

COURSE DESIGN and LEARNING PHILOSOPHY for YEARS 1 and 2

One of the strengths of UTMB's Integrated Medical Curriculum is that the courses are designed to provide the student with multiple learning opportunities. Our fundamental learning philosophy is that students should begin their medical education by first looking at clinical problems from the point of view of what they know and do not know, instead of learning minutiae and facts in the absence of a real-world relevance. Therefore, the foundation of our year 1 and 2 courses is small group (8-9 students per group) problem-based learning (PBL) sessions highlighted by student-centered, active learning that is gently guided by faculty facilitators. PBL is so critical to the success of the curriculum, that the quality of the student participation in small group is evaluated by the faculty facilitator. Subsequent lectures, laboratories, clinical wrap-up sessions, and other faculty-generated activities are designed to reinforce the student's understanding and to fill in any knowledge gaps. The curriculum schedule allows the student ample time for self-study and assimilation of information. If the student feels the need for additional support, the Office of Student Affairs provides tutoring services. Each course provides practice examination questions and other problem-solving activities, with faculty feedback, so the students can evaluate their understanding of the material prior to examinations. Another valuable tool for the student is the discussion and question board posted on the course website. Faculty members monitor the discussion board and provide answers to student questions. We believe that when all of these learning opportunities are utilized together, the result is that each student will have an enhanced understanding and a better retention of critical knowledge and concepts, and consequently will be better prepared to enter the clinical years of their medical education.

