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Eugenie C. Scott

NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott contributed a "This I believe" op-ed to *Frontiers in Evolutionary and Population Genetics*. "I believe that there are three genetics-related concepts that, if taught properly, would greatly improve the biological literacy of our fellow citizens," Scott [wrote](#) [4], selecting evolution ("the big idea of biology"), adaptation, and phenotype.

In addition to the scientific importance of these concepts, Scott emphasized their civic relevance. With regard to phenotype, for example, she wrote, "Consider the recent election season, in which there were a fair number of women, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender candidates for office. How often did you encounter, explicitly or implicitly, the misguided idea that their genetically-based characteristics either qualified or disqualified them? Such incidents remind us how useful the concept of phenotype actually is."

Scott concluded, "Evolution, adaptation, and phenotype. If teachers could do a better job teaching these concepts, Americans would be more biologically literate, which — dare I hope? — might lead to more thoughtful conclusions about what it means to be human." Her essay appeared on the journal's website on January 2, 2013.

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