

Evolution and School Curricula

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Throughout the past few centuries, virtually every domain of knowledge has progressed to broaden our perception of the world. However, several imperative discoveries become an issue of controversy and often do not receive wide press. One such issue, which deserves as much serious attention as many other issues, revolves around the controversy of evolution and its inclusion in school curricula. Despite being a religious person, I fervently believe that evolution is an integral component of our society for it serves great importance to our educational system and social understanding.

In order to thoroughly understand the debate over evolution, it is pertinent to primarily understand what science is and how evolution fits within this framework of science. The purpose of science is to develop an understanding of the world with evidence to support our positions. It looks at the world in a disciplined manner and is a vital area of education. Throughout mankind, science has unlocked the many secrets of life and is thus one of the most crucial areas of education.

One principal area of misconception stems from the misunderstanding of the term “theory.” It is a misconception held by many religious fundamentalists that Evolution is “just a theory.” However from a scientific viewpoint a theory is an explanation of a fact supported by a body of evidence. As far as science is concerned, evolution is not “just a theory,” but the fundamental theory as it is supported by a huge body of evidence. It is a fact and facts are explained by theories. When Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species*, he pointed out the fact of Evolution and then proposed the mechanism of natural selection to explain this fact. There are various theories of evolution, which are proposed mechanisms to explain the fact of evolution.

If the goal of Science is to achieve support through evidence, then let’s evaluate the evidences. The amount of scientific evidence supporting evolution is overwhelming. For instance,

adaptations are one of the strongest pieces of evidence for evolution because they clearly show that changes have taken place over time. For example, mimicry and camouflage are examples of structural adaptations, which protect organisms from predators. The resistance that bacteria have developed against antibiotics is a physiological adaptation that further sheds light on evolutionary adaptations. Fossils are an additional source of evidence because they provide a record of early life and evolutionary history. Anatomy of homologous and analogous structures is also evidence of evolution as they show relationship among animals and their physical appearance. Alongside, vestigial structures (body structures that have no function in a present-day organism but were useful to an ancestor) also suggest evolutionary relationships. In addition to anatomy, embryology and biochemistry are also evidences of evolution. The embryos of fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals look alike, which suggests similar developmental processes and show relationship between organisms. Finally biochemistry reveals information about relationships between species in that DNA and RNA of different species is similar.

One of the most essential and the greatest notions of science is evolution, which with great evidence explains how life began on earth and how changes take place over time. Ever since the notion of evolution was brought to existence there always have been impediments to its acceptance particularly from religion, which disallowed many people from believing in evolution. However, today in our contemporary world, with so much scientific evidence present there still are religious obstructions, which disallow the teaching of evolution in schools and look at the notion of evolution with ignorance.

At present many schools have been lobbied heavily to stop teaching evolution in science classrooms, mainly because of a few religious groups who show an appalling ignorance of what science is and what it is not. It is a major belief held by many fundamentalist religious minorities that there is a massive anti-God conspiracy in the scientific world, when there really isn't any. Science

holds absolutely nothing against God or religion in any form. Thus, restricting the instruction of evolution on religious grounds simply impinges academic freedom.

As mentioned above, the teaching of evolution is not contradictory to religion, nor is it an attack against religious beliefs and systems. Clearly, religion holds a valuable place in society and social understanding, but it must be understood that religion is a different sort of understanding – one rooted in faith and not evidence. There are two areas of religion that separate it from science: the first being that most religions cannot be tested, and therefore do not meet scientific standards and the second is that those claims which can be tested have been falsified, or show no evidence and cannot be included in a science classroom. By definition it is not science and society has chosen science as the desired educational tool. It is very well understood that religion is important, but it can't be taught in a science class, giving equal time as evolution as there isn't any evidence supporting the religious beliefs. Religion should be given coverage but in classes like religion, philosophy, or sociology, and not in a science classroom. Science and religion deal with separate areas and therefore should never be mixed and conflict only occurs when science is applied to religion or religion to science.

As we can now see, evolution can be supported by numerous evidences while religious beliefs can not. Evolution should not be disputed in any form and should be taught in every school in order to provide a better standard of education as it ties into our understanding of all sciences. We are in the 21st century and a well educated citizenry is the utmost priority for us. Therefore it is very important that science isn't mixed with religion and the scientific notion of evolution is accepted by the general public and taught in every school for the better future of all kids. The problem with the fusion of science and religion has long been discovered but it is high time that such problems are resolved if mankind is to continue prospering.