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Educating about Origins of Life Research: The Power of Collaborations

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Introduction: The Center for Chemical Evolution is uniquely positioned to pursue high risk, high reward research relating to the Origins of Life field, including in its broader impacts initiatives. There are three major barriers to learning about chemistry and science: they are thought to be too complex, boring or irrelevant, or threatening to personal beliefs. Through partnerships with communicators using a variety of media, the CCE has explored several paths to present scientific concepts and overcome the aforementioned barriers. Over the past 5 years, the CCE has collaborated with Stated Clearly to create short, jargon-free animations that illustrate processes as they are taught. Several million informal and formal learners have been exposed to Origins of Life research through the videos, presented in both English and Spanish. Further efforts are underway to create teaching tools that correspond with education standards so that the animations may be easily incorporated into curriculum materials. Here we share what guides animation development and assessment strategy.

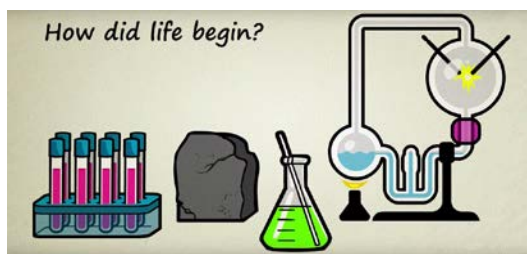


Figure 1 – Image from the animation, “Can Science Explain the Origin of Life?”, a collaboration between Stated Clearly and the Center for Chemical Evolution. This animation has been viewed nearly 500,000 times on YouTube.