

## Views of South African Academic Instructors to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Anatomy Education

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**Abstract :** Reflecting on teaching is commonly cited as a fundamental practice for personal and professional development. Educational research into the scholarship of teaching and learning anatomy includes engaging in discipline specific literature on teaching, reflecting on individual teaching methods and communicating these findings to peers. The aim of this paper is to formally assess the opinions of senior anatomy instructors regarding the state of anatomical knowledge at their respective institutions. The context of the paper derives from ongoing debates about the perceived decline in standards of anatomical knowledge of medical students and postgraduate learners. An open ended questionnaire was devised consisting of eight direct questions seeking opinions on anatomy teaching, knowledge, and potential educational developments and general thoughts on the teaching of anatomy to medical students. These were distributed to senior anatomy Faculty (identified by the author by their affiliation with the Anatomical Society of Southern Africa) based at the eight national medical schools within the country. A number of key themes emerged. Most senior faculty felt that the standard of medical education at their respective institutions was 'good.'. However, emphasis was also placed on the 'quality of teaching' incorporating clinical scenarios. There were also indications that staff are split into those that are keen to do research and those that are happy to provide teaching to medical students as their primary function. Several challenges were also highlighted such as time constraints within the medical curriculum, the lack of cadavers to reinforce knowledge and gain depth perception and lack of appropriately qualified staff. Recommendations included fostering partnerships with both clinicians and medical scientists into the anatomy curriculum thus improving teaching and research.

**Keywords :** anatomy, education, reflection, teaching

**Conference Title :** ICHBP 2017 : International Conference on Human Body and Physiology

**Conference Location :** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Conference Dates :** December 11-12, 2017