‘I am *more independent and confident*’

BDA Education Services Administrator **Francesca Scott** spoke to Natalie Murray about her experiences on the online oral health education course.

Natalie Murray qualified as a dental nurse in May 2008 and has worked at St. Michael's Orthodontics in Wakefield, West Yorkshire since July 2009. Prior to this, Natalie worked in general practice from 2006. Having previously taken BDA Education's online radiography course, Natalie decided to take BDA Education's online course in oral health education (OHE) in 2009. She recently passed the NEBDN's certificate with flying colours and is now a qualified oral health educator.

Natalie was kind enough to answer a few questions about the course and her experiences.

Why did you want to gain the certificate in Oral Health Education?

I wanted to gain more responsibility within my work place and to be able to work more with the patients on a one-to-one basis.

How have you used the qualification since gaining it?

Becoming a qualified oral health educator has enabled me to hold regular individual sessions with the patients at my practice. I regularly conduct individual OHE sessions and give the patients tailored advice on cleaning and taking care of their orthodontic appliances. I also help the patients with their brushing technique. This benefits the practice because the patients have someone on their level who they can talk to about their oral health.

How has the OHE course changed your aspirations?

The OHE qualification has enabled me to be more independent and I feel more confident talking to patients as a result.

What made you choose the BDA's online course in oral health education?

I had done the BDA's online course in radiography before and I had thoroughly enjoyed it. The flexibility of the course appealed

to me; I work full time so it was great that I could do the modules whenever I wanted. The course was very good and not particularly expensive, especially in comparison to other courses and considering what you achieve at the end of the course.

What was the best thing about BDA Education's online OHE course?

The best thing about the course was that I could do it in my own time. I could do the modules when I wanted and I could rely on the support from BDA Education. The emails that I sent were answered very quickly, within the day.

How did you feel about studying online before the course began?

I was fine with studying online. Although at the start, I was a little bit worried that I wouldn't be motivated to do it, once I got the hang of it, everything was fine.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to do this course?

Make sure that you set aside regular time slots, both when it comes to completing the online course and when it comes to completing the practical work. Don't be afraid to ask your supervising dentist for help and, finally, just get stuck in!

What did you enjoy most about completing the OHE sessions?

The main thing I enjoyed was seeing a change in the patients' attitudes. We deal with a lot of younger patients and it was really nice to see the patients developing better attitudes towards brushing. When I completed my first OHE session, I was nervous and I got into work an hour early! I made sure that I was really well prepared for everything, but everything went really well and I thoroughly enjoyed giving the OHE sessions.

What did you most enjoy about completing the exhibition?

I enjoyed everything! However, I enjoyed designing the leaflets most of all. This is

Natalie Murray

because you design the leaflets in a way that the patients can understand things. You get to know your patients and you learn to present the information in a way that appeals to them. I learnt a lot through completing the exhibition. I focussed on a specific age group (children aged 3-5 years) and I learnt about oral health issues relating to this age group in particular.

Do you have anything else that you would like to add?

I would just like to say that the course is a good course for anyone who wants to work their way up and progress their career. The course is especially good if you are working full-time. It isn't that expensive for what you gain at the end, especially in relation to other courses.

The BDA's online course in oral health education prepares students for the NEBDN's certificate in oral health education. Designed for busy DCPs in a clear and concise format, the online course is broken down into 'bite-sized' modules which can be accessed and viewed at any time. Students also benefit from a detailed textbook, ample revision notes, plenty of mock tests as well as the support and guidance of committed and friendly tutors.

Places on the course are extremely popular and there are six starting dates for the course in 2011: 7 March, 4 April, 9 May, 1 August, 5 September and 3 October. For further information, visit www.bda.org/dcps/course/, email ohc.support@bda.org or telephone 020 7563 4551.