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Innovative educational approach for oral health therapy education in Australia

This paper outlines the development of the Bachelor of Oral Health degree at the CQ University in Rockhampton from 2010 to the present. This three-year degree trains and educates graduates to perform preventive and operative dentistry on patients of all ages. It is only one of three oral health degrees in Australia and New Zealand to be accredited for adult scope of practice. The program does not sit alongside dental programs; it sits alongside programs in medical science, sonography, medical imaging, chiropractic and paramedic science as well as nursing, speech therapy, podiatry, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. The curriculum aims to foster a collaborative approach to clinical practice with oral health students studying and learning with, and from, students from other disciplines. In this way, links between oral health and systemic health are made in terms of patient-centred care. Clinical placements in residential care facilities and in the CQ University Health Clinic will be used to illustrate this innovative education approach for oral health therapy students at CQ University.

Biography

Leonie M Short is a registered dental practitioner – dental therapist – in Australia. She has completed a Certificate in Dental Therapy from the Westmead School of Dental Therapy in 1977, a Diploma in Clinical Hypnotherapy from the NSW School of Hypnotic Sciences in 1983, a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in Education and Sociology from Wollongong University in 1986, and a Masters of Health Planning from the University of NSW in 1987. She is the Discipline Lead for the Bachelor of Oral Health degree at CQ University, and has numerous publications and research grants in excess of \$1m. She is the Editorial Board Member of the *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Dental and Oral Health Therapy* as well as *Australian Options*.

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