



MYTH VS. REALITY

WHY DO WE NEED DISSECTION?

MYTH

REALITY

“The real feel”

Specimens are often contorted and mishapen, with monochromatic tissue, which becomes even more pronounced after days or weeks in a lab. Specimens cannot resemble living or post-mortem organisms due to the cellular changes that occur during embalming. Formaldehyde reacts with the soluble albumins in the cell and converts them to albuminoids or gels. (Wyoming Funeral Directors Association) Therefore, embalming alters the physical structure of the body's proteins, creating a latticework of inert, firm protein. (National Funeral Directors Association)

“Students spend too much time at the computer.”

According to the National Science Teacher’s Association and US Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, computer technology exposure in the classroom is invaluable to students. Its integration is key to their future career success. (see **ESEC’s Technology sheet (INSERT LINK TO TEACHING, TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEW PROFESSIONAL WORLD)**)

“Necessary for medical or veterinary school.”

Numerous physicians and veterinarians have testified in dissection choice hearings that middle and high school dissections were not necessary for their professional training. In medical school, non-human dissection is rare. (Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine) Many vet schools, in response to student objections, now provide ethically sourced cadavers for their dissection labs. (Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights) While 75% to 80% of American high school students will dissect at least 1 animal in school, less than 1% of them will enter a field where their dissection experience is even remotely relevant. (American Anti-Vivisection Society)

“Alternatives cost too much.”

Alternatives, unlike specimens, are not one-time-use materials, do not require additional tools such as scalpels or dissections pans, and are often accompanied by supplemental manuals. According to a national cost comparison, in the long run, alternatives are less expensive. (see Cost Comparison sheet **(INSERT LINK TO HSUS COST COMPARISON)**)

“Students don’t learn as well with alternatives.”

In 28 out of 29 studies, students using alternatives performed as well if not better than students using specimens. In Sweden and Norway students tested highest in scientific literacy on the International Math and Science Study, even though dissection is used infrequently in high school. (Balcombe’s The Use of Animals in Higher Education)

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