

Editorial

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Here we are at the end of 2009 already. This final issue of *Evolution: Education and Outreach*, volume 2 closes our celebration of the Darwin Bicentennial and our full second year of publishing. As Stephen Jay Gould wrote on the flyleaf when he gave his friend and collaborator Niles Eldredge a copy of his last book, *The Structure of Evolutionary Theory*, “what a ride we’ve had!” Our journal was born at an intense planning session in New Orleans. The winter of 2007 was just ending, and the flood-torn city was still a wreck. A quorum of our editors and Board of Directors, headed up by prime mover and Executive Editor Andrea Macaluso, convened at Springer’s invitation to invent a new kind of journal. We didn’t not just want to publish about evolution: We wanted to teach it. We knew that teachers needed clear, accurate sources dealing with evolution; they needed to know more about what works best to prepare high school students for college—and what doesn’t; they needed models for teaching evolution in elementary school; they needed information, encouragement—respect, even. But could we reach them? And who could we find to speak to them? Were our hopes for teaching the great lessons of evolution any more promising than the future of the ruined city we visited?

We quickly found that we had the advantage in a fresh start and new ground to build on. Like a wise contractor, our publisher, Springer, has given us the tools and support we called for to get the job done. That includes going over budget to double the page count for Kristen Jenkins’ weighty special issue, “Teaching Evolution” (*EEO*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, 2009). And our stellar board of teachers and scientists has reliably

show up for the publishing equivalent of a barn-raising: lots of hard work for no pay but the vast satisfaction of helping to erect a structure serving the needs of the community. By now, we have succeeded so far beyond our hopes that our (recently promoted) Editorial Director Ms. Macaluso assures us we are “the hottest new evolution journal on the planet.” In a rugged and competitive landscape, *EEO* attracted so much attention that libraries were buying subscriptions in spite of finding the journal free online, and one indexer actually *invited* us to apply for inclusion in their database. So far, the journal has been indexed/abstracted in *Abstracts in Anthropology*, *Google Scholar*, *Summon by Serial Solutions*, and the online library and research consortium OCLC.

It takes a while to gather readership information, but we just got the download report for late 2008 and early 2009. The top few articles people hit on included T. Ryan Gregory’s two masterful analytical essays, “Understanding Evolutionary Trees” and “Evolution as Fact, Theory and Path.” Next came Kristin Jenkin’s book review of *Guns, Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond, followed by Ian Tattersall discussing “What’s so Special about Science?” and rounded out with two classroom pieces designed for use in lesson planning: Anastasia Thanukos’ regular column, *Views From Understanding Evolution*, devoted to “Parsimonious Explanations for Punctuated Patterns” and Gregory Eldredge on “The Five Major Divisions (Kingdoms) of Life.” To interpret for a moment: the first two articles by Ryan Gregory belong on every evolutionary biologist’s bookshelf, yet they are so clearly written that a good high school biology teacher could build entire units of study around either one. As for the book review, given Diamond’s popularity, may we guess that it has been downloaded by the proverbial General Audience of All Ages and Interests. And the noted primatologist Ian Tattersall’s engaging look at science as a human endeavor

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embedded within culture is also a great read for anybody from scientists to students. Last of all, the Thanukos and Eldredge downloads give us real proof that teachers want and will access the tools to teach evolution when they are available. It seems that EEO is a hit on every level from the upper reaches of the evolutionary high table right down to the communal trough we call the Internet.

Clearly, our success is a “new media” story. EEO represents a networking of the linear world of print and scholarship with the meshed, linked, and intersecting pathways of the electronic cloud. What an exciting time to start a journal. Yes, there are a few hard copies floating around, but online is where the action is—and the pictures are all in color there, too. Interestingly, old-fashioned, brick-and-mortar libraries may stand at the heart of the revolution. Look at the work of our first prize winner for this year’s Springer award for the Darwin Year Celebration Contest, entitled “Evolve Your Library.” This notable contestant is the science and technology library of the New University of Lisbon in Portugal. They won for a wide-ranging celebration of Darwin and evolution at their Caparica Campus that included theater performances, a book and video exhibit, a recreation of Darwin’s study, an outdoor installation inspired by Darwin’s tree of life, and outreach activities for high school students and senior citizens (<http://eventos.fct.unl.pt/darwin2009>).

Don’t miss our own latest nod to networked information: First, co-editors Niles and Gregory Eldredge present a radical new integrated approach to teaching K-16 science that highlights evolution, folds the natural world and personal experience back into the curriculum, and turns to alternate resources including the Internet as much as to formal textbooks. Also, Adam Goldstein, our book review editor, starts a new column this issue devoted to Evolution and Education Resources—feel free to send in suggestions for future columns and get updates on our blog and twitter sites as well as our MySpace (http://www.myspace.com/springer_evoo) and Facebook pages (<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=23672835224&ref=ts>). We love to hear from our fans, supporters, and fellow evolutionists, so stay in touch. We particularly urge teachers, scholars, and students from outside the USA to contribute and make this a truly international effort. Next year should be another smash, a dynamic series of special issues starting with another sure-fire instant classic, edited by our esteemed board member John Thompson and his Chilean colleague Rodrigo Medel, on coevolution. Plan to visit us in the New Year for this original issue; then, share your own adventures, lessons, and insights about *Evolution: Education and Outreach* at <http://www.springer.com/life+sci/journal/12052>