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A Message from the Editors

The Editors

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*Letters***A Message from the Editors**

The complex nature of ecological and environmental problems requires a multi-faceted approach to their understanding and solution. Ecological and environmental anthropology sounds interdisciplinary, but what exactly does that mean? And how does that differ from multi-disciplinary? Numerous articles over the past 30 or so years have talked about this type of research and some researchers have braved the unknown to produce high-quality, interesting, and useful work. However, for various institutional reasons, true integration of methods and theories across disciplines remains difficult to achieve.¹

Last spring, a number of us had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Thomas McGovern about the difference between interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research during a teleconference in our historical ecology seminar. He used concepts from developmental psychology to explain his view of the differences between the two approaches. Parallel play, where two children play side-by-side in a sandbox but do not interact, is akin to multidisciplinary work. On multi-disciplinary projects, researchers from different disciplines work side-by-side but do not necessarily communicate with one another about their methods or results. Interdisciplinary research resembles the example of children playing together in the sandbox. Researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds integrate methods, knowledges and theories through collaboration and real communication. This integration allows for the emergence of new understandings of complex issues and new questions to ask.

In this issue, we highlight interdisciplinary work from primatologists who combine cultural anthropology and primatology approaches to gain unique perspectives about the species that they study. From the discovery of a new species in Tanzania, to cultural primate symbolism and subsistence in Amazonia, and to the interactions of rural communities with local populations of monkeys in Bali and Sulawesi, Indonesia, ethnoprimateologists in our second issue demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary methods for primate conservation on three continents. A special Ethnoprimateology issue coming out later this spring will further explore this new interdisciplinary field. We are excited to be able to include video in these issues, and look forward to future multimedia submissions.

Starting up and publishing an online, peer-reviewed journal is not an easy task, and the editorial staff at EEA rode a steep learning curve this year. We at *Ecological and Environmental Anthropology* would like to take this opportunity to thank all the authors and reviewers who have patiently worked with us over the course of this past year. We would also like to thank the many faculty and graduate students here in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Georgia who have supported and contributed to *Ecological and Environmental Anthropology*.

Warm Regards,

The Editors

¹Lélé, S. and R.B. Norgaard. 2005. Practicing interdisciplinarity. *BioScience* 55(11): 967-975.

Metzger, N. and R.N. Zare. 1999. Interdisciplinary research: from belief to reality. *Science* 283: 642-643.