

SUGGESTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVES FOR DISSECTION IN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

Legislative directives, associated with dissection in Illinois Schools:

1998 Legislation: (105 ILCS 5/2—3.122 new)

Sec. 2-3.122. Dissection alternatives. The State Board of Education shall make available to school districts sources of information concerning alternatives to the dissection of animals. Such information may include, but need not be limited to, names, addresses, and contact personnel of organizations that offer free instructional and teaching materials as alternatives to dissection.

Current School Code regulations pertaining to life science dissection issues:

27-14. Experiments upon animals. No experiment upon any living animal for the purpose of demonstration in any study shall be made in any public school. No animal provided by, or killed in the presence of any pupil of a public school shall be used for dissection in such school, and in no case shall dogs or cats be killed for such purposes. Dissection of dead animals, or parts thereof, shall be confined to the classroom and shall not be practiced in the presence of any pupil not engaged in the study to be illustrated thereby.

Comparable legislation references from other states:

Several states have passed legislation associated with what is referred to as the 'Students Rights Option' in the context of alternatives to dissection. Pennsylvania (P.L. 30, No. 14, Section 2), California (California Code 32255.1, 3, 4, 6), and Florida (Florida 233.0674) have enacted legislation which provides for alternative opportunities for learning in the life sciences.

Professional organizational position statements and materials associated with educational-setting decisions about dissection of animals in the classroom:

(This is not intended to be an exhaustive listing of position statements related to the issue of alternatives to dissection activities. The organizations are listed alphabetically and include the Internet address for acquisition of the statements and related materials. Some of the organizations may offer free or inexpensive materials for curricular assistance.)

- **American Anti-Vivisection Society**
(http://www.aavs.org/html/dissection_information.html)
- **American Association of Anatomists**
(<http://www.faseb.org/anatomy>)
- **American Physiological Society**
(<http://www.faseb.org/aps/animal.htm#class>)
- **Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights**
(http://www.envirolink.org/arrs/avar/avar/pos_stat.htm#elementary)
- **Ethical Science Education Coalition**
(<http://www.neavs.org/eses/model.html>)

- **Human Anatomy and Physiology Society**
(<http://www.bio.psu.edu/haps/animaluse.htm>)
- **Humane Society of the United States**
(<http://www.hsus.org/harm.html>)
- **Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources**
(<http://www2.nas.edu/ilarhame/23day.html>)
(<http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/labrats/>)
- **National Anti-Vivisection Society (Chicago, IL)**
(<http://www.navs.org>)
- **National Biology Teachers Association**
(<http://www.nabt.org>)
- **National Science Teachers Association**
(<http://www.nsta.org>)
- **The University of California Center for Animal Alternatives**
(http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/Animal_Alternatives/precollege.htm)

Alternative Strategies for Classroom Applications for Dissection Activities

The traditional life science classroom practice of animal dissection has begun to be questioned as schools analyze the relevance of many curricular activities, especially in light of impact on student achievement, philosophical foundations and even financial costs. While the curricular inclusion of dissection is not a mandated requirement, the learning community has requested assistance for schools as they face the challenges and questions specifically about this learning activity.

As schools approach the alternatives for dissection, it is suggested that administrators, teachers, students and parents cooperatively research the options which are most appropriate for ALL students, instructionally sound, developmentally appropriate and cost-effective, while promoting student achievement and understanding and respecting personal beliefs.

Decision-makers may begin their research on the alternatives by exploration through personal search engine preferences of Internet. This search could be directed through guidewords such as: dissection, anti-dissection or dissection alternatives. For example, the search prompted through the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Math and Science Education (<http://enc.org>) provided 182 documents matching the query of dissection alternatives. The viability of document matches may in many cases, be short-lived and shall not be offered through this document. Educational research is presented in many formats for direct use at the district level for providing a sound basis for informed decision-making.

Preliminary searches through Internet, biological supply catalogs, technology resource catalogs and educational curricular reviews have provided access to the following two major avenues for strategies for accommodating a wider range

for classroom activities for life science curricula. These include the use of instructional media (e.g. software programs and videotapes) and the use of models. Specific commercial inclusions are not appropriate for state-wide recommendations, realizing that there is a diverse variety of sources of materials and the criteria for the choice of instructional media is locally determined. Individual attendance centers and district offices regularly receive the catalogs from biological supply houses, technology resource suppliers, etc., all of which offer descriptors and suggestions for consideration of purchase.

Promoting the technological approaches which can be accessed through instructional media can substitute for classroom dissections, while students gain expertise in the manipulatives of interactive technologies. The option of such technologies can more fully integrate and improve the student comfort level in the use of these strategies.

In addition, the instructional strategy of issue investigation and personal position statement development could be included as a possible learning situation for students, while addressing specific benchmarks noted in the Illinois Learning Standards (from Language Arts and Science). This issue investigation could include:

- the historical basis for animal use in research;
- policies from the national, state and local levels for humane animal care, impoundment, and research;
- student dissection/anti-dissection movements;
- evaluation of claims by proponents/opponents; use of persuasive or inflammatory wording; development of criteria by the students to evaluate claims;
- development of personal position statements by all students to justify participation or non-participation in classroom dissection curricular activities.