Shading technique in direct aesthetic restorations

By Sushil Koirala, Nepal

Natural teeth are complex in structure and difficult to imitate because many colours are distributed through the enamel and dentin. The structural components of teeth — enamel, dentin and pulp — have different characteristics that greatly influence their optical properties. It is well accepted that the colour of a tooth is basically determined by its dentin component.

Dentin represents the opaque and complex core — rich in hue, chroma and fluorescence — and is covered by an enamel shell, which is translucent and opalescent. This diversity and the alteration between enamel and dentin explain the unique and individual nature of the appearance of a natural tooth. The opaque material (similar to dentin) has been described as “double effect layer.”

There are two shading techniques commonly used in direct aesthetic restorations: the blended shading technique and the layered shading technique.

Blended shading technique

In this shading technique, also known as traditional shading method, the result achieved by applying clear and translucent material (similar to enamel) over a saturated and opaque material (similar to dentin) has been described as “double-effect layer.”

Clinically, it is important to have a detailed examination of colour, opacity, translucency, texture, surface gloss and presence of any special characterisation such as hypocalcification, stain crack, etc., of the tooth in need of restoration. The detailed study of these components and colour mapping are quite helpful in choosing the appropriate restorative materials and shading technique.

Solving esthetic dilemmas

Dr. Bruce LeBlanc notes that direct composites have a longevity that qualifies them as a great value in terms of solving esthetic dilemmas. In addition, with conservative tooth preparations, the solution can often be realized in one visit.

Batman and braces?

Shirley Gutkowski, RDH, BSDH, FACE, reveals how hygienists can intervene to cure the melted enamel under and around orthodontic brackets and bands. This may even mean suggesting the braces be removed in the most extreme cases of uncooperative patients.

Four tenets for tough times

By Sally McKenzie, CMC

Today’s retailers certainly will confirm that when the economy takes a turn for the worse, consumer focus shifts from luxury to necessity. Moreover, many dentists would encounter similar behaviors in their practices. The focus of care moves from elective to need-based. It’s tougher to sell those high dollar cosmetic cases. In addition, patients are less inclined to stay with your practice if you are not on their company’s insurance plan.

You are likely feeling the pain of more no-shows and cancellations. Everyone is walking on financial eggshells, causing many to pause before they dare ask, “So how’s business these days?”

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