Lesson plan

Modern views on the Design Argument

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The big picture	Today there is a group of modern philosophers and scholars whose views on the Design Argument are new and, perhaps, just as persuasive as those of the classical scholars.
Learning objectives	What? Modern Views on the Design Argument: key points, strengths and weaknesses. Why? To compare, evaluate and analyse different versions of the argument. How? After studying this topic, students should be able to consider different versions of the Design Argument. Also, they can explain their strengths and weaknesses.
Starter activity	Create a list of the classical versions of the Design Argument. Then consider which version you find the most persuasive and be prepared to explain why to the rest of the class.
Lesson activities	(a) Go through the argument as presented by Swinburne, Tennant, Dyson and Polkinghorne. (b) Consider the theories of Intelligent Design and Irreducible Complexity. Discuss whether you find either of these convincing. (c) In groups create a poster showing the key points of each of the theories you have studied.
Plenary	Discussion: To what extent do scientific theories pose a real challenge to the Design Argument? Are the philosophical and scientific theories compatible?
Homework task	Research Peacocke's theory of continuous creation and prepare a presentation for the next lesson.
Assessment opportunities	Using the mark scheme, students should self-assess their work with feedback from the teacher. You can also use the quizzes the students created at the start of the lesson to recap.
Differentiation	Teachers may wish to put key points on a worksheet for dyslexic or EAL students.

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