

## COMMENTARY

## SELECTION DEFINES DESIGN

André V. Ritter, DDS, MS\*

The publication in 1908 of G. V. Black's *A Work of Operative Dentistry* textbook is one of the most significant landmarks in restorative dentistry.<sup>1</sup> Operative dentistry as a discipline (and as a specialty in many countries) has evolved substantially since that time. The principle of "extension for prevention" proposed by Black was necessary at a time when the tooth preparation had to accommodate the restorative materials' limitations, such as a lack of adhesion and inadequate compressive strength. A limited understanding of caries diagnosis and prevention processes also demanded that restorations be extended for prevention as dental caries was not universally recognized as an oral disease that could be prevented.

G. V. Black's principles served patients well for many years, but improvements in dental materials as well as a better understanding of caries diagnosis and prevention have prepared the field for a change in paradigm to more conservative tooth preparations and restorations. As a consequence, today the motto "extension for prevention" can be replaced by "prevention to eliminate extension" as proposed by Terry and Geller in the above article.

The authors propose what they call an "adhesive design" philosophy of tooth preparation and restoration, which consists of (1) preservation of the natural dentition by caries management and prevention, (2) preservation of the tooth structure during cavity preparation, and (3) increasing the longevity of the restoration. According to the authors, the selection of the restorative material, often dictated by the specific application, influences the preparation design to be used.

The clinical article is superbly illustrated with systematic documentation of a proximo-incisal restoration of a fractured maxillary central incisor. The successful restoration of form, function, and natural color of large Class IV defects such as the one illustrated in this article is a challenge that can be surpassed by following the systematic protocol described by the authors. Experience and a good amount of manual dexterity and esthetic sense are required to obtain such optimal results consistently well, but the incremental layering protocol proposed is a good road map to achieve those results.

Despite the fact that the article illustrates the proposed philosophy with the restoration of a fractured maxillary central incisor, the concept proposed by the authors can be applied as well for other types of anterior and posterior composite restorations.

## REFERENCE

1. Black GV. *A work of operative dentistry*. Chicago: Medico-Dental Publishing; 1908.

\* Department of Operative Dentistry, University of North Carolina School of Dentistry, Chapel Hill, NC, USA.

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