

“Intelligent Design” and Ohio

Gordon J. Aubrecht, II
OSU at Marion

Information on the ideas of “Intelligent Design” and Ohio's rewriting of science standards are discussed. A proposed letter to the State Board of Education will be shown. Audience discussion is encouraged.

What is “intelligent design”?

A good introduction comes from the articles in the April, 2002 issue of *Natural History* magazine. (magenta, intelligent design; cyan, evolution; handouts)

M. J. Behe, “The challenge of irreducible complexity,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 74 (2002).

K. R. Miller, “The flaw in the mousetrap,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 75 (2002).

W. A. Dembski, “Detecting design in the natural sciences,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 76 (2002).

R. T. Pennock, “Mystery science theater,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 74 (2002).

J. Wells, “Elusive icons of evolution,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 74 (2002).

E. C. Scott, “The nature of change,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 74 (2002).

B. Forrest, “The newest evolution of creationism,” *Nat. Hist.* **111**(3), 74 (2002).

The *mousetrap*—
where it comes in.

Behe claims that a mousetrap exhibits “irreducible complexity,” and so illustrates the false claims that evolution could have worked. How could the mousetrap evolve? Everything must be there for mice to be caught.

Miller answers that each part of the mousetrap has another use; this is how evolution works. It uses something that had some use for some other use. The mousetrap illustrates this perfectly. Without its catch and metal bar, you have a machine that makes a tie clip. The catch could be a fishhook, etc.

Dembski suggests “specified complexity” shows that intentional design has been at work. Complexity has been created out of simpler forms.

Pennock points out that the argument assumes a closed system, but evolution operates in an open system—energy comes from outside. And no model for this is posited; it is merely stated.

Wells argues that natural selection has not been demonstrated to operate. He uses the Grants study of finch beaks in the Galapagos to illustrate his point that natural selection is unproven. He claims that random variations cannot account for “designed features.”

Scott says he gets it wrong. It did show natural selection in action—when the stimulus abated, the response disappeared. Wells’ ideas are misplaced because science can only describe natural causation.

How does science work?

It works by *disproof*, not by proof.

“Intelligent design” does not allow for falsifiability. It is NOT science.

Our draft letter reflects that view, and our commitment that science classes represent real science.