

What IACLE means to me...



Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan, the first IACLE Asia Pacific Contact Lens Educator of the Year, describes her experiences of winning the award and how IACLE has helped in her work and career

It was a pleasant surprise when I received the email from [IACLE Director of Operations] Bonnie Boshart regarding the Educator of the Year Award! My email box was full with wishes from so many people from all over the world. I realized the power of IACLE.

IACLE has been the biggest advantage to me from the time I started teaching. During the early days of my optometry career I didn't know I would also be an educator. With my organisations, the Elite School of Optometry and Sankara Nethralaya Medical Research Foundation in Chennai, IACLE moulded me to become a contact lens educator. Actually, I dedicate this award back to IACLE and to the Medical Research Foundation.

IACLE helped me to learn how to prepare a syllabus, lectures, Continuing Medical Education (CME) and workshops, and supported me with all its resources. Added to this, I had the advantage of working in a large clinical practice and an educational institute. Along with education, our clinical practice has also developed, to the point that all learners / practitioners look up to the practice as the gold standard.

IACLE resources gave me the confidence that any questions or doubts related to contact lens could be answered with references at hand. Over time, I learnt to use IACLE resources – the IACLE Contact Lens Course modules and videos – effectively for teaching. Having been inspired by these methods of teaching, people from all over India put in requests for continuing education programs. Hence I started organising CME in a unique way, for which IACLE resources were the recognised reference. The IACLE network helped me to organise educators from all over India and from industry for workshops and CME.

Following the IACLE Contact Lens Educator of the Year Award my network of educators and industry increased exponentially, and people look up to me as a renowned practitioner, educator and researcher wherever I go with the FIACLE badge and the Award. The IACLE Award also highlighted the value of having a qualified optometrist in charge of the contact lens clinic at such a large institution as Sankara Nethralaya.

For a developing country like India, education and training is crucial to impart knowledge for the standardization of practice. The IACLE Award is a great motivator for all contact lens educators to help achieve consistent standards of practice through the spreading of knowledge. I consider the award as a responsibility to keep moving in this direction.

FIACLE Dr Rajeswari Mahadevan is Head of Department – Contact Lens Clinic, at the Medical Research Foundation, Associate Professor at the Elite School of Optometry, and Director – Contact Lens Course at the Sankara Nethralaya Academy, Chennai, India.

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