

October 2020

## ‘Back to contact lenses’ – IACLE’s first Virtual Conference

The impact of COVID-19 on contact lens education, practice and the industry – and how IACLE can help – was top of the agenda for our half-day conference last month. Amelia Morgan reports



The COVID-19 pandemic has been a difficult time for all industries and institutions across the globe. The contact lens education sector, clinical practice, and the industry as a whole have been affected by the ongoing crisis. More than 200 delegates tuned in live to IACLE’s ‘Back to contact lenses’ themed Virtual Conference which was designed to support its educator members around the world with their teaching and learning in this new era and to reinforce the message that contact lens wear is safe (26 September).

IACLE President **Dr Shehzad Naroo** and Vice President **Professor Philip Morgan** introduced the conference and EAME Regional President **Judith Morris** chaired the event. Executive Manager of Global Education **Lakshmi Shinde**, Treasurer **Professor Ety Bitton** and Executive Manager of Education Development **Professor Craig Woods** discussed findings from our COVID-19 survey and the development of IACLE’s key current programs – The TLC Initiative and IACLETOP.

From this month, the [IACLE Case Report Series](#) will be available via IACLETOP with a new structure that is more interactive and has a choice of multiple delivery options. These options include self-directed learning, a flipped classroom environment where there is an opportunity to use polls, with a certificate of completion issued at each stage of the reports. Other developments on IACLETOP to come include the [Distance Learning Program](#), the [Fellowship Exam](#) – due to take place in November 2021 – and increased content in different languages.

[Access the full conference through IACLETOP](#)

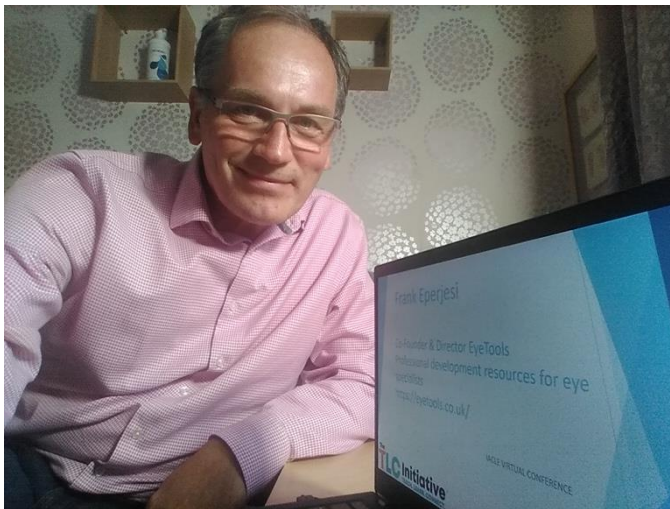
## Experiences with IACLETOP

FIACLE **Fakhruddin Barodawala**, one of the first contact lens educators to run IACLE's [Online Student Trial Exam](#) (STE) with his students, shared his experience using the STE, which counts towards 10% of the students' final examination grade at his institution, [SEGi University](#) in Malaysia. Since students felt cautious about the time-based nature of the exam, they sat a mock version of the STE to feel more reassured, which Fakhruddin said worked 'wonderfully well'.



One of Fakhruddin's final-year students said 'The IACLE Online Student Trial Exam is highly flexible in terms of accessibility as it can be carried out without the restriction of location, as long as the Internet is available. Registration is easy and a step-by-step guide is provided. The STE is an internationally recognized exam that effectively evaluated my knowledge in my contact lens studies.' FIACLE **Dr May Bakkar**, Associate Professor of Optometry at [Jordan University of Science and Technology](#), described her experience using the IACLE Flashcards with her students, which were 'very easy to follow'. May said the slides were interactive and helped to stimulate discussion among students. She would recommend all educators and clinical supervisors to use the flashcards, available via IACLETOP, in their theoretical contact lens teaching.

## Ensuring a good online presentation



**Dr Frank Eperjesi**, Co-Founder and Co-Director of EyeTools, discussed key principles for delivering an excellent online presentation. Frank's tips included keeping slide content to a minimum to ensure the audience's attention is solely on the speaker, only to add images or videos if they add value to the presentation and to think about the camera lighting when presenting.

When recording an online lecture, 'I pretend I am talking to my friend as a way of making me feel more comfortable behind the camera', said Frank.

## The way forward for the contact lens industry



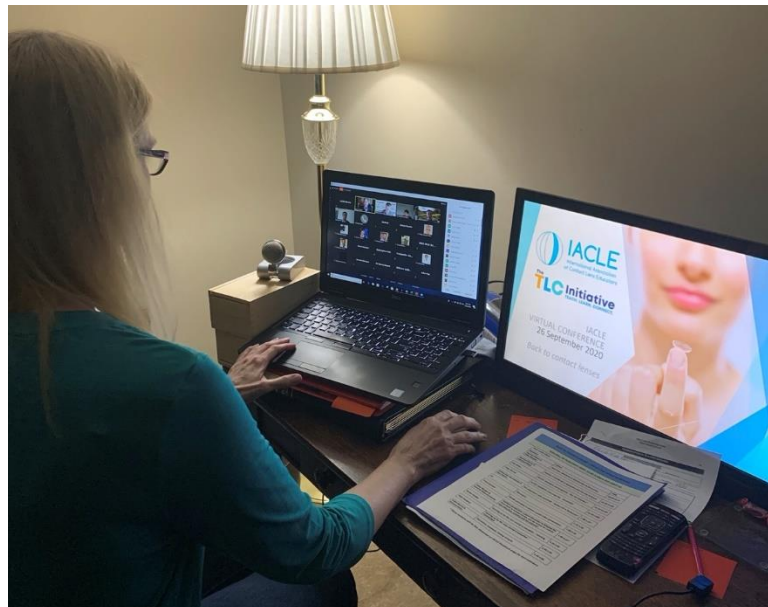
**Professor Philip Morgan** chaired a panel discussion with industry leaders **Cheryl Donnelly** from Alcon, **Dr Gary Orsborn** from CooperVision, **John Meyler** from Johnson & Johnson Vision and **Dr Osbert Chan** from Bausch + Lomb. Each of the panel members expressed optimism about the future for contact lenses and identified significant changes to contact lens practice that had resulted from the pandemic. Some of these changes include patient purchasing habits for contact lenses, permanent changes in the patient journey and smarter ways for the sector to work moving forward. Cheryl Donnelly said, 'We need to look at how patients want to engage and consider changes to our practice patient journey to allow for the imposed and required changes. It's not about doing things to a lesser extent clinically... but doing things differently.'

### [Read a summary of the industry session](#)

#### The 'new normal' in teaching

**Dr Renée Reeder**, Professor at the [University of Pikeville Kentucky College of Optometry](#), USA presented a talk on 'Gearing up for the new normal in education – teaching', sharing her knowledge on the new classroom environments that have changed significantly due to the pandemic.

Renée stressed the importance of good communication between educators and students: 'We're feeling more isolated than ever, so we need to make sure that we are transparent about our goals.'



Renée's lecture gave pointers on how to engage and motivate today's learners, such as launching Canvas quizzes during a class to break up the session and also to provide students with the ability to interact with the materials. 'The bottom line is to be as creative and innovative as you can. Students will love it, and you'll have more fun as a teacher than you have ever had before!' she said.

## The 'new normal' in assessing contact lens students



FIACLE **Dr Byki Huntjens**, lecturer at City University, London, used a variety of creative methods to assess students without the ability to meet them face-to-face. She suggested using online quizzes, either through Virtual Learning Platforms or through IACLETOP, which were straightforward to set up and consistent as students study the same cases. However, the opportunity for practical experience might be more limited at the current time. To assist here, Byki suggested sending students glass eyes to practice safe application and removal of contact lenses in preparation for face-to-face assessments.

IACLE members and FIACLEs played an active part in the online discussion throughout the conference. Indian FIACLE **Premjit Bhakat** commented: Glad to hear the wonderful talks and discussions! Many congratulations to all the presenters and panellists.'

- IACLE's next global webinar series will focus on myopia and its management. The topic of the first webinar, on **3 November**, is 'What causes myopia and its progression? – current understanding', presented by **Professor Nicola Logan** from [Aston University](#), UK.