

The first paragraph of an academic paper on forensics:

The assessment of skeletal injuries and determination of their relevance to medicolegal death investigations is one of the main tasks a forensic anthropologist is asked to conduct in the course of a routine examination of human skeletal remains. In bodies that undergo traditional postmortem autopsy examination of injuries, their classification, mechanism, and sequence of events that led to the occurrence is mostly extracted from soft tissue damage. In skeletonized remains and remains in advanced stages of decomposition, however, trauma interpretation is almost exclusively discerned from interferences to the integrity of a bone. Despite its seeming persistence, bone tissue is a perishable organic material susceptible to exterior and interior disturbances. Dismemberment, burial, burning and/or exposure to a variety of climatic factors (e.g., weathering, fluctuation of humidity, temperature and acidity, etc.) are influential factors in decomposition of bone elements. If an expert is presented with a case exhibiting significant taphonomic modifications, either environmental or as a result of the perpetrator's behavior, skeletal injuries can be less abundant, less straightforward, and more ambiguous. Taphonomic alterations may mimic characteristics of skeletal trauma (e.g., scratches, postmortem fractures, fragmentation and spatial dispersion), obscure the presence of such prior damage (e.g., surface abrasion and exfoliation), or modify the unambiguity of the original state (e.g., sharpness, coloring and pressure distortion).

(212 words)

Joe's revision:

Forensic anthropologists are often asked by death investigators to examine human remains and determine whether skeletal injuries are relevant to the case. In a traditional postmortem autopsy, damage to the soft tissue is the main source of information about what has happened to the body. But with skeletonized remains, or with bodies in advanced stages of decomposition, forensic experts must rely on the bones to provide clues. Unfortunately, bones are not always reliable evidence. Despite its seeming durability, bone tissue is perishable, and susceptible to exterior and interior disturbances such as dismemberment, burial, burning, weathering, or changes in humidity, temperature and acidity. All of these can effect bone decomposition and make an investigator's job harder. If there have been significant taphonomic modifications to the bones, either because of the environment or because of a peetrator's behavior, evidence of skeletal injuries can be more difficult to find and to analyze. Taphonomic alterations may mimic characteristics of skeletal trauma (e.g. scratches, postmortem fractures, fragmentation and/or spatial dispersion), obscure the presence of such damage (e.g. surface abrasion and exfoliation), or make the original state of the bones unrecognizable (e.g. sharpness, coloring and pressure distortion).

(190 words)

A sample abstract:

This paper presents and assesses a framework for an engineering capstone design program. We explain how student preparation, project selection, and instructor mentorship are the three key elements that must be addressed before the capstone experience is ready for the students. Next, we describe a way to administer and execute the capstone design experience including design workshops and lead engineers. We describe the importance in assessing the capstone design experience and report recent assessment results of our framework. We comment specifically on what students thought were the most important aspects of their experience in engineering capstone design and provide quantitative insight into what parts of the framework are most important.