

# STUDENT SUCCESS PROFILE

## WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW

When I opened my practice in 2005, I thought I knew everything I needed to know about dentistry. I had graduated with honors from the University of Pennsylvania ('99), was selected for OKU, and scored in the 90's on my board exams. I worked for five years in a great practice, North of Boston, with two skilled dentists who became my first mentors in the real world. Thanks to them, I was able to build more quality experience than most young dentists just starting out.

When I moved back home to Pennsylvania, I was confident I was ready to go out on my own. I grew my start-up, fee for service practice for two years before merging practices with one of the area's most respected dentists. For 40 years, Dr. Karl Glassman built his reputation on his ability to get people out of pain by treating their occlusal problems. Up until this point in

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my career, my understanding of occlusion was limited to adjusting my restorations until they felt comfortable or the marks disappeared, whichever came first. Dentistry seemed easy when I was unconsciously incompetent.

Working with Karl was an eye-opening experience. I soon realized that when he retired, I would either need to be able

to treat all of his “pain” patients, or risk losing them. He told me that Dr. Peter Dawson taught the first course on occlusion that really sparked his interest, and suggested I look into The Dawson Academy as a resource for my own continuing education. Even though I thought I understood occlusion, I was sure I could pick up a tip or two that would help me with Karl's patients, so I signed up for Seminar 1.

## MY DAWSON EXPERIENCE

Seminar 1 was a challenge for me. It took some time for me to unfold my crossed arms and unfurrow my brow. It was hard to accept what I was hearing, because it meant admitting that I wasn't as good as I thought. By mid-morning of the second day I had moved up to the front row, and was leaning forward on my elbows trying to absorb

Dr. Forgosh received his degree from the University of Pennsylvania and was selected to be a member of dentistry's most prestigious honor society, Omicron Kappa Upsilon. Dr. Forgosh runs his private practice in Lehigh Valley, PA, with special focus on treating occlusal disease, esthetic dentistry, and dental sleep medicine for the treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea. He actively pursues advanced training through continuing education to stay on the leading edge of proven techniques and technology.



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every word. The problems being described, the errors shown on that big screen could have easily been found in my practice on any given day. I was gradually entering the realm of conscious incompetence, and that is a very uncomfortable place to be.

By the end of that weekend, I was at a crossroads with two seemingly unpleasant paths to choose from. I could either go back to my practice and ignore what I had learned, or I could trust in the principles of Complete Dentistry, and make some significant changes. The first option would be easy, but my guilty conscience would keep me up at night. The second would be far more challenging. The knowledge that I still had so much to learn would also keep me up at night, but I was not a stranger to hard work. The choice was easy. My patients deserved the best I could offer, and that meant making a paradigm shift from being an excellent "tooth mechanic" to becoming a doctor of the Masticatory System.

I signed up for Seminar 2 and never looked back. The people I have met along the way have been simply wonderful. They are dedicated, talented, and supportive. They have faced many of the same challenges in their practices as I have, and we have helped each other find solutions. Too often in dentistry we get caught up in a competitive race. It is refreshing to be with other Dawson Dentists working cooperatively with each other. The Dawson Academy faculty along with the Alumni members, really do make good dentists even better.

### **HOW THE DAWSON ACADEMY CHANGED MY PRACTICE**

It took a few years to complete the curriculum, but with each course I became more confident in my understanding of occlusion. I started to identify more occlusal disease than I had thought possible. I took records on my staff, on my wife, and on patients with signs and symptoms of instability. I discovered that there was a

whole new world of dentistry right in my practice that I never noticed before.

I don't complete a full mouth reconstruction every afternoon, but I do have a lot of patients who no longer suffer from debilitating headaches. I have patients with a history of class II mobility who now have stable bites and solid teeth. I have changed peoples' smiles with total control from visualization through porcelain. And when a patient really does need a reconstruction, I now know I can diagnose, treatment plan, and deliver the case with confidence. I could not have done that without The Dawson Academy.

I am now *consciously competent*, which means I know what I'm doing, but I still have to think about it. Someday, I hope to master my craft and become *unconsciously competent*, but for now I'm a work in progress. Some would say the best of us are. Even Dr. Dawson keeps learning, so I'm in good company.

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**THE DAWSON ACADEMY**  
Making Good Dentists Even Better

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