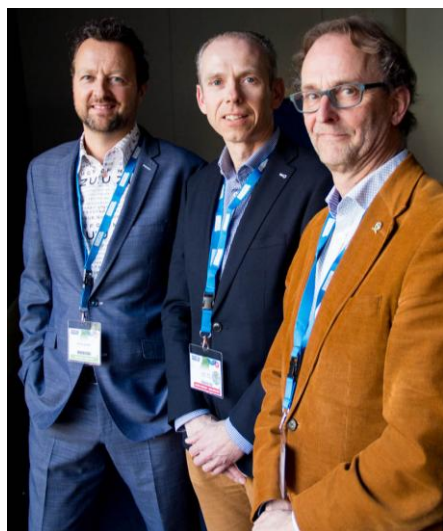


March 2016

Dutch members meet to discuss the future for education in the Netherlands



A new qualification structure for optics in the Netherlands means that contact lens education is about to change. Henri Eek reports on an IACLE Educator Meeting held to coincide with the recent Nederlands Contactlens Congress (NCC) in Eindhoven and explains the changes

Three IACLE Fellows, Ruud van't Pad Bosch, Henri Eek and Dr Eef van der Worp (pictured right, centre and left), organized the IACLE Educator Meeting (14 March) during NCC2016.

The meeting was attended by around 25 representatives from several disciplines in the contact lens field. Representatives came from the Dutch schools for optics and optometry, from industry and from IACLE. There were also a few IACLE members from overseas attending the meeting.

During the meeting, that was chaired by Ruud van 't Pad Bosch, three topics were on the agenda:

1. Presentation of **IACLE activities** by Professor Philip Morgan, IACLE Assistant Secretary.
2. Presentation of the **new qualification structure** for optics in the Netherlands and the position of contact lens education within it, by optometrist Henri Eek, educator at Deltion College and Hogeschool Utrecht.
3. Presentation and discussion about a **new protocol for corneal topography** by optometrist Ruud van 't Pad Bosch, chairman of the Dutch examination committee, contact lens education (IRIS).



IACLE Activities – Professor Philip Morgan

Philip spoke about several activities of IACLE which can be divided into six main areas:

1. **Delivery of effective training** (Fellowship Exam, Student Trial Exam and Distance Learning Program).
2. **Educator Meetings/Train-the-Trainer programs** (didactic lectures and hand-on workshops)
3. **Development of educational resources** (a completely updated five-module and 30-PPT IACLE Contact Lens Course – the New ICLC– is almost finished)
4. **Collaborating with institutions** (identifying priority

institutes, conducting meetings with heads of institutes, promoting educational programs and delivery of education)

5. **Facilitating relationships** between members and industry (hosting of Train-the-Trainer programs and Educator Meetings for interaction, requesting donations, encouraging IACLE members to get involved in industry).
6. **Institutional demographics database** (developed to gain knowledge about the level of CL activity in institutions). It identifies areas of need for (practical) training.

IACLE has several industry sponsors divided into Platinum, Silver and Donor sponsors. Platinum sponsor is Alcon, Silver are CooperVision and Johnson & Johnson, and Donor is SynergEyes.

IACLE regions

Philip went on to present how IACLE has divided the world into three regions (Asia Pacific, Europe/Africa – Middle East and Americas), who the coordinators of the regions are and the number of members that each region has. In 2015, 469 members came from Asia Pacific, 172 from Europe/Africa – Middle East and 135 from Americas. Half of all members in 2015 came from Global Priority Countries (China, India, Korea, Taiwan, Mexico, Brazil and Russia).

Third IACLE World Congress

In 2015 the Third IACLE World Congress was held in Manchester UK. It was attended by 107 delegates from 30 countries (Asia Pacific 26, Europe/Africa-Middle East 15 and Americas 10). During the congress delegates were offered lectures and presentations about new trends in education. The main topics were new (digital) education methods, blended learning and hands-on education using digital tools.

IACLE Awards

Every year IACLE awards three individuals, one from each of the three regions, with the IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year Award for their outstanding achievements in education. The winners receive a bursary up to US\$3,000 to attend a major conference, permission to use the title 'IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year', a certificate to mark the award and publicity relating to the award in several communications and media from IACLE. These awards are sponsored by CooperVision.

Members who are otherwise not able to go to a major international conference can apply for the IACLE Travel Award. The winner receives a generous award towards the cost of travel and accommodation, a certificate to mark the award and related publicity.

New qualification structure in the Netherlands – Henri Eek

In the Netherlands the structure for education in optics and contact lenses is changing. The current structure has five qualifications; with the new structure (starting 2016-2017) there will be three.

Old qualifications:

- Sales employee in optics
- Lab employee in optics
- All-round employee in optics, optician (incl. refraction)
- Optician manager (incl. refraction).

New qualifications:

- Sales employee in optics
- All-round employee in optics
- Optician (incl. refraction).

Each qualification consists of three parts: a basic part which contains general basic tasks for the optician; a profile part which contains more specific professional tasks; and a 'free module' part which is designed to improve job opportunities. A student has to choose at least two modules for each qualification.

Some examples of free modules are: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, Dealing with innovations in optics, Lab duties and foreign languages (eg German).

'Introduction to eye care' modules

For the future optometrist and contact lens specialist three 'Introduction in Eye care' modules will be developed. These modules, which take 240 hours each, are:

- Introduction to eye care – Retinoscopy and **introduction to contact lens fitting**.
- Introduction to eye care – Binocular vision and medical history.
- Introduction to eye care – Low vision.

The modules can be combined, up to a maximum of 720 hours.

Pathway of education

In the schedule below you can see what the chronological pathway from optician to contact lens specialist and optometrist was and what it will be in the future. Note that a certified optician is allowed to start directly with the optometry course. He/she might do the contact lens private courses first but is not obliged to do so.

Chronological structure (old)	Chronological structure (new)
Optician/manager (incl. refraction)	Optician (incl. refraction)
	Optician with inclusion of module 'Introduction in eye care – Retinoscopy and introduction in contactlens fitting' - Basic spherical lenses (soft and RGP)
Contactlens employee (private course) - Basics of soft lenses and RGP	Contactlens employee (private course) - Basics of soft lenses and RGP
Contactlens practitioner (private course) - All soft lenses, RGP, some specialties and refitting of lenses	Contactlens practitioner (private course) - All soft lenses, RGP, some specialties and refitting of lenses
Optometry (bachelor of science) - All soft lenses, RGP, specialties and refitting of lenses - Clinical education - Introduction in research	Optometry (bachelor of science) - All soft lenses, RGP, specialties and refitting of lenses - Clinical education - Introduction in research

Advantages of the new structure

- Opticians become familiar with contact lenses during their three years of education to become an optician.
- Students from schools for optics are better prepared for the contact lens/optometry course.
- Better chronology in education.

We think and hope that the new structure will lead to better skilled and more motivated contact lens practitioners!

Trends in education

- Blended learning becomes the new standard in the Netherlands. More interactive modules are being introduced.
- The Hogeschool Utrecht is transforming its contact lens course into blended learning. Using its 'HUBI' blended learning program.
- A blended learning program for the private contact lens course is almost finished.
- Blended learning for the optician will be developed during the years 2016-2019.

Corneal topography, the new standard – Ruud van 't Pad Bosch

Around the world the keratometer is still the most commonly used instrument for measuring corneal curvature. Although the corneal topographer gives us much better and more detailed information it is not commonly used. In the Netherlands we want to change that because we think that using the corneal topographer is absolutely necessary for the future, modern contact lens practice!

Ruud gave a short presentation about the advantages and use of the corneal topographer. After that he started a discussion about what students need to know from corneal topography. This resulted in a list of the minimum concepts that students should comprehend. After the meeting the list has been optimized by Ruud, Henri and some of their colleagues at their institutes.

Selected topics

In the Netherlands we decided that the topics that students need to comprehend, at a minimum, are:

- Interpret the topography map and criticize it on quality and usability in relationship to regular soft, RGP and ortho-k lenses.
- Explain the advantages and disadvantages of different scales (eg absolute and relative scales).
- Understand when and how the sagittal (= axial) map should be used.
- Understand when and how the tangential (= meridian) map should be used.
- Explain what a 'difference map' is, how relevant it is, and how and when it should be used.
- Explain what a 'height/elevation map' is, how it's related to the 'best sphere curvature', how relevant it is, and how and when it should be used.
- Explain and interpret how topographic maps are related to ortho-K (eg Bull's Eye, Smiley Face, Frowny Face, Central Island).
- Know what the following indices stand for: 'Simulated K', 'Asphericity Index' and Surface Regularity Index (SRI).

The list has been sent to the branch organization for optics and contact lenses (NUVO). If it is approved it will be included in the new competence profile for contact lens specialists in the Netherlands.

Conclusions

After the meeting participants had a good feeling about it. They had a good overview about what IACLE is and what its purpose and goals are. They also received a good overview about the current and future position of contact lens education in the Netherlands. Last but not least there was a good debate about the future position of corneal topography.

