

## Origin of Esthetic Technique in Question

This is a letter of complaint. Recently, Simon and Magne published an article on esthetics in your journal (“Clinically based diagnostic wax-up for optimal esthetics: the diagnostic mock-up,” *J Cal Dent Assoc* 36:355-62, 2008). The technique they described (as their own) I developed and published in the *Journal of the American Dental Association* in 2001.

As part of my graduate prosthodontic program at the University of Michigan, I was taught to carefully review the literature, particularly in describing potentially new techniques in order not to be accused of plagiarism.

Please forward this letter to your authors and request that they review the literature to see if they can find my article: van Zyl L, Geissberger M, Simulated shape design. *J Am Dent Assoc* 132(8):1105-9, 2001.

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P.S. A sorry under “erratum” would be nice.

### Author’s response:

We appreciate the interest in our article “Clinically based diagnostic wax-up for optimal esthetics: the diagnostic mock-up.”<sup>1</sup> It is a pleasure to see that this topic engages the readers and is continuously thought-provoking.

We are sorry to hear about Dr. van Zyl’s disappointment that his article was not quoted by ours.<sup>2</sup> However, our records show that his article did not come up in a Medline search for the key words: wax-up, mock-up or porcelain veneers, which were the topics of our article. Most likely, the reason is that his article title, “Simulated shape design,” is not a conventional dental term, nor does it resemble the subject of diagnostic wax-up or mock-up, and therefore did not come up

in the database search. This example serves to illustrate the importance of using proper terminology in scientific literature. As authors and members of editorial boards of various dental journals, we advise writers to consult with journal guidelines and refer to the Glossary of Prosthodontic Terms when discussing prosthodontic terminology.<sup>3</sup> Please review the article titled “Terminology for implant prostheses” for further information on this important issue.<sup>4</sup>

We are certainly disappointed that Dr. van Zyl was under the impression that we claim to have developed the technique. Under no circumstances do we claim such a thing, nor did we contend it in the article. It is important to note that the purpose of our article was not self-promotional but rather educational; thus, its goal is to serve the readers by reviewing the literature in an unbiased way while quoting key publications on this topic. After reviewing Dr. van Zyl’s article published in 2001, we discovered that he identifies himself as the “inventor and developer” of this technique. This is somewhat surprising considering the fact that he himself quotes the article “The diagnostic template” by Magne et al. from 1996 as a reference for the diagnostic mock-up technique.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, additional references on the precise step-by-step mock-up techniques used by Dr. van Zyl have been published prior to that by Magne et al. in 1999 and by Belser et al. in 1997.<sup>6-7</sup>

It is fascinating to observe how authors from different parts of the world evolve separately yet emerge with similar ideas, often with no awareness of each other’s contribution to the subject. We all live in the same global village, influenced by each other’s ideas, which lead some of us to form similar concepts independent-

ly of one another. Without question, this adds to the validity of the idea and serves to confirm the importance of publications that shed light on the same topic from different viewpoints. This could explain why even publications on this topic prior to Dr. van Zyl’s article have refrained from similar assertions of invention and ownership of this technique. This could also clarify why Dr. Magne, who published on this technique extensively prior to Dr. van Zyl and could have claimed to be the “inventor” of this technique, chose not to do so.<sup>5,7</sup> It is out of the same spirit that Dr. Magne also chose to excuse Dr. van Zyl for his incorrect statements claiming to be the “inventor and developer” and his lack of proper credit to Magne’s work.

We would like to thank Dr. van Zyl for bringing this information to our attention, and we encourage him to continue to publish and share his experience with the dental community.

With collegiality,  
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### REFERENCES

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