

What dreams may come ...

From staring to gaming, students find ways to stay awake during class

By Gabe Patterson
THE BATTALION

Blake Dworaczyk, a senior computer science major, has staying awake in class down to a science. Over the years he has developed several methods, some of them drastic, to keep his eyes peeled.

"I sometimes stab myself with a pencil or squirt myself with a bottle of water," Dworaczyk said.

He said his friends employ similar techniques.

"I know some people who drink several pots of coffee before coming to class," Dworaczyk said. He and his friends also have resorted to slapping each other like the Three Stooges on occasion.

"Whatever it takes to get through the class," Dworaczyk said.

Sleeping through class is a serious problem afflicting the Texas A&M student body, one that transcends gender, grade level and college boundaries. Balancing work, play and an ever-increasing load of homework, Aggies are finding it harder and harder to stay awake during class.

Opinions differ significantly on the most effective way to achieve this sometimes difficult goal.

Other students like Steven Haynes, a freshman biomedical science major, find less sadistic means of keeping alert.

"My No. 1 technique is to find someone of the

opposite sex who is really attractive," Haynes said. "Then, when I feel my eyes getting heavy, I just stare at them."

Brian Laird, a freshman biomedical science major, said he too has learned to harness the power of attraction.

"I always try to have something to do after class, specifically women," Laird said.

Some Aggies need alternate sources of entertainment to maintain consciousness. Many students do crossword puzzles or read a newspaper for amusement when classes get monotonous. Others make use of electronic gadgets that are less obvious to the watchful eyes of their professors.

Lamar Mueller, a freshman business administration major, said he sometimes relies on his calculator to keep him entertained.

"When I'm really bored, I'll play Tetris or some other game," Mueller said.

The tedium of lectures inspires other students to break out their cell phones for a spirited round of Space Invaders.

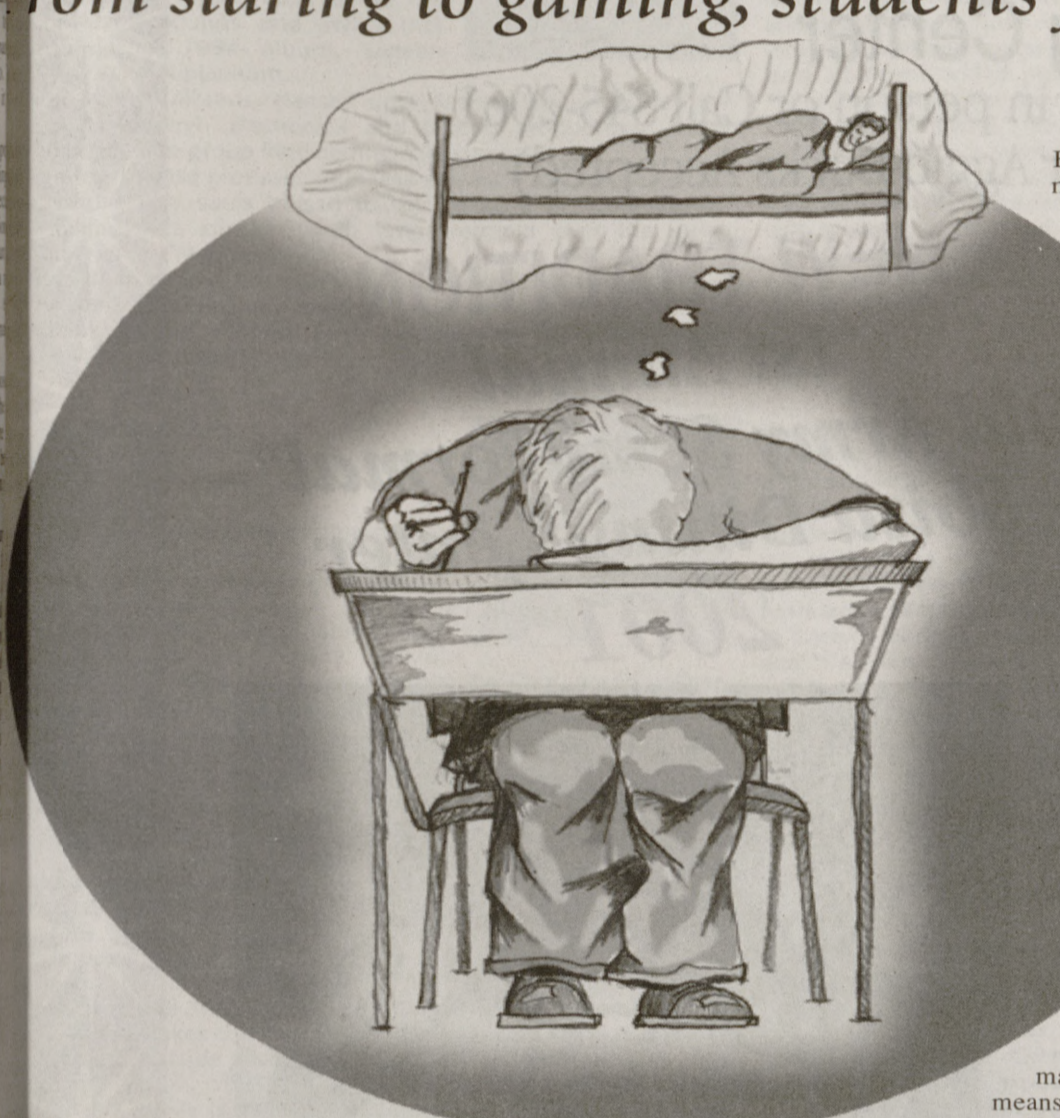
Still other Ags take a more practical approach.

For Viet Tran, a junior international studies major, the battle starts before class. Tran said students should focus on preparing for school the right way.

"I personally always try to get a good night's rest," Tran said. "Then, when I get up, I usually listen to some upbeat music to get me going."

The seriousness of this issue should not be overlooked, an idea that is supported by research on sleep deprivation. A study published on MIT's Website, www-tech.mit.edu, claims that the abundance of work and little or no downtime makes college students among the most likely to suffer from sleepiness during the day. But the problem does not stop there.

Sleep deprivation can also affect students' lives outside of school. According to a report on SleepNet.com, students who need sleep are also more susceptible to the effects of alcohol. This can hinder a student's ability to make logical decisions and perform normally simple physical tasks like driving a car.



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