

A Cultural Study of Religious Education in America

*Hui-Chin Lin**, *Douglas S. Jarvie***, *John A. Purcell****,
*Patricia J. Larke*****, *Lawrence L. Perkins******

Abstract

Recent years, increasing diverse attitudes to religious education in the classroom make many private and public school face the controversy of “should religion be taught as a subject at schools?” As a result, many administrators and teachers are making efforts in searching for an appropriate relation between religion and curriculum design in order to ensure that they handle this sensitive issue in a democratic fashion, especially in public schools which are not sponsored by any religious institutions. Indeed, religious topics make teachers feel alarmed when introducing the conflicts in religions to students in different races in class (Marshall & Kappan, 2003)¹. This article addresses that the curriculum design for religious education must carry out the spirit of American’s constitution, particularly in public schools that do not apply Christianity as their faith.

Keywords: Western Society, Democratic Theory, Lemon System, Endorsement, Coercion Test

* Assistant Professor, National Sun Yat-sen University.

** PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Tunghai University.

*** Professor, Department of English, Blinn University, Bryan, USA.

**** Professor, Department of Teaching, Learning & Culture, Texas A&M University, College Station, USA.

***** PhD Study, Department of Teaching, Learning & Culture, Texas A&M University, College Station, USA.

¹ Marshall, J. M., & Kappan, P. D. (2003). “Religion and education: walking the line in public schools,” *Academic Search Premier*, No.85, pp.239-246.

I. Introduction: A Problem of Religious Textbook

Kasier (2003)² argues the inappropriate religious introductions might perplex students toward a religion if the teacher does not instruct it in a neutral attitude. He believes the wrong adoption of textbooks for teaching religions is one of the serious problems. Accordingly, he points out that a religious subject textbook like *A History of Western Society* might not be a proper religion material, because it creates a negative impression for students that Islam is disfavored. Actually, besides Kasier, numerous scholars of religious education and education legislation have also motioned similar principles of religious education (Slattery & Rapp, 2002; Wallace, Forman, Caldwell & Willis, 2003)³, most of them argue that a democratic spirit of education and an attitude of respecting diverse cultures should be concerned by teachers and school administrators when teaching subjects related to any type of religious.

II. Influence of Text with Bias

In reality, Kaiser (2003) indicates McKay's seventh edition religious textbook, "A History of Western Society" is indeed an improper religious textbook choice because it establishes a negative impression for the Islamic prophet Mohammed. Actually, we agree with his statement after reading the following text in this book: "The faith of Allah united the Arabs sufficiently to redirect their warlike energies. Hostilities were launched outward." (McKay et al, 2002)⁴

A. Teachers' Responsibility

From the perspectives of ethic and democracy, I believe a teacher needs to have a neutral attitude when teaching all the religions of the East and the West. This means that he needs to have a sense of responsibility to impartially and calmly identify for

² Kaiser, E. D. "Jesus heard the word of God, but Mohammed had convulsions: how religion clause principles should be applied to religion in the public school social studies curriculum," *Journal of Law*, No.3 (2003), pp.321-356.

³ Slattery, P., & Rapp, D. *Ethics and the foundations of education: Teaching convictions in a postmodern world*.(Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishers,2003). Wallace, J.M., Forman, T. A., Caldwell, C. H., & Willis, D. S. "Religion and U.S. secondary school students, Current patterns, recent trends, and sociodemographic correlates," *Youth & Society*, No 35 (2003), pp.98-125.

⁴ McKay, J. P., Buckler, J., Hill, B. D. *A history of western society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin College, 2002), pp.222-225.

students what are the texts with bias and what are the suitable materials and descriptions of introducing a religion.

B. Government's Position toward Religious Education

In truth, the US constitution and Supreme Court have clearly stated that mere inclusion of religion as a subject in the public school curriculum does not offend constitutional principles. Nevertheless, it has the possibility that certain pedagogic choices might be, and the definition of the appropriate religious education is still very ambiguous (Kaiser, 2003)⁵.

III. Religious Curriculum Designed from Perspective of Democratic Theory

We believe that an ideal pedagogic choice in religious curriculum is one which takes democratic theory into consideration, because many cases of failure in religious education reveal the religious education should not be delivered in a compelling fashion. From aspect of morality, we should respect each member from diverse structures of multi-societies (Lin & Larke, 2006)⁶.

A. A Failure Case of Religious Education

This famous event happened in 1965 in Abington Township Pennsylvania. An insistent activity of prayer training in Abington Senior High School as well as a public school caused a student Schempp, a Unitarian and a resident of Abington Township, Pennsylvania, and his parents' objection, and then sued the school. What had happened was the school let ten selected outstanding students read the Holy Bible and broadcasted to each room of the school's buildings. In truth, the suit from Schempp was not only for expressing their disagreement to the school's curriculum but also to the Pennsylvania state law.

“The Abington case began when Edward Schempp, ...filed suit against the Abington School District in the Federal District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to prohibit the enforcement of a Pennsylvania

⁵ Kaiser, E. D. op., cit.

⁶ Lin, G. H. C., & Larke, P. J. My feelings toward Afrocentric Epistemology, from <http://twowamaggoes.com/node/517> (2006).

state law that required his children, Ellory Schempp, to hear and sometimes read portions of the Bible as part of their public school education. The law required that at least ten verses from the Holy bible be read, without comment, at the opening of each public school on each school day.” (Wiki, 2008)⁷

In this case happened in a public school, a three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania judged that this practice of school was unconstitutional under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The reason was that the First Amendment of American constitution suggested an impartial position toward any religion, and the prayer activity designed by school was obviously not from a neutral standpoint. In fact, “the case was part of a string of Supreme Court cases ruling on the place of religion in public schools, and was both condemned by some religious conservatives and celebrated by those who supported constitutional separation of church and state.” (2008, Wikipedia)⁸

B. The statement in The First Amendment and a letter sent by Schempp

Allow us to probe into the logic and a sense of balance between the First Amendment and the teenager student Shempp’s objection dispatch. The declaration that suggests schools’ neutral and moderate position toward any religious conviction in the First Amendment states is:

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”(Amendment I, 1791)⁹

Significantly, the sixteen year old Schempp in Abington Senior High School accordingly pointed out that the education of his public school had already violated the national constitution by intending to preach Christianity.

⁷ Details can be investigated in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abington_School_District_v._Schempp

⁸ Case of “Abington School Distric v. Schempp,” argued February 27-28 and Decided June, No.17, 1963.

⁹ Find more information from <http://aclupa.blogspot.com/2006/12/guest-blogger-ellery-schempp.html>.

“...I would very greatly appreciate any information that you might send regarding possible Union action and/or aid in testing the constitutionality of Pennsylvania law which arbitrarily (and seemingly unrighteous and unconstitutionally) compels the Bible to be read in our public school system....” (Schempp, 2004)¹⁰

C. Schempp's Triumph

Finally, the Abington Senior High School was struck down because of its aggressive pedagogy which made Schempp and his parents feel being compelled.

“The Pennsylvania legislature amended the statute to allow children to be excused from the exercises upon the written request of their parents. This change did not satisfy Schempp, however, and he continued his action against the school district, charging that the amendment of the law did not change its nature as an unconstitutional establishment of religion.” (Wiki, 2008)

Therefore, the religious court ruling in the subsequent trial, in striking down the practices and the law requiring them, made specific findings of fact that the students' attendance at Abington Senior High School was enforced and that the practice of reading ten verses for the Bible was also compelled by law. As can be seen, the district court ruling was indeed unambiguous and severe on this issue, which at the same time, clarified for us as well as each teacher in the public school, about our required unbiased attitude of teaching and conveying any knowledge associated with religion even politics.

From our observation, being forced to listen to the other students' Bible reading “every day” would be very stressful if a student is not a Catholic and Christian. Moreover, the US First Amendment clearly specifies the neutrality, which means neither aiding nor opposing religion, so the school should not go too far.

In this case, we think that Abington would not be litigated if the Christianity was transmitted in a softer and more proper approach. Indeed, this case happening fifty years ago influenced Schempp a lot, so he wrote a paper last year titled “A Democratic Way” by remembering all the processes he went through with his school

¹⁰From “The blog of the ACLU of Pennsylvania” titled “Speaking Freely”.

and courtyard (Schempp, 2004)¹¹. In this article, he cited a democratic theory written by Lindemann and Smith (1951)¹² to defend his individual behavior fifty years ago: “Democracy is a state of mind. It is a state of mind, first, of and toward the majority. It is a state of mind, second, toward and of the minority. It is a state of mind, finally and fundamentally, by and for the individual.” (Lindemann & Smith, 1951)¹³

IV. Religion Education Approach of an Explorer

Philosopher, Patrick Slattery

A prestigious postmodernist Patrick Slattery (2003)¹⁴, as well as our professor in Texas A&M University, College Station, has a parallel insight as Schempp’s toward Religious education. In “Ethics and the Foundations of Education,” he profoundly expressed that he believe excessive religion education might replace the essential sex education. Slattery (2002) considers religious education might develop students’ wrong concepts such as “...body, masturbation, orgasm, or sexual intercourse as the gravest temptations and the impure thoughts.” (Slattery & Rapp, 2003, p. 168)¹⁵

A. Exploring the Value of Religion Education

As an educational explorer, he incisively interprets the Christian sisters as “nuns” to announce his negative position and his antagonistic feeling toward the authority from church (Slattery & Rapp, 2003)¹⁶. Moreover, he honestly reveals how he struggled to conquer his religious guilt of masturbating when he was a juvenile junior high school scholar who was learning in a polluted religious classroom.

Indeed, when a religious creed containing many conflicts in the students’ different religion was over emphasized or conveyed by the passionate or even so called “obsessed” teachers, the innocent youths might be naturally therefore suffer

¹¹Information provided by American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania.

¹²Lindeman, E. C., & Smith, T. V. *The democratic way of life* (New York: Mentor: Books, 1951)

¹³Refer to <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-lind.htm> & Lindeman, E. C.. “Building a social philosophy of adult education” (1951b) in S. Brookfield (ed.) *Learning Democracy: Eduard Lindeman on adult education and social change* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987).

¹⁴Dr. Patrick Slattery, Professor of Department of Teaching, Learning, & Culture and. Department of Educational Administration & Human Resource Development.

¹⁵Slattery, P., & Rapp, D. *Ethics and the foundations of education: Teaching convictions in a postmodern world* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon Publishers, 2003)

¹⁶See <http://www.cehd.tamu.edu/directory/view.epl?nid=pslattery>

from feeling culpable and apologetic, even though there might not exist anything wrong, from a perspective of physical and psychological healthy, on his “biased behavior,” titled by “nuns.”

A sever doctrine influence a student emotion, even his characteristics of the future, might not be comprehensible and tolerable by students or parents who have different genre of religion. We believe that students who had shamed through a doctrine from different religion must feel tremendously perplexed and embarrassed. We think that a teacher should respect the students’ human right and freedom for believing his/her own religion. No one should be judged from a narrow view; moreover, we can not talk through the authenticity of God.

With education experience of a high school principle, Slattery (2003) emphasizes the significance of students’ liberty by signifying that the religious education might transfuse the erroneous perceptions into students, including the incorrect thoughts like “a sexless celibate life was clearly superior” and “a devout and pure married couple is identified as better.” (Slattery & Rapp, 2003)¹⁷

B. Reasons of Opposing Religious Education

In fact, Slattery (2003) believes that teachers have to explore if we do respect our students’ liberty and their own choices. He suggests us to seriously consider about which one is more imperative for the spirit of the immature students, the topics of “homosexuality and sex education” or “Bible study and prayer training?” He indicates that the laboring and moment consuming prayer and the Bible reading should be seriously doubted, for the reason that students might be confused by the guiltiness of puberty, and loses their rights of obtaining sexual education which if truth be told can strengthen them to be more dynamic (Slattery & Rapp, 2003).

V. Religion Education Approach of Citizen Philosopher,

John Dewey

Probably, another philosopher who considers the teachers’ roles as citizens, John Dewey, also supports that excessive religious education is not a proper idea (Dewey, 1971)¹⁸. Shea (1992) categorizes Dewey as a naturalist, a humanist, and an

¹⁷Slattery, P., & Rapp, D. op., cit, p.168.

¹⁸Dewey, J., *A common faith*. New Haven (Conn.: Yale University Press, 1934).

atheist. In fact, this social-realist as well as citizen philosopher believes that educators should "...eliminate any sacramental order that threatens full attention to democratic politics and its sacraments." (Shea, 1992)¹⁹

A. Reasons of Rejecting Religion

Dewey thinks long-established religions with their cognitive claims, their obscurantism and their divisiveness could not continue to exist the scrutiny of liberated intelligence, and he hints the teachers should divest themselves of the limitation from religious education and tutor the students to be improved citizens rather than a supporter for religious conviction. Shea (1992)²⁰ commented that the vast and mysterious public human good became Dewey's God, and his existence in its service became his faith.

B. From a Christian to a Citizen

Accordingly, he rejects the consequence of religious schooling in his "Common Faith," which reveals that he had to disappear from his Christian religion and its concern with the individual interior life in order to become properly political, public, communal, and sacramental (Dewey, 1934)²¹. No wonder, Dewey wishes the objective of education for every person is being able to participate in our civilization as a citizen, so he would not permit Christianity to threaten the students' concentration to the democratic politics.

VI. Two Curriculum Theories Applicable for Religion Education

The religion education is not illegal, but it needs to be taught in a prudently designed curriculum based on more unprejudiced foundations. In fact, there are three systems provided by Supreme Court that can be regarded as appropriate theories of designing religion curriculum, which are regulations taking human rights into concern.

¹⁹Shea, W. M. On John Dewey's spiritual life. *American Journal of Education*, No.101 (1992), p.80.

²⁰Assess to William M. Shea: Dept. of Theological Studies 3910 Bontanical 314-977-2888 St. Louis, MO 63110, Email: sheawm@slu.edu

²¹Dewey, J. op., cit.

What's more, a list of twelve rules written by Marshall and Kappan (2003)²² according to constitution principles can be employed as consulting references for curriculum designers.

A. Lemon, Endorsement, and Coercion Tests

The US Supreme Courts have developed three different types of tests for these kinds of cases: Lemon, Endorsement, and Coercion tests that the administrators and teacher should notice when designing the religious education curriculum (Kaiser, 2003)²³. Two of them are written by court judges. Fortunately, American youth's human right and freedom of religion therefore can be sheltered.

B. Applying American "Lemon" as a standard curriculum theory in religious course design

Firstly, the "Lemon" is a method of analysis with three criteria declared by Supreme Court in 1971, which evaluates if teachers instruct in a neutral manner and violate the constitution. The scales in Lemon Test have functions of raising the curriculum writers' awareness if there is whichever suspicion that the completed curriculum has bias against the state's constitution. For example, one of the criteria asks "Whether the curriculum has a secular purpose?" to notify curriculum writers not to incorporate any personal opinion into curriculum.

C. Applying American "Endorsement Test" as a standard curriculum theory in religious course design

Secondly, the "Endorsement Test" designed by O'Connor in 1985 focuses on examining if the state governments interfere with the schools' religious education by sending any documents of disapproval or approval for any religion. Actually, O'Connor's purpose of writing this system is for emphasizing the importance of neutral position in religious education and supporting the previous Lemon system which curriculum writers can apply to protect their well-designed curriculum from being oppressed by the government officials.

²²Marshall, J. M., & Kappan, P. D. "Religion and education: walking the line in public schools," *Academic Search Premier*, No.85 (2003), pp.239-246.

²³Kaiser, E. D. "Jesus heard the word of God, but Mohammed had convulsions: how religion clause principles should be applied to religion in the public school social studies curriculum," *Journal of Law*, No.3 (2003), pp.321-356.

D. Applying American “Coercion Tests” as curriculum theory in religious course design

Thirdly, another updated “Coercion Test” provided by Kennedy in 1989 acknowledges if the environment of school and pedagogies in religion curriculum are coercive or not. Coercion analysis system informs teachers not to bound students by establishing inappropriate learning conditions such as forcing background chanting music or dimly-lit gym for relaxation.

E. Marshal and Kappa’s Twelve Problems and Solutions as Curriculum Theories of Religion Education for Public Schools

Despite many voices of objection in religious education from the perspective of democracy theory, Marshall and Kappan (2003)²⁴ have provided their positive position of religiosity among American adolescents in public schools. They believe that if the religious education can be conducted in an approach through which the students’ variations can be respected, the religious topics should be addressed in classrooms. In one of their article “Religion and Education: Walking the Line in Public Schools,” they provided twelve potential problems for teachers to resolve, in order to inspect if they distinguish a proper pedagogy of teaching religion. With the list of twelve problems, the teachers can assess if they are qualified to religious education.

F. Problem Example

One of the problem examples is “A Muslim girl wears a head covering (heap) to class, how you should do?” And the lawful solution for this should be “...this is okay as free religious express.” (Marshal & Kappan, 2003)²⁵ In general, Marshall and Kappan agree that the ignorance of other religions need to be avoided.

²⁴Marshall, J. M., & Kappan, P. D. “Religion and education: walking the line in public schools,” *Academic Search Premier*, No.85 (2003), pp.239-246.

²⁵Marshall, J. M., & Kappan, P. D. op., cit, p.242.

VII. Curriculum Theory and Philosophy Application in Shempp's Case

A. Slattery's Thinking

As Slattery argues that the religious topics such as the prayer trainings are always very time consuming and laborious (Slattery & Rapp, 2003)²⁶. We think this point should be applied by the principle or a curriculum designer of Abington, which means they can reduce the time and the frequency of the Bible reading. Let's consider about this: If the Bible study is only twice a week, will Schempp and his parents be still angry about it?

B. Curriculum Design Consulting Resource: American "Lemon System"

Indeed, by applying above three evaluation systems as religious curriculum theories, the conflict between Abington Senior High School and Schempp will be avoided. Our reasons are as follows. First, the restricted religious instruction in Christianity will be detected when the curriculum designer promote bible study too frequently in an aggressive way. In other words, "merely Bible reading" will be identified to be a bias on the other religions by the Lemon system. Through noticing the Lemon text of "...advancing or inhibiting religion," the favoritism and favor of the church authority will be recognized by teachers and administrators.

C. Curriculum Design Consulting Resource: American "Coercion Test"

Second, by referring to the Coercive Test, the classroom broadcasting will not be adopted to a good pedagogy of Bible study. If the principle perceives the "Coercive Listening" conception at that time, the school will not be struck down by the court judge.

²⁶Book Review by Nakia S. Pope in *Educational Studies: A Journal of the American Educational Studies Association*, 1532-6993, Vol. 41, Issue 3 (2007), pp.255-258.

VIII. Discussion, Diverse Democracy Concerning Multi-culture and Multi-races in American Society

A. Religion from perspectives of Multicultural Studies

It is teachers' responsibility to pay attention to differences as certain differences correlate with differential power in American society. (American Pluralism and the College Curriculum. Higher Education in a Diverse Democracy, 1995)²⁷ The curriculum design must reflect the range of American diversities that believing many different religions and wishing to practicing different forms of life. Although Buddhism, Muslim, Jewish, or Daoism are not national belief and followed by most of the American, the basic philosophies, as well as the common senses existing in them still have to be conveyed to students. This way the pupils would be able to identify the cultural differences among them.

B. Concept of Mission Statements

While a lot of private schools are emphasizing that Christianity is the national faith, and a faith to Jesus our God should be a major part of the American way of living, this study suggests that a teacher should still carefully and conservatively raise their awareness when teaching mission statements or bible scripts to their children, especially if they are teaching these concepts in the public schools of the US. They should teach with a way that sounds like a teacher instead of a pastor. Teachers in private schools supported by religious institutions might be able to work like pastors or sisters, however, teachers in public schools should teach with a more neutral attitude and teach religious courses like teaching historic and cultural courses.

As you can identify, Schempp's school principle was even protected by the Pennsylvania state law, he still be defeated in the Court. Sometimes, from a sever perspective of human right, the adjudicator or a student believing a different religion might not be able to understand that the relationship of religion to education tends to

²⁷This document discusses higher education's current debate about emphasizing diversity in the curriculum as part of the academy's continuing engagement with the wider society and with fundamental societal questions. The introduction suggests that the academy stakes its claims to leadership and service on a continuous engagement with nonacademic issues whose outcome will significantly affect individual lives.

be joint and sociable and not conflicting. On the other hand, they might feel pressurized by a different voice of religion their parents do not follow.

Although religious education should be strongly associated with the civil religion of America, and the religious education naturally should be regarded as obligatory or necessary, yet when a teacher is arguing the contribution of the common good of nation and culture of new continental religion, they should still be extremely careful to what level their children and parents accept their pedagogies applied in a preaching way or even a little bit forced way. Conclusively, for public schools which do not focus on a specific religious value, teachers should be more suspicious not to commit a crime based on the educational laws in American constitutions. On the other hand, private schools might allow their teachers to enjoy teach like preach, because all students and their parents welcome the specific religious types of teaching. Students in private school have admitted and accepted these types of religious preaching when they enrolled the school. Actually, they pursue specific types of preaching so they select the school. However, the students in public school might not be the same case. Some students in public schools select public ones instead of private schools due to their avoidance of religious bother.

C. Teach as a Teacher or Preach as a Pastor

We argue that a teacher should morally recognize whether their education has become an approach to promote a belief, or they can control themselves not to emphasize any superior sides of a type of creed, even though it might be a national faith. In a word, believing and be faithful are both significant in our daily life, but it should be progressed in a temperament way which students suppose they can agree to. Briefly, teachers should have their conscientiousness to transmit knowledge about multicultural believes, interpret diverse ways of pray, but they should not conduct these activities through a corresponding procedure approximating that they are doing the missionary task in the classroom.

We therefore conclude that religious education must be concluded in curriculum but can not make our children feel coerced, especially in public schools which do not declare any religious faith as their school spirits. It should be carried out through the diverse instruction for pluralistic religions, through different stories of multi-religious studies and world-wide aspects, instead of making students feel want to be a follower of a religion.

IX. Suggestion, Acceptable Benediction and Communion in School for National Events

Through the emphases of arguments by above laws, not to instruct like sermonize should be all American public school's teachers' common sense, so they would not disrespect the laws of religious education, be sued and be called to the court. On the other hand, we deduce it would be acceptable to pray for the 9-11 victims and request the students to stay quiet for a moment in the class. The reason is above benediction or communion is not related to any educational law so teachers will not offend the judge. Also, this should be a good educational opportunity that students can be trained to think together, inspect and unite spirits together and love each other. In addition, praying for nation and world peace should be allowed by both public and private school since learning how to express their true feelings from bottoms of hearts and show concerns for those who have died for them due to the violent acts and war, is actually significant for pupils and adult students.

X. Conclusion, Philosophy of Searching for an Appropriate Relation between Religion and Curriculum Design

We think that religious education is still necessary because it transmits the "ethic" and the "cultural difference" ideas to students. However, it needs to be taught under a well- concerned curriculum concerning democratic values. Dayton and Glickman (1994) argue that "To inculcate American democratic values, the democratic mission should be integrated with subject matter emphasis, learner needs, and societal concerns during curriculum development."²⁸

Students should not be guided to believe something, but should be led to learn more about believes in diverse cultures. More clearly, students have their human right to gain knowledge of all the religions of the world through a curriculum designed based on a nonaligned and egalitarian way. We believe that the pedagogies of introducing religion need to be carried out in an equal, non-compelling, and peaceful fashion in order to practice American's constitutional spirit. We think religious

²⁸Dayton, J., & Glickman, C. "American constitutional democracy: Implications for public school curriculum development," *Peabody Journal of Education*, No. 69 (1994), p.68.

education at school have to be more like a history, or a cross-cultural class, which can not be equivalent as an adoration procedure in a religious instruction.

In sum, just like John Dewey's standpoint, he wants everyone to have a "conversion," but not historic community that has already possessed belief. Therefore, the religious course at educational institution should be for learning of multicultural information, multi-linguistics, or historical and geographic studies in diverse areas, believes of different peoples and make us be able to amalgamate to the other people's cultures when it is necessary, but not for unifying all the peoples into only one belief, order, culture or language. Through concerning democracy in schools that many scholars have argued (e.g., Kearney & Ronning, 1996; Knud, Larsen & Walker, 1995; Taitz, 1996)²⁹, we argue that a contemporary professor with a conception and responsibility of moral and democratic education should instruct religions on this globe in an attitude that is unprejudiced, non-preaching and knowledgeable.

²⁹Kearney, M., & Ronning, A. H. *Women and the university curriculum: Towards equality, democracy and peace* (France: Springer Netherlands, 1996); Knud, J., Larsen, O. B., Walker, S. "Democracy in schools, Citizenship and global concern," *Didaktiske Studier, Studies in Educational Theory and Curriculum*, No.18(1995), p.167; Taitz, M. *Discipline, democracy and developmentally appropriate curriculum: or what constitutes effective classroom management in the early primary grades* (New York: Elementary and Early Childhood Education, 1996).

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林慧菁* 道格拉斯·嘉維** 約翰·波塞爾***

派萃霞菴·蘭克**** 勞倫士·波津斯*****

摘 要

近年來，許多宗教教育與教育法之學術界諸多學人，偏好討論一難解之議題：「校園與教室之內，是否允准進行宗教教育？」美國學校的管理階層與教師與學生們經常彼此討論，自我反思與評估衡量，希望能夠以自由民主的中立態度來創造公平、公正且合乎國家與本州法令的宗教教育課程，特別是在非傳教性質的公立學校，老師更必須警覺到，傾向佈道性的宗教教育課程可能引發的師生衝突。經參考美國的許多教育法規及各州向來自由民主的教育方針，本文籲請各級在校老師，可參考美國一著名的宗教教育教師不慎觸犯法案例，以正確合理地從事宗教教育，簡言之，宗教教育過程應如多元文化研究或是史地科目介紹，我們須知尊重多元化社會結構中的所有成員。

關鍵詞：西方社會結構、民主式教育、檸檬教育法系統、許諾支持法、測試是否強制法

* 國立中山大學外國語文系語言組專任助理教授。

** 東海大學社會學系博士候選人。

*** 美國伯林大學英語系專任教授。

**** 美國德州農工大學大學城分校教學文化系專任教授。

***** 美國德州農工大學大學城分校教學文化系博士候選人。