

# The Angle Orthodontist

*A magazine established by the co-workers  
of Edward H. Angle, in his memory. . . .*



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## Wanted: A Good Undergraduate Orthodontic Text Book

Get your shot gun ready for this is where your editor sticks his head through the hole in the canvas. After spending eight frustrated years in teaching in the department of orthodontics, he's willing to nominate for top priority the need of a new text book for the undergraduate student of Orthodontics.

But no more new editions *please*. We've repainted the old body and streamlined it here and there. We've put on a front bumper of heredity and a rear bumper of anthropology. We've got a new high speed automatic transmission called extraction and four wheel hydraulic brakes of infallibility of pattern. We've successfully concealed the old functional differential with window dressing so thick you have to take the whole bus apart before you can find it's still working.

And to give the new look we've added gadgets galore. The revamped supersonic labiolingual radio, the edgewise window opener a la this one, and the edgewise window closer a la that one, the twin-wire horn, and the automatic universal hand signaler that tells which way you're going to turn before you yourself have decided. We've got door handles from Norway and tire locks from Germany, not to mention the retread-nonskid positioners guaranteed to stop on a half dime.

The root of our dilemma lies in failure to realize that undergraduate orthodontic teaching has changed fundamentally in the last twenty-five years. With few exceptions we are no longer training students for the practice of orthodontics in the undergraduate curriculum. Most of our

orthodontic text books date back to the days before this transition and have attempted to adjust to it by additions which are designed to make them serve both the undergraduate and graduate student. As a result they serve neither.

There was a day when many phases of fundamental science, upon which successful orthodontic treatment rests, were not included in the basic science courses of undergraduate students and it was necessary to include them in texts in the special field. But these newer concepts and more recent additions to our knowledge in gross and micro-scopic anatomy, comparative anatomy, physiology, and anthropology which encompasses the field of facial growth and development, have been discovered by other departments of dental science. They have been incorporated in the re-organization of basic science teaching and we have witnessed the birth of correlation in course content.

Likewise the chapters dealing with details of this and that appliance therapy have no place in the teaching program for the undergraduate student where neither clinic nor laboratory hours give opportunity for their application. In graduate instruction the demand is for far more meticulous instruction in these technical phases of the science. The occasional sections of our existing texts that deal with fundamentals of etiology, classification, treatment principles and technic, scarcely justify the cost of a volume much of which cannot be utilized.

The undergraduate course cannot cover the waterfront. With gross anatomy providing the knowledge of facial structure; histology furnishing the essentials of minute tissue structure and in many courses the tissue changes incident to tooth movement; growth and development — the structural changes in face and dentition; and physiology — an understanding of function: the business of the orthodontic text is to review and apply this knowledge, not to supply it. When treatment of major orthodontic problems is removed from the clinical phases of the student's experience, detailed exposition of several types of appliance is not only unnecessary, but unwise. When we shear our texts of this material we have little left.

There is no alternative for the undergraduate teacher but to supply a syllabus of multigraphed material for his classes. While this has distinct advantages it omits the valuable pedagogic aid of illustration and obstructs a uniform understanding among graduates of the several dental schools. We need to minimize distinctions which are without essential differences in basic concept.

Orthodontics has reached a degree of maturity that demands a consolidation of its tenants and precepts in a sensible and organized fashion for presentation to undergraduate students. There is good reason to concentrate upon the fundamentals upon which there is agreement rather than the technical details that involve controversy. In this way the student may be left with a more unified impression of the part which this important segment of dental knowledge fills in the fabric of his understanding of dental science, and the general practice of dentistry.

There is a need for a new and better orthodontic textbook.\*

H. J. N.

Lest criticism be raised that no constructive comment has been offered, it is suggested that the American Association of Orthodontists temporarily suspend and accumulate the small awards for essays which contribute to our growing confusion with respect to details of our problem and provide a substantial prize for the answer of our sixty-four dollar question, a good undergraduate textbook of Orthodontics.