

# Cutting into dissection

Business



It's that time of the year again. The smell of formaldehyde fills the hallways. Some complain about the scent while others tolerate it. High schoolers around the country are dissecting animals. The dissection of animals in high school classrooms dates back to the early 1900s.

Back then, frogs were the animal of choice due to their commercial availability. It wasn't until the 1960s when the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, a federally-funded organization dedicated to transforming science learning, was formed, that animals such as fetal pigs and cats were used for high school dissections on a widespread scale. Before this, only college level courses had the dissections of these animals. In 1988, an estimated 75-80% of pre-college level biology classes had animal dissections. As of 2014, a National Anti-Vivisection Society survey of pre-college biology educators showed that 84% use dissection for teaching.

Garaway High School would be among that 84%. Each year the Biology II classes dissect an animal whether it is a cat or a fetal pig. This year Mr. Spillman's first and seventh period Biology II classes are dissecting cats. The cats are fully grown and according to Abby Yoder, a student dissecting a cat, "Some (cats) are chunkier than others." When students were asked about the dissections, mixed responses were received.

Junior Abby Yoder said, "It's just kind of gross. The cats are dead and just laying there while you cut them." Sophomore Quinn Gordon said, "It's fun." Senior exchange student Veronika Vainio actually has to leave the classroom. Veronika stated, "I really like cats, so the facts that they are dead cats is what gets me."

" The one aspect of the dissection where opinions are very similar is the smell. " It's disgusting. I gag every single day and almost throw up," said Abby Yoder. Upon entering the classroom during seventh period, the scent hit me like a brick wall. Several of the students in Mr.

Spillman's seventh period class said that the worst part of the dissecting was the smell. In previous years, Biology II classes have dissected fetal pigs. I asked whether the participants would prefer cats or pigs. Veronika said, " Maybe it would be easier if it was a pig." Sophomore Noah Finley said that he preferred the cats over the pigs. Yoder stated, " I'm not really a fan of any dissection so it wouldn't really matter.

" Ms. Sass, who has previously taught Biology II, says that the cats are the more educational option because the muscles and other organ systems in the cats can be studied more than the pigs. Why Dissect? With improving technology in the school systems, virtual dissections are becoming a popular option. Virtual dissections are also the option recommended by many animal rights organizations such as the National Anti-Vivisection Society. " Online is a good option, if it is the only option," says Ms.

Sass. " Hands-on is the better option. As long as you go about it in the right way and conduct yourself in the proper manner, dissecting in person can be very educational and humane." The students dissecting agree. Veronika said, " You see the real thing instead of just pictures.

It's easier to learn that way." Dissections can also be a good tool in learning about oneself. I asked Ms. Sass if she dissected cats while she was in high school and if the dissection had any influence on her career decision. Her <https://assignbuster.com/cutting-into-dissection/>

answer was” I dissected cats in high school and it definitely sparked my interest for going into biology.” Without dissections, students might not discover that they want to be a surgeon.

The dissections of animals in high schools are unique learning experiences that not only teach students about anatomy, but about their interests. Online options are available for the weak stomachs, but, if done correctly, dissections in real-time seem to be more effective. The smell is slightly nauseating, but the knowledge gained is worth it. If your stomach can handle it, the first and seventh period classes will be dissecting for about the next week in Room 215, don't be afraid to check it out.