



45,000 units of crown and bridge later

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In the early 1970s, a young dentist offered a seminar at an airport hotel in Baltimore on **CROWN AND BRIDGE TREATMENT**. Since my practice was limited to prosthodontics, I decided to attend. There were about 12 dentists and a few of their team members present. The presenting dentist had conviction, presence, and a boatload of technical knowledge for such a young colleague. I always remember that day because he also showed the most exquisite models of his preparations and impressions that I had ever seen. It appeared he was gifted with incredible talents. Since then, I've learned that **he had a system that, with practice, would work for any of us with reasonable ability.**

The young dentist was Dr. Bill Strupp and he was just beginning his career. Back then, we were pursuing similar paths in prosthetics. In the course of the day, we discussed our relationships with Dr. L. D. Pankey, Dr. Niles Guichet, Dr. Peter Dawson, and Dr. Peter K. Thomas. These were the giants back then when dentists needed to learn about occlusion, TMJ, and prosthodontics.

Attending seminars has always been a motivational experience for me that keeps dentistry fresh and exciting. After 46 years, I'm still excited to go to my office on Monday mornings. Periodically, I've touched base with Bill and attended his seminars in Clearwater, Fla. It has always been a positive learning experience.

With that in mind, I decided to attend his latest two-day course on "Simplifying Complex Cosmetic and Restorative Dentistry." When I strolled into the lecture room a few minutes early, I was in for a big surprise. Just imagine, this time I was one of 500 participants! I was stunned to see so many in attendance. Once the program started, it was easy to understand why. It was outstanding ... so much so that I am highly recommending it to the readers of my column.

This is a dentist that shares the wisdom of a lifetime. Unlike many lecturers, he also shows you his mistakes as well as his successes. His slides are excellent and authentic. No Photoshop changes here. Bill tells it the way it is. He plays down his accolades, organizations, and contributions to dentistry, and concentrates on teaching you his concepts.

Questions are encouraged and he never intimidates with his answers. I don't know about you, but I've attended lectures in which dentists were afraid to ask questions for fear of belittlement. Not so at this one! Questions are answered immediately and completely with respect for those asking.

Two of Bill's powerful traits are his organizational skills and attention to details. It all shows in exquisite form in his technical manual prepared for every participant. The appendix section lists every product, material, and piece of equipment Bill uses, as well as how to order it. Then it devotes a section to a sequence for patient management, protocol for predictability, and success with crown and bridge. The manual covers all the latest clinical techniques in minute detail, including preparations, core buildups, impressions, cementations, and just about anything I've ever done in prosthetics from A to Z.

There are even sections devoted to prevention and maintenance. Some explain how your hygienist and dental assistant can better support you in your restorative practice. I learned how my hygienist can be more involved in attaining better tissue health for the patient, prior to and during treatment. As a by-product, my hygienists' production goes up, my patient is healthier, and my preparations, as well as my impressions, are better. The result is a more accurate, uncontaminated marginal seal that creates a crown with greater longevity. There is also a section dedicated to assisting you and your team in laboratory support. This section discusses handling impressions, preparing the models, and mounting models accurately. The last section of the manual covers actual cases — discussed with slides during the seminar — on a step-by-step basis. Each case is presented so you have an opportunity to listen and ask questions. There is never any need to take notes because all treatment is explained and written down exactly, word for word, in the manual.

While covering the various complex cases, Bill reviews an enormous array of topics. Here is a list of the 25 topics covered:

- 1) Excess attrition and abrasion cases
- 2) Accurate bite records
- 3) Accurate shade selection
- 4) Perfect impressions
- 5) Smile design and anterior envelope of function
- 6) Core buildups
- 7) Lab communication
- 8) Implants in the cosmetic zone
- 9) Vertical dimension — changes
- 10) Trauma cases

- 11) Occlusion
- 12) Materials selection
- 13) Significance of red gums
- 14) Smile makeovers
- 15) Immediate orthodontics
- 16) Digital photography
- 17) Profit from failures
- 18) Biologic width management
- 19) Presenting the case
- 20) Team working with periodontists and endodontists
- 21) Staff rules and scheduling
- 22) Handpieces and diamonds
- 23) Biologic root reshaping
- 24) Cementation protocol
- 25) Magnification and light

After attending this seminar, I realized that this man is what Dr. Pankey would classify as a “master.” He can write it, teach it, and do it. His lecture style is direct, with no wasted time on personal storytelling, personal family photos, or vacation slides. Perhaps that is why he can cover so much material in two days.

Over the years, I’ve noticed Bill is more concerned with tissue health ... or, as he says, “tissue is the issue.” All margins are being placed supragingival whenever possible to avoid iatrogenic infection and violation of the biologic width. Most of his units are feldspathic porcelain using the “contact lens” effect at the margin, so cosmetics is never compromised. The correlation between dental disease and systemic infections is heavily emphasized during the course. Supragingival margins minimize any source of irritation, inflammation, or infection caused by the prosthesis. All complex cases are cleared by a periodontist to assure optimum tissue health prior to formulating a final treatment plan.

A relaxed party with steamed shrimp and cocktails was planned after the first day’s lecture. Bill welcomed meeting the participants and answering any clinical questions or assisting with management of their practices. He sat at the front door to greet everyone and be easy to find. How many times have you attended a seminar and the speaker was racing to catch a flight home immediately after the presentation? So much for getting those questions you’ve thought about answered.

Serendipity had me sitting next to Dr. Michael Brumm, who happened to be Dr. Strupp’s new partner. Mike said to me, “I’m the luckiest dentist in the world! I have spent the last two years learning from the master, and I believe I now can do what he does except slower.” This young dentist affirmed that the concepts and methods being discussed were the way he was being trained to perform in the office. That convinced me that Bill walks the talk. You, my fellow dentists, can achieve a similar level of excellence if you’ll invest the time, money and energy to learn. Bill also has educational videotapes, DVDs, books, models, and a “Crown and

Dr. Bill Strupp makes complex dentistry look simple. After 45,000 cementations, he has learned his lessons and he is willing to share his knowledge.

Bridge Update Newsletter.”

Assistants’ CE training is also offered by the staff. How would you like it if your staff could fabricate beautiful multiple units of temporaries quickly in your office? Assistants can be trained to accomplish this. They can learn to take perfect alginate impressions and pour bubble-free models, all while you are attending the second day of the doctors’ seminar. Assistants are taught to appreciate the maintenance of tissue health and how to create a better outcome biologically. Bill’s team can get your team up to speed if they’ll bring a lab handpiece, eye protection, magnification (if possible), and an open mind with a desire to learn.

Team members are cross-trained and capable of assisting either dentist. If your assistants can spend time with them, you’ll be amazed at how much more can be delegated.

Dr. Danny Melker, the periodontist working closely with Dr. Strupp’s concepts, was present, and he offers courses as well. Note, too, that Bill has no affiliation with any manufacturer or product. You quickly recognize he is an independent thinker.

Seeing Bill evolve over the years from 12 to over 500 in attendance was gratifying. Obviously, he has a lot to offer. He makes complex dentistry look simple. After 45,000 cementations, he has learned his lessons and, fortunately for us, he is willing to share his knowledge.

So, how about you? Kahlil Gibran said that “when the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” Are you ready? Do you want to transition your practice to the next level? Best of all, do you want to do the complex dentistry with confidence and an understanding of how to simplify the treatment? Just remember to get your seat in the lecture room early by calling (800) 235-2515 to make a reservation for his Feb. 10-11, 2012 lecture in Clearwater, Fla., because the word is out. See you at the top! **DE**

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