I am delighted to announce that I am up to date with my course work – all lectures so far have been listened to and the critical reading has been printed out and read – well, skimmed anyway!

We have left Unit 1 behind, except for the end of unit assessment which is due in a week's time – five short answer questions on topics ranging from the characteristics I would seek in a new caries diagnostic device, to how I would choose between a conformative or reorganised approach to the occlusal scheme in a patient requiring multiple posterior restorations replaced. Sounds like a day in the life of a general practitioner... Still, putting my thoughts down in a succinct yet organised manner will require some effort! I haven’t received the results from the first assessment where I really did struggle to answer the questions within the word allocation which makes me slightly nervous...

Unit 1 covered the Foundations of Clinical Practice, leading us into Unit 2 entitled Aesthetic Foundations. This is much more familiar territory for me, having spent the last eight years of my professional career involved in the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. I would classify my learning style as 'highly impatient' or 'cut to the chase' – I can’t abide waffle, and I was concerned that as I have spent many years learning about smile design, aesthetic evaluation etc, I may become frustrated with having to revisit these areas. All credit goes to Chris Orr – not only was his presentation a work of art (must be a Mac thing) – but he did keep my attention and pulled the information together in a very logical and scientific method. His excellent use of actual cases served as real-life examples to describe smile evaluation, which can often be a tedious subject to teach as it so often turns into a long list covering lip line, embrasures, contact points, connector lengths, golden proportion etc. Included in the lectures was an e-learning unit on photography which was excellent. Even as a regular user of digital photography, I gained some useful insights into how I could further utilise photography on a daily basis.

As I write this, the next thing is our first residential learning course in London. More on hands-on photography – yippee! I have spent years teaching my team how to take excellent photographs which I don’t have to turn up with my camera! What goes around comes around. My team are looking forward to me showing myself up in a subject I used to teach in the early days of BACD! We’ll see – I am looking forward to meeting my fellow students who have so far just been a list of names and comments beside the webinars.

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Cut to the chase learning

In this issue of her blog, Elaine Halley discusses the latest developments in being an online MSc student