

Jumping on the dissection table

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The sun shines brightly outside the window of a biology class.

Everyone is whispering. 'Settle down, settle down children,' the teacher says. 'Alright! Settle down,' she repeats a little louder now. The whispering stops slowly, starting from the back, like a wave gently rolling to the sandy shore. Then silence. 'Class, tomorrow we will dissect frogs,' the teacher announces.

Then the bell rings. As people get up, everyone around is buzzing. Some groan. Others talk excitedly. Some think this will be fun; others are trying to make up excuses for staying home.

But as the day progresses on, groups of kids are gathering to protest about animal rights. Those kids are getting riled up over nothing. Dissecting animals can inspire teens to become vets, or doctors, or any other profession that involves knowing parts of a body and how it looks and feels (and smells!). Biology students should dissect animals to learn about the animal, and to learn about themselves. It is not the same feeling: actually dissecting and virtually dissecting. I have heard the same story over and over again: how some teen was inspired to become a professional in a field they never thought they would like after dissecting an animal in class.

Normally they had to do the dissection, in order to pass the class, others were dared to by their friends. But the experience changed their lives and how they looked at animals and their life. One story really sticks with me. Some teen was only dissecting the animal to pass the class, but then she ended up becoming a professional where she had to dissect humans, using an example of an indigent woman with an ovarian tumor the size of a

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football (Curran, 2002-2009?). Dissecting is an effective way to learn about oneself and other animals.

' All students benefit from knowing that their own body is similar in some ways and different in others from the specimen they dissected ' the full lesson can not be learned without cutting and touching formerly living tissue that is like the tissue of the student's own body' (Conger, 2002-2009?).

Another person said, ' While it is not for everyone, I was happy to have the experience of seeing the inside of an animal. To learn the digestion process, to see the liver, the heart, and stomach helped me to appreciate the human body, as well as the intricate design of life' (Furness, 2002-2009?). Knowing something was once living and not just a diagram that will not change, makes one appreciate and become more knowledgeable from the experience. To actually dissect is totally different from virtual dissections.

The organs can not be felt, living thing can not be smelled, that sensation of cutting through layers will not be experienced, the texture of the animal can not be touched, it can not be known whether the skin is easy to cut through, etc. " It's not the same as the real thing,' Perillos said. ' To actually cut through the tissue, see how the skin layers feel, the textures, the way the organs look inside the body, I think that can't be duplicated." (Dickerscheid, 2008). It really cannot be duplicated.

Animal lovers and many others have issues with dissecting for class. Some think that if people start killing animals, as if human's lives are more important than the animals', then kids will start to kill other animals, like neighborhood cats, for fun. ' This callous attitude can, and has been known

to carry over to larger species, such as neighborhood cats, and then, who knows what will follow from there once these less-sensitive of our children have out-grown the thrill of the simple and helpless creatures pinned to a board. It's a little like setting a time-bomb, and depending on the 'wiring'... will it go off?' (Loving, 2002-2009?). Where did they get that idea? I like to dissect animals; it helps me learn hands-on. That does not mean I will grow up killing everything I see. What about those other million people that dissected things in class? Did they grow up to kill every animal they see for the thrill? Does that mean people should ban everything that involves killing? Should people ban eating meat and vegetables just because they involve killing a living thing? That is just crazy. Animals that are only bred for the specific purpose means people are not going out and taking every animal they see. The people who want to release the animals so they do not have to die for science are just sending them to their doom.

Animals that grew up in a lab will not be able to survive in the open. The people who kill the animals are not even taking them away from their families. They all die sooner or later. Yes, animals are getting costlier as the economy fails. But everything comes with a cost.

One just cannot expect it to be free. Teens think the animals are disgusting, though I think they are fascinating. If they do not want to cut the animal, I am okay with it. They should not have to do it if they do not want to, even if it will prevent them from having an amazing experience. I know some schools say that in order to pass, the students have to dissect something.

I do not think that is really fair and the schools should give a choice. Maybe the best solution is to have the teacher dissect it in front of the class, and occasionally allow willing students to cut something, so they can get that feeling, or feel the skin and organs. It would save some animals, and it is a learning experience still. In a survey, there was close to half thinking that schools should ban, and half said there was no need to ban. But I just think people should just get over it.

Like my brother said, ' Why would they do that?' (in response to virtual dissection). At the end of the day, people start to realize that dissection is not really that evil. The next day, everyone arrives in the hot weather as they smell the stink of dead frogs. ' Oh, joy,' is the common thought for students. But after science, they grow a new profound respect towards these animals.

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