One book, two reviews

Two dental professionals review *Essentials of dental assisting*.

Essentials of dental assisting, 6th edition

This book is written by D. S. Robinson and D. L. Bird and published by Saunders. It has 520 pages and costs £60.99 (ISBN 9780323400640).

This textbook is aimed at either someone who is considering a career in dental nursing, someone who has just begun training or for a dental assistant looking to improve their knowledge.

From the beginning, it must be noted that this textbook is more appropriate to someone either living in America or considering a move to and continuing or beginning a career in dental assisting. This book does not discuss the GDC standards and principles, COSHH or AQC/RQIA. Some of the names given to instruments and materials are also different. As a dental assistant with over 14 years' experience I found it easy to apply the UK standards or names to certain things, however, in my opinion, I wouldn't recommend this textbook to a new dental assistant student studying for their NEBDN exam.

Putting aside that this text would not be applicable to the UK in some instances I must say that I really enjoyed this textbook. When I studied for my NEBDN exam our textbooks were Levison's *Textbook for dental nurses* and Hollins' *Question and answers for dental nurses*. Without question *Essentials of dental assisting* was a huge improvement.

The book is broken down into ten chapters, each with their own overview title. Then each chapter is further subdivided into smaller topic chapters. Throughout all chapters detailed diagrams and pictures are available. In some chapters there are probably more diagrams than writing but it makes it extremely easy to understand. For

example, I'm sure I'm not alone when I think back (and cry silently) to having to learn the facial nerves and bones. In our textbook the picture was rather small (especially when compared to the amount of letters in some of the names) and was black and white. The *Essentials of dental assisting* has wonderful large pictures of the skull, in colour, from different angles and the position of the nerves. (Please do not confuse my enthusiasm with actually wanting to ever think about the palatine nerves!)

At the beginning of each chapter the 'learning objectives' and 'key terms' are outlined. The definition of the 'key terms' are fully explained in the glossary at the back of the book. This makes reading and learning the information in the chapter almost seamless.

'Every chapter was well presented and had fantastic diagrams and photographs that would really help anyone visualise a procedure.'

Every chapter was well presented and, as discussed above, had fantastic diagrams and photographs that would really help anyone visualise a procedure. For example, the chapter on endodontics. The procedure was described from the beginning to the end. Every instrument possibly needed for an endo procedure was listed and pictured in great detail (I never fully appreciated the difference in a K-flex file and a Hedstrom). Detailed diagrams showed the accessing of the pulp chamber, extirpation of the root canals, cleaning and widening of the root canals and finally obturation (including the reason why a lateral condenser/finger spreader is important - it is that detailed).

At the end of each chapter 'procedure guides' are available. These are a detailed description of what you would set out for a certain procedure. (Think of it as the answers to the Record of Experience for the NEBDN.) An 'Icon key' is at the top of each procedure. These icon keys highlight if the procedure is moisture sensitive, if it involves contact with materials that are considered hazardous or potentially infectious materials etc.

The last page on each chapter is multiple choice questions, followed by 'apply your knowledge' questions. These are basically scenarios designed to make you think how you would 'put in practice' your learning.

Essentials of dental assisting starts with the 'history of dentistry and dental assisting' Although it is probably not important to our role today it is great to know that we, as dental assistants, have progressed through the years from the 'lady in attendance' to the amazing people who keep the surgery operating in perfect harmony and keep dentists all across the lands from fleeing in despair.

To close, if this textbook was changed to acknowledge the UK guidelines, GDC, AQC/RQIA etc this would definitely be the perfect textbook for the dental assistants of the UK.

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This is a beginner's guide for dental nurses, primarily aimed at the American student; however, the core clinical knowledge of dentistry is universal. This book

has an online interactive study aid with evolve.elsevier.com.

The book is large and heavy with a colourful, eye-catching cover.

The strengths of the book are:

- It is a good overall general guide for dental nurses
- Clear, refreshing layout, good presentation
- Well illustrated - colour pictures and photos
- Comprehensive coverage of some subjects, including
 - Anatomy
 - Endodontics
 - Radiography.

The book's weaknesses are:

- It's written for the American dental student
- Health and safety, safeguarding, mental capacity, Caldicott, Gillick competency and other UK regulations are missing or not extensively covered

'It does not cover the whole of the curriculum for the UK reader'

- It does not cover the whole of the curriculum for the UK and for this reason the claim that the book is concise is false for the UK reader
- The picture of the naked child in chapter 3 page 21 is not necessary to demonstrate anatomy and physiology
- The photos are grainy, the television in the photograph has video built in which dates the photographs, screen shots using windows XP are used

rather than quality photos, flat screen television and the latest operating system

- Chapter 13 on medical emergencies would need to be based on the Resuscitation Council guidelines for the UK.

In conclusion, this book is a good general guide and useful introduction to dental nursing background and techniques for trainee dental nurses. The authors describe the book as today's most concise, practical guide to clinical dental assisting and in the USA this may be true but in the UK the curriculum covers all aspects of dentistry including the Care Quality Commission's key lines of enquiry (KLOE), health and safety, HTM 01-05 and COSHH.

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