an analysis of the current "student revolt" as it relates to graduate education. Bob has been fortunate, indeed, to be able to speak from a point of close observation, if not involvement, of recent events in both

Ithaca and Rochester. It is heartening, that in spite of the dangers of such proximity to the trees, he views the forest and is not guided by the disturbing violence of a few, but rather exhibits empathy for the genuine concern of the many.

Recent works on personality characteristics of dental students by McCabe and others indicates that in the past, at least, dentistry has attracted the type of student that can be characterized as determined, diligent, resistant to change, unimaginative, essentially conservative, and the least socially conscious of the three professions of law, medicine and dentistry.

Therefore, if Dr. Baker's quotes of medical students verbalize the honest idealism of today's professional student, his increasing awareness of some hypocrisies of the ethics of the past or present, and an urge for meaningful change, then the essayist's plea for a sensitive response in kind by us as educators via our structured curriculum is most germane. For this is a new kind of student for dentistry and one we should welcome. Perhaps, in relevant course content, we are just as guilty of neglect in treating the human being as we might be in the pragmatism of the economics of practice management.

Dr. Baker, this discussion was not intended to be pontifical, but to place some emphasis on the provocative nature of your timely and perceptive dissertation. I thank you for the opportunity.