

Dissection and vivisection are important tools in the methodology of biology/life science instruction. However, the use of any animal for dissection or vivisection should never be regarded in a casual or frivolous manner. Dissection and vivisection must always be conducted in a manner respectful of every animal's unique life value in the environment, no matter what the species level, and shall conform to the following standards:

- A. Only the most appropriate teaching strategy/animal model shall be employed to achieve the desired learning objective. In instances when only an actual animal shall satisfactorily demonstrate a desired learning objective, the teacher shall select the most--appropriate animal model. When selecting the most appropriate animal model, the teacher should consider:
 - a. the specific age and maturity level of the students involved;
 - b. the animal model that shall best satisfy the learning objective.

In instances when an actual animal model is not necessary to demonstrate a desired learning objective, teachers shall endeavor to use such alternatives as: computer simulations, tutorials, models and videotapes or video discs on the biology of animals.

- B. Reverence for all life.

Teachers should initiate dissection in the classroom after all students have been thoroughly inculcated with a value and respect for life. Students should be instructed that all animals, no matter what their position in the evolutionary scale, have value and purpose; each animal species is a critical component in a balanced ecosystem. Therefore, every animal's life has value.

Teachers should impress upon students that the animal's death or sacrifice is solely to help the student learn and that the animal, even in death, has something to teach the pupil.

To reinforce this philosophy, dissections should be graded assignments. Students who mutilate or otherwise mistreat an animal will be subject to discipline.

Policies

Newport Public Schools Instructional Mandates - Dissection

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In accordance with Rhode Island law, a parent(s) or legal guardian of any student may refuse to allow their child to participate in the dissection or vivisection of any vertebrate or invertebrate animal, or any part of a vertebrate or invertebrate animal. For those students whose parent(s) or legal guardian(s) have refused to allow participation, the teacher shall permit them to demonstrate competency through an alternative method of learning the material that would be covered in the activity. Alternative materials and methods may include but need not be limited to: video tapes, models, films, books, computer programs, clay modeling or transparencies.

Also in accordance with Rhode Island law, a teacher shall not discriminate against a student for not participating in dissection or vivisection and shall not lower a grade because a student's parent or legal guardian has chosen an alternative education project.

Reference

RI Gen. Laws § 16-22-20