



RECAP

ITL 2026

*INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND
LEARNING PROGRAM*



ACADEMY FOR ADVANCING LEADERSHIP

ITL 2026 Program Graduates

Celebrating the Session Participants with Enhanced Dental Teaching Skills

The Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) is an annual four-day onsite experience for early-career faculty, practitioners transitioning to academia, and experienced faculty seeking to strengthen teaching practices and enhance the quality of their interactions with students in the classroom and the clinic.

This year's session, held July 29-August 1, 2026 in Atlanta, attracted educators from 29 institutions for reflection, skill development, collaboration, and practical application. Guided by the theme, **From Foundation to Innovation: Equipping Dental Educators for a Dynamic, Adaptive Learning Landscape**, participants explored the foundations of effective teaching, learner-centered approaches, critical thinking and assessment, technology and AI, student support, clinical teaching, communication, and conflict management. Throughout the institute, participants translated learning into practice through interactive discussions, hands-on exercises, and micro-projects designed to support meaningful application within their home institutions. Attendees also received complimentary access to the **Fundamentals of Clinical Education (FCE)**, an online, asynchronous program that equips new dental educators with the right tools to succeed and provide 8.5 ADA CERP CE credits.

The four-day ITL 2026 program featured these topics among others:

- The Effective Educator: Promoting Learning through Self-Discovery
- Creating an Educational Philosophy
- Navigating Academic Life Stressors
- Learner-Centered Teaching in Action
- Building a Foundation to Support Student Success
- Rigor in Objectives and Assessments Using Bloom's Taxonomy
- Incorporating Technology into Classroom Activities
- Clinical Teaching Scenarios
- Equal Access to Dental Education
- Professional and Empathetic Patient Communication
- Integrating Clinical Case-Based Scenarios in Course Curriculum
- Mastering Difficult Conversations with Students
- Conflict Management for Dental Educators: Tools for Communication and Resolution



Impact & Outcomes

“

ITL provided practical tools, boosted my confidence as an educator, and connected me with an incredible network of peers beyond my own campus. It's easily one of the most empowering programs I've experienced. I wish I had done this sooner!

~ Dr. Heather Tuthill, Virginia Commonwealth University

“

AAL's Institute for Teaching and Learning was an outstanding professional development experience. It provided practical teaching strategies, encouraged meaningful collaboration with dental educators from across the country, and inspired me to continue integrating innovative, student-centered approaches into my courses. I highly recommend this program to both new and experienced dental faculty.

~ Dr. Nacxit Calderon Trejos, University of Detroit Mercy

Micro-Project: Turning Learning into Institutional Impact

Learning moved toward institutional application as participants designed initiatives addressing specific problems within one of three critical institutional areas: Rubrics, Assessment, and Student Feedback; Innovation in Curriculum; and AI Ethics and Integration. In small group discussions, participants demonstrated concrete skill development and explored actionable goals for implementation at their home institutions.



ITL 2026 Attendees & Speakers

Attendees by Institution

- **Dr. Devin Byard**
Akron Children's Hospital
- **Dr. Ana Keohane**
Boston University
- **Dr. Adam Goodrick**
Creighton University
- **Dr. Rebecca Metzger**
Creighton University
- **Dr. Veronica Sule**
Creighton University
- **Dr. Mahmoud Elashiry**
Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University
- **Dr. Liara Vinson**
Drexel University
- **Dr. Prita Dhaimade**
East Carolina University
- **Dr. Thomas Morgan**
East Carolina University
- **Dr. Yawen Peng**
Loma Linda University
- **Dr. Donald Bennett**
Louisiana State University
- **Dr. Diana Cole**
Naval Postgraduate Dental School
- **Dr. Michael DeFazio**
Naval Postgraduate Dental School
- **Dr. Brian Eng**
Rutgers University
- **Dr. Manita Utreja**
Southern Illinois University
- **Dr. Jonathan James**
Texas A&M University
- **Dr. Lin-Hsin Chuang**
Tufts University



Dr. Felicia Tucker-Lively led participants to examine their assumptions, strengths, and beliefs that shape their work as educators. Through self-discovery and reflection, they established a foundation for intentional and effective teaching.



Dr. Colin Haley encouraged participants to explore characteristics of effective educators and learning environments while considering instructional design practices and strategies for engaging today's learners.



From classroom technology to artificial intelligence, Dr. Jayne S. Reuben guided participants' exploration of tools and strategies for enhancing educational activities, student engagement, innovation, and efficiency in dental education.



Educators practiced professional and empathic patient communication skills. Dr. Kelton T. Stewart described the importance of communication practices for fostering a humanistic environment.



Through real-life scenarios and communication strategies, participants strengthened their ability to approach challenging student interactions with empathy, clarity, professionalism, and appropriate expectations.



Working across dental areas, programs, and specialties, participants examined clinical scenarios that integrate basic sciences with clinical application.

Attendees by Institution *continued*

- **Dr. Jason Garner**
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
- **Dr. Stephanie Helmus**
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
- **Dr. Christian Petersen**
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
- **Dr. Andrea Pierce**
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences
- **Dr. Nacxit Calderon Trejos**
University of Detroit Mercy
- **Dr. Lana Gardi**
University of Detroit Mercy
- **Dr. Lisa Rawle**
University of Illinois Chicago
- **Dr. Robert Bowers**
University of Iowa
- **Dr. Ivanna Ivaniv**
University of Maryland
- **Dr. Sandra Stuhr**
University of Michigan
- **Dr. Tanya Al-Talib**
University of Nevada Las Vegas
- **Dr. Savita Gupta**
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- **Dr. Poojan Shrestha**
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- **Dr. Fayrouz Bazina**
University of Pittsburgh
- **Dr. Pooja Ajitsankardas**
University of Tennessee Health Science Center
- **Dr. Devin Christiansen**
University of Utah Health

Attendees by Institution *continued*

- **Dr. Hakan Gem**
University of Washington
- **Dr. Chin-Chun Peng**
University of Washington
- **Dr. Shaza Abass**
UT Health San Antonio
- **Dr. Sandra Andari**
UT Health San Antonio
- **Dr. Heather Tuthill**
Virginia Commonwealth University
- **Dr. Jonathan Abraham**
West Virginia University



Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences Postgraduate Dental School scholars explored mentorship, peer support, and early intervention that can contribute to academic efficiencies, student engagement, and innovation.



Participants reflected on their current teaching practices while exploring the principles, benefits, and challenges of learner-centered teaching and identifying opportunities for application.

Speakers

- **Dr. Felicia Tucker-Lively**, AAL Senior Vice President
- **Dr. Colin Haley**, Clinical Associate Professor, Executive Director of Curriculum and Student Success, University of Illinois Chicago College of Dentistry
- **Dr. Anita Joy-Thomas**, Professor and Chair, Department of Diagnostic and Biomedical Sciences, Peggy A. O'Neill PhD, DDS Distinguished Professorship for Biomedical Sciences, UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry
- **Dr. Isabel Rambob**, Clinical Associate Professor and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center College of Dentistry
- **Dr. Jayne S. Reuben**, Instructional Professor, Biomedical Sciences and Medical Education, Texas A&M College of Dentistry
- **Dr. Kelton T. Stewart**, James J. Baldwin Endowed Professor, Assistant Dean for Faculty Development, Chair of the Department of Orthodontics, Indiana University School of Dentistry

Organizations Investing in ITL Graduates

Scholarship Winners



American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the AAPD Foundation in partnership with CareQuest Institute for Oral Health

- **Dr. Devin Byard**, Akron Children's Hospital
- **Dr. Yawen Peng**, Loma Linda University
- **Dr. Liara Vinson**, Drexel University



American Academy of Periodontology Foundation (AAP Foundation)

- **Dr. Devin Christiansen**, University of Utah Health
- **Dr. Prita Dhaimade**, East Carolina University
- **Dr. Mahmoud Elashiry**, Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University
- **Dr. Sandra Stuhr**, University of Michigan



American Association of Orthodontists Council on Orthodontic Education (AAO COE)

- **Dr. Shaza Abass**, UT Health San Antonio
- **Dr. Tanya Al-Talib**, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- **Dr. Sandra Andari**, UT Health San Antonio
- **Dr. Fayrouz Bazina**, University of Pittsburgh



American Dental Association's Council on Dental Education and Licensure (ADA CDEL)

- **Dr. Jonathan Abraham**, West Virginia University
- **Dr. Donald Bennett**, Louisiana State University
- **Dr. Robert Bowers**, University of Iowa
- **Dr. Ana Keohane**, Boston University
- **Dr. Thomas Morgan**, East Carolina University

Scholarship Winners *continued*



American Dental Education Association / Academy for Advancing Leadership (ADEA/AAL)

- **Dr. Pooja Ajitsankardas**, University of Tennessee Health Science Center
- **Dr. Lin-Hsin Chuang**, Tufts University (*not pictured*)
- **Dr. Lisa Rawle**, University of Illinois Chicago
- **Dr. Heather Tuthill**, Virginia Commonwealth University

ITL 2026 brought together dental educators from across **29** different institutions.





Register Now!

ITL 2027: Atlanta, July 28-31

Register by January 29, 2027 for 20% Discount!



aalgroup.org/itl



**AAL Builds and Strengthens Your Unique Value
through Results-Driven Consulting and
Professional Development**

info@aalgroup.org | 404.350.2098
2451 Cumberland Parkway SE, Suite 3411, Atlanta, GA 30339

AALGROUP.ORG