

Dental Speak

"I'm at a loss for words." is a commonly heard phrase.

Well, no matter, the solution is easily found. Now one can order the April 1989 twenty volume set of the *Oxford English Dictionary* from Barnes and Noble Bookseller for \$950.00 (at a 68% discount). What a deal! It truly is a literary masterpiece, and remember it's leather bound and dedicated by the Queen herself.

This newer set has it all over the original twelve volume set completed in 1927. The original volumes, first called the *New English Dictionary* took seventy years to complete. It defined 414,825 words. Its 227,779,589 letters and numbers were each hand type set, and these millions don't even count its punctuation marks and spaces. If you can't relate with that, realize the printed paper for the original set would stretch 178 miles. There is no question that it definitely made a statement about the complexity of the English language.

A more economical idea if you have your heart set on extraordinary "wordsmithing" for you and your family is to order up the August 1993 two volume set for \$108.00. Again, it can be ordered from Barnes and Noble, also at a discounted price. Finally, if you don't have desk space for either volume, you can always obtain the *Oxford English Dictionary's* CD version at \$236.00 from the same bookseller. Bargains all; and the plot is breathtaking!

Which leads us to the *Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms*, a document of greater importance to prosthodontists who require an equally recognizable standard of acceptable nomenclature.

The Academy of Denture Prosthetics (now the Academy of Prosthodontics) saw the need for such a standard back in the 1920's. Accepting any existing proposed terms and arriving at exact interpretations and definitions

was a difficulty not easily overcome. The Academy attempted to solve this problem by holding two "workshop" meetings. These groups studied nearly 1,000 words or terms. An Academy Nomenclature Committee restudied the terms, and finally sixteen outstanding prosthodontists of the day lent their serious study to the approval of terms.

The Academy Fellows saw this particular task as being so important, that along with the appointed Nomenclature Committee, the entire membership appointed itself as lexicographers. In this task they saw their role as:

*"Recording the current usage of words, leading as well as following. Where clearness demands it, the lexicographer should place such restrictions as are necessary to avoid ambiguity. That is, he must narrow down some definitions so they will not carry too much generality. Where voids exist, he should fill them in. Where more than one term is used to express the same idea or concept, he should indicate the preference on the basis of logic and other considerations." **

That particular charge is notable, but it just doesn't sound like it came from a group of dentists interested in prosthodontics. More likely, it was lifted from some other well crafted lexicographic document of the day.

The Academy's first efforts included other guidelines. If terms were considered objectionable for any reason such terms were marked —(Obj.). This practice was dropped in later editions. Where more than one term carried the same sense of meaning, the preferred term was listed first. The preference was decided by majority opinion of the Nomenclature Committee. The Academy strived to have a collection of words and terms with special meanings that would be used in the

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* From the Preface to the first edition of the *Glossary of Prosthodontic terms*

art and science of prosthodontics. They correctly surmised that the use of a uniform terminology would permit authors to understandably discuss their concepts and techniques, the key word being "understandably." They further wanted to insure that the words, with definitions, would be understood by those who would read articles relating to prosthodontics, regardless of the geographic location or the specialty of the reader.

The *Glossary's* First Edition was finally published in *The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry*, 1956, pages 1-34. For reference other editions can be found in the JPD as follows:

- Second: 1963, page 993 [one page addendum to the First Edition]
- Third: 1968, pages 443-480
- Fourth: 1977, pages 66-1090
- Fifth: 1987, pages 713-762
- Sixth: 1994, pages 41-111
- Seventh: 1999, pages 39-110

Each edition reviewed terms and definitions and eliminated terms declared obsolete and antiquated. The Fourth Edition eliminated the original cross-indexing and cross referencing features. The Fourth also added Speech and Hearing Terms related to prosthodontics.

The latest edition, the Seventh, added many new words and phrases as well as historical information. This edition notes that although some terms reach obsolescence, those terms should be retained in order to authenticate and explain the early literature used by today's readers. This edition also carries clear and concise Explanatory Notes and its 2,766 terms and definitions are well validated with a Standard Reference section.

Although always published and copyrighted by The C. V. Mosby Company, publisher of the JPD, the control of its distribution and sales was managed for a time by the Education and Research Foundation of Prosthodontics, which no longer is in existence. Copies can now be obtained by contacting Mosby directly at 1-800-325-4177, extension 4313.

All editions of the *Glossary* have been worked, edited, compiled and produced in cooperative effort of several organizations and their nomenclature committees. In addition to the Academy of Denture Prosthetics, The American Prosthodontic Society, The American Equilibration Society, The American Academy of

Maxillofacial Prosthetics and The American Academy of Implant Dentistry were all heavily involved in its early editions. Nineteen organizations have been credited with participation in the Seventh Edition.

Many prominent leaders in prosthodontics, too numerous to be individually recognized, have well guided this "work in progress." These individuals and their committees cannot begin to realize the enormous contribution they have made to the specialty and discipline of prosthodontics and to dentistry as a whole. *The Glossary of Prosthodontic terms* as it has evolved is a remarkable document! Those of us who use it are in the debt of those who envisioned it and to those who have worked so diligently on it during three quarters of a century!

Ben Franklin was asked as he flew his kite, "What good is it?" His response, applicable to the *Glossary*, was "What good is a new born baby?" So, what good is it?

- It stands as an antagonist to error in every prosthodontic writing, report of research, and American Board of Prosthodontics examination preparation.
- It serves as an example of correctness in communication with every contact to the other specialties in dentistry, the general dentist referral base, and the medical community as a whole.
- It influences and eases communication with patients, broadening correctly their understanding of dental treatment.
- It is a statement of what the specialty of prosthodontics is, and what it isn't. It stands as a significant, important and recognizable example of the "total" of the specialty; a visible sign for all to read and for all to see; and for all to follow.

Finally, Dr. Clifford W. VanBlarcom, the Chairman of the Nomenclature Committee of the Academy of Prosthodontics and his committee are credited with the Seventh Edition. Congratulations for a job well done! He now states, "Our hope is to join hands with other dental specialty organizations in publication of a much broader, comprehensive glossary."* We wish them well with our eternal thanks!

IS THERE AN ETHICAL PARADIGM IN PROSTHETIC DENTISTRY?

(see RECOGNIZING THE ETHICAL PARADIGM IN TREATMENT PLANNING, October 2001, ProsStars Newsletter)

If ethical considerations are not discussed, written about, read, or commented upon is there “any” ethical paradigm? Worded differently: Should ethical considerations be discussed, written about, read, and commented upon as we go about our every day tasks in prosthodontics?

Do advanced education programs in prosthodontics teach ethics?

- Specifically how do they do it?
- Have schools of dentistry incorporated a curriculum for faculty? And does such a curriculum include ethical thinking and the application of ethical principles?
- Are dental schools first teaching the teacher?

Do advanced education programs in prosthodontics incorporate ethical considerations into every course, with discussion on the “issues” as well as the “techniques”?

- At the completion of training is a natural overlay* of ethical consideration related to every treatment and every interaction with patients, staff, referring dentists, other specialists and medical associates?

***natural overlay meaning:** a subconscious control built in from practical experience, repetitious example, continual faculty guidance, and a critically reviewed decision process.

Does a student selection process that results in a greatly diversified student body; diversified by race, national origin, sex, and/or age:

- intensify the need to teach a standard of ethics common to all?
- or lessen the need to establish a standard of ethics because each individual carries their own standard that will be carried back to and used in their place of origin?

Are the unique ethical guidelines brought to a program by students with differing origins identified and then discussed—applied or eliminated—adapted to or ignored?

In advanced education programs in prosthodontics what are the rewards for emphasizing ethics in:

- curriculum development?
- lecture instruction?
- students who have applied good and correct ethical decision in treatment?

What are the rewards to faculty who:

- institute courses in ethics, and who have injected ethical considerations in every lecture and course?
- demand ethical conduct?
- recognize that the development of an educated mind is not purely an exercise in teaching dental technique, but is rather a recognition of philosophical and societal values, which should be taught as well?
- attempt to provide working solutions to ethical and professional dilemmas, rather than working through mixed signals in solution to ethical problems.

Has the American Board of Prosthodontics and the process of program certification by the American Dental Association ensured that ethical considerations are integrated into every step of prosthodontics' advanced education programs?

- What is their mechanism of discovery?