



# Thinking Evolutionarily: Evolution Education Across the Life Sciences: Summary of a Convocation

*Steve Olson, Jay B. Labov, Planning Committee on Thinking Evolutionarily: Making Biology Education Make Sense, Board on Life Sciences, Division on Earth and Life Studies, National Research Council*

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Evolution is the central unifying theme of biology. Yet today, more than a century and a half after Charles Darwin proposed the idea of evolution through natural selection, the topic is often relegated to a handful of chapters in textbooks and a few class sessions in introductory biology courses, if covered at all. In recent years, a movement has been gaining momentum that is aimed at radically changing this situation.

On October 25-26, 2011, the Board on Life Sciences of the National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences held a national convocation in Washington, DC, to explore the many issues associated with teaching evolution across the curriculum. *Thinking Evolutionarily: Evolution Education Across the Life Sciences: Summary of a Convocation* summarizes the goals, presentations, and discussions of the convocation. The goals were to articulate issues, showcase resources that are currently available or under development, and begin to develop a strategic plan for engaging all of the sectors represented at the convocation in future work to make evolution a central focus of all courses in the life sciences, and especially into introductory biology courses at the college and high school levels, though participants also discussed learning in earlier grades and life-long learning.

*Thinking Evolutionarily: Evolution Education Across the Life Sciences: Summary of a Convocation* covers the broader issues associated with learning about the nature, processes, and limits of science, since understanding evolutionary science requires a more general appreciation of how science works. This report explains the major themes that recurred throughout the convocation, including the structure and content of curricula, the processes of teaching and learning about evolution, the tensions that can arise in the classroom, and the target audiences for evolution education.

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