

The role of part-time educators in defining knowledge and skill levels in orthodontic residency programs

Vance J. Dykhouse, DDS, MS, John E. Grubb, DDS, MSD, and Peter M. Greco, DMD

Blue Springs, Mo, Chula Vista, Calif, and Philadelphia, Pa

The American Board of Orthodontics (ABO) has historically requested the chairs and the directors of accredited orthodontic programs to submit questions for the Phase II written examination. For the last decade, most programs have required their senior residents to complete the ABO Phase II examination for residency outcome assessment and to initiate the orthodontist's pathway to board certification. Although a few educators have responded to the ABO's request for questions, the response in general has been minimal. To facilitate the residency program outcome assessment and in response to the recommendations of the participants attending the AAO/COE Educators Conference in May 2004, the ABO has established a web site through which multiple-choice questions can be readily submitted.

In a July 1999 educational update, Vaden and Riolo¹ defined the valuable role of part-time instructors in accredited orthodontic programs. ABO statistics indicate that approximately 725 such part-time educators work in the United States and Canada. These educators provide a significant component of the clinical instruction in most programs. They augment the work of full-time faculty and contribute greatly to their departments' continuity, heritage, and educational mission.

These part-time faculty members could also be a great source of clinical questions for the ABO. Clinical orthodontics comprises a significant portion of the

ABO Phase II examination. Its clinical topics—such as biomechanics, orthopedics, and orthodontic materials and techniques—appear to be a natural fit for question submissions from the part-time educator. Diagnosis and treatment planning would also be a logical topic for part-time educators to address because they often contribute to clinical seminars, supervision, and examinations in the typical orthodontic program. Multidisciplinary questions on the Phase II examination, such as orthodontics/oral surgery, orthodontics/periodontics, orthodontics/endodontics, and orthodontics/restorative dentistry require clinical input in comprehensive training. The experienced part-time educator remains a superb resource for these subjects because of the problem-solving and interactive nature of everyday clinical practice.

Recently, the ABO wrote to 975 orthodontic educators and asked them to submit 10 questions via the new web site. Even 5 questions per educator would give the board over 4875 new, clinically oriented items to add to the Phase II question bank.

The submission of new questions by each member of every department's faculty, whether full or part-time, would greatly augment the board's mission of continuous improvement of the Phase II examination. It also would ensure that every residency program substantially contributes to the outcomes assessment process.

To submit a question, visit the ABO website: www.americanboardortho.com/q_submit.

REFERENCE

1. Vaden J, Riolo ML. Educational update. *Am J Orthod Dentofacial Orthop* 1999;116:117.