PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

in

Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

Sixth Edition

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Foreword

As a clinician and educator, I am honored to write this Foreword to the sixth edition of *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology*. Previous editions provided a foundation for teaching graduate courses and afforded helpful guidance in clinical practice.

The editors have been immersed for many years in undergraduate and graduate education as well as in the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology. Their varied experiences are illustrated in their selection of topics and authors. While the focus of this book is on themes that are most critical for emerging clinicians, it is also designed to serve as a resource for more experienced practitioners who might want to seek another career path, understand the fundamentals of health care policy, refine their skills as clinical supervisors, or expand the scope of their clinical specialty internationally. While there are many online resources for topics covered in this text, Melanie Hudson and Mark DeRuiter have coalesced the context that frames our professions in one comprehensive text.

In graduate school, students are focused on acquiring knowledge about the science underlying communication and swallowing disorders, the evidence that supports clinical practice, and the clinical methods that help students, clients, and patients (and their families and caregivers) achieve successful participation in their respective worlds. Yet other critical content is necessary for navigating clinical practice. Chapters on competency-based education and practice, leadership, and stress and conflict in the workplace offer valuable guidance for students as they prepare to shift to the next phase of their evolving careers. Ultimately, this is a resource for crafting a pathway to a vocation.

The final chapter, *Advocacy*, by Dr. Tommie Robinson, serves as a coda to the abundance of resources contained in this text. He offers the "why" for what we do in the professions. According to Dr. Robinson, we all have the opportunity to promote our excellence, help those we serve to speak for themselves, and create access for others who need our services. The authors in this text craft the framework for this endeavor.

Barbara H. Jacobson, PhD, CCC-SLP

Barbara H. Jacobson, PhD, CCC-SLP, is retired faculty from the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences at the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center in the Vanderbilt University Medical Center. In addition to clinical practice in adult acute care and in voice disorders, she has taught courses in professional issues, dysphagia, voice disorders, and medical speech-language pathology. She is a former ASHA vice president for standards and ethics in speech-language pathology and is an ASHA fellow.

Preface

Welcome to the sixth edition of *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology*! Since the publication of the first edition more than 25 years ago, the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology have continued to evolve. Our scopes of practice are regularly updated to reflect the dynamic growth and increasing complexity of our roles and responsibilities within our varied work settings. Our caseloads are more diverse than ever, and we must keep abreast of evidence-supported knowledge and skills that define best practices in our professions. Audiologists and speech-language pathologists continue to remain challenged and motivated to meet the demands of their professional environment.

This sixth edition of *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* is intended to be a primary text for students and a resource for faculty and practicing clinicians seeking a comprehensive introduction to contemporary issues that affect our professions and our service delivery across settings. We aim to provide our readers with a better understanding that both day-to-day clinical work and personal professional growth and development are influenced by political, social, educational, health care, and economic concerns. Your professional identity is enhanced when you understand the range of factors that define what you do, with whom, for how long, and at what cost. With this big-picture view of your profession, you will be more prepared to make informed decisions as you provide services, engage in advocacy efforts, and plan your career as an audiologist or speech-language pathologist.

How to Use This Text

This text is widely used in CSD programs, typically in professional-issues courses or capstone seminars, but also as a general reference tool for faculty and practitioners. It should continue to serve as an excellent desk reference even after you complete your graduate education. Important topics such as the job search (and keeping your job!), ethical practice, accountability and documentation, leadership, cultural competence, economic issues, technology, research, and setting-specific issues will continue to be relevant as you grow professionally.

New to the Sixth Edition

The success of the first five editions of this text is attributed to the insightful and cutting-edge contributions made by each of the chapter authors, recognized experts in their respective topic areas. This sixth edition continues that tradition by including both previous and new contributors who have made timely updates and revisions to reflect new issues and trends in audiology and speech-language pathology within their topic areas. Our new contributors include (in order of how they appear in the text) Shari Robertson, Christine T. Matthews, Sandra Gillam, Erin Lundblom, Nicole Corbin, Rachel Ritter, and Jennifer Taylor. You will note in particular that the updates include issues related to the 2020 pandemic, changes in technology, how the changing political landscape has affected the

professions, ASHA certification requirements and the assistants certification program, and the 2023 ASHA Code of Ethics.

We have also updated the list of acronyms to include those that are referred to throughout this edition. This list is provided at the front of the book to use as a quick reference.

Professional issues always provide the basis for lively discussions among students and practitioners alike. We have included Critical Thinking on the companion website to encourage discussion and reflection on the topics covered in each chapter.

Online Ancillary Materials

The sixth edition of *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* comes with ancillary materials on a PluralPlus companion website. Instructors can access PowerPoint slides for each chapter, and students can download Critical Thinking questions. Instructors should send an email to instructormaterials@pluralpublishing.com to request access to the slides. Students, please see the inside front cover of the printed book for the website address and access code. Students using the ebook via the Plural eReader will find the questions embedded in the ebook.

A Final Thought

We hope that by reading this text, participating in class discussions, and engaging in critical reflection, you will be motivated and inspired to explore more learning opportunities, become involved in your professional associations, and advocate for your professions and those you serve.

About the Editors

Melanie W. Hudson received her BS from James Madison University and her MA from George Washington University, with postgraduate studies at George Washington University and the University of Virginia. She is an ASHA Fellow and a Distinguished Fellow of National Academies of Practice (NAP). She served on ASHA's Board of Directors as chair of the Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Council (2016–2018), the Board of Ethics, and the Board of Special Interest Group Coordinators. She currently serves as a trustee on the board of the ASHFoundation. Melanie's publications include *Professional Issues in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* (4th ed.) (Lubinski & Hudson; Delmar, Cengage Learning, 2013; Plural Publishing, 2018), and chapter author for *The Clinical Education and Supervisory Process in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology* (McCrea & Brasseur, Slack, Inc., 2019). She served as president of the Georgia Speech-Language and Hearing Association and on the Georgia Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology. She worked as an SLP in Arlington (VA) Public Schools, in private practice, and as adjunct faculty. Recently retired from full-time work, she was the national director at EBS Healthcare from 2003–2022 and continues to be an invited speaker at universities and professional conferences.

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Mark DeRuiter is professor and vice chair for academic affairs in the department of Communication Science and Disorders at the University of Pittsburgh. He received his BA and MA degrees from Michigan State University, his PhD from the University of Minnesota, and his MBA from Augsburg University. He teaches coursework in aural rehabilitation, practice management, and professional issues, He has research interests in speech perception as well as clinical practice within the professions. He is certified by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) as both an audiologist and a speech-language pathologist, and he is a fellow of ASHA and the American Academy of Audiology (AAA). Mark has a history of service on ASHA's Council for Clinical Certification and Special Interest Group 11 (Administration and Supervision), as well as extensive service with the Council of Academic Programs in Communication Sciences and Disorders.

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SECTION I

Overview of the Professions

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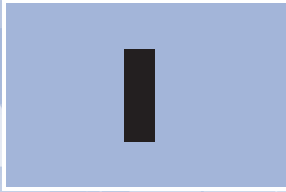
Professions for the 21st Century

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Melanie W. Hudson and Mark DeRuiter

Introduction

You have chosen a dynamic profession, with substantial growth expected to continue in the coming years. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for services provided by audiologists is expected to increase by 10% from 2021 to 2031, while the need for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) is expected to increase by 21% during the same period (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). Even as we are writing this introductory chapter, changes are occurring and more professionals are being trained, which will significantly impact the professions of audiology and speech-language pathology. As the demand for our services continues to grow, what are some of the major trends and issues impacting our professions?

Many factors have come into play in recent years that are transforming how we plan and carry out our work. Rapidly advancing technology, legislation in health care and education, demographic shifts that include an aging population and an increase in diversity, global economic changes, the COVID-19 pandemic, and new research are influencing how we deliver services. Even the effects of climate change are playing a role in how audiologists and SLPs make career decisions. Faced with these and other changes, how do we ensure that our clinical skills are state of the art and incorporate the latest technological advances? How do we provide services that are of the highest quality, yet cost effective? What are the ripple effects of global economic changes and demographic shifts on our professional practice? What have we learned from a global pandemic? And finally, what role does evidence play in our clinical decision making?

This chapter provides an overview of some of the most important trends and issues that are likely to affect your professional practice in the coming years: technology, trends in health care and education, economic influences, demographic shifts and globalization, and evidence-based practice. Each of these areas is addressed more fully in chapters specific to the topic and within the appropriate context throughout the rest of the book. Additionally, chapter authors will include information relative to the global pandemic where appropriate. The information in this chapter will set the stage for advanced critical thinking and constructive dialogue. In this rapidly evolving professional climate, it is not enough to be performing only competently as a clinician. Today's audiologists and SLPs also need to engage in analytical thinking and critical reflection when making decisions that affect the lives of others.

As you read this chapter, consider the scopes of practice in audiology and speech-language pathology (ASHA, 2016, 2018). Remember that each of these practices is well defined and dynamic. Take time to reflect on how the trends and issues presented in this chapter influence your own decisions and plans for the future as we complete the first quarter of the 21st century.

Trends in Technology and the Digital Revolution

The future is an inevitable reality . . . which we either adapt to or resist, but that we have the power to "envisage and take action to build alternative and desirable futures." (Facer & Sandford, 2010)

We are living in what is known as the digital revolution, also known as the third industrial revolution, the change from mechanical and electronic technology to digital technology. Analogous to the agricultural revolution and industrial revolution, the digital revolution marked the beginning of the Information Age (Digital Revolution, 2019). Those born during the 21st century would not be able to imagine a world without computers, the internet, and personal electronic devices such as smartphones that enable instant communication with anyone, anywhere, anytime. By 2022, the internet penetration rate was 69% worldwide (Internet World Stats, 2023), and mobile internet use and access is expected to eclipse desktop use in the next few years (Bouchrika, 2022).

These digital advances have made globalization possible, allowing businesses to operate more efficiently with increased opportunities to find and share information. We hold virtual meetings instead of traveling to conduct face-to-face business, and more of us work from home as telecommuters, especially after the COVID-19 global pandemic. These advances have also had a significant impact on our individual lifestyles and daily routines. Instead of going to the shopping mall or even the grocery store, we buy our goods from online retail merchants and order services from a company's website. As a student reading this text, you may even have taken some, if not all, of your courses through an online university program. Advanced classroom technologies have enhanced learning opportunities for all students. Where digital technology saves us time and helps us stay connected, many people find it increasingly difficult to keep their personal and professional lives separate. This can lead to digital overload, causing stress and job burnout.

The advancing technological contributions to science are continually growing, notably in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI) and robot design. The evolution of three-dimensional (3D) printing and ongoing developments in computer design, such as Digital Twin (Venkatesh et al., 2022), where providers and manufacturers can test the impact of potential change on the performance of a health care procedure by experimenting on a virtual version of the system (i.e., a person or device), continue to change the landscape of the industrial sector.

AI continues to play a major role in the health care industry due to the availability of big data and the drive to lower health care costs. Research firm Grand View Research predicts that AI in health care will have a compound growth rate of 37.5% between 2023 and 2030, starting at $15.4 billion in 2022 (Grand View Research, n.d.). Implications for practicing SLPs and audiologists include chat-based digital services in which users have a conversation with a chatbot, software designed to understand and respond to natural language inputs. Through the use of coaching conversations, clinicians can apply their knowledge and skills with AI resources to engage patients in meaningful conversations about their health.

The medical industry has also been impacted by the digital revolution. Genomic medicine, the use of genetic information for personalized treatment plans, will have long-lasting implications in the provision of health care. The use of simulated patients and virtual reality and augmented reality (VR/AR) formats, the delivery of health care services through telepractice, and securing sensitive information will certainly play important roles in the training of future health care providers.

New devices for hearing amplification and augmentative communication will be of special interest to SLPs and audiologists. Currently, audiologists are expressing concern regarding the future of the discipline as more hearing technologies are available to the public through smartphone retail outlets and as over-the-counter devices. Although our patients may have increased access to better communication, there is a general concern that some patients may be at risk without the advice of a trained professional, making professional collaboration more critical (Berenbrock et al., 2022). The same is true for augmentative and alternative communication options that are readily available to patients and families on smartphones and tablets. What expertise is needed to guide these families? How can we be assured these technologies are being optimally used? What responsibility do we have as a profession to shape these various technologies and their availability? These are challenging times, with many opportunities!

The positive and negative aspects of the impact of the digital revolution on human lives will continue to be discussed, explored, and analyzed as we move into the future. As audiologists and SLPs facing such challenges, we need to be well prepared to engage in critical

thinking that supports our decision-making ability in a world of rapid technological advancement. Technology is discussed in more depth in Chapter 23.

21st-Century Trends and Issues

Trends in Health Care

Health care in the United States is undergoing rapid transformation due to several reasons—political, demographic, and technological being among the key drivers. Health care legislation and regulation have created a shift in reimbursement policy, moving away from provider-centered payment models toward patient-centered models, with Medicare, Medicaid, and private health insurance being most relevant to practicing SLPs and audiologists. In addition, provider shortages; increasing costs paired with a lack of affordability, even for those with good insurance; and an aging population are changing the face of health care as we know it.

The costs associated with health care continue to increase while both public and private insurance reimbursement rates for providers fall below the actual cost of providing services. Many physicians and payers may view audiology and speech-language pathology as low-priority services as they attempt to conserve limited financial resources. As a result, referrals and authorizations for evaluations and treatment are decreasing and jobs in physicians' offices and other health care facilities may be eliminated or reduced to an as-needed basis. See Chapter 15 for further discussion of access to services.

Another factor influencing reimbursement for health care services is that the age-old concept that "more care means better care" is no longer an accepted tenet in the evolving health care industry. The trend is moving in the direction of value-based reimbursement where quality of service is favored versus fees for services, which only reward volume. Patient satisfaction surveys have more and more influence on insurance reimbursement, and this has important implications for practitioners.

The number of health professionals working in home health care will continue to grow as the demand for treatment outside the traditional doctor's office is on the rise. A recent survey conducted by the PricewaterhouseCoopers Health Research Institute showed that consumers increasingly sought care outside of their doctor's office during the pandemic. Additionally, patients desired to engage with more digital tools to support their health during the pandemic, and the overall utilization of health care services increased after the pandemic (PricewaterhouseCoopers, n.d.).

Health information technologies (HITs) and electronic health records (EHRs) are other changes in health care that continue to shape what we do as audiologists and SLPs. Currently, there is a proliferation of different EHR and HIT options. Even though these systems are designed to increase reliability of access to records and clinician productivity, they can pose barriers as well. One challenge is the way we serve our patients. Many of us have experienced a health care provider who has spent more time looking at a computer screen than interacting with the patient. Additionally, records are not easily transferred across different EHR platforms, posing roadblocks to patients as they seek care, particularly from specialty providers.

One of our most important tasks as SLPs and audiologists is to ensure our services are mandated and maintained at reasonable rates. As the population ages, we also need to ensure our practices enable and prolong independent living, support access to needed services, support our patients' participation in decision making regarding their lives and care, and help them maintain a positive quality of life for as long as possible. We need to be not only skilled and knowledgeable clinicians but also ready to employ our skills as advocates on behalf of our patients. Chapters 11 and 14 provide further discussion of services in health care.

Trends in Education

The educational landscape continues to transform, with political influences, demographic shifts, and nearly immediate requirements for distance education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as major drivers. Federal, state, and local funding for schools influences the quantity and quality of services provided by school-based SLPs and audiologists. Government-mandated accountability with an emphasis on standardized testing to measure student achievement has provided data for important decision making, including systems used for teacher evaluations.

The paperwork burden and the demands that come with ever-increasing caseloads and responsibilities assigned to school-based service providers continue to be hot-button issues and are the focus of advocacy efforts by professional organizations such as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, n.d.-a). The use of multitiered systems of supports such as Response to Intervention (RTI), the importance of using a variety of service delivery models including distance education, incorporating evidence-based practice (EBP), and engaging in interprofessional collaboration in the diagnosis and treatment of school-aged children have been noteworthy initiatives in the evolution of school-based services.

Many school districts have increased the hiring and use of paraprofessionals to ease the caseload burden and to support the work of school-based service providers.

SLPs and audiologists will need to develop their knowledge and skills in supervision, particularly in the area of ethical accountability as they work with support personnel. You will find further discussion of support personnel in Chapter 9.

As in health care, technology continues to play a major role in education for SLPs and audiologists working in schools. Software programs designed specifically for special education documentation and recordkeeping have become the norm. Technology tools that support oral, audio, and written skills allow students of all ages to express themselves beyond the capacity of their writing abilities. Much work with critical thinking can also be done in this manner when tools such as Seesaw blogs (https://web.seesaw.me/blogs) are used to support learning. Finally, with the global pandemic, more children were seen with internet-based technologies for both assessment and treatment sessions. These children learned to deal with technology very quickly as they engaged with services from SLPs and audiologists.

Issues related to school safety and information and training on trauma-informed practices will continue to increase as education professionals seek resources for responding to traumatic events that affect children of all ages. Postpandemic mental health concerns in children are on the rise and teachers and clinicians will be required to adapt classroom management strategies, instructional supports, and school climate to support children who have experienced trauma to help them achieve success. Chapter 18 explores these issues more fully.

Audiologists and SLPs in the schools continue to play a major role in helping educators adopt more inclusive practices in education. Such practices are designed to enable special education students at all grade levels and with a wide range of needs to be involved in and make progress in the least restrictive environment (LRE). To that end, service delivery models that place an emphasis on working with students in their natural environment, in addition to interprofessional collaboration, are appropriately taking the place of the more traditional medical (pull-out) model.

As educational trends continue to evolve, SLPs and audiologists will need evidence-based studies that demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative differences we make in students' lives. Practices that help students improve their ability to participate productively in education and employment will continue to be the focus of school-based service providers in the coming years. See Chapter 12 for further discussion of policy and service delivery in education.

Economic Trends

The United States is a highly developed nation, with the world's biggest economy in gross domestic product (GDP), representing around one-fourth of the global GDP. At the time of this writing, economic indicators show that U.S. GDP will grow 2.8% in 2022, 2.2% in 2023, and 2% in 2024. Challenges in predicting growth relate to both current inflationary and interest rate issues (Amadeo, 2022).

The United States experienced a gradual economic recovery at the time the fifth edtion of this book was published. However, the COVID-19 pandemic created significant economic challenges. In the second quarter of 2020, unemployment moved to a high of 13%. The jobless rate has steadily declined to 3.5% in 2023 (Edwards et al., 2022). Although there may be a perception that many people retired early due to the pandemic, the statistics have not necessarily supported this assertion (Thompson, 2022).

Inflation has been a major concern following the COVID-19 pandemic. The inflation rate was 7.1% between November 2021 and November 2022. The annual inflation rate in December 2022 was 6.5% (U.S. Inflation Calculator, 2023). With rising inflation comes concerns about the erosion of real income, which may impact any services viewed as elective from SLPs and audiologists. Additionally, concerns regarding a subsequent recession typically follow high inflation, which has caused many to view the economic landscape very carefully.

Employment prospects for SLPs and audiologists in all settings are excellent. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, speech-language pathology and audiology are both expected to grow significantly over the next seven years. In 2021, the median pay for SLPs was $79,060 per year, or $38.01 per hour. For audiologists, it was $78,950 per year, or $37.96 per hour (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.). Chapters 7 and 8 provide more detail on issues related to employment for audiologists and SLPs.

Demographic Trends and Globalization

The world's population is more than 8 billion, with the largest populations in China and India (Worldometer, n.d.). The United States ranks third and its population continues to grow, in large part due to immigration. With an increase of more than 10 million people between 2016 and 2020, the 2020 estimated population of the United States is 331,002,651 million. According to a 2020 report, the pace at which the worldwide population is aging is faster than ever. It is anticipated that the proportion of people over 60 years old will nearly double between 2015 and 2050 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022).

Population aging, while due primarily to lower fertility rates, has created many new challenges, particularly in the health care arena. How many years can older people expect to live in good health? What are the chronic diseases they may have to deal with? How long can they live

independently? How many of them are still working? Will they have sufficient economic resources to last their lifetimes? Can they afford health care costs? The World Health Organization (WHO) is dedicated to reducing health inequities for this aging population with a focus on person-centered care (WHO, 2022).

Audiologists and SLPs working with this growing population will need to be prepared to face these challenges as they apply to practice settings. As with all populations, providing the highest quality services that support hearing, communication, and swallowing will need to be the focus of continuing education as trends in best practices continue to evolve with this aging group. Finally, new graduates will need to be mindful of these same challenges as they contemplate their own retirement years and as they plan their career paths.

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the U.S. population, with a slower rate of growth between 2020 and 2021. However, the rate of growth has recovered in 2022. Migration patterns into the U.S. had also slowed during the pandemic but are now near normal prepandemic levels (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). According to the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, English is the most commonly spoken language (78.5%), while 13.2% of the population speak Spanish and 1.1% speak Chinese (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.).

As our population becomes increasingly diverse in age, spoken languages, race, ethnicity, religion, education, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic factors, it is imperative that we demonstrate cultural competence in meeting the needs of those we serve. See Chapter 21 for further discussion.

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)

The foundations of best practices in audiology and speech-language pathology are rooted in evidence. EBP is the integration of (a) clinical expertise/expert opinion, (b) external scientific evidence, and (c) client/patient/caregiver perspectives (ASHA, n.d.-b). What does this mean to the new clinician who wants to ensure the highest quality of services, yet lives in a world where "facts" are questioned and empirical data is politicized?

The policymakers in both the insurance industry and government have implemented EBP requirements for reimbursement, making research in communication sciences and disorders (CSD) all the more important. Audiologists and SLPs can access sources for EBP guidance including bibliographies, evidence maps, and summaries of treatment efficacy in a wide range of clinical areas from ASHA (https://www.asha.org), the American Academy of Audiology (https://www.audiology.org), and the Academy of Neurologic Communication Disorders and Sciences (ANCDS; ancds.org), among others. ASHA

and other organizations continue to build resources for professionals as the demand evolves for accountability and quality. See Chapter 6 for more discussion of EBP.

Summary

The professions of speech-language pathology and audiology are dynamic and diverse, much like the patients we work with. This chapter discussed some of the most dynamic changes, trends, and issues that are likely to affect your practices. Included in this discussion was information on technology and the digital revolution, trends in health care and education, economic influences, demographic shifts and globalization warranting cultural sensitivity and competency, and evidence-based practice needs. Knowledge of these topics is essential for applying analytical and critical reflection when making decisions that affect the lives of those we serve. It is the intention of this chapter and book, much like the overall goal of SLPs and audiologists, to optimally communicate the present and projected practices that will shape our expertise and professional necessity long into the future.

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