

TMLA  
11/12/10

Mon, Nov 8, 2010

Subject: Textbook,Media,Library Advisory Council meeting on Nov 12

I regret that I won't be able to make it to the meeting but here, however, are my comments on the Biology textbooks. I hope they may be of some use.

The main deficiencies in the books are in taking a doctrinaire, everything-is-solved attitude, toward just about every problem addressed (and many important biological issues are not touched on). The books are extremely out of date... not dealing with modern issues of language and language development, embryology (embryonic) development and the related issues of genetics and epigenetic phenomena. They should all be sent back to the publishers as unacceptable. They are a poor commentary on the American school systems at large. The authors of the books on display seemed not to have access to modern databases or the journal literature of the most recent decades of biological research.

Key controversies ignored or skirted include the HIV controversy, epigenetic phenomena in general, the current state of knowledge concerning retroviruses, and critical advances in genetics and biosemiotics are ignored entirely. The sense of discovery is muted by the doctrinaire pretense that all the problems of biology have been solved and critical thinking is not only discouraged but virtually smothered. In their favor many of the illustrations are colorful, though highly repetitive across the various selections... The books with "Louisiana" on the covers are, I believe, without exception, obviously dumbed down... an insult to our children and schools. That aside, the books on the whole, fail to capture the excitement of the dynamic ongoing work in biology. They fail entirely to acknowledge that as representations from DNA upward are corrupted the results are, in the long run, deleterious. This singular truth sounds the death knell of current evolutionary dogma. It is the basis for mortality, the extinction of thousands of species, and the diseases and disorders faced currently by the whole human population. Genetic, epigenetic, and biochemical errors are not the source of order in the biosphere. Nonsense of that sort is what has led to the sorry state of our current educational system and the rampant crime and deterioration of our social and economic systems. True and valid representations are required from DNA upward and they do not arise by chance.

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