

Re:View

Keeping excellence in your sights | April 2015 | Issue 21



**Profile feature
on Ross McLeod**

We find out about Ross and his research into pre-school vision screening

**An interview
with Lindsay Keefe**

**Why upgrade
your qualification?**

Reasons why returning to study is great

Why upgrade your qualification?

Are you considering taking a further qualification or course?

Whether you work as an optical assistant and want to become a DO, have qualified as a DO and are thinking about further qualifications in contact lenses or low vision, have always wanted to become an optometrist, or are considering a masters or PhD, here are 11 reasons why returning to study is great.

1 It's easier to fit studying in with your life that you might think: ABDO College offers straightforward ways to study while you continue in employment.

"Study to gain greater specialist skills in areas that interest you, and further your career within the optics profession."

Peter Williamson, senior optical dispenser at Birmingham & Midland Eye Centre, City Hospital, currently studying Low Vision Honours course and Distance Learning Tutor course

2 Anyone can study: if you lack one of the required GCSEs, start with an Access course. These are available in Maths, English, Science, Optics and Dispensing, and Human Biology and give you a great way to get back into studying.

"I study for the love of learning, and to make me a better dispenser"

Suzanne Flay, dispensing optician student at Specsavers Bournemouth, studying Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing at ABDO College in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University

3 For optical assistants or anyone new to optics, the 'FBDO' qualification is a stepping stone to higher professional qualifications and numerous career opportunities.

4 A further professional qualification opens doors to more jobs for anyone. Qualified dispensing opticians can expand their skills and progress their career into management, practice ownership, sales and marketing, manufacturing optics, optical education or optometry.

"Study keeps me interested and fresh in a subject and profession I love. It is a great way of meeting like-minded people, who you bump into from time to time over the years!"

Jo Holmes, practice manager and principal dispensing optician, Tiverton Devon, ABDO board member and area chair

5 Further study and specialisation will give you more satisfaction in your career and allow you to move in the direction that is closest to your interests.

"Knowledge will follow its owner everywhere, the more you learn, the further you can go!"

Abigail Peters, DO and final year optometry student at Aston University

6 You may get a salary increase on completing your studies or moving to a new, higher level job, and you'll have more choice of positions to apply for.

"Study to enhance patient experience, create new opportunities for yourself and practice."

Claire Wright, deputy clinical lead at the Centre for Eyecare Excellence, Plymouth and ABDO College distance learning tutor

7 With the contact lens and low vision courses, you can continue to add further clinical skills to your dispensing skills.

"Being able to use my new skills as a low vision practitioner give me a fantastic feeling each time I can help someone suffering with sight loss."

Russell Ham, dispensing manager for Specsavers, studying for accreditation for the Welsh Low Vision Service



8 There are opportunities now to take your special interests further and go on to do a research degree and contribute to knowledge about optics.

9 You'll meet new like-minded colleagues and friends on all of the ABDO College courses.

"Study to renew the passion for the subject that gets lost over the years. This will enable you in the future to look back without thinking 'I wish I had given it a go'."

Angela Jane Reilly, CLO, currently a student on the Career Progression to Optometry course at Bradford University

10 It's never too late to study: at ABDO College you'll find students of all ages.

"It's good to keep learning as it keeps your brain young & active!"

Ant Blackman, CCCU academic link tutor to ABDO College and professional lead for ophthalmic dispensing and ABDO board member, studying for a professional doctorate in Ophthalmic Science at Aston University

11 With every further qualification you do, you will increase the ways in which you can help patients.

"I am proud to tell people what I am and what I do. My studies made that possible."

Paul Cross, CLO, DO and retail director, Specsavers, Dudley

You are never too old to learn



As the old saying goes, 'you are never too old to learn' and in the issue of *Re:View* we've listed 11 reasons why returning to

study is great. There's a number of ways that ABDO College can assist you, so please feel free request a copy of the new 2015/16 prospectus by giving us a call, or sending us an email.

The profile feature on Ross McLeod highlights how study can yield rewards and you can read his research into pre-school vision screening in this issue.

As well as opportunities within the major retail chains, there's plenty of scope for DOs to build a successful and fulfilling career in the independent sector and the 'Independents in optics' feature provides an insight into the work of the AIO.

The ABDO College team will be attending Optrafair (18–20 April at the NEC, Birmingham), so please come along and say hello to us on stand H17, as we will be making a major announcement at the show!

**Huntly Taylor FBDO,
Chairman,
ABDO College Board of Trustees**

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Independence in optics

Do you work for an independent practice or a multiple?

Increasingly the High Street seems to be dominated by optical chains, yet independent practices also play a vital role in offering choice to consumers, and choice of approach to practitioners.

In this article read a little more about what one organisation, AIO – The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians, is doing to highlight the role of independent practice in the UK optics scene.

Pat Cameron Davies, the AIO general secretary says, "We believe that practising independently is the best way to look after our patients and are committed to stopping the decline and increasing the number of independent optical practices. Obviously encouraging students and newly qualified into independent practices is top of our priorities." AIO committee member Tove Hoff Gascoyne and her daughter Heidi Raper are both dispensing opticians and part of the family team at Cameron Beaumont Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians in Wetherby. Tove, a past chairman of ABDO Area 2, is married to a 3rd generation independent optometrist, David Beaumont who is also the immediate past president of the AIO. His grandfather was president of the BOA in his practising days.

Tove says, "David and I have been members of AIO, The Association for Independent Optometry for nearly 30 years, the only not-for-profit British organisation supporting and working purely for independent optometrists and dispensing Opticians. The AIO is

looking at how to attract students to independent practice, as well as those looking for pre-reg work and those who are fully qualified. "We want students in particular to consider whether they might work in independent practice or even run a practice of their own. In our own case, Cameron Beaumont has been in the family for four generations, seven of our ten family members are qualified in optics so we have a real passion to see independent practice grow and thrive."

THE AIO MISSION STATEMENT

Members of The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (AIO) believe independent optometric practice is an important way of delivering a high standard of clinical care to the public. The Association will encourage the promotion and development of independent practice and support and assist Independent Practitioners in pursuit of their professional duty to act in the best interests of their patients.

The AIO is running a campaign with the ABDO, visiting the Schools of Optometry and telling students about Independent practice and the importance of working with dispensing opticians. Heidi says, "I was lucky to go into a family business, but a lot of students feel they only have one option if they want a training place. I've only ever really known the independent sector. I worked as an optical receptionist, before going to university to do the dispensing course

on day release. I knew about the freedom that the independent sector offered: it was a natural choice after I qualified. When I went to college there wasn't any promotion of independent optics – equally there was no representation from multiples going around. You were left to find your own feet. We need to see more opticians going and speaking to students to make them aware of their choices while they are at college." Tove says, "We have spoken to optometrists and dispensing opticians at the local universities and invited them to come along. Lots of students are very interested in the independent side and they would like to get into the independent sector.

One of the problems is that a lot of the independent practices only have a single consulting room which can make

it difficult to take on a pre-reg optom. This isn't an issue regarding a dispensing optician in the same way and a day or block release course can be ideal for independent practices." Pat Cameron Davies says, "The first visit of this year was to Cardiff School of Optometry. We were gratified to find how many optometry students – at least 75 per cent, indicated their wish to practise independently once qualified." Tove says, "AIO have for some time had a stand

at several optical exhibitions and been pleased to find the same high interest in independent optics. It is another way of letting the profession know about our Association. You can join as a student member, and then even if you can't get training in your local area, you can network which can help you find the right position after your training."

Looking at the approaches to training of DOs, Tove says, "Day or block release is very beneficial for the practice. The trainee gets more and more information and knowledge which they then put into practice right away. For example, they get really good training from the ABDO College courses. It is also an advantage for any optical practice to have a trainee dispensing optician, both because they may stay with you, but will also contribute to the level of knowledge out there. Working in an independent practice will also help trainees, showing them freedom in choice of frames and lenses, and how to choose products to suit each individual." Heidi adds, "Independent opticians ought to take on trainees where possible and invest in them with a view to them staying on afterwards, this way the practice will get a dispensing optician who knows the local environment. The training in independent practice is more personalised and the service therefore becomes more personalised too"

The AIO has web pages and a database on its website, www.afio.co.uk/independent-supervising-practices, to encourage independent practices to offer optometric and dispensing opticians training places. Pat says, "We'd like a

lot more practices to be listed but it will, hopefully give some dispensing students help in finding positions."

As well as working with students, the AIO works to drive up standards of practice. Tove says, "The AIO is working on a charter for ethical practice. It is important to see the highest standards amongst its members. We are trying to distance ourselves from the misleading phrase, 'free eye test'. Nothing is free, and this is damaging to the public perception of values. It can artificially drive up conversion rates too."

Becoming a member of the AIO will give any student or qualified independent optometrist or dispensing optician the opportunity to mix and communicate with like-minded people, to be informed and reassured in every aspect of working or setting up and running an Independent practice through the AIO forum and yearly national conferences. These conferences

are held in different locations around the country, usually a week-end in mid-October. Professional lecturers, marketing firms and business programmes and manufacturers holding workshops all contribute to CET points. Evenings are entertaining and relaxing. Tove says, "We also run international conferences to exciting places every other year (India, Mauritius, Norway, Mexico & Cuba, Fiji, Thailand and the latest; a river cruise in central Europe), where we have visited local independent optometric outlets, laboratories, hospitals and schools for the blind. At the same time, these conferences give members the opportunity to have meaningful conversations about practice concerns – or simply having a good time with like-minded people!

Find out more about The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians at www.afio.co.uk or www.twitter.com/AIO_Secretary.

2015/16 prospectus

ABDO College specialises in distance and blended learning education for the optical profession. It is the only college in the UK devoted solely to the teaching of ophthalmic dispensing and its related specialist areas.

Offering a range of courses including access, foundation degree, diploma, degree, advanced and honours, ABDO College provides quality programmes leading to ABDO examinations and qualifications.

To obtain a copy of the prospectus, please contact the Courses Team at ABDO College on 01227 738 829 (Option 1), or email info@abdocollege.org.uk



Ross McLeod

We find out about Ross and his research

Ross McLeod is from Glasgow and is a dispensing optician at Specsavers in Barrhead. He has recently completed his degree in ophthalmic dispensing, and in this issue he shares with us the findings from his dissertation project, *'Is pre-school vision screening more effective when performed by optical or non-optical professionals?'*

Like many students, Ross stumbled into optics as a career. He says, "I first studied politics, sociology and history for my degree. I was working in ASDA at the weekends throughout the course. A position in the ASDA Opticians came up, I moved over and really enjoyed it. It was quite a change from what I had thought I would be doing, but I liked it enough to continue working there." When the chance came up to move to Specsavers and be sponsored through the ophthalmic dispensing degree by distance learning with ABDO College it seemed like a good next step for Ross.

Combining work and study can be challenging. Ross says, "The three years of the degree course were difficult but enjoyable. I've now done a full time degree and a distance learning degree, and I enjoyed the distance learning more. I think this was because I had all the benefits of working and a regular salary alongside great support in my learning. I also liked the block release which gave me the chance to go away and meet up with all the other students. Then, when I returned I could put what I'd learnt into practice. I really felt like I'd achieved something at the end of the course."

Every student has some parts of the course that they prefer to others. Ross says, "My favourite parts of the course were the 2nd year ophthalmic dispensing unit and Sally Bates' units on prescription analysis and dispensing skills. The first provided a sound theoretical background on the science behind the products we

use and the latter provided training on how this can be communicated to the patient and applied in dispensing and problem solving. As I did not come from a maths-related background the early units on optics and ophthalmic lenses in 1st year were probably the toughest. However as I moved through the course I found this had given me a sound basis upon which to develop. The later units in the course are also enjoyable, particularly low vision, which as a student DO and qualified DO is an aspect which can be both challenging and very rewarding and is not appreciated until you start further training past the optical assistant stage.

As part of the ophthalmic dispensing degree, every student has to write a dissertation on a topic of their choice. Ross explains how he chose his topic. "My initial thoughts for my dissertation were to do something in the area contact lenses as I had been involved in that through all my time in optics. When I started to look for research papers I found that, although there is a lot of research, very little of it is specifically relevant to dispensing opticians who have yet to become contact lens opticians. I wanted to study something that was of relevance to DOs in every day practice so I went back to the core competencies, and this reminded me that I was interested in paediatric dispensing. I narrowed down my focus to look at pre-school vision screening. One of my supervisors had been an orthoptist which meant the topic was relevant and of interest to them too."



Ross McLeod – with ABDO President, Peter Black at the 2014 ABDO graduation ceremony

Ross's dissertation is entitled, *Is pre-school vision screening more effective when performed by optical or non-optical professionals?* He says, "My main thing to take away from the study was that the optical professional can be very important in the process of vision screening for pre-schoolers. The literature wasn't particularly aimed at DOs and it would be beneficial for more research to be performed about the role of the DO in this area."

Now he has completed his degree, Ross is considering his long term career in optics. He says, "I don't have a plan set in stone. I moved into a different practice within the same group after qualifying – I'm the only DO in a new practice, and that brings new challenges for me every day. I'd like to develop my own skills, I've not been in optics that long and I can learn a lot here. In practice I have taken on a more supervisory role, within this I enjoy the training and development of other staff – to ensure patients receive the best advice and care. Since becoming a DO I feel I am a valued and respected member of the inter-professional team ensuring best practice and patient care. I like learning, running training sessions in practice and teaching others and I also need to think about how that fits in to my future plans. In the medium term, I'd like to get involved in optics outside the practice, and maybe play a role in local optical associations and committees. In the long term I might want to work abroad or even open my own practice."

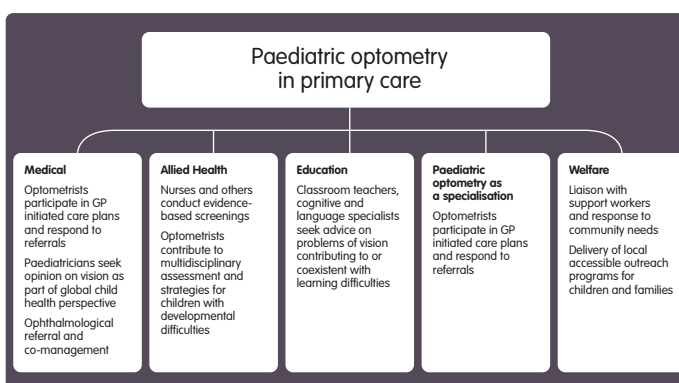
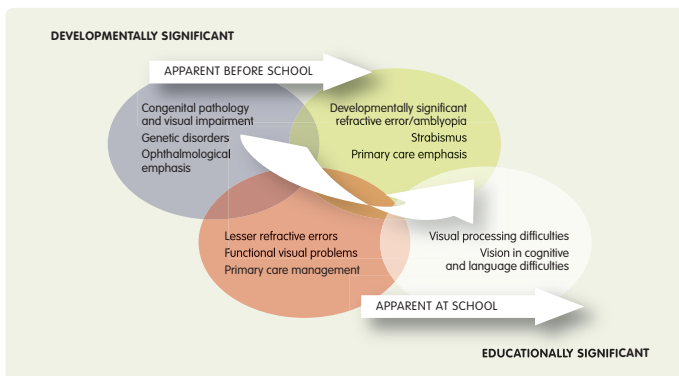
Is pre-school vision screening more effective when performed by optical or non-optical professionals?

By Ross McLeod BSc(Hons) FBDO

INTRODUCTION

Vision screening is viewed as an important stage within the general population-wide health screening of childhood. The methods used to perform screening are not uniformly agreed upon nor is the practitioner who performs the screening. The practitioner performing screening brings a different

skill set depending upon their qualifications and training. The UK model is based upon the skills of orthoptists and trained nurses. However the dispensing optician, as a qualified member of the optical healthcare team is often under-utilised in this process.



Baker, 2011

AIM

The aim of this study is to address the merits of using optical versus non-optical

professionals in the population-wide screening of pre-school vision.



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METHOD

Four online access databases were searched for literature relating to the topic of pre-school vision screening. The databases used were MedlinePlus, Science Direct, Google Scholar and the online library of Canterbury Christ Church University. Randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews were selected as the documents with the best quality of evidence based upon the hierarchy constructed by the National Health and Medical Research Council. Each article was then assessed using their abstracts to ensure relevance to the area of study. A full text critical analysis was performed on the appropriate texts selected utilising the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme structure, the articles generally demonstrated a thorough and rigorous search methodology

in each case. Initial search criteria required texts to have been published within the last five years and excluded lower quality articles such as non-randomised controlled trials and cohort studies. Further criteria were based upon synonymous search terms utilising boolean operators. Additionally only UK based articles were considered with the aim of maintaining relevance to UK based dispensing opticians. However the search parameters were widened to produce an appropriate body of literature to perform the study due to the low number of high quality documents available. The bibliographies of each article were hand searched for further resources which helped to build an appropriate body of literature on which to formulate the literature review.

RESULTS

Common thematic elements were identified during the critical analysis of the texts to identify the main areas for consideration. The research question focuses solely on pre-school vision screening supported by the research findings which showed referral from screening produced the best results when children were screened before the age of starting school. This ensures assessment of children during the critical period of visual development but additionally considers testing past the age where non-compliance to testing is particularly problematic.

The method of screening varied due to the age of the child and with the practitioner performing screening. Testing younger children generally focused on amblyopia, strabismus and binocular vision issues which changed in older patients to the detection and correction of ametropia. The analysis showed both optical and electronic screening produced equivalent sensitivity but that optical professionals provided increased accuracy regardless of screening method. The optical professional was agreed to provide more precise testing and efficient correction regardless of the condition being screened. Electronic methods were understudied by the literature and merit further research.

Consensus was not found on what constituted screening. Some articles considered vision to have been screened if a red-reflex was observed in conjunction with visual acuity (VA) measurement whilst others required the use of an auto-refractor. Most testing was more thorough and required a combination of VA measurement, assessment of refractive error, cover test and an external ocular examination. This set of tests is known in the USA as the Modified Clinical Technique (MCT) and is treated as the gold standard for screening, no equivalent was found in the UK based research.

Whilst dispensing opticians as a particular speciality were rarely assessed by the research interdisciplinary working was highlighted as a linchpin of successful screening and treatment. Consensus is found within the research in showing that the testing performed by optical professionals encompasses more tests, an increased length of screening time and generally higher costs. This consideration requires balance of the importance of screening with resources available. Further advocating the use of qualified professionals such as the orthoptist or dispensing optician, who are well placed to support the primary healthcare team without the costs involved in utilising optometrists or ophthalmologists.

DISCUSSION

The themes identified in the research process were then considered in relation to the wider context of public health and inter-professional working. Identifying strengths and limitations in the research process allows for consideration, reflection and identification of best practice for future consideration.

Reflection upon the methods employed in this project demonstrate both strengths and limitations. A systematic approach has been employed by applying a critical framework to each article however limitations are evident in the quality of articles appraised. By employing Kolbs reflective cycle of experiential learning future research will be beneficial in developing personal analytical skills and in practice behaviours. Extending past Kolbs closed reflective cycle will allow for continued development, the theories found should be assessed, reflected and built upon continuously developing and improving the processes and practices of pre-school vision screening.

Considering the screening process in the UK highlights an area worthy of further consideration which was out with the scope of this study. If the UK currently operates a structured system, in the vein of the USA MCT it was not evident from the research available. Improvement in education or communication in this would improve the knowledge of other optical practitioners who may be working with children but are

unaware of the wider screening process.

Interdisciplinary working and care was not an initial research area for this project, however critical analysis of the research highlights this as an area worthy of further consideration. Utilising each member of the primary care team helps to justify population wide screening which is often constrained by tight budgets. Mass screening is agreed by most authors to be the most effective form, producing the highest positive referral rate. Interworking between professionals, including a good knowledge of each practitioners job role allows the success of a team based approach, delegating particular functions as is done in high street or hospital optical practice. Thus providing the most effective use of patient and practitioner time and of funding available. The use of non-healthcare professionals, such as teachers is agreed to be far less effective, trained health professionals providing a far higher level of specificity whilst optical practitioners provide the best results. Current policy does not indicate the role of the dispensing optician within the screening process. Dispensing opticians as GOC registered practitioners are trained to a high standard with specific training in paediatric vision. This would suggest further consideration particularly as an area for professional policy development.

CONCLUSION

The literature available on the subject of pre-school vision screening shows both strengths and weaknesses in methodological approach. Quality literature addressing the question is available but is limited in quantity. This highlights the need for further research in this area. The findings and discussion of the studied literature shows increased accuracy when screening is performed by optical professionals but does not rule out the valuable input made by non-optical professionals working in an inter-professional situation. By combining the relevant skills of the full practitioner set the aim of universal screening can be balanced with the requirements to balance budgets and time constraints. Current UK policy relies upon the skills of nurses and orthoptists which is

currently accepted as a suitable situation. Further consideration of the role of the dispensing optician and potential benefits of inclusion as a paediatric vision focused member of the primary eye care health team is merited. Trained laypersons, particularly supported by improving technologies may meet current requirements, however further research on the input of dispensing opticians on the screening process would be advantageous. No simple answer exists in respect of who should perform pre-school vision screening but the literature suggests interdisciplinary working based on a wider set of needs, both from individual patients and from wider society can produce sufficiently accurate screening to promote good public ocular health.

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An interview with Lindsay Keefe

Lindsay Keefe is Placement Lead for Occupational Therapy in the School of Allied Health Professions within the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Canterbury Christ Church University.

As well as being the home of the degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing the department also includes degrees in Diagnostic Radiography, Occupational Therapy, Operating Department Practice, Paramedic Science and Speech and Language Therapy. Lindsay herself is an occupational therapist (OT) by professional background. She says, "I was an OT for a number of years in the NHS and joined the university 15 years ago. Here I have always had a role related to the placement aspect of the programme. Initially that was predominantly within occupational therapy, securing placements and matching students to different types of clinical and geographical areas across the south east of England and then supporting students while out in placement. I work to help prepare students for placements, encouraging them to think about their knowledge and skills and how to use these when they are in practice. I also am actively involved in preparing the practice educators and mentors who support the students. I facilitate training for those who are new to the role to help them think about the different skills to draw on, which have parallels to the skills used in practice, assessment for example, but with a student rather than service users. I also support mentors

in understanding learning strategies, principles of supervision and the related placement documentation. I encourage regular practice educator updates checking their familiarity with the documentation, updating their skills and when we have revalidated and changed the programme my role involves informing them what the changes means regarding the criteria against which they assess the students."

The university has had a long standing focus on interprofessional, collaborative learning and along with the occupational therapy role, Lindsay works across the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing, and has been involved in both academic modules and placements that have a collaborative focus. She says, "I have, over time, gained an oversight of how different professionals work with each other, giving me insights to other professions generally and in particular how different professions need to organise their placements to meet regulatory requirements. I am involved in the practice component along with other colleagues with the aim of ensuring that when it comes to placements, everything is fair and equitable across the faculty and that positive learning environments are available to our students." Lindsay explains how she initially became

involved in the Ophthalmic Dispensing course: "Professor Kate Springett, Head of School of Allied Health Professions, asked me to be involved with the ophthalmic dispensing programme right from when ABDO College came on board with CCCU, to work with them particularly in relation to their placements by drawing on my experience of validating placement components of a programme and meeting academic standards that are required by the university. Alongside this my role involved liaising with and supporting the practice support team. In the process I learnt a lot from them and I hope they learnt something from me about how the university works and how to make an effective experience for their students as part of their degree."

Lindsay's initial work was focussed on developing the practice support team. Lindsay says, "We have well established structures in place in OT with regards to placements from the university, student and practice perspectives, and we had



Lindsay Keefe

to consider what the ABDO College practice support team might look like. There are parallels between OT and optics but also a huge amount of differences: student DOs are for example all employed and generally in the same practice placement throughout the duration of their training. I talked with the practice support team about what we did in OT, what DOs do, and how to find the common ground. There was work done in terms of the role of the practice support team and also the structure of the planned visits. With

team. The documentation and evidence needs to be really transparent.” Lindsey continues, “The other thing that struck me is that optics is a commercial world. Every student on placement and their mentor has demands on their time, and there were challenges in blocking out a time slot to support a student if a patient needed seeing because that didn’t just equate to time but also money. Appropriate time for support, guidance and teaching is vital for students in the workplace. I don’t believe that there is an easy solution to this time/money

The educator asks, ‘Have I got enough time, do I have enough skills?’ They need their self-belief building, and perhaps it shouldn’t be surprising that although the professions meet different needs for the service users, there are the same underlying principles when supporting students in practice.”

If you want to improve the placement experience, whether as a student or a supervisor, Lindsey has a couple of tips. She says, “Communication is key to a good placement, with the need for open and transparent discussions. There should be no surprises when it comes to make an assessment, the student needs continuous feedback on what’s going well, areas of future development and areas of concern. They need to know the level of competence they are working at. The educator needs confidence in their own knowledge based: the person who has been in practice a long time and has a certain way of working needs to not be afraid of learning from and with the student who may be exposed to new research, evidence bases and techniques. They can contribute to your professional development too.” Lindsey is positive about inter-professional training. She says, “Working across the faculty allows us to be more joined up in our thinking. As an OT I might be concerned that if someone can’t see effectively that this might impact on the work I am doing with them. DOs and OTs may be minority professions when compared to doctors and nurses, but we both need to make our voices heard, about the benefits we bring to our service users.”

‘Communication is key to a good placement.’

help from colleagues at ABDO College I was involved in delivering training contextualised to DOs for the practice support team. I also had an exciting time travelling to different parts of the country with the team for some of their first visits, to ensure that they were familiar with processes, but also to ensure equity and fairness with other parts of the faculty.”

Lindsey’s experience of working with ABDO College has given her some insights into their training, and placements in particular. She says, “At first it was a great revelation to me that the student might be mentored by a member of their own family. There are family businesses who naturally want to train up family members to take over. It was hard to get my head round how to remove potential conflicts of interest in the assessment process. That has been a challenge for the practice support

conundrum, but it is important to think about investing in students: practices are already investing in each student by releasing them to come to training. Investing a little more time in practice allows them to ensure that the student is working at a good level of competence and turns into a loyal qualified employee who does a good job.”

Overall, Lindsey has found a number of similarities for training across the professionals. She says, “What strikes me, and what was very striking at the time, is how many parallels there are. We can too easily think that different professions have different training needs. In fact it doesn’t matter what the student is training to do, they have the same concerns, and educators and assessors have the same concerns. Students want to know, ‘Am I going to pass, am I working at the right level?’

A unique career opportunity in dispensing optics

Working in partnership, ABDO College and Canterbury Christ Church University are proud to offer a comprehensive blended learning course for prospective dispensing opticians:

- The only blended learning degree course in ophthalmic dispensing available in the UK
- Leads to a BSc (Hons) degree and the registerable FBDO qualification
- A successful partnership committed to the furtherance of dispensing optics
- Equips students with the ability to problem-solve within the practice, benefiting both students and their employers
- A proven track record of success through consistently high theory and practical examination results
- Establishes a platform to build further career advancement

Foundation Degree/BSc (Hons) in Ophthalmic Dispensing

A two year Foundation Degree course followed by a third year BSc Degree course in Ophthalmic Dispensing – leading to BSc (Hons) and the ABDO Level 6 FBDO qualifications.

Course features

- Combines academic and work-based learning
- 32 weekly distance learning units in each academic year
- Four weeks block release at Godmersham in each academic year
- Access to supplementary web-based interactive tutorial presentations
- Block release accommodation can be provided
- Year 1 courses will commence in September 2015

Entry requirements

- Grade C or above GCSE in English, mathematics, science and two other subjects, including evidence of recent learning
- Applicants must be working in practice as a trainee dispensing optician for a minimum of 30 hours per week and have the support of their employer



KEEPING EXCELLENCE IN YOUR SIGHTS

For further information and application forms for this and other courses, or to request a copy of the ABDO College Prospectus, please contact the ABDO College Courses Team on **01227 738 828 (Option 1)** or email info@abdocollege.org.uk

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