

Editorial

S Mahadevan, Chief Editor

In any enterprise, constant self evaluation is essential for effective functioning. This is particularly important in publishing a journal such as *Resonance*. The editorial board is constantly striving to evaluate whether the articles published in *Resonance* conform to the mandate of the journal. Do they reach the targeted audience of university students and teachers? Are they inspirational and provide a useful learning resource? More importantly, are they readable?

Since the most reliable source for answers to these questions are our readers, *Resonance* introduced a correspondence section recently to encourage readers to respond to articles published in the journal. Due to unknown reasons, the response from the readers has been somewhat lukewarm. There can be two explanations for this. One is that all articles are excellent and readers do not find any need for criticism or comment! The alternative is something that I would very much wish to be wrong – *Resonance* is unattractive and therefore articles are largely unread. There are clear signals that this is incorrect as many students and teachers have personally conveyed to us that *Resonance* is indeed a valuable resource in science education and articles are read and appreciated. However, if there are limitations, we would like to hear from you.

Sometimes, *Resonance* is compared to other high profile international popular science journals in terms of contents and presentation. I find this comparison to be unfair for two reasons. Firstly, *Resonance* is a journal of science education with a different mandate compared to that of a popular science journal. Therefore, the treatment of topics by the journal is different. The reader is given an in-depth account that includes quantitative aspects of the subject. The goal is to present the topic in



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such a way that even a non-specialist reader gets an understanding of the issues involved and at the same time the specialist reader gets a useful resource. Authors are requested to present the subject so that at least a third to a half of all articles can be understood by all readers. This is easier said than done. As presentation skills vary from author to author, at times some articles may appear to be too dense or highbrow to the non-specialist reader.

This brings me to the second reason for the unfairness in the comparison with popular science journals. Whereas commercial journals have professional copy-editors who rewrite manuscripts so that presentation styles are excellent, *Resonance* is primarily run by those who volunteer their services in the interests of the academic community. Though some modifications are made with the help of a team of dedicated editorial staff, *Resonance* depends primarily on its authors to present the topics in a readable manner. Substantial investments in terms of time and efforts are made in bringing out every issue. It will be a pity if this investment does not pay off in terms of the articles reaching the intended readership. Therefore, it is imperative to have constant feedback so that the journal can stay on course and fulfill its commitment to science education.

There are many instances that reassure us that we are on the right track. Since the journal is on the web, it gets noticed internationally. In a truly gratifying gesture, a Pakistani scientist who came across the journal through the web was so impressed with it that on his own initiative, he had *Resonance* linked to the website of the *American Journal of Chemical Education*. Similarly, many *Resonance* articles on evolution have been included in the list of resources for biology courses by universities abroad.

We like to believe that *Resonance* is a one-of-a-kind journal that is attractive, informative and inspirational and is a major educational resource. But unless this endorsement comes from our readers, this will remain only a dream.

