

The Relevance of the Study Guide from the Student's Perspective: a Survey conducted amongst MBChB II and BChD II students at the University of Pretoria

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Introduction

Considering the growing tendency in, and often demand of making all study guides and material electronically available to students, the question arises whether hard copies of the study component of study guides should be completely replaced by electronic versions on ClickUP (UP version of WebCT). The Department of Anatomy at the University of Pretoria relies strongly, and adheres strictly to a well-composed study guide, a hard copy of which is presently still supplied to each student at the outset of GNK 288, the second year anatomy dissection block (see Figures 1a-d).



Figure 1a: The GNK 288 study guide

Figure 1b: Students use the study guide together with additional learning material in order to study the relevant anatomy



Figure 1c: During their free time, students use the study guide in order to prepare for that day's dissection



Figure 1d: A student uses the study guide during dissection in order to distinguish which critical outcomes are important

Aims

The aim of this study was to determine how relevant a printed version of the study guide is for a GNK 288 student.

Materials and Methods

In order to estimate what value the students attach to the study guide in hard copy-format, a standard 5-point Likert-scale questionnaire (see Figure 2) was developed and distributed amongst 305 second year MBChB and BChD students, nearing the end of the dissection block, to be completed by them.

The following questionnaire has been developed in order to determine the importance of the study guide for students currently busy with SA4 dissection

	Course				
	BChD		MBChB		
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
1 I feel the study guide is important for SA4	1	2	3	4	5
2 Only the organisational component of the study guide needs to be available in printed format	1	2	3	4	5
3 I find it helpful to make notes in the study guide during lectures	1	2	3	4	5
4 I find that it helps to complete the objectives within the study guide when preparing for lectures	1	2	3	4	5
5 I find that it helps to complete the objectives within the study guide when preparing for tests	1	2	3	4	5
6 The study guide helps to orientate me with regards to the course and what is expected of me	1	2	3	4	5
7 I will be lost without the study guide	1	2	3	4	5
8 The study guide has an influence on my attitude towards the course	1	2	3	4	5
9 The case studies help me with understanding the relevance of the studie material	1	2	3	4	5
10 I will be content if the study component of the study guide is made available on WebCT	1	2	3	4	5
11 If I don't receive the study component of the study guide in a printed format, I am willing to print it myself at own cost	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 2: The questionnaire filled in by the 2nd year MBChB and BChD students

Results

A total of 282 completed questionnaires (92.5%) were returned and analysed. The sample included 232 MBChB and 50 BChD students. The results for the MBChB group and BChD group are summarised in Figures 3 & 4, respectively. The combined results for all the respondents are summarised in Figure 5.

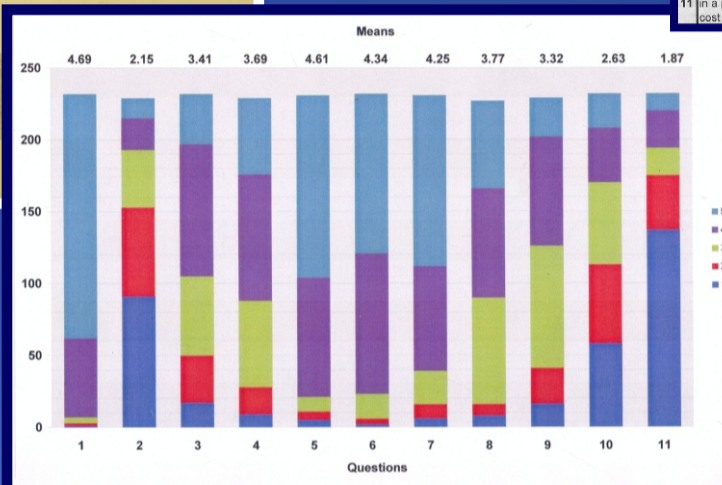


Figure 3: Results of the questionnaire for the MBChB group

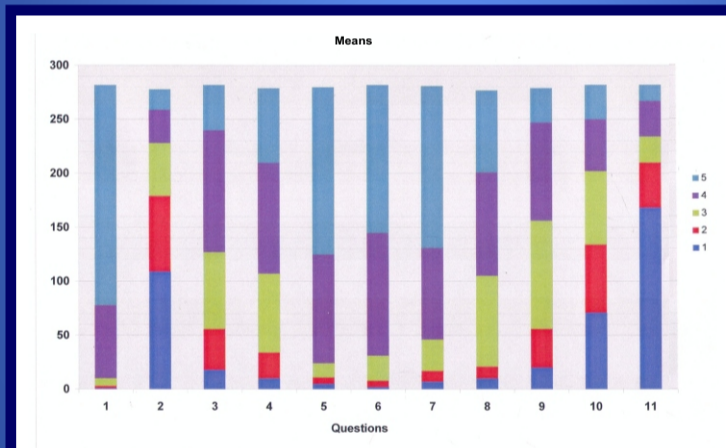


Figure 5: Results of the questionnaire for all the respondents

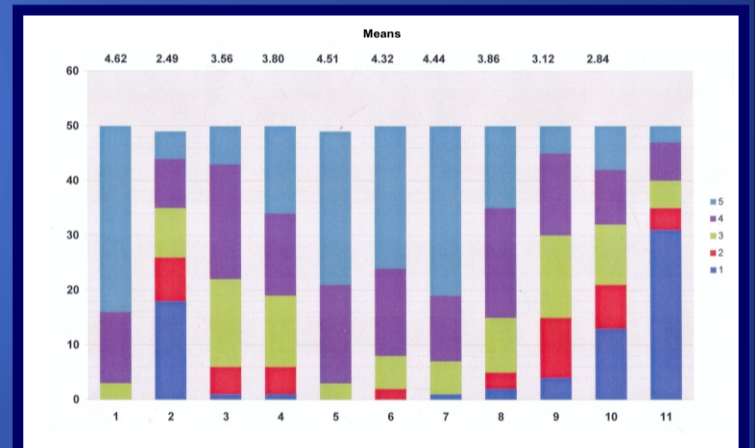


Figure 4: Results of the questionnaire for the BChD group

Discussion

It is clear from the results that the majority of students not only regard the study guide as an important tool to assist them in their studies, but would also prefer to have a hard copy as well, as the latter enables easier and cheaper accessibility.

An analysis of data obtained from the questionnaires, and is summarised in Figure 5, gives a clear indication of the concerning students' democratic opinion about the study guide. An overwhelming 204 (out of 282) students strongly agreed upon the importance of the study guide, and a total of 96.45% of respondents regard the study guide as very important for SA4 (Question 1), while 179 students (63.48%) disagreed to the proposition of omitting the study component from the printed study guide (Question 2). A total of 54.96% of the respondents preferred making notes in the study guide during lectures, while two thirds of the class (60.99%) used it in preparation for lectures (Questions 3 & 4). Of the entire sample, 256 students (90.78%) indicated that they relied upon the study guide when preparing for tests (Question 5). The majority of the class strongly agreed that the study guide was helpful in orientating themselves regarding the course and expectations they had to reach, and that they would have been rather lost without it (91.13% and 83.33% respectively for Questions 6 & 7). The study guide did have a positive influence on the students' attitude towards the course, and the case studies were helpful in demonstrating the relevance of study material, although the last aspect did not feature as prominently (Questions 8 & 9). In view of the answers received for Questions 1 and 11, it seems as if the respondents were unsure of what was asked in Question 10, although 47.52% disagreed, as opposed to the 28.37% who agreed, while 24.11% didn't have a strong opinion. The response to Question 11 shows clearly that the students regard it as an obligation of the university to supply them with a hard copy of the study guide (comprising of both organisational- and study components), as 74.47% of respondents were not prepared to print the study component at own cost, even considering their dependence upon it as illustrated by the rest of the study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that students see the study guide as an invaluable tool for studying anatomy during GNK 288. It is therefore recommended that a hard copy of the study guide (containing both organisational- and study components) is kept as economically viable as possible, but still at the students' disposal.

Acknowledgements

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