Simply the best

Chris Dakin discusses the UK Dawson Academy...

I qualified as a dentist in 2002, and like many spent my early career completing vocational training, working within the NHS, and paying off my student debt! With the treatment constraints of certain areas of NHS funding, I was keen to push my career towards the independent/private sector, and wanted a skill-set to enable me to do this. In 2006 I completed a year-long, one day a month restorative dentistry course amongst other CPD courses, and was considering what to spend my money on next! In 2008, I heard Glenn DuPont from the Dawson Academy lecture on Solving Anterior Wear Problems, and then did the break-out session taught by Glenn and Ian Buckle. Several dentists I’d spoken to had recommended the Dawson Academy and I was considering going to Florida to complete the courses. Fortunately, Ian was in the process of bringing the core curriculum to the UK, and having liked what I’d heard decided it was something that I’d like to do. I phoned Sally-An (Ian’s wife and course administrator), and organised my place. I was to be one of the first dentists to pass through the (UK style) Dawson Academy continuum.

May 2009, and I’m checking into a hotel at for the initial Dawson Academy lecture: Functional Occlusion – From TMJ to Smile Design. The usual questions featured in my thoughts. Would it be worth the cost? Would I learn things that would improve my dentistry? Would they be applicable to my practice and relevant to me?

Over the next six months I completed the remainder of the core curriculum covered Examination and Records, Aesthetics, Treatment Planning, Occlusal Equilibration, and Restoring Anterior Teeth. The small group nature of the hands-on sessions encouraged discussion and the opportunity to ask questions, and seeing the familiar faces of participants at each of the courses led to camaraderie and a heightened sense of learning together. Without exception, the lecturers always wanted to give as much information as possible, and many class-sessions had times extended at their insistence to enable this. This added lots of value and made the courses excellent value for money.

Mention must also be made of the venue - I attended the hands-on classes at Ian’s practice in the Wirral. The facility is lovely, but it is the friendliness and support of his staff that really make the courses run well. They also provide an excellent social program, so it’s not all just learning!

So, the benefits of studying with the Dawson Academy? It is simply the best post-graduate course I’ve taken. So much so, that when Ian set up some advanced courses I readily signed up. It has given me a set of clinical principles and a framework in which to apply them. It has made my work more predictable and has increased my enjoyment of dentistry. Furthermore, the lectures and course material forms a collection (along with Peter Dawson’s textbook) which I frequently refer. I have a part-time teaching position at The University of Birmingham, and I would like to think that it has helped me to teach some occlusion concepts to my undergraduate students.

In short, I feel that it is an excellent course, the continuum has also given me the chance to meet like-minded dentists, many of whom have become good friends. I’m sure many of them would agree with this thought!

About the author

Chris Dakin qualified in 2002 and works as an associate dentist in private practice in Shipston-on-Stour, and Coventry, enjoying all aspects of aesthetic restorative dentistry. He is also a part-time clinical lecturer at The University of Birmingham School of Dentistry, and has lectured on occlusion in restorative dentistry both locally and nationally.