

ANTHR 001L PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY LABORATORY

Outcome: Utilize tools and methodologies of physical anthropology to analyze, identify, and classify fossil hominids.

PLAN:

Description of Assessment Method: 8 questions on final exam ask students to identify, analyze, classify, and compare fossil hominids, based on work/exercises already completed in lab class.

Criteria for Success: Each question is scored with a maximum number of points. The criteria for success are clearly stated in the question. Students are able to prepare for the questions based not only on lab exercises already completed but also by filling out a detailed study guide for the final exam. The breakdown of points for scoring is clearly indicated to students. Partial credit is possible and indicated by the point breakdown on the exam. Students are expected to provide the correct identifications and evidence based on previous lab exercises.

Timeline for Implementation: The final exam will be administered at the end of Spring Semester 2013.

Supporting Attachments:

Lab Final Exam

Anthro 1L Final Exam, Spring 2013

Lab Final study

Anthro 1L Lab Final study guide, Spring 2013

RESULTS:

Summary of Results: Almost all students performed very well on the 8 hominid identification, classification, analysis, and comparison questions. They met my expectations and in some cases exceeded them. The students who exceeded my expectations provided additional details and specifics in their answers and/or provided additional evidence to justify their answers. The few students who did not perform well revealed that they had not prepared adequately for the exam. Factors influencing their lack of success include: failure to attend class, failure to complete lab exercises, and/or failure to fill out study sheets and/or study guide.

Results: Acceptable Criteria for Success Achievement: Met

Reflection/Analysis of Results: The 8 questions cover the entire range of fossil hominids and address the principal criteria that students are expected to master for the final and for success in the course. They are a very effective means of gathering evidence of student learning. The scoring guide works well because this semester I broke down the overall points for each question. For example: in an 8 point ID question that requires students to list 2 features, each feature is listed as 4 points. This has been a big improvement. It provides clarity for both the students and me (the grader). The number of points for each question is included on the exam, and the space in which to provide the answers is clearly delineated. It helps the students organize their answers, and it helps me grade effectively.

ACTION:

Action details and description: I will provide more time in lab class for students to familiarize themselves, individually and/or in groups, with the fossil casts and to handle and observe/compare them. Students will be required (as part of the week's lab assignment grade) to visit the station with the relevant material. As they complete their lab exercises and study sheets they must view and handle the materials rather than rely simply on information from the lab manual and class presentation. Many students are not interested in handling the fossil casts. We also need a chimpanzee skeleton to use in comparison with the fossil hominid and modern human skeletal casts. It is insufficient for students to rely on two-dimensional images in their lab manuals and on PowerPoint slides to identify and compare skeletal remains.

Implementation Plan (timeline): The weekly labs at the end of the semester covering hominid evolution: the last 4-5 weeks of the semester. This lab work prepares students for the final exam.

Expected outcome of this action: Improved ability to identify, classify, analyze, and compare and contrast skeletal remains.

Budget request amount: \$2,000.00

Priority: High

NOTES: It would be useful to show a breakdown of the scores. It is stated that most students met or exceeded expectations. Is "most" 75%, 85%, 95%? Also, were there particular topics that students did poorly on? And if most students are exceeding expectations is it because the expectations are too low? Could you increase the level of learning that you are requiring?