Teachers' Knowledge and Practice of Indoctrination in Teaching Christian Religious Studies in Mission Schools of Central Region, Ghana

Eric Mensah, PhD*
ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2362-8493
Department of Arts Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Email: eric.mensah5@ucc.edu.gh

Isaac Obiri Ampem
ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9347-6865
Department of Arts Education, University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Email: ampemisaac@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author: eric.mensah5@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract: The impetus of this study was to unpack teachers' knowledge and use of indoctrinatory practices in the teaching of Christian Religious Studies in mission schools in the Central Region of Ghana. The study used the concurrent parallel design of the mixed-methods research approach. The population for the study was all CRS teachers from mission schools in the Central Region. The census method was used to get all the 39 teachers of CRS in the schools. The instruments for data assembling were a questionnaire and an observation guide. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyse the data. Mission school CRS teachers were found to have moderate knowledge of what indoctrination is. They engaged in indoctrinatory practices at a lower extent when teaching CRS. There was no significant difference (t (37) =-.017, p=.987) in CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices based on their religious backgrounds. It was consequently recommended that the Central Regional Office of Ghana Education Service (GES) should organise in-service training workshops and seminars for teachers to deepen their understanding of the meaning and consequences of indoctrination. Furthermore, the Ghana Education Service should encourage teachers to desist from any form of indoctrination during the teaching of CRS.

Keywords: Indoctrination; indoctrinatory practices; mission schools; Christian Religious Studies.

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Introduction

A constant debate on Lesbianism, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) as well as other sensitive moral issues in the world have raised so many concerns as to where the sense of human morality has gone. With regards to this issue, every society has a unique role to play in correcting the uncultured life of its citizens. This goal can be achieved through appropriate education system. However, schools mandated to fulfil this duty are tainted with

religious indoctrination. Richard Dawkins compared religious indoctrination to "child abuse" (Stone, 2013). Copp (2016) argued that present academic conflicts pose the philosophical issue of how to distinguish between indoctrination and education. Some experts contend that there is nothing wrong with indoctrinating learners and children's religious education can be indoctrinated by their parents (Yohanis, 2015). This supports the idea that parents are not ethically condemned for indoctrinating their

children. For instance, Becky Fischer, a Christian minister, argues in 'Jesus Camp' that it is appropriate for her to brainwash kids to become committed Christian soldiers in the army of God (Ewing & Grady, 2007). They see it to be laudable to force learners under their care to accept beliefs from their religious experiences, yet they do not know the dangers it poses to students from other religions.

The Latin words "docere" (to instruct) and "doctrina" are the source of the term "indoctrination" etymologically. Although the word "indoctrination" merely means "instruction" due to the socio-political climate of the time, it came to have a negative connotation towards the beginning of the 20th century (Tan, 2014). As espoused by Momanu (2018), during the Nazi period, indoctrinating youngsters was among the most effective ways to support authoritarian regimes Momanu (2018) and Taylor (2017) supported the report that learners who have limited knowledge of a phenomenon fall prey to wicked plots. Wareham (2018) said religion is taught not in government schools in France due to the feebleness of the learners. Religious education has also been impacted by new ideas about what constitutes human development. These include the importance of critical thinking, the ethical import of choice and the influence of rationality in science. Religion as a human phenomenon is present in every aspect of existence and is so dear to heart, the idea that it is impossible to detach it from man's survival (Owusu, 2015).

Copp (2016) espouses that two things have an impact on how the subject of indoctrination is seen in the curriculum. First, there is the question of what constitutes indoctrination and several competing theories put forward on various requirements for a practice to qualify as indoctrinatory. According to some, indoctrination occurs when educators use techniques that prevent students from developing their capacity for reason. Taylor (2017) identified the danger of indoctrination and educators' responsibility to foster pupils' closed-mindedness, which jeopardizes their ability to become independent thinkers. Copp (2016) noted that when educators use techniques that hinder pupils from developing their ability for reasoning the concept has happened. Christiansen (2019) highlighted that cultural indoctrination is understood as the method of instilling ideas, attitudes and cognitive processes during the transmission of cultural legacies from one generation to another with the hope that such traditions would not be invalidated or questioned in the future.

Indoctrination usually springs up from (a) content or subject matter designated for teaching, (b) the method adopted in teaching, (c) the intent of the tutor and (d) the subject's moral objectives (Anti & Anum, 2002; Taylor, 2017, Momanu, 2018). Aside from these areas, one cannot determine if there will be indoctrination if its meaning is hidden. Tan (2014) revealed that it is obliging to segregate an indoctrinated individual from one unattached to further understand indoctrination. To counteract indoctrination propensity in schools and to equip students to detect and reject it, a renovation of education that yearns for teachers to be open-minded and committed to critical inquiry in the classroom is required (Taylor, 2017). Being open-minded is a quality everyone should possess. Failure to abide by and develop oneself towards that quality will lead to a retrogression in the educational system. This study supports Nelson and Yang (2022) and Copley's (2007) findings that in a classroom context, the teacher regardless of his or her religious background is a 'powerful storyteller' who can consciously or unconsciously privilege one set of beliefs with the risk of excluding those who don't share in those beliefs.

In Ghana, Amuah (2012) highlighted that the teacher of any religious education course needs to be fortified academically to grip the topics in the syllabus effactually without any bias. The teacher should own dexterous tactics and the dynamics in teaching the subject factually and unflappably. Ghana practices three major religions (Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion) as means of curbing immoral issues and promoting morality and drawing one closer to his or her creator. Owusu and Mumuni (2018) accentuated that religious education aims at deepening and widening the learners' understanding of religious and moral issues to help individuals to make constructive judgments about life's decisions with interferences. This gives no space for indoctrination. Therefore, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as a subject needs a competent teacher. Nevertheless, it is not the case, as in most of Ghanaian schools where CRS is perceived as a cheap subject.

Thus, anybody lacking necessary credentials (degree in religion) may well be employed to teach the subject (Owusu, 2015; Afari-Yankson, 2021; Mensah, & Owusu, 2022). This is a red flag of posterity indoctrination. Yet, a designed system of teaching without indoctrination is the most commendable and should be considered essential in teaching since it focuses on unique lives of students. Mensah and Ampem (2023) discovered that students can apply religious and moral lessons inherent in the passages they read during CRS lessons.

Several studies (Amuah, 2012; Anti & Anum, 2002; Christiansen, 2019; Ewing & Grady, 2007; Mason & Wareham, 2018; Momanu, 2018; Taylor, 2017; Warham, 2018) endeavoured to study indoctrination in Religious Education, yet no single one seems to have been able to investigate CRS teachers' knowledge of indoctrination. Most of these studies only indicated that the problem exists in schools and they did not focus on whether there exist practices that are indoctrinatory. It is salient to find out what indoctrination is from teachers' viewpoint. So far as indoctrination is concerned, the researchers deem it imperative to find out teachers' knowledge and use of indoctrination in the teaching of Christian Religious studies. What are the various activities that constitute indoctrination? If the teachers know what the concept means will they indoctrinate? How do we teach so that learners would not be robots?

Context and Purpose

It's worth noting that the Central Region of Ghana has Senior high schools that are attached to the Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Catholic, Anglican, AME Zion, Seventh - day Adventist and other Charismatic denominations. Most of them seem to have their schools and for that matter, they have free tickets to engage learners who come under their roof to be trained to know about Jesus to expand the kingdom of God. Mason and Wareham (2018) pointed out that if mission schools will be objective as the public ones do without forcing and intimidating the learners, fiscal support will go to them and will continue operating on the school curriculum. Once teachers are part of the school and intend to defend the philosophy, will they teach CRS freely without wishing to convert learners?

The church sees the teaching of religion in the schools as good grounds for getting converts. However, CRS purposed to enlighten other faith adherents and treat them as such. Bonney (2017) reported that President Akuffo-Addo addressing the graduation observance of Trinity College in Accra in 2017, said he was self-assured that the efforts to stretch the control of churches will advance discipline amongst students. To counter the president of the Republic, Mr. Mubarak toned down such planning and said that those schools have the capacity of becoming centres of indoctrination when religious bodies are given more power in their management (Sky, 2017). Recently, it was reported that Wesley Girls SHS in the Cape Coast Metropolitan prohibited Muslim students from fasting and praying while in school. Wesley Girls SHS, attached to the Methodist Church, does not allow students of other faiths to practice their faith activities. This is a sign of religious intolerance which religious educators are against. It has the potential to lead to indoctrinating students, which is a compelling issue in Ghanaian schools. Gomes (2013) opined that religious prejudice could lead to both lower religious diversity and higher skirmish and not governing it would lead to worthless results. Thorough investigations by Afari-Yankson (2021), Mensah (2018) and Owusu (2015) revealed that almost all the mission senior high schools have Reverend Ministers who teach CRS for the supposition that any individual using sound Biblical acquaintance could be invited in handling the subject.

A number of studies (Amuah, 2012; Anti & Anum, 2002; Christiansen, 2019; Ewing & Grady, 2007; Mason & Wareham, 2018; Momanu, 2018; Taylor, 2017; Wareham, 2018) focused on indoctrination in Religious Education on the general parlance. These studies did not delve into the practices of teachers that may lead to indoctrination.

Methodology
Design
This study aligned itself with the pragmatist paradigm. Cohen et al. (2018) opined that pragmatism as a philosophy of research is concerned with formulating and addressing the research topic or issue through the means of its heterogeneous designs, data collection systems and analysis. It is interested in what works or succeeds in finding answers to a pressing research questions or problems. The mixed methods approach was employed in this study. Mannino (2014) pointed out emphatically that mixed methods syndicates both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single research. The study therefore used the concurrent

parallel design of the mixed-methods research approach.

Population and Sampling
The study's population was specifically all CRS teachers from the various mission schools within Central Region. There are 39 teachers of CRS in the 19 mission Senior High schools in the region. With the help of the census method, all 39 CRS teachers from the mission Senior High Schools in the Central Region were involved. According to Leavy (2017), a census is an examination of each unit, everybody or all of that in a community. A convenience sampling technique was also used to sample 20 teachers for the observation session. This technique allows for utilization of members of a target group to whom the investigator has access or who can act as responders (Creswell, 2014).

Instruments
A questionnaire and an observation guide were used for data collection. The former for teachers contained 14 items and was divided into three sections, preceded by section A which solicited demographic information from teachers. Section B required teachers to express their knowledge of the term indoctrination through one opened-ended item. Section C beseeched teachers to respond to 7 items on the degree of their participation in indoctrinatory practices. The observation guide was organized and close-ended for the observer to tick. It contained 7 items that purported to find the prevalence of teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices. Table 1 gives details of CRS teachers' demographics.

Table 1: Characteristics of Teachers

Variable	Sub Scale	No.	%
Gender	Male	29	74
	Female	10	26
Religion	Christian	31	79
	Muslim	8	21

Validity and Reliability
To ensure content and face validity, the instruments were exposed to scrutiny with the study's objectives as a yardstick. After the corrections were incorporated, both instruments were pilot tested in three mission schools in the Greater Accra Region with CRS teachers which highlighted some loopholes and ambiguous items which were all rectified. A reliability test for the instruments with Cronbach's Alpha value was pinned on .723 and .653 for the questionnaire and observation guide respectively.

Ethical Considerations
All the necessary ethical standards (consent, confidentiality, anonymity) were followed diligently. An appointment was made with the individual heads of the mission senior high schools to seek approval to have access to the CRS teachers and their classrooms with educators. Subsequently, the teachers were fully briefed on what was expected of them, their right not to respond to some items and withdraw from the exercise, what the data will be used for and the possible repercussions (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). Convenient schedules were agreed on with teachers in the various schools for data collection.

Statistical Treatment of Data
Data collected from the 39 CRS teachers from mission senior high schools in the central region were coded, cleaned and analysed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 by employing both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, standard deviations and mean distributions) and inferential statistics. Data for research questions 1 and 2 were analysed by calculation of frequency counts, means and standard deviations. The research hypothesis was tested using the Independent samples T-test (a measure for comparing means) and the results were used to determine whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis.

Results and Discussion
This part of the paper concentrates on the results generated from the analysis of the data collected from the 39 CRS teachers in the mission senior high schools.

Research Question 1: What is mission school CRS teachers' knowledge of indoctrination in teaching CRS in the Central Region of Ghana?

This research question sought to examine mission school CRS teachers' knowledge of indoctrination in teaching CRS. The teachers had to define indoctrination through an open-ended item. The views provided by the teachers are as presented below.

A teacher alluded that indoctrination is imbibing in learners to completely accept the beliefs of a major religion. He said, "it is an ardent process of imbibing in others from another religious background to fully accept the ideas and beliefs of another particular religion" (respondent 1). Another teacher said, it is "forcing people to accept your religious beliefs and

practices" (respondent 2) which is in alignment with the first respondent's view. One of the teachers said that indoctrination has to do with impacting religious knowledge or doctrine into a learner" (respondent 3).

This definition aligns with Tan (2014) who said "indoctrination" simply means instruction. Here, the teacher sees any activity that intends to impact knowledge or doctrine to learners as indoctrination but is not education. A teacher also sees indoctrination as "information about the fundamentals and assumptions of any science or belief system" (respondent 4). One teacher further defined it as, "asserting one's beliefs and practices on others" (respondent 5). Well, it implies that if the teacher in the course of teaching CRS asserts his or her beliefs on others, then he or she is indoctrinating. One of the teachers pointed out that indoctrination "is a propensity to impose one's religious beliefs and practices on a person or persons" (respondent 6). It is a tendency and a desire to impose the beliefs and practices of other religious sects on other people. A good example is the application of ashes on the foreheads of students who are not Catholics or Orthodox believers during the Ash Wednesday celebration if schools succumb to the act to be an unpardoned imposition. Copp (2016) is right to say that indoctrination uses states, political parties and religious groups' powers and force as well as in one form or another, when psychological deception is used to persuade individuals to embrace a preferred worldview.

Coming from another perspective, a teacher sees indoctrination as "the ability to impose an individual's views on others without allowing that individual's views and perceptions to prevail" (respondent 7). Another teacher similarly said, "it is the act of imposing one's belief on others or making them accept a particular belief" (respondent 8). Another teacher added that the "concept of indoctrination refers to the process of teaching a person or group of persons to accept a set of beliefs uncritically" (respondent 9). The scientific way of ensuring that learners accept faith without having the morale to think critically or select is seen to be evil. Again, another said "It is to teach someone a set of beliefs so thoroughly which they do not have any ideas of" (respondent 10). Other teachers continued that indoctrination is "where the person has been influenced by a doctrine that has led to neglecting of his own doctrine" (respondent 11).

Others called the concept "a manipulator of the mind." It was also reported that "indoctrination is manipulating the mind of a person (student) to accept a belief or ideas". If it is manipulating the mind and making it numb, then it is not worth using it in teaching since education seeks to liberate others. Then the teacher who maintains that the concept is an act of conditioning one to accept unapproved beliefs has not made any mistake in saying that. It is the act of influencing one's beliefs, practices, norms and one's object of worship on a group of people. It has been shown again that to inculcate your belief and practices of a deity in a group of people is very clearly to be indoctrinatory.

From the above responses, it can be seen that the mission school CRS teachers in the region have some knowledge of what indoctrination is. The reason may be that teachers knew from their training or the everyday usage of the term. Studies (Copp, 2016; Taylor, 2017; Tan, 2014, Momanu, 2018) all conducted outside Ghana found that Religious education teachers had fair knowledge of the meaning of indoctrination although they were involved in indoctrinatory practices to some extent.

Research Question 2: What is the level of mission school CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices in the teaching of CRS?

The drive in this question was to determine the level of mission school CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices in the teaching of CRS. Teachers were asked to offer their thoughts on each of the items which had a scale 1= Very High level of Participation, 2= High level of Participation, 3= Slightly High level of Participation, 4= Moderate level of Participation, 5= Slightly Low level of Participation, 6= Low level of Participation. The mean scores interval was construed as follows; 1.00-2.50= High level of participation, 2.51-4.50 = Moderate level of participation and 4.51-6.00 = Low level of high participation.

Table 2 shows the results of teachers' responses on their level of participation in indoctrinatory practices in the teaching of CRS. It was discovered that (49%) of the teachers indicated that they do not confess through teaching CRS to convert the learners to fellowship with them (M= 3.59, SD= 2.27). Again, it was revealed that the majority (n=35, 87%) agreed that they do not wear the most sensitive religious or evangelical regalia to attract learners' attention to the teachers' denominational supremacy (M= 5.53, SD=.1.25). The majority of the

teachers (62%) did not speak and discriminate negatively against other religious sects in CRS (M= 4.56, SD=2.05). It was revealed again that (46%) indicated that they did not pray and sing worship songs before the class commences its activities (M= 3.85, SD= 2.05).

Table 2: CRS Teachers' Level of Participation in Indoctrinatory Practices in the Teaching of CRS (n=39)

The extent to which …	H/VH		M/SH		L/SL		Mean	SD
	No.	%	No.	%	No	%		
I confess through teaching CRS to convert my learners to fellowship with me	19	49	2	5	18	46	3.59	2.27
I wear the most sensitive religious or evangelical regalia to attract learners' attention to my denominational supremacy.	1	5	3	8	35	87	5.53	1.25
I speak and discriminate negatively against other religious sects in CRS.	10	25	5	13	24	62	4.56	2.05
I, as a CRS teacher, pray and sing worship songs before the class commences its activities.	13	33.3	8	20.5	18	46.2	3.85	2.05
I shout out or ignore learners when they challenge my opinions in the CRS classroom	5	13	3	8	31	79	5.23	1.66
I serve as an authority in the classroom by acting as if I am always right	2	5	3	8	34	87	5.51	1.25
I use force to convey ideas that seem not to be true but appear to be true	1	3	2	5	36	92	5.79	.78
Average							4.87	1.61

Table 3: Teacher's participation in Indoctrinatory Practices in CRS

Statement	NAA		R		O		VO		M	SD
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
CRS teachers confess their faith through teaching CRS to convert learners to fellowship with him or them.	4	20	2	10	4	20	10	50	3.00	1.21
CRS teacher prays and sings worship songs before the class commences	3	15	7	35	2	10	8	40	2.75	1.16
CRS teacher uses force to convey ideas that seem not to be true or verifiable	3	15	7	35	3	15	7	35	2.70	1.13
CRS teacher wears the most sensitive religious/evangelical regalia to attract learners' attention to her denomination	5	25	4	20	4	20	7	35	2.65	1.23
CRS teacher serves as an authority in the classroom by acting as if she is always right	5	25	5	25	2	10	8	40	2.65	1.27
CRS teacher speaks and discriminates negatively against other religious sects in CRS	3	15	11	55	2	10	4	20	2.35	.99
CRS teacher shouts out or puts learners off when they challenge her opinions in the classroom	4	20	8	40	5	25	3	15	2.35	.99
Average									2.64	1.14

The majority (n=31, 79%) revealed that they did not shout out or ignore learners when they challenge their opinions in the CRS classroom (M= 5.23, SD=1.66). It was discovered that the overwhelming number of instructors (87%) indicated that they did not serve as an authority in the classroom by acting as if they are always right (M= 5.51, SD=1.25). Lastly, it was discovered that the majority (n=36, 92%)

indicated that they did not use force to convey ideas that seem not to be true but appear to be true (M= 5.79, SD=.78).

An average mean score of 4.87 (SD=1.61) indicated that mission school CRS teachers participate in the indoctrinatory practices at a low level. The reason for this outcome may be attributed to the fact that although most of the teachers find themselves in mission schools, they do not engage in indoctrinatory practices because they know it effect students. This confirms what Amuah (2012) found in his study that teachers have high professional knowledge and are inundated in the dynamics of delivering the topic honestly and dispassionately. This finding corroborates Momanu (2018) and Mensah (2018) who discovered that CRS teachers ensure that learners are made aware of issues and left to decide autonomously on what is right and wrong without any intrusions.

The investigators employed observation to confirm the data collected with the questionnaire. A sum of 20 lessons was observed. The keys 1=Not at all, 2= Rarely, 3 = Often and 4= Very Often were used. The mean scores interval was shown as follows; 1.00-2.50= Low participation, 2.51-4.50 = Moderate participation and 4.51-6.00 = Very high participation level as seen in table 3.

Indoctrinatory practices demonstrated by most mission school CRS teachers included confessing to convert learners, praying and singing worship songs before the class commences and using force to convey unverifiable ideas. Few CRS teachers wear sensitive religious/evangelical regalia to attract learners' attention and are authoritative in the classroom. An insignificant number of mission school CRS teachers were observed speak and discriminate negatively against other religious sects and shout out on learners when they challenged opinions.

A mean of 2.64 (SD=1.14) indicated that CRS teachers employed indoctrinatory practices to a moderate extent when teaching CRS. Putting all the results together, it was found that CRS teachers participated in indoctrinatory practices to a low extent during the teaching of CRS. The findings of Momanu (2018) and Mensah (2018) which indicated that CRS teachers largely do not indoctrinate are corroborated. This finding confirms Annobil (2017)who found that CRS is concerned with the growth of the individual in terms of self-awareness, relationships with others and comprehension of various views, values and behaviours.

Hypothesis Testing
This section tests a hypothesis to determine whether there is a significant difference in mission school CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices based on their religious background. The null hypothesis stated as follows: *There is no significant difference in mission school CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices based on their religious background.*

To achieve this goal, an independent sample T-test was used to compare the mean difference between Christian and Muslim CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices. As the assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and was not violated, table 4 gives details of the results of the t-test.

Table 4: Independent Sample T-test on CRS Teachers' Participation in Indoctrination and Religious Background

	Group	N	Mean	SD	Df.	t-value	p-value
CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practice	Christian	31	30.58	7.06	37	-.017	.987
	Muslim	8	30.62	4.84			

The results indicate that CRS teachers who are Christians had an average score, (of M=30.58; SD=7.06, n=31) and the Muslims had a mean score was (M= 30.00; SD= 4.84, n= 8); t (37) = -.017, p= .987). Due to the p value of .987 which is greater than the critical value, results show that there is no statistically significant difference in CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practice based on their religious background. Therefore, the null hypothesis fails to be rejected. Here, the rate at which a teacher who is a Christian will participate in indoctrinatory practices is the same as a Muslim will do.

This finding contradicts the finding of Bertuzzi (2018) who revealed that all Christian teacher training is aimed at religious indoctrination of the young since without brainwashing of the young,

religion would wither and die of its absurdity. This finding also supports Nelson and Yang (2022) and Copley's (2007) findings that in a classroom context, regardless of the teacher's religious background, there is a 'powerful storyteller' who can consciously or unconsciously privilege one set of beliefs with the risk of excluding those who do not share in those beliefs. Therefore religious background does not influence teachers' indoctrinatory practices.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Conclusions
The study concludes that mission school CRS teachers in the Central Region of Ghana know the consequences of indoctrination since they have moderate knowledge of what indoctrination is. CRS students in the Central Region are to a large extent given freedom to make decisions and choices.

The ideas and perspectives of CRS teachers are to some extent not imposed on students as there is limited level of indoctrination since CRS teachers participated in indoctrinatory practices to a lower extent.

Finally, it is concluded that mission school CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices is not influenced by their religious beliefs and background. This implies that CRS teachers' participation in indoctrinatory practices does not emanate from their religious affiliations.

Recommendations
Based on the conclusions, it is recommended that the Regional office of Ghana Education Service (GES) should organise in-service workshops for all CRS teachers and stakeholders of mission schools in the region to deepen their understanding of the meaning of indoctrination, issues involved in it and its consequences. With this, teachers and stakeholders of mission schools will completely refrain from indoctrinating intentionally or unintentionally. Furthermore, the Ghana Education Service should make it a priority to encourage CRS teachers, not only in mission schools but in all schools, to desist from any form of indoctrination. Teachers should not impose their religious beliefs on students when teaching CRS. They should permit students to share knowledge they have learned and should tolerate other religious views.

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