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THE PREPARATION OF PROFESSIONALS IN THE SEVENTIES

JEROME D. SCHEIN, PH.D.

Mr. Toastmaster, PRWAD Board members, fellow members and friends, I have enjoyed being with you at this Conference. I did not mind the assignment to give this talk -- not until yesterday, when I had the privilege of hearing three distinguished speakers, James Garrett, Craig Mills and Larry Stewart, deliver their excellent addresses. They made me feel like the man who was told he would be burned at the stake. He objected, because he did not want to make a *fuel* of himself!

The previous speakers' extensive reviews of the past decade and their exciting predictions for this decade leave little relevant material that has not already been covered. In his keynote address, Dr. Garrett viewed the Seventies from our own Mount Olympus, Capitol Hill. He spoke wisely about all aspects of rehabilitation for deaf persons, and he was, as he always tries to be, most provocative. Mr. Mills discussed the field from the coign of vantage which rightly belongs to a State director of rehabilitation. All State agencies will do well to implement quickly his nine priorities. Then came the sometimes-neglected view from deaf persons, ably presented by Dr. Stewart. His candid and extensive analysis of the scene and his excellent advice for altering the conditions which must be changed will serve as model proposals for action in the days ahead of us.

So much has been said, and so beautifully, that I will confine my remarks to one topic: training professional workers with deaf adults. This is not to imply that the previous speakers did not have anything to say about the preparation of rehabilitation personnel.

Indeed, each of them did. For that reason, I will narrow my talk even further to concentrate on some of the ideas which will motivate the training programs at New York University, where, as you know, I have recently become affiliated with the Deafness Research and Training Center. What I am about to predict will be modified over time by the Center's faculty and students. They may, in fact, want to cast away all of these thoughts, though I doubt they will, since many of the basic ideas belong to them. These remarks will be about the philosophy underlying the preparation of professional personnel at the Center --- a philosophy which is set before you for your consideration as one applicable to any training program for workers with deaf adults, be they psychologists, social workers, audiologists, speech pathologists, counselors, or whatever. The Center, you see, prepares persons to work in any professional capacity with deaf people.

Regardless of the specialty for which the trainee is readying himself, he can be certain of having more to read about deafness in the Seventies than he had in the Sixties. More surveys and experiments will be reported. More fiery polemics will be written. We can easily envision the time, in the very near future, when students will have computer terminals instead of library passes. With so much material to cull, they will need electronic assistance. Similarly, rehabilitation counselors will use their regionally based computers to keep up with the vast outpouring of research.

But will all of this productivity improve matters? Not without the parallel development of theories of deafness. We must have the organizing influence of theories of deafness. We must have the organizing influence of theories to resolve pictures blurred by great amounts of detail. The value of theories --- perhaps I should say, the necessity of theories --- is at least threefold. Theories provide the conceptual framework on which to hang the fragments of knowledge that we obtain by observation and experimentation. Theories make obvious the gaps in our knowledge and, thus, encourage more research. Such research, when theory-directed, is more useful, more relevant. What is more, theories enable the practitioner to work systematically in the absence of research evidence. He can extrapolate from established points, not always correctly, it is true, but in such a way as to profit even from the errors. Without theories physics would not have advanced so

rapidly as it did. Einstein's abstract notions have led us to very practical outcomes, not all of which we have welcomed. But whether a theory leads to Hiroshima or the Moon, it directs us to new efforts. From theories emerge predictions, guesses about the unknown and untried. What would happen if ..., we ask, and theories offer answers, a plan of action to follow. In the Seventies we must meet the need for theories and shun the leadership of that great wastrel, Blind Empiricism.

In connection with theory direction we need to develop *research appreciation*. How often have you heard the complaint, After all the research that has been done the practices in the field remain unaffected? Too often, I suspect. And we have all complained about the intolerable lag in time between discovery and application.

One way to remedy this situation is to train people to apply research. I despair of teaching researchers how to write so everyone can understand them. It is a little like trying to make physicians' handwriting legible. Instead, the pharmacist has learned to interpret the physicians' scrawls. In the same way, the preparation of the rehabilitation worker must include instruction in how to interpret the researcher's shorthand. We need to develop in our students the desire and the skills for understanding the scientific literature. The ideal has been expressed by Bacon centuries ago: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider."

Now such instruction will not succeed if it is limited to a course or two in statistics. In fact, I believe that the typical statistics course defeats appreciation of research by concentrating on the ancillary mechanics of analysis. This is not the proper time to pursue this argument, but I would like to say that understanding scientific studies should, and must, be encouraged. I have no doubt that, when properly taught, such understanding can be achieved by every graduate of a rehabilitation training program. That it is not achieved indicts the training program, not the trainee.

Among research findings which have been ignored is that people learn best by doing. We know this, yet in most universities we cling to the lecture-reading model of instruction. Certainly lectures can

be helpful. But to almost confine a training program, particularly a professional curriculum, to such activities is to be anti-educational. In our programs, regardless of the ultimate degree to be earned, the students will spend far more time working in practicum settings under supervision than sitting in classrooms. The key to making such a plan effective is supervision: the immediate feedback from a highly qualified professional is the most potent way we have of shaping our students into the kinds of professionals who are needed. In the Seventies we are apt to see the application of the master-apprentice paradigm increase.

Finally, the preparation of professionals concerned with deafness will concentrate more on attitude development than on the acquiring of skills or knowledge. If we succeed in teaching research appreciation, then we will have prepared the professional for the changes which will surely come. He will have acquired techniques for coping with the new developments, and he will have learned to anticipate the shifting directions of tomorrow. In serving his clients, however, he needs more than techniques: he needs a rehabilitation attitude.

In little ways he can convey the wrong impression to the person with whom he wishes to work, thus destroying the relationship which may be his best tool. A few days ago our trainees met with the faculty of the Center in the first of our monthly seminars for this year. Several of the deaf students spoke movingly about their feeling that DVR counselors treated them as objects instead of people. As a tiny antidote against our doing the same in the Center, we adopted the rule against using the word *deaf* as a noun. Henceforth we will not speak about "the deaf." On the other hand, "deaf people," "deaf children," -- yes, "deaf adults" -- are acceptable phrases, because the subjects of the thoughts expressed are living beings not objects. The emphasis is on the human, not his condition.

Oh, you say, that is a petty business, a mere matter of semantics. Yet as we think, so we speak; as we speak, so we think. A minor distinction in the use of terms for laymen, perhaps, but for the professional it could be most revealing and, hence, most important.

In the same vein, we will emphasize the great abilities of deaf persons. I subscribe to a social-expectancy theory of achievement. People can usually do far more than they believe they can do. They often will do more than they are expected to do. As professionals working with deaf adults we can greatly advance their cause and improve their performance by believing they can do more and better. When we believe it, we are likely to convey that expectancy. The deaf person who senses your confidence in him has a greater probability of success. This positive attitude of high expectancy will, I hope, mark the graduates of all our training programs in the Seventies.

You will note that in these remarks about training programs for the Seventies I have not spoken about any special techniques. I have not discussed any new methods of counseling deaf persons, no advanced treatment of statistical data, not revolutionary developments in case-finding. Surely these new techniques, different methods, revolutionary developments will emerge in the next decade. To make best use of them, however, we need to train professionals for change, hence research appreciation and practicum-oriented instruction. They must learn to deal with theories, theories of deafness and theories of rehabilitation. And most importantly, they must develop a positive, high-expectancy attitude toward deaf persons. With such preparation, I feel certain, the graduates of our training programs in the Seventies will advance the field well beyond the high point to which you have brought it during the Sixties.