



MINNESOTA ACADEMY OF AUDIOLOGY Newsletter

Feature Story

What Makes a Professional?

*By John Greer Clark, Ph.D.
University of Cincinnati*

Members of a profession share a common body of knowledge and are sought out for their application of that knowledge which is assumed to be provided in an ethical and unbiased manner. In my view, two keys to professionalism include exercising sufficient introspection to ensure one's delivery of services is coherent with the profession's acknowledged best practices, and seeking opportunities to bolster the profession itself so that it is in a position to best serve future practitioners.

An Introspective Guide Toward Best Practice

Evidence-based practice is a careful blending of the practitioner's clinical expertise, the patient's perceptions of the disorder and its impact on quality of life, and the available research on the interventions provided. Professional introspection can quickly reveal several areas in which audiology practitioners are failing to provide care in keeping with best-practice guidelines to the detriment of efficacious service delivery.

Unfortunately, surveys have suggested that patients often view audiologists and other hearing professionals as insensitive and indifferent or lacking compassion and well-founded counseling skills (Glass & Elliot, 1992; Martin, George, O'Neal & Daly, 1987; Sjoblad, Harrison, Roush, & McWilliam, 2000). A foundational reason for these findings can be found in how we engage our patients from the outset.

Self-assessment measures ensure that we understand the patient's perceptions of difficulties encountered so that services may be tailored to better match the patient's needs. These measures also form the foundation for initial exchanges with patients and communication partners and offer a springboard for motivational engagement with the frequently encountered patient who may not be ready to move forward with recommendations (Clark, 2010; Clark & Weiser, 2014). It is unfortunate that these measures are consistently under-utilized by audiologists (Pietrzyk, 2009; Huff, Clark & Earl, 2017) in spite of the fact that use of self-assessment measures is long been considered part of audiology best practice (AAA, 2006).

Similarly, audiologists continue to fail to fully address the auditory challenges of their patients. Best practice guidelines recommend that all hearing aid fittings be completed with probe-microphone verification to ensure that the greatest audibility of speech has been attained. Yet, Mueller and Picou (2010) report that only a third of audiolo-

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gists use this measure routinely and that comparison with past surveys reveals no significant upward trend has been observed. This is both an amazing and disheartening statistic given the repeated research findings that demonstrate audibility cannot be ensured through hearing aid manufacturer software prescriptive fittings (e.g., Hawkins & Cook, 2003). Given that probe-microphone measures ensure we are more accurately fitting our patients' hearing loss and that best-practice policies state that we should be doing this, Palmer (2009) questions if lack of providing such measures might be considered a violation of professional ethics.

The human ear can only comfortably tolerate a partial restoration of lost hearing. Indeed, many fitting formulas for prescribing needed hearing aid gain are based upon some variation of the half-gain rule. Knowing this, it becomes readily apparent that even with the best electronics and the most complete hearing aid fitting protocol, hearing is not restored to normal with amplification and some degree of hearing deficit remains after the fitting. Evidence-based research has repeatedly demonstrated some form of hearing rehabilitation can be beneficial for most patients (e.g., Sweetow & Palmer, 2005). Taylor (2012) outlines recommendations for additional hearing rehabilitation based on patient performance on speech-in-noise testing and testing of acceptable noise levels (ANL) as described by Nabelek and her colleagues (2006). As Taylor notes, patients with poor speech-in-noise performance (e.g.: an SNR loss greater than 10 on the QuickSIN) and lower tolerance for background noise (e.g., an ANL greater than 10) are less likely to be successful with amplification alone.

Unfortunately, hearing in noise testing is another area that is most frequently not included in the pre-hearing aid

selection and fitting evaluation (Huff, Clark & Earl, 2017). And this is true, again, in spite of the fact that these measures are recommended in best-practice guidelines. As some form of hearing rehabilitation beyond the usual technological fix provided by audiologists is also recognized as a component of best practice (AAA, 2006), and many audiologists still fail to incorporate a meaningful rehabilitation component into their hearing aid fitting protocol (Huff, Clark & Earl, 2017), Clark, Kricos, and Sweetow (2010) suggest that Palmer's (2009) questioning of potential violations of professional ethics may apply here as well.

A profession suffers when its practitioners do not take it upon themselves to advocate for their profession and those it serves.

Introspection is rarely painless and requires pulling back the curtains of one's life and critically assessing performance. Such introspection is requisite to being a professional.

Giving Back to the Profession

A profession suffers when its practitioners do not take it upon themselves to advocate for their profession and those it serves. State and national audiology associations (and through these, audiologists) are successful only through the active involvement of their members. Every organization at every level sends out periodic calls for volunteers to serve on committees or run for office. Part of being a professional is to heed these calls and volunteer one's time. There is no better way to stay abreast of the profession, network with colleagues, and help to make an impact on the future.

One can also make a large impact on the future by volunteering one's time and talents in mentoring those who will

be entering the profession. All audiologists who make a commitment to best practices should reach out to nearby university programs and offer to provide practicum experiences to audiology students. Taking on a student is a win-win experience as students and preceptors quickly find they learn from each other.

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What is Leadership?

By Carolyn
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Starkey Hearing
Technologies

As the world of audiology continues to change and our profession remains an item to be constantly redefined and reevaluated, it is important that the future of audiology remains current on the happenings of our industry and feel encouraged to step forth and take action as leaders. While the levels of leadership may vary, the basic needs and components of a true leader stand firm. The following is an excerpt taken from a recent contribution to *Innovations Magazine* where I was asked to comment on leadership from the perspective of a young leader in a large organization.

Beyond the Clichés

When asked to write about leadership it's easy to fall into a pit of clichés or broad definitions. “Lead by doing,” or “There's no ‘I’ in team,” or “To lead people, walk beside them.” It is also easy to get caught in a train of thought surrounding leadership as defined by position or title – the higher up a person is, the better the title, the more in the world of “leadership” they are within that community.

A more pertinent investigation into one's ability to lead or serve in a leadership role would be to examine others' willingness to follow them regardless of title, position or managerial privileges. I've always enjoyed thought-leader Simon Sinek's take on defining leadership by stating, “There are leaders and there are those who lead.” Those who lead cause people to follow them for themselves because they want to follow them, whereas leaders are given the authority to force those beneath them to follow them via position, title or rank.

A large part of what drives people to follow someone's lead stems from that leader showing a genuine passion for their root cause and outside motivations. A true passion for your end goal and belief in what you are doing accompanied by evident willingness to participate in the most minute pieces of the task if needed will draw a sincere reflection of that passion from your audience. The instant that your potential followers sense a hint of insincerity towards the goal of your mission or suspect selfish motivations, they have the opportunity to use that as a reason to not join you in working towards that goal.

When employees observe their peers or leadership stepping up to different challenges with a determined attitude, they are much more likely to follow.

Confidence

Perhaps one of the most motivating factors that I've observed in successful leaders is their ability to mirror the image of a performer that they'd like to see in their team members. When employees observe their peers or leadership stepping up to different challenges with a determined attitude, they are much more likely to follow that lead and mirror that team member's ways. This task is not always easy though, as life's daily tribulations can cause even the most optimistic and spirited people to become run down and demotivated. A true leader is one who can, even in the darkest of times, find the capability to motivate others to achieve the goal despite uncertainty, negativity and unpopular decisions and assignments.

Having confidence in your path will help with the ultimate need for a leader and

that is trust from her team members. In *The Speed of Trust*, Stephen M. R. Covey highlights the importance of thinking of every interaction with your team as a “moment of trust.”¹ It is all of these moments that shape the confidence your team has in you, your motivations and the tasks that lay ahead.

Compassion

Perhaps the most influential trait that a leader can have is true compassion. Taking the time to know and understand your fellow team members is crucial in efforts of having them follow your lead. On any team, you are going to have difference in attitudes, views, motivators. This is especially true when generational differences quietly present challenges that you must acknowledge and work through.

At times you, the leader, need to adjust your personal style to meet the needs of your team members. If you have someone who needs frequent check ins, whereas you prefer a more hands-off approach when being managed yourself, you may need to accommodate that person's needs for affirmation more than you may believe is necessary. The same principle applies to recognition and showing of gratitude. Everybody likes to feel appreciated—it's knowing how that person would like to be recognized that is important. Most upsets that I've noted in any work environment are a result of unhappiness caused by not feeling heard or appreciated. In fact, 75% of workers who voluntarily leave their jobs do so because of leadership and not the position itself.²

If showing compassion and authentic care for your team leads them to ultimately be happier in the workplace, you too will be happier. There have been many studies that demonstrate this relationship: the ultimate way to

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Leadership, cont.

be happy yourself is to make others happy. Because most of us need to work full time, most of our days are spent in the office with our team, making them the perfect target for this sharing of happiness.

In the co-authored book, *Happy Money: The Science of Smarter Spending*, Elizabeth Dunn and Michael Norton investigate this principal as it applies to how an individual spends their money with goals of achieving happiness. Their research lead them to find that not only did spending money on experiences trump spending on things,

but also spending resources towards the happiness of others lead to the most fulfilling happiness of all.³ So why not apply this same principal to leadership? While we don't need to use money as the bartering good, we can take this same theory and substitute spending to effective leading. The happier the team you lead is, the happier you will be and the "happier" your end product will be. Personally, I've found all of these components to be critical, particularly starting as a younger team member who was managing large initiatives. It can be intimidating to join a team of experienced, intelligent professionals and be given a position in which you need to direct such a team in any

capacity towards your goals. What I've found is that the more confidence you portray towards a goal that you are truly passionate about, while keeping in mind the team's need for recognition and kindness, the better the end result and the better your working relationships.

* * * * *

¹ Covey, Stephen M. R. *The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything*. Simon & Schuster. 2006

² <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/106912/turning-around-your-turnover-problem.aspx>

³ Dunn, Elizabeth, and Michael Norton. *Happy Money: The Science of Smarter Spending*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.

Message From Your President

Everyone Benefits When You Volunteer

By Jennifer Reside, Au.D.

On behalf of MAA, I would like to give a shout out to our awesome volunteers who helped make this year's conference so wonderful! Often times we don't realize how much work goes into putting these events together. It takes a lot of time and effort to get these things up and running all the while trying to be fiscally responsible.

This brings me back to the message of how important it is to volunteer. It is so easy for us to sit around and talk about things we wish would change. These things won't change without action. The larger the group of volunteers we have the more we can promote change. WE make this organization great! WE make audiology great! WE are the individuals who can help promote quality hearing and vestibular healthcare for our patients.

As an organization we cannot do all of these great things that we do without our volunteers! The conference alone requires that multiple committees work together to make this wonderful event happen. We have so many other committees who do so many wonderful things to help promote audiology as well.

Again, I encourage each and every one of you to find time to volunteer on an MAA committee. Do you see something you would like to change? Volunteer! Have an idea of a way to improve MAA? Volunteer! Do you want to promote this profession, but aren't sure how? Volunteer! All the meanwhile, you will meet so many wonderful people!

Another way to volunteer is at the Minnesota State Fair, taking place August 24-September 4, 2017! Take a few hours to help educate the public on the importance of our profession. I had at least two

memorable experiences last year alone. One, a man walked up to me and thanked

us for encouraging him to get evaluated. He showed me his hearing aids! The second was a woman who had experienced a sudden hearing loss three days prior. Had she not stopped at MAA's booth would she have gotten help the following day? Maybe.

I must say I have enjoyed my time as an MAA volunteer thus far. Please reach out to one of the committee members to inquire about how you can volunteer to help MAA and this wonderful profession we call audiology.



High Quality Earplugs Go To the Sharks

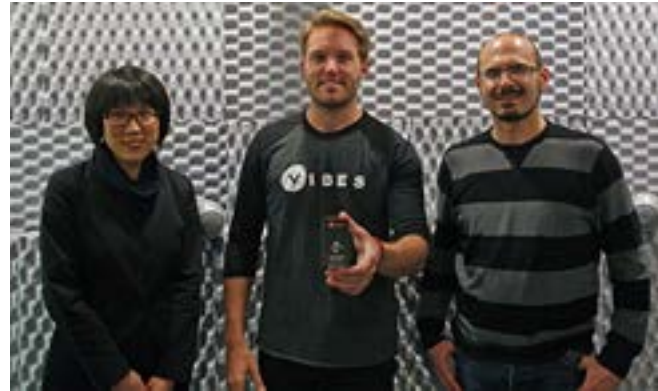
Dr. Bert Schlauch and two of his graduate students, Jocelyn Tzu-Ling Yu and Andrew Kersten, gained invaluable, real-world experience working with Jackson Mann, a Minnesota-based entrepreneur. Mann had sought to minimize hearing loss through the creation of Vibes: high-quality and affordable earplugs, the team's project was recently featured on an Episode of ABC's hit television program "Shark Tank".

"Shark Tank" has become a popular reality television which is based upon the premise that entrepreneurs, like Jackson Mann, are pitch their business plans and inventions to well-known venture capitalists. If a deal is struck, the so-called "Sharks" agree to invest in and assist the entrepreneurs. When Jackson Mann decided to develop an

earplug for concert goers, he first sought out the assistance of the University of Minnesota's Department of Speech Language Hearing Sciences. "We were glad to play a role in the development of this product with a start-up company in the Twin Cities," Dr. Schlauch said. "It provided a wonderful experience and a source of funding for our students, and helped to launch a product that will preserve the hearing of its users."

In 1970, Chuck Speaks, now an emeritus professor, and his colleagues published an article that concluded that live rock music concerts were hazardous to hearing. In 2006, Dr. Schlauch and colleagues published additional findings that suggested that the genre of music doesn't matter--pop, heavy metal, and rock-a-billy concerts all produced hazardous levels of exposure. Their study also found that earplugs, when randomly assigned to half the participants, offered protection.

However, some participants refused to participate in the study when they learned that they had been assigned to the earplug group. Audiophiles frequently shy away from foam earplugs because they tend to distort the quality of music. This is the issue that was taken on by Schlauch, Yu, and Kersten when Jackson Mann approached the department with his idea to test his concept. Mann wanted to develop an easily accessible "musician's earplug" that would decrease the amplitude of music while maintaining quality. Generic earplugs distort and muffle sound while custom ear plugs, that work to preserve sound quality, are expensive and require a fitting process. Mann was interested in



Entrepreneur Jackson Mann (center) with graduate students Jocelyn Tzu-Ling Yu and Andrew Kersten.

Photo by Bert Schluach

producing a pair of ear plugs that would be inexpensive, easy to obtain, and practical to use. He believed that this would allow musicians, concert goers, and anyone exposed to loud noises to preserve their hearing while still being able to fully experience the range of sounds around them.

Dr. Schlauch recruited the help of two of his graduate students. Yu, a PhD candidate, works on cochlear hearing loss and its impact on communication. She describes herself as a "speech person who became intrigued by hearing." Kersten is a Doctor of Audiology student who received his undergraduate degree in philosophy but then became intrigued by the physiology and psychology of hearing. At Dr. Schlauch's suggestion, both students were hired by Jackson and were tasked with the challenge of validating the effectiveness of the innovative earplug.

Jackson Mann presented the team with two prototypes which the students tested in the Multisensory Perception Lab in the University's Center for Applied and Translational Sensory Science (CATSS). The prototypes differed in both size and mechanical components. Each prototype

cont.



Welcome New Members

Fellows

Katie Awoyinka
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Judy DeMorest
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Melodie Maerz
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Students

Angela Keller
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Victoria Pechacek
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Shark Tank, cont.



was tested to determine how well they maintained the quality of the sound when reducing the amplitude to a safe decibel level. The team had subjects wear the earplugs and sit in the lab, surround-

ed by speakers. Kersten and Yu then tested how the ear plug affected attenuation at different frequencies. The goal was to change the level at all frequencies equally. If one frequency decreased an amplitude more than others, it would distort the sound, resulting in a muffled or unpleasant listening experience. Together, the team was able to find the perfect balance between sound quality and sound attenuation and, as a result, Vibes was born.

Vibes earplugs are now being sold online and can also be found on Amazon.

Not only do they provide a safe and high-quality listening experience, but a portion of the money from their sales also benefit the Hear The World Foundation, which helps fund hearing projects for those in need. Additionally, the undertaking was a great experience for the SLHS students involved in the creation of this product. Graduate student Jocelyn Yu said that “working with Vibes had sharpened my skills in cooperating on a research project with a non-academic institute and has taught me the importance of public awareness in hearing loss prevention”.



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Need Help? Advertise Your Audiology Jobs

Ever heard that expression: “Hire in haste, regret at your leisure?” Hiring someone on your team who is a good fit is extremely important and shouldn’t be rushed. If you have a job opportunity and are looking for that special person, post it here!

Email your job posting to the [administrator](#). Job posts must be limited to 200 words or less and may include a single graphic and link to the application. Graphics must be saved in a separate jpeg file.

*Note: MAA does not endorse nor is responsible for the veracity of any advertisement appearing in our newsletter.



Get Involved: Nominations and Elections Underway!

On behalf of the MAA Nominations and Awards Committee, it is our pleasure to invite all MAA members to submit nominations for candidates to serve on the 2018 MAA Board of Directors for the following positions:

- **President-Elect (1)**
Nominees for President-Elect must have served on the Board of Directors within five (5) years preceding the date on which they would assume office.
- **Member-at-Large (2)**
Nominees for Member-at-Large must be or become members of the association.



The position descriptions outline the responsibilities when serving on the MAA Board, establish minimum qualifications for an eligible MAA member to be considered for service on the Board, and provide estimates of the time required to fulfill the duties of each position. If you or somebody you know, would like to be considered for one of these positions, please [e-mail our administrator](#).

Below are the important milestones in the MAA 2017 nominations and election process:

- **August 16, 2017** Deadline for receipt of nominations.
- **August 30, 2017** Deadline for candidate vitae and letter of intent. Letter of intent should attest to: 1) understanding requirements, 2) agreeing to use his/her best ability to carry out responsibilities, and 3) agreeing to support and further the MAA Vision & Mission.
- **Aug/Sept, 2017** Nominations and Awards Committee presents provisional slate of qualified candidates for each position to the Board of Directors. Board of Directors will determine the final slate of nominees for each open position.
- **September 20, 2017** Deadline for candidate remaining required materials: 1) supportive statement, 2) biographical information, and 3) photo.
- **October 1, 2017** Slate of nominated candidates (including biographical information and supportive statement) presented to MAA membership.
- **October 1, 2017** Electronic voting opens.
- **October 31, 2017** Electronic voting closes.
- **November, 2017** Election results announced to members.
- **January 1, 2018** New officers take office.

“The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.”
Amelia Earhart

Gloria Gross Scholarships Awarded

The Gloria Gross Scholarship is an award given out each year by the Minnesota Academy of Audiology (MAA). The scholarship is awarded to high school seniors who have hearing loss. Applicants are nominated by MAA members and winner(s) are selected by the Audiology Awareness Committee. The scholarships are funded by money raised during the silent auction at the Upper Midwest Audiology Conference, therefore the amount and number of awards we are able to give are dependent on money raised. Thank you for those who helped support the silent auction this year. Thank you to all who submitted applications and nominations.

2017 scholarship winners are:

- Paige Christenson (pictured at right) was nominated by Brent Fisher, AuD and awarded \$1,000.
- Matthew Glaven was nominated by Angie Mucci, AuD and awarded \$450.

The winning essays written by Paige Christenson follow here.

Please tell us about your hopes and dreams for the future.

I will attend the College of Saint Benedict this fall. I hope to study either English or early childhood education with an overall goal to work as an early childhood teacher, specifically with special education students. I want to help kids with disabilities because of all the amazing teachers I have had in my educational career. During college, I hope to study abroad (preferably in Australia or New Zealand), challenge my understanding of myself and the world while meeting and learning from amazing people.

Outside of academic interests, I love to write and would love to publish a book of my writing. Publication has been a dream since for as long as I can remember. I want to keep learning, formally or informally, and always be kind. I want to see the world outside of my limited perspective and experiences. I want to be more adventurous and do things that scare me, despite my anxiety.

I want to become more connected to my deafness and be more involved in the deaf community. My deaf community exposure and connections has been limited as I was raised in a hearing family, attended neighborhood schools and socialized with hearing kids and teens. I want to be quick and curious, playful and strong, and respected and loved. In turn, I will respect and love others. Ultimately I want to always be challenging myself and never be stagnant.

How would you convince someone with a hearing loss to see an audiologist and follow hearing aid recommendations?

I would tell this person that getting support for your hearing loss will change your life. Regardless of how you currently feel about your disability, getting help for your hearing loss will transform the way you interact with others and how you view yourself. Think of all the things that you currently struggle with, for example, being able to communicate in noisy situations, watch tv shows on lower volumes, enjoy music, etc. While a hearing aid or visit to an audiologist won't automatically fix those problems, an audiologist can provide you with tools (hearing aid, amplifier, etc.) and teach you how wearing a hearing aid can change the way you communicate and interact with others.



The second thing I would say to this person is that a visit to an audiologist isn't shameful, and neither is having a disability. Hearing loss or deafness is one of the most common disabilities in the world. I describe my deafness in this way, "My disability isn't all of me, but it's an important part of me." You can find a strong identity and community in the deaf/hoh community and they will support you. I would also tell this person that though it may be a difficult transition, you need to follow the audiologist's instructions because they will be ultimately beneficial to your hearing. I would be honest: getting new ear mold always hurts until it has softened a bit; volume setting changes are startling and uncomfortable for about a week; the initial use and any future program changes of your hearing aid or cochlear implant make it sound like everyone on earth is an alien until your brain adjusts to the change.

However, this is the most important part, I wouldn't trade any of the annoying parts of audiology and my hearing equipment, for the benefits and the scientific miracle that allows me to hear. Above all, I am so ultimately grateful for audiology and how it has impacted my experiences and my life, many of which would have been nearly impossible hundreds of years ago. Lastly, I hope your journey into wearing hearing aids is just as rewarding and meaningful as mine.

Fun at the Fair!

The Great Minnesota Get Together is just around the corner and MAA is getting ready to screen hearing! The State Fair runs August 24 – September 4, 2017 and MAA will be there all 12 days. The MAA booth in the HealthFair 11 building is staffed by volunteer audiologists and audiology students each year who perform video otoscopy, hearing screening and counseling to fair-goers who come by the booth.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed up but **we need more volunteers** to help fill our time slots! The State Fair attracts thousands of potential patients who could benefit from your help! Volunteers will receive free fair admission for each day they sign up. This is an excellent audiology awareness event but also a fun networking opportunity. Each time slot has two openings so you could sign

up with a colleague and enjoy the day together outside of the office! You can view available time slots and [sign up online](#).

We will be having giftcard drawings in August and September for those who

sign up to volunteer. You will have a better chance to win the sooner you sign up! If you have any questions about volunteering or need help getting signed up, you can contact [Mary Richter](#).



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Sources: *Groth 2016, **Jespersen et al. (2016)

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