Truly practical, a book review for *Teaching Anatomy: A Practical Guide*

- Title: Teaching anatomy: a practical guide
- Authors: Lap Ki Chan, Wojciech Pawlina
- Publisher: Springer, 2015
- ISBN: 9783319089294

To a first line anatomy teacher, *Teaching Anatomy: A Practical Guide*, is an inspiring and truly practical book. Anatomy sciences, both gross and micro anatomy, have always been the foundation of medical sciences and medical education. As stated by Friedrich Tiedemann, “Doctors without anatomy are like moles. They work in the dark and the work of their hands are mounds,” clinical doctors rely on anatomy knowledge to carry out virtually all kinds of activities, including performing physical examinations, interpreting radiological images and pathology specimens, forming differential diagnoses, communicating findings and performing emergency and surgical procedures. However, under the notion that undue emphasis on detail for anatomy is not required in the medical curriculum, anatomy education in medical school curriculums across the world has been in decline in many years, especially in the areas of cadaveric dissection and microscopic practicals. Since then, important issues have been reported, such as the decline of the anatomy knowledge base of junior doctors, the increased legal claims associated with anatomical errors and the shortage of qualified anatomy educators.

Arriving timely, the unique volumes in this book help us anatomy teachers/instructors to answer some pressing questions in the new era of anatomy education. Edited by Lap Ki Chan and Wojciech Pawlina, the book combines

the wisdoms and experiences of 60 renowned educators, provides both theoretical foundations and, more importantly, easy to follow practical guide to effectively enable the medical students to acquire sufficient knowledge and comprehensive understanding of human anatomy, in the modern system-based medical curriculum. The chapters of the book are arranged in a unique way for the most direct and clear guidance to create an effective, student-centered learning experience. The first part of the book acknowledges the challenges presented to us anatomy teachers in the modern days that we are to efficiently deliver outcome based education to the vast diversity of the new generation medical students and help them to achieve higher order of learning goals; it

Korean J Med Educ 2015 Jun; 27(2): 141-142.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3946/kjme.2015.27.2.141>

eISSN: 2005-7288

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also explains the theoretical principles and key elements to the successful adult education, especially for teaching anatomy, this old fashioned yet essential subject. Indeed, as described in the book, it seems both “sage on the stage” and “guide on the side” are needed. The chapters in the later parts of the book make up a practical user manual that they are grouped according to every different scenarios and tasks an anatomy teacher would face in a medical school curriculum. These detailed guidelines, practical tips, boxed key points and self-assessment tools formulate the recipe for a both informative and interactive anatomy lecture for large audience, provide the frame work for a successful small group tutorial customized for the need of each individual student and help to organize a time sufficient student oriented gross anatomy dissection lab that promotes the post-learning problem-solving abilities. The book then introduces an arsenal of variety readily available modern techniques that can be integrated into the anatomy education. Later chapters of the book go on to explain how to set up the assessments that can motivate the students to strive to achieve their learning goals and effectively evaluate the intended learning outcomes, and

ultimately how to create an innovative anatomy curriculum. In the book there are also rich information to help those who are teaching anatomy to the students of different disciplines, tips of how to explore the benefits of interdisciplinary teaching and advises for anatomy teachers to pursue scholarship of education.

The intended audience of *Teaching Anatomy: A Practical Guide* are indeed both novice and experienced anatomy teachers. In my point of view, the novice teachers could seek practical guidance from the book on delivering effective anatomy teaching, forming their teaching styles and improving their student evaluation ratings; the experienced teachers would benefit from the rich contents of the book to reflect on their own teaching experiences, enhance their teaching techniques and help in the development and innovation of anatomy education in the modern medical curriculum.

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