

# Creationism in the classroom

[Religion](#)



Derek Dougherty English 1302 Turman 11/1/2010 Creationism in the Classroom Many Christians believe that the earth and all things on it were created by God in six days. This is denied by the theory of evolution. Since the origins and development of life are an important part of the school science curriculum, the question of what schools should and should not be allowed to teach is an important one. There are many problems that present themselves when attempting to tackle the issue of teaching creationism in a public school setting.

The first being, does creationism even qualify as a science? If it is not scientifically testable then it should not be taught alongside evolution in a classroom setting. However some creationist supporters claim that it is scientifically testable and that its theories are consistent with the scientific method. The next logical question to ask is should the controversy be taught in a science classroom setting? Many people are against the idea of teaching two conflicting ideas in the same classroom setting because of the implications it would have on the children.

Others say if creationism is to be taught, it shouldn't be taught in a science classroom. If you have two conflicting ideas that cannot come to terms and be taught in harmony then one must be selected over the other. Creationism is not science; it is not scientifically testable, and does not belong in the science classroom. While both creationist and evolutionists have very convincing arguments, the question isn't what is best morally or ethically for the children.

The question is what will best prepare them for their continued education, and seeing how evolution is the basis for biology and a wealth of other

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sciences, creationism holds no ground and was even found unconstitutional to be taught. According to the Center for Science and Culture Intelligent design can best be described as " Certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection (CSC). " This idea is the basis of creationism, and stems from religious doctrine such as the bible that state the world was created in a matter of days rather than millions of years. Bibles and other holy doctrines are not allowed to be used by a teacher for any purpose, so regardless of anything else, it is against the law for a teacher to teach out of these doctrines. In the 1987 Supreme Court case of *Edwards v. Aguillard* it was decided that, " Educators may not teach, either as scientific fact or even as an alternative or competing theory, the theory that humankind was created by a divine being. In science classes, educators must present only scientific explanations for life on earth and scientific critiques of evolution.

The U. S. Supreme Court has held that it is unconstitutional to require educators who teach evolution also to teach creationism (Religion). " Justice William Brennan went on to write in the majority opinion that "...creationism could not be taught as an alternative to evolution because of its religiosity, but that teaching a variety of scientific theories about the origins of humankind to schoolchildren might be validly done with the clear secular intent of enhancing the effectiveness of science instruction (Moore 303). Creationists used this as an invitation and legal right for making scientific alternatives and teaching them in public school. The most popular of these " alternatives" was Intelligent Design (Moore 303). Justice Brennan's intent in

stating that teaching alternative theories could be done was not to invite creationists to make up more alternative theories. Brennan was simply stating that teaching a multitude of theories to children could be beneficial to them if it was clear that they were all equal and that one was not superior to the other.

In response to the question, Can creationism be scientific? Theodore M. Drange had this to say, " Yes, creationism can be a scientific theory, because naturalistic creationism (in sharp contrast with theistic creationism) would be scientific if it were ever to be pursued by empirical method. That is not anything that has ever been done, but it is at least possible (Drange). " Drange implies that naturalistic creationism, which is a form of creationism that makes no reference to God or any supernatural beings, is scientific and thus could be scientifically testable.

But given that no creationist wishes to teach creationism in this form, the fact remains that theistic creationism is not scientific. Drange explains that the reason theistic creationism is not scientific is due to the fact that it is theistic. It has nothing to do with the appeal to creation merely that theism is involved discredits it as scientifically provable theory (Drange). In 2000 the Kansas Board of Education removed "...all references to the origin of humans and the age of the earth at the urging of conservative Christians (Moore 339). Not only was this a borderline illegal act, but it was irresponsible of the School district to give in to the public fantasy that creationism is okay to be taught in schools. In April of 2001 an article was put in the New York Times discussing the Board's decision to overturn their previous ruling, " When Kansas School officials restored the theory of evolution to statewide

education standards a few weeks ago, biologists might have been inclined to declare victory over creationism.

Instead, some evolutionists say, the latter stages of the battle in Kansas, along with new efforts in Michigan and Pennsylvania as well as in a number of universities and even in Washington, suggest that the issue is far from settled (Glanz). " We are not here to argue the religious implications of discrediting creationism as a viable alternative to evolution. It has been proven and reinforced by the Supreme Court that creationism has no place alongside evolution in Science. Teaching a theory that discredits the rest of the teaching in that science class is preposterous.

The only part of evolution that is a theory is why it occurs, not how it occurs, whereas creationism in itself is a theory that has very little watertight evidence to support its claims. The bottom line is that creationism has a place in the lives of our children, but that place is not in the science classroom or any classroom in a state funded school. We risk undermining our constitutional right to separation of church and state if we were to teach creationism as an alternative or even alongside evolution.

The battle to keep creationism out of the classroom has already been won, but the war between the two sides still rages on. Even today there are laws trying to be enacted to push Creationism into schools. We must remain vigilant and wary of these laws that are meant to undermine our rights, and remind ourselves that this issue isn't about what you should believe; it's about what we should teach.

Works Cited " CSC - Top Questions. " Discovery Institute. Web. 03 Nov. 2010.

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