If you are like me, you scratch the plastic lenses in your glasses against the metal on the microscope oculars. With the creation of newer, light weight plastics more and more users are switching from glass lenses to the soft plastics in modern eyeglasses. Unfortunately the plastic shields supplied by most microscope manufacturers are not flat and are intended for use by individuals that are not wearing glasses.

Over the years I have tried a variety of ways to soften the contact between the lenses. While gluing felt and other agents onto the oculars helped, lint and other debris inevitably ended up on the lenses. Tapes also worked well for a while but then the adhesive would ooze out and end up on the eyeglasses, resulting in a difficult to clean smear.

The best solution I have found is coating the metal on the microscope oculars with a plastic dip. This product is a liquid which dries to a soft, rubbery, plastic coating. It is sold to coat the handles of tools and other objects including those to be submerged in water. The product I found at the local hardware store is "Plasti Dip" and is manufactured by PDI, Inc., P.O. Box 130, Circle Pines, MN 55014. According to the label it will not crack, chip or peel for years. I have had it on my microscopes (which receive almost daily use) for slightly over a year and it is beginning to peel slightly. This coating is soft but tough and does not leave marks or smudges on eyeglasses.

Can this type of coating be used for other laboratory uses? It appears similar to the coatings found on the inside lining for many jars containing food products. If they are the same, maybe the plastic dip could be used to coat the inside surfaces of museum jar lids. If it does not peel or otherwise deteriorate in the presence of alcohol, it should make a good vapor seal.