

INTELLIGENT DESIGN: WHAT IS IT, AND WHY DOESN'T IT BELONG IN SCIENCE CLASS?

WHAT IS IT?

- Intelligent Design (ID) is part of a movement, disguised as science, to allow supernatural causes into scientific explanations.
- ID is NOT the same as the widespread belief that God created the world using natural processes, including evolution, as the means by which He expresses His will for the world.
- ID proponents claim that the scientific theory of evolution is false in certain fundamental ways. They say that special intervention by an unnamed “intelligent designer” is necessary to explain such things as the development of complex structures in organisms and the differences between species or other taxonomic groups.
- ID proponents are not clear, nor in agreement among themselves, about exactly what aspects of evolutionary theory are wrong, what aspects of life must have been designed, or how design might have happened.
- They purposely confuse the fact that science studies only natural phenomena with the incorrect idea that science asserts that natural phenomena are all that exist.
- They believe that science in general, and the theory of evolution in particular, are responsible for a materialistic, atheistic philosophy (which they call “Naturalism”) whose destructive cultural consequences in our society must be reversed.

WHO IS TRYING TO GET INTELLIGENT DESIGN TAUGHT AS SCIENCE?

- A national group, the Discovery Institute, is the primary source of ID activity in the country. They support local groups such as the Intelligent Design network, Inc. of Kansas City, and travelling speakers such as Phillip Johnson and Jonathan Wells.
- The Discovery Institute has a strategy, called the “Wedge,” to divide the public into two camps by convincing us that accepting the theory of evolution is incompatible with a belief in God. Their goal is to replace science with a “theistic science” derived from their particular version of Christian theology.
- ID proponents have an uneasy working alliance with Young-Earth Creationists, who are temporarily quiet about their disagreements on such issues as a 6,000 year old Earth or dinosaurs on Noah’s Ark so they can work together against evolution.

HOW DO THE INTELLIGENT DESIGN PROPONENTS MAKE THEIR CASE?

- They present their case like lawyers, philosophers, or public relations experts, but rarely like scientists. They attack science with words, not evidence. The so-called “scientific” evidence they present consists of distortions of science or current gaps in our knowledge (even though science has a reliable history of narrowing such gaps.)

- They don't give any evidence FOR "intelligent design" - except that they don't understand how complex things could have evolved.
- They quote scientists who are atheists, but ignore the many religious scientists who accept the evidence for evolution. They claim that such "theistic evolutionists" are really no better than atheistic naturalists. They insist that accepting the evidence for evolution is incompatible with both a belief in God and a commitment to moral standards.
- They don't discuss details of the elusive "Intelligent Design theory". They don't publish experimentally testable ideas, or offer any ways that ID could lead to new, useable scientific knowledge.
- They claim that ID is "censored" by the scientific establishment because of its naturalistic bias. But actually, ID has been rejected as valid science because it has produced no testable ideas nor any actual empirical evidence. It is not "censorship" when the arguments and purported evidence for ID fail to convince people.
- They don't admit to the general public that "intelligent design" is a religious belief. However, most will admit this in private or to religious groups. Usually they avoid the issue by saying either that the identity of the designer is unknown or that questions about the designer can be settled after ID is established.
- ID proponents Phillip Johnson, Nancy Pearcey, and William Dembski have all written that "intelligent design" is a reflection of the Word of God. Dembski has written that ID has no detectable mechanism and, being the creative act of God, follows no specific rules or laws. Clearly, these religious beliefs could not be tested by the methods of science.
- They claim that it is "only fair" to teach ID in public schools, because the Constitution requires that the "atheistic naturalism" of evolutionary theory needs to be balanced by teaching ID. However, ID is really disguised religion, not science, so the Constitution requires that it not be taught as part of the science curriculum.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Support the teaching of mainstream science in the public schools.
- Support the role of science in seeking natural explanations for the physical world, and support your choice in religion as it addresses your spiritual needs.
- Resist ID's attempts to divide the public into two camps based on associating science with atheism and ID with a belief in God.
- Resist ID's attempt to exploit our children and our public school system by trying to insert "intelligent design" into the science curriculum as a means of bypassing normal ways of establishing scientific knowledge.
- Stay informed about the positions of elected officials and candidates. Vote for those who support quality science and science education.
- Support good science and science education. Join Kansas Citizens for Science. See our website at www.kcfs.org for more information about ID and other related topics.