

This is a copy of Merv Jones' response to the article "the Right Qualifications" in a recent issue of Audiology Now. Merv is an Audiologist who is one of the teachers of the Diploma course at SIT. He also was one of the teachers during the Sof AA course last year. I have spoken to Merv and he has given me permission to post this on our site and to email members.

Merv's response:

In Issue 38 of Audiology Now, an article appeared , "The Right Qualifications" which purported to reflect the general view of attitudes towards qualifications required for successful activities to be performed in the Hearing Health Industry.

TAFE NSW is very proud to have been the source of supply of qualified Audiometrists to Australian Hearing, ENT Surgeons, to Audiologists, and to the Companies who own the extensive chain of Hearing Aid outlets throughout Australia. All these employers run successful businesses, and TAFE has been the source of supply of successful employees in the field for many, many years.

All employers understand the importance of a succession plan for future workers in their business and embrace motivated employees who possess the Necessary and Sufficient qualifications.

A key concept avoided or ignored by many cosily employed public servant employees, who never happen to have ventured into the real world of a level playing field of commercial activity, is that employers look for Necessary and Sufficient qualifications for employees to perform a task.

A Builder is not an Architect and doesn't NEED to be. A GP is not a Specialist Surgeon, and doesn't NEED to be. An Electrician is not an Electronics Engineer, and doesn't NEED to be. The Secretary of the ENT surgeon , (possibly the wife or relative) , performs audiograms, does tympanometry, reflexes, ABRs as well as accounting , financial, and personal duties for the doctor. The job gets done to the satisfaction of the employer. The person has the Necessary and Sufficient knowledge and skills to perform what is expected by the employer. So the pinnacle of the Hearing Health profession is happy with the people they employ and the ENT society does not cavil and whinge about members who employ "such and such". Neither does Australian Hearing, which employs audiometrists as well as audiologists.

Obviously , (though it appears some don't understand) the Surgeon is not "BETTER" than the GP..... they perform different tasks. Obviously, the Architect is not "BETTER" than the Builder..... they perform different tasks..... etc. The Professor's skills may be in Research, so he doesn't teach. The Teacher's skills are in imparting knowledge, not research. And so it goes.....

Historically, Audiometrists were on the map well before "Audiology" formally existed in Australia. Old NAL "Audiologists" well recall that they originally were all psychologists and happened to be "in house" trained to fit hearing aids. The Audiometry Course preceeded the existence of any Audiology University degree in Australia.

The sensible business owners out there understand that Necessary and Sufficient qualifications are required to perform the tasks. That's the issue. No employer who wants to survive in a competitive world, is going to demand and insist on the employment of overqualified academics with inferior practical and personable skills than is necessary and sufficient to do the task.

Really, the shame is ,that current University Audiology graduates, in general leave University and virtually immediately dive into fitting hearing aids, rather than perform the diagnostic role that their training is aimed at. No wonder many ENT surgeons can't find a qualified audiologist to perform the diagnostic tests required for further investigation. And so, their secretary's role !

In a way, Audiology has failed itself in under-utilising its purported expertise..... if audiologists are meant to have the specialty in interpretation of diagnostic tests, why are so few doing it ?

Each to their own. Practitioners are not all the same . They are DIFFERENT. Different expertise , with the NECESSARY and SUFFICIENT skills to perform their tasks.

So, what an absolute pleasure it is, to be associated with other respected Audiologists, such as Peter Robinson, Paul Dudley and Bettina Turnbull at TAFE NSW, involved in making a contribution to the sustainability of good business succession plans in the Hearing health industry.

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