The teacher of biology has an opportunity – and an obligation – to point out some of the practical implications of Darwinian theory for human conduct. A thoughtful biologist cannot fail to find (in Shakespeare’s words) “tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones. ...” If he is interested in people as well as in things – and a teacher should be, even if a researcher is not – he will want to help students hear the sermons.

— Hardin, 1973, p. 15

Getting Prepared

Biology teachers are fortunate when topics to be addressed possess inherent qualities that interest students. Classical genetics rarely fails to interest secondary school students because it is introduced at a time when they are self-absorbed with their nascent physical characteristics, emerging sexuality, and/or future athletic potential. A topic like genetics is always an easier sell than would be taxonomy, for instance. How should one treat topics that traditionally are tougher to teach?

A simple but effective method for self-assessing readiness to teach a particular topic is to be prepared to respond to the questions, “Why do I have to know this stuff?” and “What’s in it for me?” Faced with these questions, real or implied, instructional decisions will be made to better address the needs of target learners. If