

# Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

## Student Teaching in Community Dental Health-Prevention

### Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

This prevention course provides foundational information for students regarding the causes of dental diseases, how to prevent them, and how to communicate information about prevention to a patient. At the beginning of the term, students identify a friend or family member who will serve as a “patient” for them throughout the term. The procedures and patient conversations that would normally happen in a single visit to the dentist are broken down and presented over the course of the term. Each week, the course covers one aspect of the visit. As students learn the content, they are expected to “teach” this content to their “patients.” The purpose of this process is for the student to be able to re-teach what they have learned in their own words in a manner that the “patient” can understand.

After teaching the week’s content to their “patients,” the students post a summary of their session to the course discussion board. This helps the instructor know if students understand the material and if they can explain it in non-technical terms. This also helps reinforce the students’ internalization of the content. Students are also expected to comment on one of their classmate’s posts.

Students also have the potential opportunity to see real world outcomes as their “patients” change behaviors and improve their oral hygiene habits. At the end of the course, students discuss their greatest successes, greatest frustrations, and the most important thing they learned about educating others about their oral health.

Students are motivated and engaged in the re-teaching assignments because they know that they will use this in their future careers.

### Notes From the Instructor About This Innovative Teaching Practice:

Helpful tools and books include *The Chairside Instructor: A Visual Guide to Case Presentations* by the American Dental Association, *Clinical Practice of the Dental Hygienist* by Esther Wilkins, and *Dental Hygiene: Theory and Practice* by Michele Leonardi Darby and Margaret Walsh.