Dissecting Anatomy teaching in MBChB: How multimodal teaching has improved student engagement

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- At the University of Aberdeen’s Medical School, Practical Anatomy is taught mainly using a prosection-based approach in practical sessions as part of the Systems based course in Years 1, 2 and 3 MBChB.
- Our classes promoted adult learning principles, however the strong emphasis on self-direction, did not fully consider the need to help students to transition, into higher education learning strategies.
- This was reflected in Course Evaluation forms

Prosection-based teaching:
Students are able to work at their own pace and concentrate on areas where they struggle, work in groups and discuss problems – Transition to adult learning.

1. Workbooks:
Questions in workbook promote adoption deeper learning strategies, encourages students to prepare for class beforehand

2. Near peer teaching
Promotes learning because of social and cognitive congruence.

3. Pre-practical lectures and video demos:
Gives a grasp of Threshold Concepts

4. Spotters in class:
Strategic learning – but also promotes critical self-reflection by raising consciousness of knowledge base

5. Anatomical body painting
Active learning in group to consolidate surface anatomy

6. Radiology, Ultrasound and endoscopic teaching
Promotes 3D visualisation, familiarises students with appropriate clinical investigations

7. 3D clinical cases
Team based problem solving approach consolidates clinical anatomy

Conclusion: We show that engaging students with Anatomy leads to increased enjoyment and attainment, which is maintained throughout the course and builds valuable adult learning strategies, applicable across the curriculum. Ultimately students learn to self-direct within the framework which we establish, so they can devise their own learning strategies.

References: