



Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board

MEDIA RELEASE



1325 California Ave, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3Y6 ph: (519) 253-2481 fax: (519) 253-0620

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Virtual Dissection

WECDSB, UWindsor usher in new era in science education

(Windsor, Ontario, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2019) – The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board is ushering in a new era of science education by phasing out animal dissection in its classrooms and replacing it with modern virtual technology to teach students about anatomy and biology.

Through a new partnership with the University of Windsor's Canadian Centre for Alternatives to Animal Methods (CCAAM), the school board will phase out frog and fetal pig dissection over the next two years.

In its place, students will use virtual dissection kits and other advanced technology that provides a hands-on, animal-free learning experience.

"Animal dissection is academically unnecessary and, despite its prevalence in North American schools, it is not practiced worldwide," said Dan Fister, Executive Superintendent of Innovation and Experiential Learning. "We believe this is a more ethical, humane and engaging way to teach students science and we hope this sets an example for school boards right across Canada."



University
of Windsor

Thanks to the partnership, WECDSB students will also have access to state-of-the-art training lab at the CCAAM, where they will work with Dr. Charu Chandrasekera and her research team on contemporary technology like the Anatomage Table, an unprecedented 3D anatomy visualization system which provides users with the same experience they would get working on an actual cadaver.

Comparison studies have shown that dissection alternatives are "equivalent, and in some cases superior, to learning with actual animals, particularly in relation to students' ability to understand anatomy and physiology and to retain knowledge and perform well in written or visual tests," according to Chandrasekera.

"Today's animal-free technologies help students build a strong knowledge base and achieve curricular learning objectives, all while promoting scientific curiosity and a passion for the discipline," Chandrasekera said today during a demonstration at St. Thomas of Villanova Catholic High School where students got to experience the Anatomage virtual dissection table and the "faux frog" dissection kits for the first time. With the success of this

"Learning together in faith and service"

pilot project, Chandrasekera hopes to expand this program across the province — and ultimately across the country — to phase out animal dissection.

All eight of the board's high schools have received faux frog dissection kits, which were generously donated by the CCAAM and its supporters. Each kit is designed for a class of 30 students, to work in groups of three: two different tactile frog models (Edu-Science Simulated Frog Dissection Kit and 4D Vision Frog) to be paired with Biosphera 3D Frog Anatomy Software; 3D4Medical Essential Human Anatomy 5 software; and Curiscope Virtuali-Tee augmented reality T-shirt, when paired with their human anatomy app, students can study the respiratory, digestive, and circulatory systems. Students can even track their own heart rate and see it animating live in the app.

"The biggest advantage of non-animal dissection is that it allows students to continue learning about physiology and anatomy throughout an entire semester because we don't have to dispose of actual animals after a single use," said Gisele Jobin, the math and science curriculum consultant with the board who has been helping introduce the new kits in WECDSB schools. "Students can revisit the subject matter at any time, which increases their ability to make connections between all of the biological systems."

For further information contact:

Stephen Fields, Communications Coordinator
519-253-2481 ext. 1246, E-Mail: Stephen_fields@wecdsb.on.ca

Or

Lori Lewis, Manager, News Services,
Office of Public Affairs and Communications
University of Windsor
519-253-3000 ext. 3241, llewis@uwindsor.ca