2019 Oregon Dental Conference®
Course Handout

Cynthia Durley, MEd, MBA/Joanne Dawley, DDS/Renee DeMallie, RDH, EPDH/Teresa Haynes/Ginny Jorgensen, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, AAS/LeeAnn Redifer, CDA, EFDA, AAS

Course 3139: “The Value of Dental Assistants: Building an Empowered Dental Team”

Friday, April 5
9 am - 12 pm
The Value of Dental Assistants: Building an Empowered Dental Team

Course Description:
Dental assistants are an integral part of the dental team but finding and retaining dental assisting staff can be a challenge. This interactive program will dive into current trends related to dental assistants:

1. Learn more about dental assistants’ roles and their impact on outcomes, productivity and profitability.
2. Learn strategies for maximizing dental assistant productivity based on state allowable functions.
3. Explore the dental assisting career ladder and educational and credentialing opportunities.
4. Discover dental assisting hiring trends and strategies to improve hiring effectiveness and reduce turnover.

This program is about understanding the role of the dental assistant and building an effective, healthy dental team. Attendees should leave with an expanded view of what is possible for dental assistants and strategies to amplify the skills and talents of their dental assistants.

Educational Objectives:
At the conclusion of this course, attendees will be able to:

• Recognize the value dental assistants bring to the practice related to patient care and practice productivity
• Identify characteristics to look for in the dental assistant hiring process, both for practices hiring dental assistants and for dental assistants looking for career opportunities
• Understand how to maximize dental assistant productivity based on state allowable functions
• Recognize the critical role dental assistants play in infection control, prevention and safety
• Identify traditional and nontraditional dental assisting career paths
• Understand the importance of lifelong learning and the value of certification and continuing education in dental assisting careers
• Discover strategies to increase dental assistant job satisfaction, impacting their engagement, motivation and loyalty

Teaching methods: Discussion and demonstration

Prior level of skill, knowledge or experience required: No prerequisites required

This course is recommended for: Dentists, Hygienists, Assistants, Office Managers, Laboratory Technicians

Speakers: Joanne Dawley, DDS; Cynthia Durley, M.Ed., MBA, DANB and the DALE Foundation; Ginny Jorgensen, CDA, EFDA, EFODA, AAS; Teresa Haynes, Oregon Board of Dentistry; LeeAnn Redifer, CDA, EFDA; Renee DeMallie, RD, EPDH
The Value of Dental Assistants to the Dental Practice

Dental assistants are the largest segment of the dental workforce. This research sheds light on the many ways that dental assistants bring value to the dental practice — and to the entire dental industry. Read on to learn more!
PRODUCTIVITY

DENTAL ASSISTANTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE DENTAL PRACTICE.

Overwhelmingly, dentists and dental office managers agree that dental assistants contribute to the productivity of the dental practice. They say that dental assistants make an impact in many ways, such as allowing the dentist to move to the next patient more quickly and making all team members more effective. They also can help to relieve some of the pressures a dentist faces in practice.

What dentists and dental office managers are saying . . .

99% agree or strongly agree that an effective dental assistant contributes to practice productivity.

98% agree or strongly agree that an effective dental assistant contributes to team synergy and makes all team members more effective.

97% agree or strongly agree that an effective dental assistant allows the dentist to move to the next patient more quickly.

86% of dentists say that an effective dental assistant helps prevent dentist burnout.

“Our assistants give more support to the hygienist – which is big for production. We’re doing 25% more hygiene as a result.”

“I work much faster and more efficiently with four hands instead of two.”

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DENTAL ASSISTANTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROFITABILITY OF THE DENTAL PRACTICE.

Dental assistants contribute to the practice’s profitability in many ways, according to dentists and dental office managers. They say that dental assistants can positively impact patient retention and treatment plan acceptance.

What dentists and dental office managers are saying . . .

97% agree or strongly agree that an effective dental assistant contributes to patient retention.

91% agree or strongly agree that an effective dental assistant makes it more likely that a patient will accept the dentist-recommended treatment plan.

“Patients can be stressed, so it helps to have the dental assistant talk to them and get them settled and comfortable before the doctor comes in. This is a big thing with patient retention.”
INFECTION CONTROL

DENTAL ASSISTANTS PLAY A KEY ROLE IN KEEPING THE DENTAL PRACTICE SAFE.

Busy dental offices see hundreds or thousands of patients each year. Keeping those visits safe for everyone is essential. That’s why infection prevention and control is of critical importance for the safety of patients and for the dental team members who serve them.

According to dentists and dental assistants ...

99%
say that sterilization and disinfection duties are delegated to dental assistants.

“I strongly believe as the infection control person, dental assistants MUST have proper education, not just on-the-job training.”

“Infection control is one of the most important aspect of the job. The safety of the public is at stake.”
DENTAL ASSISTANTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PURCHASING DECISIONS OF THE PRACTICE.

Many dental assistants report feeling overlooked by sales reps who call on the dental office. Dental assistants also say that sales reps sometimes ignore them in the exhibit halls at dental meetings. This is unfortunate because a majority of dental assistants report that they play a role in the purchasing decisions of the dental practice. Dental sales reps should make sure to take the time to speak with dental assistants about the products and services they offer.

According to dental assistants ...

74% of dental assistants are involved in recommending products.

72% of dental assistants are involved in placing orders.

DANB Certified Dental Assistant™ (CDA®) certificants are particularly influential. Dental assistants who hold DANB CDA certification were more likely to independently meet with sales reps, make recommendations for purchases, and place orders for some products and services.

“I have a lot of buying influence in the practice. The doctor wants me to be knowledgeable about the products out there.”
BEING KNOWLEDGEABLE AND PROACTIVE IS IMPORTANT FOR DENTAL ASSISTANTS.

Dental assistants are responsible for many areas within the dental practice and often wear a lot of hats. With broad roles like these, it may seem impossible to find a dental assistant who can do it all. However, dentists and dental office managers identified some of the most valuable traits of dental assistants.

According to dentists and dental office managers ...

99% agreed or strongly agreed that an effective dental assistant anticipates the dentist’s needs without the exchange of words.

96% agreed or strongly agreed that an effective dental assistant does it right the first time.

“The strongest dental assistants take ownership of their work and consider the well-being of the practice.”
DENTAL ASSISTANTS SHOULD BE GOOD WITH PEOPLE AND EAGER TO LEARN.

The best dental assistants have a mix of the right emotional qualities, like being caring and cooperative, as well as being eager to learn and diligent in their work. Finding a dental assistant with this combination of qualities is the goal for many dental practices.

According to dentists and dental office managers ...

**TOP 5 DENTAL ASSISTANT QUALITIES**

1. Good patient care skills
2. Team player
3. Willing to learn
4. Takes ownership of work
5. Initiative

“Good patient care is about going beyond expectations, like bringing the patient a cup of coffee or a blanket.”

“Dental assistants must earn the trust and confidence of patients.”
DENTAL ASSISTANTS CAN BRING A GREAT DEAL OF VALUE TO THE DENTAL PRACTICE — IF THEY HAVE THE PROPER SUPPORT. TRAINING AND EDUCATION ARE KEY.

Dentists and dental office managers agree that dental assistants can bring tremendous value to the dental practice. Dental assistants contribute to practice productivity and profitability. They also play a critical role in infection control. However, it is important to remember that dental assistants need support and resources in the practice to maximize their contributions.

According to dentists and dental office managers ...

85% agreed or strongly agreed that in their practice, dental assistants are cross-trained to do whatever is needed.

83% agreed or strongly agreed that dental assistants should do everything the state allows them to do.

“We aim to have the dental assistants do everything possible.”
THE IMPACT OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

Providing continuing education for dental assistants helps them make a bigger difference in the dental practice.

A majority of dentists believe that continuing education (CE) benefits not only the dental assistant, but the profitability of the practice. Providing continuing education for the whole team, including dental assistants, helps the practice thrive.

According to dentists ...

87% agreed or strongly agreed that dental assistants who complete CE are more likely to contribute to the profitability of the practice.

86% agreed or strongly agreed that CE is critical to maintaining the dental assistants’ skills.

“It’s highly important to continue to learn. Doctors need to make this investment if they want the practice to grow.”

About the Research

The Value of Dental Assistants to the Dental Practice survey was conducted in November 2016 by Association Laboratory, an independent research firm, on behalf of the DALE Foundation. Results from nearly 3,000 dentists, dental office managers, dental hygienists, and dental assistants underwent thorough statistical analysis and validation in 2017 and 2018 to identify trends and key takeaways. The Value of Dental Assistants to the Dental Practice research was generously sponsored by Benco Dental and Henry Schein.
The Dental Assistant Career Path

As a dental assistant, you have so many options to grow professionally and expand your career. The biggest challenge you'll have is figuring out where you want to grow. When weighing your options, it is important to keep in mind your state's requirements and available job titles.

Once you have that covered, there are two main types of dental assistant career paths you can follow: broadening your role chairside, or shifting your focus in the dental field. As you explore each path’s potential, here are some key milestones and educational opportunities to consider.

Broadening your role
If you love patients, helping people, and promoting wellness, working chairside might be a good path for you. There is a wide array of duties for chairside dental assistants, and growth opportunities can include everything from earning your Certification to becoming a dentist, and everything in between.

• Become a Certified Dental Assistant
  Earning your Certification is a wonderful way to gain recognition and increase your earning potential. If you’re considering Certification, but are unsure where to start, check out our How to Earn Your Dental Assistant Certification page for more information.

• Become an Expanded Function Dental Assistant
  Expanding the functions you can perform as a dental assistant is a great way to take on more responsibilities and stand out in your office. To learn more about the different options you have, check out our How to Become an Expanded Function Dental Assistant page. If you're looking to review any expanded functions topics, the DALE Foundation offers the EFDA Practice Test.

• Become a Dental Hygienist
  Advancing your career to include cleaning teeth and advising patients comes with a lot of perks, including increased pay and work hour flexibility. To do this, you will need to earn at least your Associate’s Degree in Dental Hygiene, and complete licensing examinations specific to your state. For a list of relevant schools, check out the dental hygiene programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) at ada.org.

• Become a Dentist
  As the most advanced role within a dental practice, becoming a dentist requires a substantial educational commitment. All dentists have to have a college degree, complete 4 years of dental school, and pass a series of state licensing examinations to get their D.D.S. or D.M.D. Some also choose to continue their professional education by completing a residency program in a dental specialty. If you’re interested in learning more about the process, check out ada.org.
Shifting your focus
If your goals take you away from chairside, there are still a lot of career growth opportunities within the dental field. You can move within your office, or help others with their career goals by becoming an educator, thought leader, consultant or speaker.

- **Become a Dental Laboratory Technician**
  The fourth treatment-specific position within or supporting a dental practice is the technician. The technician’s responsibilities are to fill prescriptions for crowns, bridges, and other prosthetics. To become a dental laboratory technician, you can complete one of 14 CODA-accredited dental laboratory technician education programs or receive on the job training; most lab technicians do both. You can also work towards Certification through the [National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology](https://www.nbdlt.org).

- **Become an Office Manager**
  The role of dental office manager varies widely from office to office, but generally includes handling accounting and HR duties, and keeping the office running smoothly. While no formal education is required to be a dental office manager, it generally requires extensive on the job training, and often times some continuing education. It’s increasingly common for office managers to hold a degree in business. Check out our [courses specifically focused on office manager responsibilities](https://www.ada.org/en/education-and-career-center), and talk to your dentist about the steps involved with making the transition. Learn more about the varied role of dental office managers through the [American Association of Dental Office Management](https://www.aadom.org/).

- **Become an Educator**
  Teaching dental assisting is a rewarding way to share your experience and help others. While some dental assisting educators are able to obtain jobs based on their dental assisting work experience, dental assisting programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) require that dental assistants who wish to work as educators hold DANB Certification and a bachelor’s degree to become a professional dental assisting educator.

- **Become a Thought Leader, Consultant or Speaker**
  There’s not really a clear-cut path to pursuing roles like these. You will usually need to have extensive industry experience, be heavily involved in the dental community, and offer a specific perspective or type of information that few others are providing.

- **Work in the Dental Industry**
  Work outside of the clinical practice in the dental industry as a sales representative, consultant or educator for a dental manufacturer or supplier or work for a dental insurance company.

- **Hold a Leadership Positions within the Office**
  Grow your dental assisting career as a Lead Dental Assistant or Infection Control Coordinator.
How to Earn Dental Assistant Certification

Many dental assistants wonder how to get a dental assistant certification. It’s important to note that there’s only one way to earn a national dental assisting certification recognized by the ADA – and that’s through the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB). DANB is the national certification board for dental assistants.

Earning DANB certification can boost your career in many ways. First of all, DANB exams and certifications are recognized or required by 38 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Air Force and the Department of Veterans Affairs. So, if you ever plan to work in another state, holding DANB certification can help you out.

Earning and maintaining DANB certification can also lead to greater personal pride, increased dental assistant salary, employer recognition, and more! To learn about all the benefits of DANB certification, visit DANB’s “Why Certify with DANB?” page or see the results of DANB’s Salary Survey to learn how much a dental assistant makes.

So now that you’ve decided to earn DANB certification, you may be asking yourself, now what? The next step is to decide where you are in your career, and what DANB certification is right for you.

DANB’s most popular and widely recognized certification is the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification. DANB’s CDA certification is made up of three component exams: General Chairside Assisting (GC), Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) and Infection Control (ICE). Visit DANB’s CDA certification page to learn more.

If you’re just starting out in your career, DANB’s National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA) certification may be right for you. Or, if you are interested in preventive or restorative functions, consider DANB’s Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA) or Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA) certifications.

Whatever route you take, the DALE Foundation has the study guides to help you prepare for exam day. Visit our product catalog to learn about our review courses and practice tests.
Build Your Credentials

To earn DANB certification, it is not necessary to take all of the component exams in one sitting. If you’re interested in earning DANB certification but do not meet the eligibility requirements of one or more of the component exams, or need more flexibility to fit your budget, schedule and career goals, DANB offers options to meet your needs.

DANB National Certification Exams Consist of Component Exams
Each DANB certification exam consists of two or more component exams:

- NELDA: Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP); Infection Control (ICE); and Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) component exams
- CDA: General Chairside (GC), Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) and Infection Control (ICE) component exams
- COA: Orthodontic Assisting (OA) and Infection Control (ICE) component exams
- CPFDA: Coronal Polishing (CP), Sealants (SE) and Topical Fluoride (TF) component exams
- CRFDA: Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP); Impressions (IM); Temporaries (TMP); Isolation (IS); Sealants (SE); and Restorative Functions (RF) component exams

Not All Component Exams Have Eligibility Requirements
There are eligibility requirements to take certain component exams, such as the GC, OA and RF. These eligibility pathways might include 3,500 hours of approved work experience, graduation from a CODA-accredited program or other requirements in order to apply. However, there are no eligibility requirements to take these DANB exams: RHS, ICE, AMP, CP, SE, TF, IM, TMP, IS. Start with one of these component exams, and you’re on your way to becoming certified!

Focus Your Studies on One Exam at a Time
Some candidates prefer to concentrate their studies on one exam at a time. DANB offers flexibility when it comes to earning certification by allowing you to take one component exam at a time. This flexibility gives you more breathing room for the other responsibilities you have in your life.

Pass All Component Exams Within 3–5 Years
As long as you pass all required component exams within a five-year period, you can earn DANB CDA or COA certification. NELDA, CPFDA or CRFDA candidates must pass all components within a three-year period. DANB certificants enjoy enhanced employment opportunities and greater earning potential. Apply for a DANB exam today to begin building your credentials!
**Exams & Certifications**

DANB exams and certifications give you the opportunity to advance in your career; maintaining certification helps you stay current on new technologies and issues in the dental assisting profession.

**National Entry Level Dental Assistant**

Get a jump-start on your career and earn DANB’s NELDA certification. Learn more about eligibility requirements and the three component exams: Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP); Infection Control (ICE); and Radiation Health and Safety (RHS).

- DANB’s NELDA Certification
- NELDA Component Exams (AMP, ICE, RHS)
- NELDA Application Packet (PDF)

**Certified Dental Assistant**

Successful completion of the CDA exam will lead to a national certification that is highly valued by both employers and patients.

- DANB’s CDA Certification
- CDA Component Exams (RHS, ICE, GC)
- CDA Application Packet (PDF)

**Certified Orthodontic Assistant**

Earning COA certification helps orthodontic assistants stand out in the dental assisting profession.

- DANB’s COA Certification
- COA Component Exams (OA, ICE)
- COA Application Packet (PDF)

**Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant**

DANB’s CPFDA exam consists of four component exams: Coronal Polishing (CP), Sealants (SE), Topical Anesthetic (TA)* and Topical Fluoride (TF).

- DANB’s CPFDA Certification
- CPFDA Component Exams (CP, SE, TF)
- CPFDA Application Packet (PDF)

**Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant**

Take the next step toward earning DANB’s CRFDA certification. Learn more about eligibility requirements and the six component exams: Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP); Impressions (IM); Temporaries (TMP); Isolation (IS); Sealants (SE); and Restorative Functions (RF).

- DANB’s CRFDA Certification
- CRFDA Component Exams (AMP, IM, TMP, IS, SE, RF)
- CRFDA Application Packet (PDF)
Student Clinic: Your Dental Assisting Road Map to Success
Post-Course Assessment
Friday, April 5th, 2019

1. What organization awarded the first Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification?
   a. American Dental Assistants Association (ADAA)
   b. Dental Assisting National Board (DANB)
   c. American Dental Association (ADA)
   d. American Dental Education Association (ADEA)

2. What is CODA?
   a. College of Dental Assisting
   b. Council of Dental Assistants
   c. Commission on Dental Accreditation
   d. Council of Dental Associations

3. How many total CE credits in infection control does DANB require those who hold one or more DANB certifications to earn annually?
   a. None
   b. One
   c. Two
   d. Three

4. According to *Value of Dental Assistants to the Dental Practice* research, the percentage of dentists and dental assistants who report that sterilization and disinfection is performed by dental assistants is:
   a. 33%
   b. 55%
   c. 77%
   d. 99%

5. According to DANB's 2018-2019 Salary Survey, a DANB certificant earns an average of how many more dollars an hour than a dental assistant who is not DANB-certified?
   a. $1
   b. $2
   c. $3
   d. $4

Answer key:
Q#1 – a, Q#2 – c, Q#3 – d, Q#4 – d, Q#5– c