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: 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-Ann (Ian’s wife and course administrator), and reserved 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 TMD to Smile Design. The usual questions featured in my mind: Would it be worth the cost? Would I learn things that would improve my dentistry? Would they be applicable to my core curriculum? Would they be useful and make the courses excellent value for money.

Over the next six months I completed the remainder of the core curriculum which 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 group 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 timings extended at their insistence to enable this. This added lots of value and made the courses excellent value for money.

In short, I feel that it is an excellent course. The philosophy of the Dawson approach really emanates from Peter Dawson himself, possibly the most important figure in the advancement of complete dentistry, and Ian Buckle, along with John Cranham, Glenn Dupont, Dewayne Wilkinson and Andrew Cobbito name a few have brought this philosophy forward. They teach with a passion and desire to spread their knowledge as Peter Dawson would have wished when the academy was first set up.

The University of Birmingham School of Dentistry is an exciting place to work, and has increased my enjoyment of all aspects of dentistry. Furthermore, with the Dawson Academy, 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!

Mention must also be made of the venue – I attended the hands-on classes at Ian’s practice in 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!

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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.

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