UMASS Boston Anthropology Outreach

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**Summary**

- UMB Anthropology Outreach launched a pilot program in January 2011.
- The program serves as a science enrichment program for Boston area K-12 public schools.
- Science teachers are provided with fossil casts of early human ancestors and the expertise of UMB faculty.
- The program helps students further their understanding of biological evolution.
- The program was free to 13 prequalified Boston area schools.

**Methods**

- 13 Boston area schools were selected to be part of the pilot program during the spring semester of 2011.
- Fossil casts were purchased with grant money provided by OSRP.
- The Principal Investigator was on hand during all visits to answer student and teacher questions.
- Each school was given a lab activity to complete which took approximately 1 hour.
- All students were encouraged to touch the fossil casts carefully.
- Students were also encouraged to think critically about their answers.
- Teachers were required to submit a survey at the end of their visit so that the effectiveness of the program could be evaluated.

**Results**

"My students better understand the concept of evolution, common ancestor, comparative anatomy, and the concept of time and evolution. The program was wonderfully hands-on which also allowed all of my students to participate. Most other enrichment type programs our school participates in do not specifically address the middle school science curriculum frameworks."

-Response from 8th grade science teacher, Point Webster Middle School, Quincy, MA.

**Conclusion**

- UMASS Anthropology Outreach was an effective program, addressing a void in public science education.
- Learning about the human fossil record helped students gain a better understanding of biological evolution and anthropology.
- According to teacher feedback and Massachusetts curriculum standards the program is most effective at the middle school level.
- In order to continue, more funding must be secured.

**References**


**Further Information**

If you wish to learn more about the UMASS Anthropology Outreach program, you can contact Claire Gold at:

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