

Editorial • Students and Residents: Fulfilling OEPF's Educational Mission

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As an educator, I have worked with students and residents since 2004. I began my career at Nova Southeastern University and, in 2007, made a move for various reasons to Southern College of Optometry. I have worked with over 50 peds/VT/rehab residents and somewhere in the realm of 2000 students.

Many of my students did not have an affinity for the areas in which I was teaching. Luckily, my philosophy, and that of the two schools in which I have taught, is to provide a well-rounded education, exposing the students to all facets of the profession. This allows for the best training and eventual care when they are faced with the patient in their chair.

I won't lie...I admit that I get extra nachas (Yiddish word meaning that you are happy and proud, especially of someone's accomplishments) when my students who make the jump leap into my world. This takes the form of opening a practice, taking OEPF or other courses to expand their knowledge, joining a practice that does VT or wants to start it, and of course, doing a residency.

I am also proud of the fact that SCO was the first school to open a private practice residency in VT. Since starting that residency, SCO has added many others in private offices, as well as other pediatric-centered residencies at some of the best children's hospitals and universities in the country.

Personally, I have been a part of the College-based residency programs since I stepped in the building in Memphis. We started out with one peds/VT resident and over the years have built that program up to three positions. Several years after joining SCO, we were able to start a rehab/LV residency, which was replaced last year by a rehab/VT program.

Despite the fact that I am entrenched in education on a daily basis, I am always after new mediums in which to teach and spread the gospel of VT. Luckily, I work with a most excellent organization whose mission is education. Since 1928, the Optometric Extension Program Foundation has been educating optometrists all over the globe. If you have not recently looked at the mission statement and goals of OEPF, take a look now, and you will see how pervasive education is throughout:

Mission

To advance human progress through research and education on vision, the visual process, and clinical care.

Goals

- Educate optometrists and their staff in the concepts of clinical vision care
- Educate the public and professionals about:
 - The importance of visual health and hygiene
 - The prevention of visual and ocular problems
 - An understanding of visual development
 - Visual rehabilitation
- Enhancement of vision and the visual process
- Encourage research into human vision and the visual process
- Provide education necessary for the discipline of optometry to emerge as an independent profession worldwide
- Develop a cadre of willing and able leaders for the continued support of optometry
- Provide access to instruments, equipment, publications, and materials supportive of the discipline of optometry related to the educational mission of the Foundation

You might be wondering what the connection is between students and residents and OEPF. Students and residents are provided clinical associate status at no charge. This affords them the opportunity to access all of the same materials as the doctors and therapists, including the very journal you are reading right now. As a bonus, students and residents are given an extra year post-studying as a clinical associate.

You also might be aware of the Optometrists Change Lives Writing Competition that takes place every year; 2021 marks the seventh year of the competition. Students and residents, from all colleges of optometry in the U.S. and Canada, are invited to submit a case report, literature review, or research paper. The winning submission from each group receives a prize, and the editorial team at OVP works tirelessly to get not only the winners but all submissions to publication. I am thrilled to announce that both Good-Lite and Bernell are supporting this effort by providing some of their amazing equipment as part of the prize packages. Here is a link to the competition information, so please take a look or pass it along if appropriate.

Perhaps the silver lining to the pandemic has been the explosion of accessible education provided by OEPP. As the organization shifted from in-person to virtual formats, students and residents were in a perfect position to benefit. As both groups have daily responsibilities, getting time off to attend education is challenging. With the education beamed right to them, this previous challenge was eliminated.

All students and residents are invited to participate, at no cost, in the Wednesday night lecture series, in which clinicians from all over the globe have presented topics near and dear to their hearts. These are topics that might not have been covered at most optometry schools or that are presented at an advanced level. Each Wednesday night, between 25 and 75 doctors, therapists, and yes, students and residents, are on Zoom religiously.

Residents are afforded an extra opportunity for education. OEPP has increased the variety of education opportunities it offers this past year and now offers 4-hour courses. Topics have ranged from ABI to sports vision to syntonics. Residents are given the opportunity to participate in these programs, which are presented at an advanced level, and they have they been showing up in droves!

I am so proud to be part of an organization that not only includes student and resident education, but makes it a priority...and so should you! As an OEPP clinical associate, you help to support the types of programs mentioned, directly benefiting the next generation of doctors. So, pat yourself on the back for just a minute, but not too much...we still have work to do!

BRAND NEW DIGITAL FORMAT

A 25-volume series by Samuel Renshaw, PhD, this series was written as a post-graduate course for the Optometric Extension Program between 1939 and 1965 and includes a comprehensive index. Samuel Renshaw, PhD was a Professor of Experimental Psychology at the Ohio State University and a member of the OEP writing staff. His study of and research in vision have become classics in optometric literature, as have his text papers. His writings continue to be in demand. Here they are collected and combined in 4 large volumes at a discount compared to purchasing the 25 volumes individually.



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