BioLEAP
BIOLOGY EDUCATION ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM

Waste and Cruelty of Dissection

Dissection Wastes Valuable School Resources

Animal dissection is a one-and-done activity. Many non-animal alternatives are more economical because they can be used repeatedly and indefinitely with no need to constantly replenish supplies of once-live animals. On average, *schools can save thousands of dollars* by replacing animal dissection with alternative learning methods.

Where Animal Specimens Come From

An estimated 12 million animals are killed in the US every year for the purpose of dissection. Schools usually buy them from biological supply companies that obtain the animals through a variety of sources:

- Animal dealers who acquire animals, including cats and dogs, from legal and illegal sources such as animal shelters, 'free to good home' ads and pet theft.
- Fish and sharks are captured from the wild either intentionally for dissection or as a result of byproduct from the cruel and unsustainable fishing industry.
- Many animals are purpose bred for dissection and born into unsanitary, overcrowded environments and subject to extreme temperatures and rough handling.
- Fetal pigs and fur bearing animals are obtained as byproducts of cruel industries that subject these animals to food deprivation, high rates of injury and illness, and premature death.

Dissection Can Be Hazardous to Students

Chemicals used to preserve biological specimens, even nontoxic formaldehyde substitutes, have been reported to cause headaches, drowsiness, and eye, nose and throat irritation in students performing dissection exercises.

Environmental Hazards of Dissection

India banned dissection at the university level "to prevent the disruption of bio-diversity" and to maintain "ecological balance."

In North America the collection of frogs for dissection specimens has depleted local populations leading some areas — including Michigan, Wisconsin and all of Canada — to outlaw commercial harvesting.

Chemicals used to preserve dead specimens, such as formaldehyde and formalin, are respiratory irritants, carcinogenic in humans, and environmental pollutants. Irresponsible disposal of these preservatives or animal remains can contaminate water and soil and potentially harm wildlife.

Animal Dissection Fails Students and the Community

Many students find the act of dissecting an animal gross and uncomfortable, sometimes resulting in students being turned off from pursuing science degrees and careers simply because they do not want to cut into animal specimens.

A curriculum that promotes the natural roles of animals in their ecosystem and as individuals in the web of life presents a far more practical and accurate lesson in life science. The removal of animals from their ecosystems sets a negative example for wildlife conservation and environmental protection – two vital concepts for future scientists.

Educators who insist on using animal specimens miss a valuable opportunity to teach their students about the basic value of a life. Dissection indoctrinates the idea that cutting open animals is "fun," and prioritizes "hands-on" exploitation of animals. Use of an animal specimen teaches students that animals' lives are disposable and of little importance.

Learn more about humane options to dissection at bioleap.org

NAVS
ADVANCING SCIENCE
WITHOUT HARMING ANIMALS