

A Cost Comparison Between Animal Dissection and Humane Educational Alternatives

Animal dissections are not cheap. The purchase of animal cadavers from biological supply companies year after year can be very expensive. On the other hand, humane educational alternatives such as computer simulations, videos, models, and dissection charts can often be used for minimal cost, virtually indefinitely, once the initial purchase has been made.

The following study is based on the needs of a typical biology department over a three-year period. Four of the most commonly dissected species - the frog, fetal pig, cat and dogfish - are given as examples. It is assumed that the department teaches three classes comprised of 30 students each, and that every pair of students dissects each species of animal once. Hence 45 frogs, 45 fetal pigs, 45 cats and 45 dogfish are needed annually, or 135 of each over a three year period. Prices were taken mainly from *WARD's Natural Science Biology and Chemistry 2004 Catalog*, in addition to the Carolina Biological and Pro Dissector websites, using the average cost of animals available in bulk. Items such as dissection kits, aluminum pans, and the humane educational alternatives were only purchased once. A range of humane educational alternatives is given for each species, and the total costs provided. However, not all of these alternatives would be necessary in every educational setting.

ANIMAL DISSECTIONS

Supplies

High School Dissection Set: \$15.00 x 45 (one-time purchase)	=	<u>\$675.00</u>
Aluminum Dissection Pan Set: \$8.85 x 45 (one-time purchase)	=	<u>\$398.25</u>
<u>Total</u>	=	<u>\$1,073.25</u>

Cat*

Price Range for 1 cat: \$29.50 - \$64.25 = Average = \$47.00 x 135 (for the 3 years) =	<u>\$6,345.00</u>
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Bullfrog*

Price Range for 1 frog: \$8.50 - \$14.60 = Average = \$11.55 x 135 (for the 3 years) =	<u>\$1,559.25</u>
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Fetal Pig*

Price Range for 1 fetal pig: \$8.20 - \$45.00 = Average = \$26.60 x 135 (for the 3 years) =	<u>\$3,591.00</u>
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Dogfish

Price Range for 1 dogfish: \$6.25 - \$12.00 = Average = \$9.13 x 135 (for the 3 years) =	<u>\$1,232.55</u>
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*Price ranges include specimens preserved with formaldehyde and formaldehyde-free solutions

TOTAL	=	<u>\$13,801.05</u>
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HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

Cat

CatWorks CD (45)	=	<u>\$2,591.00</u>
Ward's Pregnant Cat Model	=	<u>\$399.00</u>
Ward's Cat Dissection Video	=	<u>\$99.00</u>

<u>Total</u>	=	<u>\$3,089.00</u>
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Frog

Digital Frog 2 – Building site license

(Networkable CD-ROM and workbook)	=	<u>\$899.00</u>
Ward's Realistic Frog Model	=	<u>\$120.00</u>
Pro Dissector Frog CD (45)	=	<u>\$1,799.55</u>

<u>Total</u>	=	<u>\$2,818.55</u>
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<u>Fetal Pig</u>		
DryLab Plus Fetal Pig CD (45)	=	<u>\$2,251.00</u>
Ward's Fetal Pig Model	=	<u>\$325.00</u>
Ward's Fetal Pig Dissection Video	=	<u>\$64.50</u>

<u>Total</u>	=	<u>\$2,640.50</u>
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<u>Dogfish</u>		
Dogfish Dissection Video	=	<u>\$135.00</u>
Ward's Pregnant Shark Model	=	<u>\$305.00</u>
BioLab Fish CD (unlimited LAN network)	=	<u>\$949.95</u>

<u>Total</u>	=	<u>\$1,389.95</u>
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TOTAL	=	<u>\$9,938.00</u>
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ANIMAL DISSECTIONS TOTAL	=	\$13,801.05
HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES TOTAL	=	\$9,938.00

COST SAVINGS OF HUMANE EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES	=	<u>\$3,863.05</u>
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