Simply the best
Chris Dakin discusses the UK Dawson Academy...

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 on 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 re-served 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 Daw- son Academy lecture: Functional Occlusion – From TMJ to Smile De- sign. The usual questions featured in my thoughts. Would it be worth the cost? Would I learn things that would improve my dentistry? Would they be applicable to my core curriculum to the UK, and wards the independent/private sector? I was considering what to spend my money on next! Would they be applicable to my core curriculum to the UK, and wards the independent/private sector? I was considering what to spend my money on next!

The Dawson Academy however brought something very new to my career progression. In 2009 I undertook the first set of four modules for the core curriculum and found that importantly all the fragmented pieces of knowledge that I had been able to come together so that I could finally start to implement the concepts of complete dentistry into the practice. The course offers a pragmatic and systematic approach from carrying out a comprehensive examination through to treatment planning and implementation. From 2010 onwards I have successfully completed a significant number of cases, from full mouth rehabilitations to complex implant work.

To change a career path is a big step. Having worked for many years I struggled to apply the principles that I had learnt. Focusing on the approach of a systematic diagnosis and treatment plan I began to approach my treatment decision making in a different way. I used the three dimensional approaches taught by Dr Buckle and started to visualise and create plans in the diagnostic wax up phase myself rather than expect a technician to guess where the teeth should go and what they should look like. This alone improves clinical and diagnostic skills and coupled with the additional modules of anterior restoration and equilibration helps to make important treatment making decisions in the planning phase rather than start treatment with no concept of how it will conclude. An uncertain future would not help our profession make the decisions.

The Dawson Academy has been the best postgraduate course I’ve taken. So much so, that when Ian set up some advanced courses I readily signed up. It has given me a set of clinical princi- ples and a framework in which to apply them. It has made my work more predictable, repeatable and has increased my enjoyment of dentistry. Furthermore, the lec- tures and course material forms a collection (along with Peter Daw- son’s textbook) to which I fre- quently refer. I have a part-time teaching position at The Univer- sity of Birmingham, and I would like to think that it has helped me to teach some occlusion concepts to my undergraduate students.

In short, I feel that it is an ex- cellent course, the continuum has also given me the chance to meet like-minded dentists, many of whom have become good friends. I’m sure many of them would agree with this.

About the author
Chris Dakin qualified in 2002 and works as an associate dentist in pri- vate practice in Shipton-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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**" A career path change and discovering my passion **

My first experience of the Dawson academy was a BDA lecture in Birmingham, where I first met Ian Buckle and was impressed with both his knowledge and enthusiasm. I had studied previously under well respected speakers, Bill Comcowich and Roy Higson, so my knowledge of occlusion was already at a respectable level.

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At this transitional time, Dr Buckle is there to help. He encourages bringing models and helping with the treatment making decisions, while always insisting that the all the records are as accurate as possible. Poor records mean all further stages are compromised. Unlike many of the restorative guru out there, Dr Buckle is always approachable.

This course has truly changed my practicing career and I am now doing the kind of dentistry I could only have imagined a few years ago. I have since gone on to the advanced set of modules and slowly have gained the confidence to tackle complex and difficult cases.

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, Dwellt Wilkinson and Andrew Cobito (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.