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UC Paleontology Museum Puts Evolution On-line

Evolution is the central organizing principle of the life sciences, yet it remains a source of controversy. Teachers, students and the public often have a hard time getting a handle on exactly what evolution is and why it is so important. To help ease the controversy and confusion, the University of California Museum of Paleontology will use a new \$390,000, four-year grant from HHMI to develop an interactive Web site on evolution.

Different sections of the site will target teachers, middle and high school students, and the public. Teachers will be able to turn to a section of the Web site to find factual information as well as self-study units on topics such as the nature of science, a series of proven teaching strategies, and links to curriculum resources elsewhere on the Internet. For students, a section called Exploring Evolution will provide Web-based activities such as a virtual research lab. Students also will find a guided tour of major concepts in evolution, as well as information about careers in evolutionary biology and a chance to "meet" scientists working in that field. A third section, Evolution Around Us, will offer the public an interactive arena that addresses common misconceptions and controversial issues and provides answers to frequently asked questions.

A volunteer panel of students and members of the public--the project's target audience--will help a team of scientists and educators develop activities for classrooms and the Web. Their input will help the museum provide a product that meets the needs of various users.

Workshops and short courses for teachers and a public lecture series will supplement the evolution Web site.