

# Learning About World Religions in Modesto, California



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Abstract

After cultural and religious controversy in Modesto, California, community leaders attempted to increase tolerance and respect by requiring an unique world religions course for high school students. The first large-n empirical study of the effect of teaching about religion in public schools indicates that students taking the course showed statistically significant increases in passive tolerance, their willingness to refrain from discriminatory behavior, and active respect, the willingness to take action to counter discrimination. This research documents the circumstances that gave rise to the course and evaluates the course's effects using qualitative and quantitative evidence. It also connects the course to a larger research tradition in political science on the effects of civic education programs that promote liberal, democratic values.

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'Learning about tolerance might sound like a wishy-washy idea, but far from being a passive acceptance of things we don't like, it's a powerful tool not only to achieve peace in our playgrounds, but also to hone young minds in critical thinking, logic and communication skills,' says Rhian Seller, co-founder of the Learn2Think Foundation, which organises the UN International Day for Tolerance in primary schools. So how can we help our children grow up to be tolerant and respectful people? Talking about tolerance. Learn about other religions' festivals and traditions, and try cooking some of their recipes or learning a song. Even simple things like going to a park in a more ethnically diverse area can help your child see that the world is made up of all sorts of different people. Learning about World Religions in Modesto, California: The Promise of Teaching Tolerance in Public Schools. Article. Full-text available. Faced with familiar cultural conflicts, Modesto, California, chose to become the first public school district in the USA to require all Cite. Download full-text. THE DISTINCTIVE PARADOX OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: Active Tolerance as a Mean Between Passive Tolerance and Recognition. Article. Jan 2006.