"HOW DO I STUDY FOR THE ANATOMY COURSES"

Students have often asked their instructors the question, “How do I study for this course?” As a result, students have been given different suggestions which may be conflicting at times.

In the observation of students as they learn Gross Anatomy, some faculty members have noted among them some typical study habits which proved to be obstacles. They include among others:

1. Lack of confidence in visual learning.
2. Placing too much emphasis on memorization and the textbooks rather than learning from cadaveric dissection.
3. Excessive re-reading of written materials which consume time.
4. Studying while fatigued.
5. Studying in isolation.
6. Using study techniques which are consumptive rather than productive:
   a. Memorizing by rote or "parrot-learning" anatomical facts.
   b. Making an outline of textbooks or lecture notes.
   c. Constructing and memorizing charts.
   d. Use of flash cards.

Here are SIX SUGGESTED STEPS IN LEARNING GROSS ANATOMY:

1. Preview the lab assignment of the week:
   It is a very good practice to know what you are expected to dissect and to learn. Familiarize yourself with some of the terminology; however, you are not required to learn the whole material yet. The preview should take only a few minutes, say 15 to 30 minutes. Weekly lab activities will be sent by email. Each lab activity includes a hyperlink on the dissection procedure. It is highly recommended to view the dissection procedure at least the night before the lab session.

2. Attend the lectures:
   Lecture time is your opportunity to know what the instructor considers what is important for you to know. During the lectures, listen carefully, digest fully what you hear and make note of the functional or clinical correlations.

3. Participate in dissection:
   This means not only dissecting but also reading the dissection instructions for the dissector, reading the descriptions of anatomical structures, and correlating the dissection materials with information given during the lecture periods. Always use many criteria to identify the structures you are learning in the cadaver. The dissection laboratory is the place for the greatest amount of learning of Anatomy.

4. Utilize laboratory experience to the fullest:
   To do this, you must note:
a. Observe and examine your dissection, see if you have done a thorough job; and look at other stations because dissected structures may, at times, look different from your work. This is because of differences in sex, normal variances, anatomical differences, age of cadavers, disease processes involved and dissection skills.

b. Gain a clear mental image of the dissection by cleaning the structures and comparing them with the pictures in the atlases.

c. Have a group discussion pertinent to the dissected materials, correlate lecture information with the dissection, and use anatomical terminologies until they become part of your vocabulary.

b. Review the dissection, finishing the dissection does not mean that you are done for the day; to the contrary, you are ready to start studying the visual aids you have just prepared. Group members should take turn manually and orally to demonstrate the dissection to each other. Remember that the best way of learning anatomy is by teaching it to others!

c. Test yourself on what you have gained from the laboratory experience; try to recall the mental images; demonstrate to yourself the dissection materials mentally; describe what you saw a few minutes ago.

f. Above all DO NOT WASTE YOUR TIME IN THE LABORATORY! Study plastic models or dry specimens and bones if you cannot participate in the dissection.

5. Read the textbooks and lecture notes:
Compare what you have read with what you have seen in the cadaver and the atlas regarding the description of the structures and their relationships; actively interact with what you have read, make drawings, make key word lists, act out muscle actions, palpate the described structures on yourself. Stop reading if you feel that comprehension and attention are at a standstill. Resume when you are ready.

6. Review for quizzes and practical exams:
Remember that you do not study separately for a quiz, for a practical exam or for a written exam. When you start to study, you must study to know the materials but not to know for a test!! Utilize laboratory time to your best ability; use the "dull hours" to review the materials of the previous weeks.

We realize that students have their own unique way to approach study and learning; nevertheless, it is our hope and desire that these above 6 steps will lead you to a productive and enjoyable experience in the Anatomy Laboratory.