

Re:View

Keeping excellence in your sights | April 2017 | Issue 29

**How to give
a presentation**

**Profile feature on
Monika Reinberger-Smith**

We find out about Monika
and her amblyopia screening
research

Equipment in practice

25 years a tutor

An interview with Kevin Gutsell

**How to become a
distance learning tutor**



Vision science 'top-up'



In this issue of *Re:View* we are pleased to announce that, working in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University, ABDO College

will be introducing a new BSc (Hons) in Vision Science course. The course, which is planned to start in September, is designed for FBDO qualified dispensing opticians seeking to acquire a 'top-up' degree. You will find a brief overview on

page 13 and further information will be released in due course. In the interview article with Kevin Gutsell, we hear about his 25 years as a tutor. If his experiences stimulate your interest then you can find out how to become a distance learning tutor on pages 12 & 13.

Also included in this issue, there are valuable tips on how to give a presentation, and useful practice equipment information with a check list of compulsory items for any practice with a trainee DO. The profile feature on Monika Reinberger-Smith outlines her remarkable career progression to

date and you can also find out about her amblyopia screening research.

Finally, there are news updates relating the College's move to Moodle, and social media channels.

At the time of writing ABDO College is looking forward to exhibiting, and holding its next tutor meeting, at Optrafair. We hope to see you there and plan to cover these events in the next issue.

Angela McNamee

BSc(Hons) MCOptom FBDO (Hons) CL FBCLA Cert Ed

Chairman,

ABDO College Board of Trustees

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How to give a presentation

Whether you are studying or working, there are occasions when you may need to give a presentation. You may need public speaking skills to explain your research findings, give a conference presentation, interview for a new job or contribute to staff training. Whether you are an experienced speaker looking to improve, or this is your first talk and you are feeling nervous here are seven basic rules to help you speak with confidence.

1 Make eye contact

From the moment you stand up to speak, make eye contact with your audience. Don't look at the slides on the screen behind you – have a copy in front of you so that you never turn your back. And if you have notes in your hand, make a point of only glancing at them for a moment before speaking, then turning to the audience. Make eye contact with different people in turn. For a small group you can make eye contact with each person: for a large room, speak to different sectors of the room – the far right corner, those to your left, those sitting centre middle and so on. If you do this, everyone in attendance will come away feeling as though you spoke directly to them.

2 Pace your words

Speak more slowly than you would do naturally. Record yourself practicing, and slow it down again. Remember that your material is likely to be new to your

audience and they will require time to take it in. If you notice that you are speeding up take a breath and slow it down again. Never be afraid to pause: this can be an effective tool to allow you time to consider your next point while your audience takes on board what you have just said. Again, practice and record yourself: a pause that feels too long to you can seem much shorter when you are listening back.

3 Speak to the back of the room

While you are thinking about eye contact and pace, also consider volume. Address your talk to the back of the room and no-one will have to strain to hear. Don't be afraid to ask people if they can hear you: it is an easy way to make contact with your audience and get people to reply to your first question.



4 Think words and pictures and props and...

If you're worried about keeping people interested, remember to use all their different senses and ways of thinking. A presentation definitely doesn't need to be just slides full of words or clip art anymore. Link to short video or sound clips if that is a good way to get a point

across. Animate your slides if this enhances what you are saying. Bring in props to hold up or pass round: a strong visual image will always help make something stick in people's minds. The lecturer who started his presentation wearing a pigeon mask is still well remembered by his former students! If you can find a reason to tie in snacks to your speech, these will keep people interested too. Add in questions to your slides to get people thinking, and if you have time ask people in the audience for responses. Write contributions up on a flip chart, or add them live on screen if you have the technology to do this. The more interaction you can build in, the more engaged people will be.

5 Mistakes don't matter

Everyone makes mistakes: even the most experienced speaker may drop something. If you miss a slide or mix up your notes, don't panic, and don't

embark on a lengthy explanation or apology. The audience generally only notice your mistakes when you draw attention to them. Take a breath, move on and your presentation can carry on as planned.

6 Remember the audience is your friend

Don't worry about a hostile reception from your audience. People who are listening to you speak want you to do

that you allow more time to practice than you think. Write your talk, practice it out loud, record it, listen back and you should find that there are things that you can change and improve. Enlist your family and your colleagues for your next practice session. Do a run through in front of a small audience, talking them through your slides and props just as you would at the real event.

If you are worried about things going wrong, take time to work out

'Bring in props to hold up or pass round: a strong visual image will always help make something stick in people's minds. The lecturer who started his presentation wearing a pigeon mask is still well remembered by his former students!'

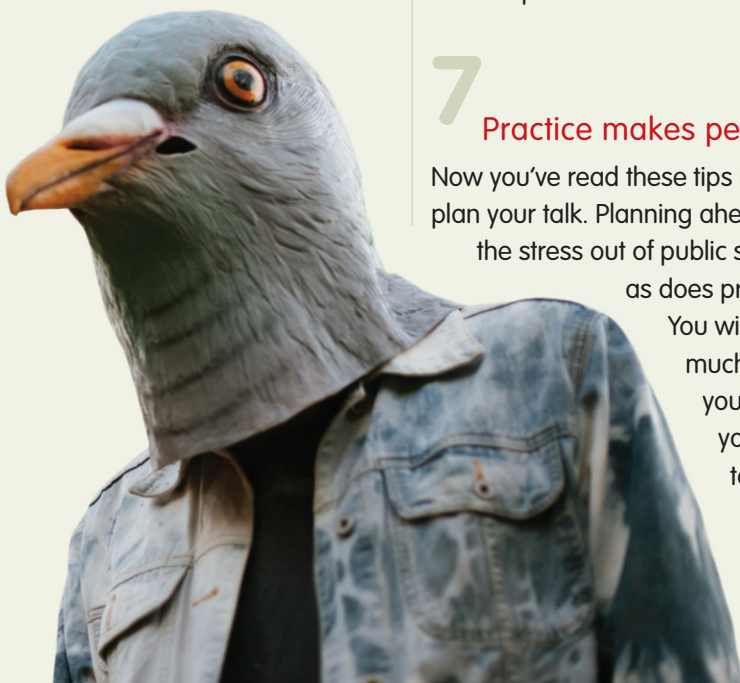
well. They are there to learn, to support you, to be entertained: it may be their turn to speak next!

7 Practice makes perfect

Now you've read these tips it's time to plan your talk. Planning ahead takes the stress out of public speaking, as does practising.

You will know how much practice you need: if you are new to speaking make sure

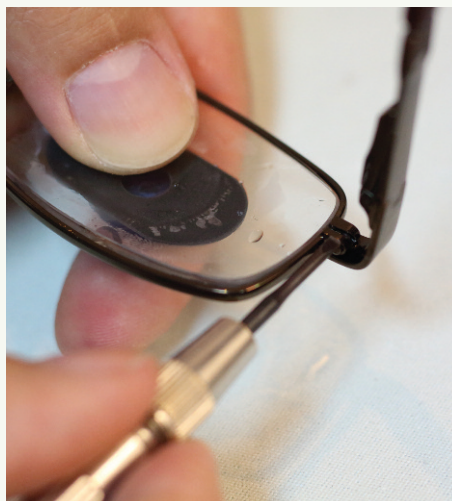
the 'what if' moments properly. 'What if I forget what I'm saying?' is easily answered by having your notes with you. 'What if I drop my notes?' You'll just pick them up again and carry on. The more you practice, the more confidence you will have. Say 'yes' when you are invited to give a talk, even if it is just at staff training in your practice. If you want more practice, look for local public speaking groups too, where you have the chance to speak on a different topic each week. You'll soon find that you are speaking with confidence and making the most of the opportunities public speaking gives you.



Equipment in practice

What equipment do you have in your practice? We all have a favourite pair of pliers, the frame heater and focimeter get used daily, but there is plenty of equipment beyond that which can make the DO's life easier. What's more, have you recently checked the list of required equipment for any practice with a trainee? Read through the accompanying equipment checklist and see what your practice might be missing.

Having the right tools for the job can make a tricky repair easy, and allow you to make an adjustment with ease and the precision you need. There is a list of equipment that every practice with a trainee should have, and this is a great place to start if you are checking through your practice supplies. Alicia Thompson BSc(Hons) FBDO R (Hons) SLD SMC(Tech) is the director of professional examinations for ABDO. She explains the thinking behind the required equipment list: "The rationale is that the students have access to equipment that will hopefully achieve the following: teach basic skills to underpin theoretical knowledge, such as using a lens measure to further understand lens form; prepare for professional examinations, manual focimetry, facial and frame measurements, hand neutralisation, fitting, repairs, checking etc; encourage enhanced customer service, by performing own repairs in practice; using 'best practice' techniques, such as using correct pliers to adjust frame parameters which minimises potential damage to frame; and have the ability to order bespoke products, such as a handmade frame." When you consider



all those different tasks it is no wonder that the list is extensive. Alicia adds, "Some items on the list may seem a little archaic but we have to encompass all types of practice, automated and

'Some items on the list may seem a little archaic...'

manual demonstration, and supervisors who all have different ways of practicing."

A good range of equipment has uses far beyond simply complying with examination requirements. In a discussion on the ABDO Facebook group, Anita

Hammond mentioned owning, "a fantastic little hook tool from Hilco for popping lenses back in to a supra. It saves the fiddly tugging with a bit of plastic," which sparked a request for a photo, and where to find the tool which would solve problems for many DOs. Other tools mentioned in the discussion included wide jaw angling pliers, nose pad pliers, parallel pliers and compression/ tensioner pliers for rimless adjustment. If you are unfamiliar with any of these, request tool manufacturers catalogues and spend a little time browsing and checking the equipment in your practice. There may be tools lurking unused that could help you with tricky adjustments or repairs. There are other items of equipment that can improve things for the patient. Emma Hatfield mentioned a trial frame and flippers, to check working distances etc. She adds, "I used to keep a sewing kit handy for changing the compression joints in a rimless and the needles are handy for wiggling supra-cord out of a frame."

If you want to find out what other tools and gadgets might help you in practice, invest a little time in browsing

websites and visit the stands belonging to the main tool suppliers at optical exhibitions so you have a chance to try tools out. Talk to colleagues and fellow students and find out which tools they couldn't do without.

Equipment checklist

This equipment is compulsory for any practice where a trainee is undertaking their PQP. All supervisors are advised to check this list at the outset and if any items are missing to ensure they are obtained. This list will be checked by the ABDO practice visitor during their visit:

Documentation

- ☐ Copy of the Practice Health & Safety Act
- ☐ Practice Public Liability Certificate
- ☐ Supervisor's current professional indemnity insurance
- ☐ Access demonstrated to or copy of the ABDO 'Protective eyewear' publication (available on the ABDO website) or EN166/EN167 Standards
- ☐ Access demonstrated to or copy of relevant sections of the Data Protection Act or full Act (available on www.legislation.gov.uk)
- ☐ Copy of BS/ISO tolerances for finished spectacles

Equipment

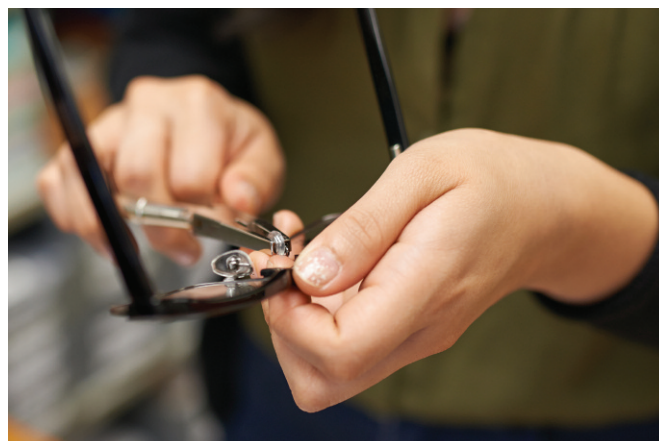
- ☐ Files and locknut wrenches
- ☐ Frame heater
- ☐ Lens measure
- ☐ Facilities for supra cord replacement
- ☐ Access to manual focimeter (automated focimeters are not acceptable in any examination)
- ☐ Appropriate rules to measure frames and faces
- ☐ Range of pliers for adjustments to include all of the following:
 - ☐ Round snipe nose pliers
 - ☐ Flat nose pliers
 - ☐ Rimless mount bracing pliers
 - ☐ Rim-forming pliers
 - ☐ Parallel jaw pliers
- ☐ Side cutters
- ☐ A means of measuring Vertex distance (Vertex distance callipers or ruler)

Facilities to demonstrate

- ☐ Multifocals
- ☐ Tinted lenses
- ☐ High index lenses to demonstrate comparable thicknesses / aspheric lenses
- ☐ Coated lenses – anti reflections and hard coatings

Trainees should have reasonable access during their training to the following equipment


- ☐ Corneal reflex pupillometer
- ☐ Photochromic demonstrator
- ☐ Head callipers
- ☐ Lens protractor
- ☐ Strain tester
- ☐ Lens thickness callipers
- ☐ Trial case lenses
- ☐ Uncut size determinator



ABDO College social media update

ABDO College is now active on social media, so you can check in on Facebook, Tweet about what you're learning or follow the College on LinkedIn for news about the profession. Please share photos from optical events with us and invite your colleagues to like the social media accounts too.

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOCollege>

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-abdo-college-of-education>

 <https://twitter.com/abdocollege>


To tie in with the new ABDO regional structure there are new Twitter and Facebook accounts for each region to make it easier for you to find local ABDO events and other news. Please follow the account that ties in to your region – you may want to like two pages if you live and work in different regions, and when you've done that, please invite and tag colleagues too:

LONDON

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOLND>

 <https://twitter.com/ABDOLND>

MIDLANDS AND EAST OF ENGLAND

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOMidlands>

 <https://www.twitter.com/ABDOMidlands>

NORTHERN IRELAND

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDONorthernIreland>


 <https://twitter.com/ABDONIreland>

NORTH OF ENGLAND

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDONorthEngland>

 <https://twitter.com/ABDONorthofEng>

SCOTLAND

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOScotland>

 <https://twitter.com/ScotlandABDO>

SOUTH OF ENGLAND

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOSouthEngland>

 <https://twitter.com/ABDOSouth>

WALES

 <https://www.facebook.com/ABDOWales>

 <https://twitter.com/WalesABDO>



ABDO College 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

Monika Reinberger-Smith

We find out about Monika and her research



Monika Reinberger-Smith is a recent graduate from the honours ophthalmic dispensing degree at ABDO College and Canterbury Christ Church University. She practices for Specsavers in Galashiels. Her dissertation was based on an assessment of 'Current screening methods for early amblyopia in the context of their application by a dispensing optician in primary care setting in Scotland'. In this article you can find out more about Monika, and in the following pages find out more about amblyopia screening and how this could become more relevant to dispensing opticians.

Monika says, "It's ten years this May since I started to work in optics. I initially applied to work as a lab technician but didn't get the job. A few months later I was offered a job as an optical assistant. I was given training, and after a short while moved to work in the lab as well as on the shop floor. Working in the lab made me question why things were glazed in a certain way, I wanted to know more. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) were offering courses for optical staff. I did the WCSM Level 5 Certificate in Optical Care via distance learning with exams, then I did the Level 7 course. There was an award for the person with the highest marks: NES would sponsor their degree in ophthalmic dispensing. I had already checked out the different places that offered degrees in dispensing optics. I knew that you had to register with ABDO, and that's what made me opt for ABDO College."

Monika achieved top marks in her Level 7 exam, and was offered the scholarship to study for the degree in



ophthalmic dispensing. She says, "I was very fortunate to be offered this, not least because the scholarship was

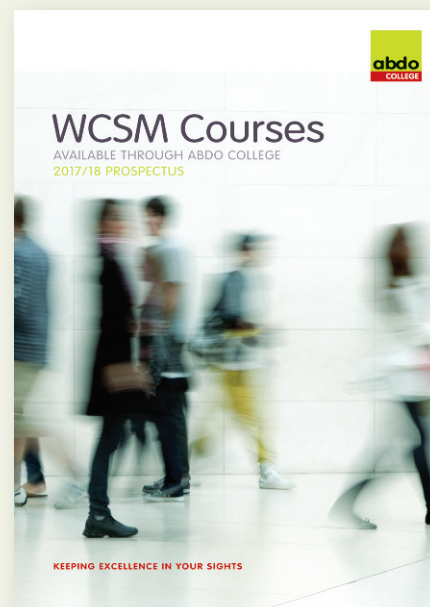
for ABDO College, the place I wanted to attend. It was the best in my opinion, even though it was 450 miles from

home!" Monika explains, "Every time I went on block release I had a nine hour drive – the first one was scary, but it became like an adventure every time. My friend and I would hire a cottage to stay in for the two week block, and although we worked hard, it was also like a holiday. The block release weeks are at different times of the year so I could discover all the beauties of Kent. I loved the picturesque views from the cottage in the morning, with mist rolling across the fields while I drank my morning coffee. Kent is amazing, Canterbury is so close, I used my car to explore on my weekends off. The location meant that even after eight hours of studying during the day I could take a beautiful walk before returning to the cottage for more study. I will be going back for family holidays." The course lived up to Monika's hopes and expectations in many ways. She says, "I enjoyed every minute. It was extremely challenging to do the degree course. The essays gave us a choice of subject to some extent, which meant that I was motivated by my interest in the topic. The research process was easier than the writing. In the first year I wasn't sure why we studied preparation for learning, but it made sense in the second and third year once I put my research skills into practice." Monika was most concerned about her maths skills, as she hadn't used them for some time. She says, "I went on the BBC revision site. I borrowed some books from a friend, and by the end I really liked all the maths, my hard work paid off and maths was my best friend. Low vision was really good and I've kept in

touch with that with a recent CET course. You can apply it in real life practice which makes it so much more interesting. Contact lenses were the best, I really wanted to learn more. I really felt that all of the subjects had a purpose which kept me interested."

Monika's dissertation looked at, 'Current screening methods for early amblyopia in the context of their application by a dispensing optician in primary care setting in Scotland.' She says, "We had written a few essays about what we could change in optics and I was looking for an area of professional practice for my dissertation that could be further developed. I have two children who have had screening, so I know what it looked like from a parent's perspective, which made me think that a dispensing optician could do the screening. Looking at the research, I discovered there is guidance, but not one recommended set method for screening. My research makes me think dispensing opticians should get more involved and develop the profession in that way."

Having completed her degree, Monika is now studying for the ABDO Level 6 Certificate in Contact Lens Practice. She says, "I'm finding it a new challenge. I love the clinical part, using the slit lamp, the practice with lenses, and the possibility of more complex fittings – I'm positive that this is not my last course. I will definitely do the Contact Lens Honours course. I have considered a Masters course and I have lots of ideas about research but I'm not looking that far ahead yet."



WCSM Courses prospectus

A new 2017/18 prospectus featuring the full range of the WCSM Courses available through ABDO College has now been published.

The WCSM courses available from ABDO College range from Level 2 Optical Support to Level 4 Optical Technicians and lead to examination based qualifications awarded by the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers.

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

Current screening methods for early amblyopia in the community: the application by a dispensing optician in primary care settings

By Monika Reinberger-Smith BSc(Hons) FBDO

INTRODUCTION

Paediatric dispensing has been reserved by the law to registered practitioners such as optometrists (OO) or dispensing opticians (DO) (Opticians Act 1989, section 27). One reason for this is that the visual system develops for years after birth, providing an opportunity to correct abnormalities and prevent visual deficiencies in binocular vision (Tunnacliffe, 1993). Due to this, one of the Core Competencies for Dispensing Opticians, established by General Optical Council (GOC), contains the requirement for the understanding of the principles of refractive management, including binocular vision abnormalities, the screening and the correction methods for children (GOC, 2011). One of the most common reasons of visual deficiency in children was found to be amblyopia (Thompson *et al*, 2015). If left untreated amblyopia could result in a profound effect on the child's life and further on into adulthood. Early detection of amblyopia and start of treatment gives the child the best chance for visual improvement. Treatment options include refractive adaptation. If ineffective, this is followed by occlusion therapy (Simmers and Dulle, 2014).

The purpose of this research is twofold: firstly, to critically evaluate the evidence available on commonly used screening methods for amblyopia in children and to learn which one potentially has the highest rates of success (due to the limited scope of this paper only recognition acuity tests were taken into consideration); secondly, to consider whether the evidence found could be used in practice by a DO to improve the patient's care within a primary and secondary healthcare setting in Scotland.

DISCUSSION

Screening design, whether picture or a letter, whether crowded or single optotype format, have an impact on the VA results achieved when testing children and adults. It was not possible to determine which paediatric screening method was the most accurate in detection of amblyopia, but it was possible to arrive at some deductions. Crowded formats were more sensitive than single optotype tests and that the letter-type formats were also better than picture tests. This evidence was consistent with the recommendation from The College of Optometrists (2014). Picture optotype tests were easier to perform with very young children but a significant number could finish the more difficult, letter-type screening. The issue of VA overestimation by some of the screening methods could have several implications. For that reason, the same screening protocol should be used by all professionals involved in the screening and treatment of amblyopia. Practitioners should be aware of possible VA deterioration when moving from picture to letter-type tests and vice versa.

Studies provided an argument that refractive adaptation, as a first stage of treatment had high rates of success (Maconachie and Gottlob, 2015). Refractive correction was the first step recommended by NHS Scotland (2005) followed by referral to Orthoptist and Hospital Eye Service (HES) for alternative treatment if no improvement was seen within the first three months of full time wear. In practice this process was usually extended to at least sixteen weeks (Barrett, 2015) as there were high success rates with this treatment method alone (Simmers and Dulle, 2014).

In Scotland, initial screening for visual disorders was advised for children between four and five years of age (NHS Scotland, 2005) in line with guidance proposed by NSC (2013). It was advised that the screening was performed by an orthoptist in a local hospital or in an orthoptic-led clinic. However, VIP (2005) Study Group provided an argument that the VA screening could be successfully administered by nurses or non-qualified personnel with adequate training, giving results comparable to screening done by qualified professionals.

If refractive correction was prescribed as a part of the treatment, the child would attend a local optical practice to obtain spectacles at which stage the expertise of a DO was employed. Any further repairs or adjustments in course of regular check-ups were also to be executed by, or at least completed under the supervision, of a DO. After treatment commenced the child had to return to the hospital at regular intervals to check the progress of the treatment. With the increasing pressure on HES in Scotland, it was proposed to utilise the expertise of the professionals in primary care, primarily OOs, by extending the provision of available services including the management of conditions such as glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy screenings (NHS Scotland 2005; Parkins *et al*, 2014) which in consequence was to provide better access for the patient and improve overall care.

During their training, DOs have acquired all the necessary knowledge on paediatric screening methods required in order to satisfy the fundamentals specified by the GOC (2011) in Core Competencies for Dispensing Opticians. DOs have been highly trained in paediatric dispensing, as they have usually been the first point of contact for the patient or a parent in case of any query regarding the spectacles or the prescription (Bartlam, 2014). This suggested that they maintained the understanding and possessed the experience of how to interact with children in order to have built trust and good rapport. Furthermore, it was also prudent to assume that the accessibility to the optical practice was better for the patient than to HES as the former could potentially offer longer opening hours, evening or weekend appointments. Consequently, the transfer of visual acuity screening for amblyopia to a primary care setting would benefit the patient and take pressure from HES. Eye examinations are NHS funded in Scotland and the number increased to just over two million in the last eight years (ISD, 2015) so it seems reasonable to assign that shift of care to a DO, even if supplementary training is required.

Context of their ng in Scotland

CONCLUSION

The subject of amblyopia is extensive and complex. Numerous research studies brought evidence to light which required revision of already known facts and highlighted the requirement for continuous education and investigation. Inconsistencies were found with regards to screening methods. No official guidance was found on the subject and there was only general advice. This is an area of potential development and improvement in the future. If there is one universally accepted screening method used by all professionals, this would benefit the patient and improve overall care. The evidence that emerged from the research available is relevant to DO practice and could potentially be used in the provision of the services provided by a DO in a primary care setting in Scotland.

As the optical practice becomes the first point of contact for patients searching for eye related care, the DO within the practice should maintain and update their knowledge on the subject of amblyopia, screening and treatments methods in order to provide accurate information to both patients and their carers. During spectacle collection it is necessary to check the VA of a young child with a prescription issued by HES: the DO should be aware of which type of screening was used in the first place to maintain consistency. If the screening and initial treatment of amblyopia is moved to a primary care setting the possibility of errors could be reduced. It would also enable a significant amount of cases to be resolved through successful treatment within the optical practice alone. If a DO is responsible for the whole process through from the initial VA screening, the subsequent referral for an eye examination when required, the spectacle dispense and the regular VA checks during the treatment process, this would potentially free up appointments within HES for patients with eye conditions which would include amblyopia resistant to refractive adaptation. Perhaps the future evolution of the DO profession would be to become the orthoptist's equivalent within the primary care setting in a similar fashion as optometrists are to ophthalmologists.



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25 years a tutor

An interview with Kevin Gutsell

Have you considered becoming a tutor for ABDO College? Every year, this hidden army of dedicated dispensing opticians spend time each week marking papers for ABDO College students. In this article you can hear from Kevin Gutsell who has been a tutor for 25 years, and find out a little more about what is involved.

With thirty years' experience in optics, Kevin Gutsell is well known across the profession. Alongside his more public facing roles, he has also helped new entrants to the profession qualify as dispensing opticians through his work as a distance learning tutor for ABDO College. Kevin says, "It was in 1992 that I began my career as a distance learning tutor. I'd moved house, which made my journey to work much shorter. I read in *Dispensing Optics* magazine that ABDO needed new tutors and thought it might be an interesting way to make use of those extra hours. On top of that, I didn't want to forget what I'd learnt: I thought supervising students as they worked on their assignments might be a good way to remind myself of what I'd learnt."

Kevin signed up as a tutor and completed the certificate in tutoring that was required at the time. He says, "The work was all paper based then, and I occasionally spoke to students on the telephone. It was a very international course at that point, and I supervised students from South Africa, Greece and Malaysia. All the papers would arrive by post, and I would have to find time each week to visit the post office to send back marked papers and the answer guide."



Technology has transformed the way distance learning tutors work, and Kevin says "Nowadays students email their work to their tutor, and I send it back corrected, still with an answer guide. We use scanners, and sometimes students send photos of their diagrams and drawings. Technology saves issues with postal delays or work going missing." There are pros and cons to the increased use of technology, Kevin says: "I probably only need to make half a dozen calls to students each year: often that is to do with issues with

submitting work. It is sad in some ways to lessen the personal interaction. Emails can make tutoring a 24 hour a day job: you need to be disciplined not to constantly check your text and emails. Despite that, I know that when students are asked to feedback they will rate you on your ability to respond 24/7! There needs to be flexibility and understanding on both sides, not least because people embrace technology to different degrees."

Looking at the practical details of tutoring, Kevin explains: "Nowadays I will receive emails with the work on a Monday or Tuesday. I will then spend an hour and a half on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday evenings marking the papers. It works out to between 45 minutes and an hour per student, but this will vary enormously depending on whether that week's paper is an essay or is calculation based. The second-year diploma students, for example, could be studying anatomy or doing lens calculations. It still works well for me as a way of ensuring that I stay up to date on all the different aspects of knowledge in dispensing optics." Kevin continues, "Some tutors mark all the questions from one student, others might mark across the questions, looking at everyone's answers to each question. I will mark one student at a time, but then see if students keep coming up with the same error, for example, and go back. There are a minority of students who ask questions about every comment you make on their paper, but that's infrequent. Most students understand where they have gone wrong after reading the

Moodle update

answer guide, and block release gives them a second chance to go over a topic. I would be happy to see more students with queries, but I know students find support from their peers, or maybe their supervisor or group training manager.”

Twenty-five years is a long time to be a tutor, and Kevin explains his motivation: “Each year I attend the ABDO graduation ceremony. This may be the only time I meet some of the students face to face, but it is great when they come up and thank me for being their tutor. I run into students years later too, at CET events and conferences, and they remember you. It is satisfying to know that you have helped them, and great to see where they have gone in their careers. People still message me to ask for advice. I’ve now been a supervisor for twenty-five years, with twelve to fifteen students a year. In some years I have worked with two batches of students, those starting in September and those starting in January, making 28 groups in total. That’s a lot of people who I have helped to become part of the profession.” Kevin adds, “We know the need for tutors is growing, there are more people on the ABDO College courses each year. There are financial benefits to becoming a tutor, of course, but beyond that there is the chance to stay involved, to refresh your own knowledge, and to give something back to the profession.”

If you are interested in being part of the tutoring team, read the ‘How to become a distance learning tutor’ article on pages 12 & 13.

Have you heard about the move to Moodle? In every issue of *Re:View* we will update you with ABDO College’s move to an online learning environment.

Moodle is a learning platform designed to provide educators, administrators and learners with a single robust, secure and integrated system to create personalised learning environments. Currently the five Access courses offered by ABDO College are all up and running on Moodle, and according to ABDO College lecturer Simon Butterfield who is overseeing the Moodle project, “Everything seems to be going well, with only one or two issues to streamline.”

Simon is getting ready for the next step which is using Moodle for the Year 1 diploma course in September. He explains, “We are definitely only going ahead with Year 1 in September, and will roll out over the three years, just to keep the same method delivery for the entire course for the students. This follows feedback from academics and our externals.” Simon adds, “From September, all students will also have access to all their coursework and much of their block-release work through the Virtual Learning Platform, whether or not their method of delivery is through Moodle. They will be able to communicate with their peers through the online environment, and have access to a range of support materials we are developing, such as screen casts of a lecturer talking through a topic or document. We are also making recordings of completed worked examples, with narration, of some of the more difficult graphical constructions, step-along and formula proofs etc.”

The next step for the VLP development, is the Optrafair Tutor meeting in April, where around 70 tutors are having a day-long workshop to ensure that they are all up-to-date with Moodle. Simon says, “This is a chance to get as much feedback from as many end-users as possible so we can further tailor it to the students’ and tutors’ needs.”

Keep reading *Re:View* for more updates about Moodle.



How to become a distance learning tutor

In the article on pages 10 & 11 you can read about Kevin Gutsell's experience of 25 years as a distance learning tutor for ABDO College. In this feature you can find out more about the practicalities of applying to be a tutor, the training you would receive, and the work involved.

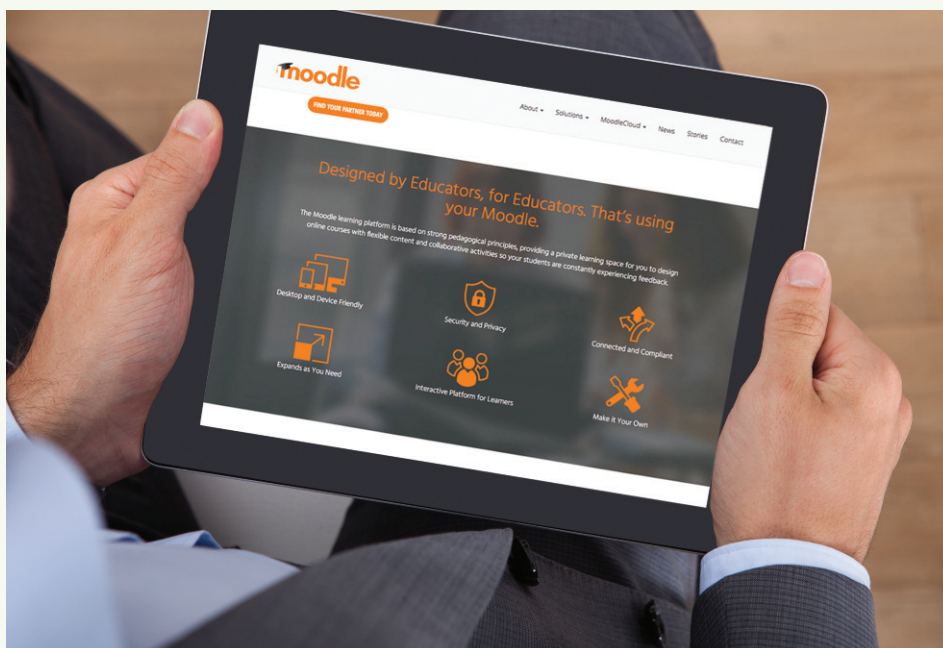
Did you know that there are around 80 distance learning tutors working for ABDO College? This hidden army of qualified dispensing opticians support students on all the different courses offered by the College, marking their work each week and providing feedback on their answers. Every year ABDO College recruits and trains more distance learning tutors to support the growing number of students. There are many benefits to being a tutor, from the opportunity to earn a little extra in your evenings or on your day off, to the chance to support the next generation of dispensing opticians and continually refresh your own knowledge. If this sounds like something that appeals to you, the first step is to contact ABDO College and request the form to register your interest. In order to qualify to apply to be a tutor, you need to have passed your four final theory exams at first attempt. You will also be asked to indicate any special areas of interest. This form will be kept on file until the next tutor training course, at which point you will be invited to take part.

Tutor courses are run on the new ABDO College Moodle online learning system. You don't need to attend the College: instead over eight to nine weeks you will complete assignments

and submit them to a senior tutor for assessment. The assignments will help you learn the rationale and method behind marking students' work. You will learn about how to give students constructive feedback and coach them to achieve their full potential. The course does not look at the actual topics covered by the students: it is assumed that as a qualified dispensing optician you will have learnt this already. You will be given examples of marking to read, and you will be asked to mark example papers yourself so that the senior tutor can see how you apply the skills you

have learnt. You will be graded for each assignment which will contribute to a pass or fail at the end. The majority of students pass: for example in the most recent course there was an 87 per cent pass rate. You are then ready to move on to the next stage of tutoring.

Depending on the time of year, there are different opportunities available to newly qualified distance learning tutors. Initially you will be allocated a small number of students and the work you have marked will be sent onto a senior tutor before they are returned to the student, to double check your knowledge and reinforce your marking capability. You will get feedback and advice on how to improve the consistency of your marking if needed. There is a wide range of courses on offer at ABDO College, from Access level to degree to revision. You may be allocated to one of the introductory courses first, rather than



those leading to the FBDO qualification. Currently the cohort of tutors who passed the tutor course in autumn 2016 are supporting students on the ABDO College Access courses. They are supported by mentors who check the work they have marked and ensure consistency. With more experience as a tutor, you may then find yourself tutoring a group of six or ten students as they pass through the Fellowship Dispensing Diploma or Foundation Degree in Ophthalmic Dispensing course. At the end of their course, all students are also asked to evaluate their tutor, on factors including approachability, speed of response to queries, and whether the tutor's comments help the student to identify their strengths and weaknesses. You will then get feedback that will help you improve your work as a tutor.

If you are wondering about the rewards of tutoring, tutors are paid per student, and the fee offered depends on the level, length and type of course. Beyond that you will find that some students require more input than others, but this averages out when you tutor a small group of people. Most tutors will say that the money is not the only motivating factor: instead they enjoy brushing up their knowledge on a whole range of topics, and most of all, seeing the next generation develop and learn. ABDO College is always able to accept expressions of interest in becoming a distance learning tutor. If you want to become a tutor, contact ABDO College on 01227 738 829 (Option 1) or email info@abdocollege.org.uk and ask for a 'Registration of Interest in Tutor Course' form.

BSc (Hons) Vision Science

Course starts in September 2017

Provided by ABDO College working in conjunction with Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU), the new BSc (Hons) in Vision Science course is designed for fully qualified dispensing opticians who wish to gain a profession specific degree and acquire graduate skills that can be applied to the workplace.

- **A unique opportunity for dispensing opticians to 'top-up' to a degree whilst still working in practice**
- **Designed for those with the FBDO diploma who want a profession specific degree**
- **A collaborative programme between ABDO College and CCCU**
- **Online distance learning via CCCU's Virtual Learning Environment**
- **Study at a time that suits you 24/7**
- **No travel or accommodation costs, no books to buy, no exams to take**
- **Flexible timeframe – 18 months is the suggested time, but you have up to three years**
- **Mix of assessments, essays, poster, leaflet, case study, workplace project...**
- **Three compulsory modules and three optional modules from a list which includes contact lenses and low vision**
- **Applications open in May 2017 for a course start date in September 2017**

Applicants should have the ABDO Level 6 Diploma in Ophthalmic Dispensing (FBDO) qualification and have current ABDO membership.


For more information and to register your interest call the courses team at ABDO College on 01227 738 829 (Option 1) or email info@abdocollege.org.uk

ABDO College working in conjunction with



Become a contact lens optician

If you have recently qualified as a dispensing optician you might be wondering about your next step, or if you have been working in optics for a number of years you may want a new challenge, so why not become a contact lens optician?

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a clear contact lens between their thumb and index finger. In the background, two orange contact lens cases are visible on a white surface.

The ABDO College Contact Lens Certificate course provides an ideal opportunity for opticians to further their career by specialising in contact lenses. The course leads to the ABDO Level 6 Certificate in Contact Lens Practice qualification, enabling registration on the General Optical Council specialty register for contact lens dispensing.

Course features

- A one year course commencing in September 2017
- Two separate weeks block release at Godmersham
- Block release accommodation can be provided

Entry requirements

- ABDO Fellowship Diploma and GOC registration, or for existing students a successful pass in the final theory examinations
- Qualified, registered optometrists and ophthalmologists are also eligible to enrol

Application deadline:

31 July 2017

For further information and an application form, please contact the ABDO College Courses Team on **01227 738 829 (Option 1)** or email **info@abdocollege.org.uk**

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