



16th Annual ISNA Education Forum

The ISNA Education Forum, which fosters professional growth, development, and provides support to many Islamic schools, is celebrating its 16-year milestone this April. We have seen accredited schools emerged from grassroots efforts across North America; and we thank Allah, subhanna wa ta'alla, for empowering the many men and women who have made the dreams for our schools a reality.

North America is home to over one thousand weekend Islamic schools and several hundred full-time Islamic schools. Having survived the initial challenge of galvanizing community support to form a school, Islamic schools are now attempting to find the most effective means to build curriculum and programs that will strengthen the Islamic faith and academic excellence of their students. These schools continue to build quality on every level to enable their students to succeed in a competitive and increasingly multicultural and interdependent world. The ISNA Education Forum has served as a major platform for this critical endeavor from its inception.

The Annual Education Forum has been influential in supporting Islamic schools and Muslim communities to carry out various activities such as developing weekend schools; refining Qur'anic/Arabic/Islamic Studies instruction; attaining accreditation; improving board structures and policies; and implementing training programs for principals, administrators, and teachers. Thus, the significance of the forum lies in uniting our community in working towards a common goal for our future generations.

Specific Goals

1. Provide sessions based on attendees' needs, determined by surveys.
2. Increase number of focused and specialized sessions given by experts (Muslim and non-Muslim).
3. Promote more independent Islamic high schools in the U.S.
4. Reward attendees with professional development credits.
5. Create task forces to research solutions for unique problems faced by Islamic schools.
6. Provide stronger networking during and after the forum.

May Allah SWT reward the efforts of our educators and the institutions supporting the cause of Islamic Education in North America.

ISNA Educational & Program Development Department

ISNA-CISNA 16^h Annual Education Forum

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Becoming a Teacher Leader

Matthew Moes

Abstract

Teacher leadership models the Islamic ideal, as described by Prophet Muhammad (p) when he famously said, “Each one of you is a shepherd...” In reality, teacher leadership provides an example and structure that fosters leadership in students as well. This session explores ways to foster leadership roles among Islamic School teachers, and it examines typical challenges that arise with practical guidance on how teacher leadership can be developed and applied within our schools.

About the Author

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Becoming a Teacher Leader

“There are no traffic jams on the extra mile.” – Zig Ziglar

A January 2015 article posted on the Education Week Teacher blog shares the turnaround story of Encina Preparatory High School in Sacramento, CA. The author, David B. Cohen, credits teacher leadership as being at the core of its redesign: “Teachers lead the work in redesigning the academic program, improving the site governance, developing the professional learning plan, and building the parent and community partnerships,” (Cohen, 2015).

Teacher leadership is gaining considerable visibility among best practices in professional development for two important reasons. For one, opportunities for professional advancement are needed to provide teachers with a tangible avenue for growth that does not require them to leave the classroom. Second, as the role of the school principal becomes ever more demanding, an expanding leadership void requires us to consider new alternatives to distributing responsibility, (Seltz, 2015).

Islamic schools are certainly no exception. Building leadership capacity allows Islamic schools to get more from their limited resources while validating the potential of the dedicated people who keep them moving forward day to day. In addition, visible teacher leadership provides an opportunity to model the Islamic ideal as described by Prophet Muhammad (p) when he

famously said, “Each one of you is a shepherd...” In other words, teacher leadership provides an example and a structure that fosters leadership in students as well.

This paper (and corresponding workshop session) is intended to promote the concept of teacher leadership while exploring ways to foster leadership roles among teachers. We will also examine some of the typical challenges that arise in making this change along with some practical examples of how it can be applied. While the paper will explore each of these topics in further detail, the workshop will be designed to be interactive and engaging in order to give participants an opportunity to consider ways teacher leadership can be developed and applied within their schools.

Islamic Leadership

The Prophet Muhammad (p) said: “When three people set out on a journey, they should appoint one of them as a leader,” (Abu Dawud). By expanding our understanding of this statement to encompass other undertakings as well, we can appreciate the leadership imperative in Islam. Life itself is a journey comprised of many smaller journeys. Indeed in the Opening Chapter that Muslims recite in each unit of formal prayer, God is implored to “Guide us along the straight path,” (Quran 1:5). Upon coming together for any common purpose we can also appreciate the implication that the group members will choose a leader from among themselves, as opposed to having one imposed from the top down. The leader in turn, will function not as a ruler, but as a shepherd who will guide and care for them as they travel along their intended path.

The Prophet (p) said, “Each one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock,” (Bukhari & Muslim). He then continued by offering examples beginning with the leader of the community, then the father and the family, then the wife who is also specifically acknowledged, on down to include even the humble servant, showing how each has a degree of responsibility akin to what Stephen Covey (1989) terms “the circle of influence.” In other words, every person in society has a leadership role in accordance with his or her own personal responsibilities.

John Adair (2010) points out that a leader has “three core and overlapping functions: to achieve the tasks, to hold the group together as a unity, and to meet individual needs. ...As a rule, shepherds go before the flock, but not infrequently they are seen behind it. ...Shepherds also walk by the side of the flock...”

The shepherd then, serves as a metaphor for leadership that emphasizes the role of the leader as a person who must guide and care for those with whom he or she has immediate influence not unlike Robert Greenleaf's concept of “servant leadership” which emphasizes personal authenticity, providing and sharing leadership, valuing and developing people, which in turn builds community. In fact, the root of the word administrator, is administrare, which means to serve, (Greenleaf, 1998).

In schools, this model helps us to debunk the myth of a leadership void. Deal and Peterson (1999) point out that natural leaders are present throughout the school constituency among

administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and especially the students themselves. More specific to the point of becoming a teacher-leader, I would like to emphasize that this phrase can and should be interpreted both ways. If you are serving in a formal leadership role, consider how the complementary role of teacher enhances your leadership capacity. If you are a teacher, consider how your responsibilities increasingly require either an informal or formal leadership role. This is especially true in terms of being able to serve as a model while cultivating leadership in students. The key then, is to foster a culture of collaboration that harnesses the leadership talent already present at every level within the school community.

Reinforcing this point, consider when the Prophet Muhammad (p) said, “Faithful believers are to each other as the bricks of a wall, supporting and reinforcing one another.” So saying, the Prophet clasped his hands by interlocking his fingers, (Bukhari).

The Prophet (p) also said, “You see the believers, as regards their being merciful to one another, showing love to one another and being kind to one another, resembling one body, so that if any part of the body is not well, then the whole body shares the sleeplessness and fever with it,” (Bukhari).

Descriptions like these must guide our vision of what our school communities will become while at the same time fostering a sense of shared consciousness for our collective role in making them that way. It is important to spend time reflecting on these concepts of leadership because it enables us to approach the first step toward fostering a culture that promotes teacher-leadership in our schools which is to effectively define, articulate, and galvanize the school community around a common set of shared values. These values begin with the mission, vision, and goals of the institution and permeate every aspect that follows from policy to procedure to personal interactions. Time must be invested in the intellectual and spiritual work of clarifying organizational values with members of the team until each individual comes to accept a sense of personal ownership for embodying them as they fulfill their own specific role in the school.

Too often the more “abstract” aspects of school success are overlooked or undervalued. It is ironic that the very institution that exists for the purpose of developing academic excellence and fostering high moral character would not plan for and promote the intellectual and spiritual development of its own stakeholders. Perhaps just as ironic is the fact that traditionally government schools led by autocratic principals are supposed to prepare our young citizens to participate productively in a democratic capitalist society. However, Islamic schools, belonging to a parallel tradition in this country of privately funded schools rooted in religious communities enjoy a degree of freedom that should empower and enable them to move beyond the ironies that challenge public schools.

Vision for an Effective School

Researchers Purkey and Smith (1983) offer a list of characteristics of effective schools that can be used as a checklist for self-assessment. Consider which qualities your school already has and which can be aspired to in contrast to my generalizations:

A. Structural Variables:

1. **School site management:** most Islamic schools are already autonomous site-managed institutions with the exception of varying degrees of entanglement with the local mosque. They are not hindered by the bureaucracy of a larger district that has to account for multiple other schools. A site-managed school can be fully attuned to the needs of its own community and constituents.
2. **Strong leadership:** this varies widely and depends on a clear definition and shared understanding of what “strong leadership” means. Paradoxically perhaps, “strong” means flexible, not rigid, while the ethos of leadership responsibility is widely distributed.
3. **Staff stability:** this also varies widely and has more to do with intangible factors such as job satisfaction than extrinsic attributes such as low salaries. Low turnover for teachers and designated leaders is a clear indicator for both #2 and #3. Islamic schools have more local and direct control over hiring to ensure that staff are aligned morally and philosophically with the mission, vision, and values of the school.
4. **Curriculum articulation and organization:** while advances are being made, Islamic schools are still developing in this area. Many still rely on textbooks and externally developed standards to articulate the curriculum rather than having invested time and resources in establishing a unique one of their own. Subjects with less developed texts and curriculum materials (such as Arabic and Islamic studies) are even more vulnerable. Organization of the curriculum tends to fall back on individual staff members rather than an aligned curriculum map which makes the secular subjects more vulnerable if they suffer from higher staff turnover. The good news is that this is an area where Islamic schools are free from the bureaucracy and constraints encountered by their public counterparts if given the attention and resources required for proper development.
5. **Staff development:** this area has improved as more schools have learned how to tap into local outlets and resources for professional development. However, the importance cannot be overemphasized. If teacher-effectiveness is the number one factor in student achievement, the value on professional development is commensurate. Regardless of local resources being tapped, a key indicator for this is the amount allocated for it in the budget. The other key indicator is the presence and quality of a systematic professional development plan for all staff that is articulated in a policy document and aligned with school wide goals and individual evaluations. It begins with induction and continues perpetually as an embodiment of the value of lifelong learning and the premium Islam places on the continuous pursuit of knowledge.

6. **Parental involvement and support:** most Islamic schools “enjoy” a high degree of parent involvement while the level of actual support varies. As an extension of the topic addressed in this paper on teacher-leaders, schools must also have deliberate and effective plans for engaging and mobilizing parents. Not doing so invites the kind of unproductive participation that feeds frustration and negative commentary in the community at large. PTO participation is probably not the best indicator, as it is another vestige of public schooling not entirely suitable in the Islamic school context. Instead, factors such as satisfaction surveys, early enrollment response, parent donations, volunteer participation, and other measures of authentic (vs political) parent involvement and support should be used as indicators.
7. **Schoolwide recognition of academic success:** Islamic schools tend to do quite a bit of internal recognition, which in turn helps to boost morale and celebrate the things that matter most such as student achievement and character development. Fine tuning in this area will require a periodic review of what and how certain types of achievement are being recognized to ensure alignment with school goals, fairness, and overall effectiveness. We would also caution against too much extrinsic recognition and also beware that such efforts do not become so commonplace as to diminish in importance and meaning.
8. **Maximized learning time:** consider the possibility that the key to maximizing learning time comes as an extension of the same teacher-leader ethos as it applies to the students and their own circle of influence. When students accept responsibility for their own learning and systems are aligned to empower them to do so, time off-task due to discipline issues and other distractions are decreased and possibly eliminated. Learning is truly student-centered and inquiry based so students do not need to wait for the class to come to order for instructions from the teacher for every activity. Effective procedures empower students to come to class and immediately get to work on their individual learning goals. Teachers facilitate this process through effective planning, providing and preparing resources, while guiding and assisting learners where needed. Most schools have a long way to go toward achieving this vision of maximized learning time.
9. **District support:** for an independently established and managed Islamic school, we might convert “district” support into “**board support**” or effective governance, which is characterized by a board that fulfills its own key functions: setting and maintaining the mission, vision, values and goals of the school; providing resources to achieve these; hiring, empowering, and deferring to qualified experts who are capable of achieving these; actively supporting and promoting the school in the community at large.

B. Process Variables:

1. **Collaborative planning and collegial relationships:** Islamic schools that mimic traditional public schools established on the factory model will have trouble fostering these until the model itself is re-examined. Organizing students into separate classes with separate classrooms governed by autocratic teachers who mirror an autocratic principal are antithetical to authentic collaboration and collegiality. Schedules (time), learning spaces,

and even the typical role of the teacher need to be re-examined. Collaboration requires shared time and space for joint planning that goes beyond the individually developed lesson plan. Collegial relationships require a sense of shared responsibility for student outcomes. True collaboration will entail groups of teachers being given the time, space, and responsibility for working together to design meaningful learning activities that are aligned with a clearly mapped curriculum and attuned to individual student needs.

2. **Sense of community:** Springing from the fertile ground of “family” that characterizes what many teachers in Islamic schools may experience, teamwork must be the professional outcome beyond the feelgood vibes. Part and parcel with collaborative and collegial work is the shared responsibility for outcomes. “Lead” teachers will be responsible for facilitating the necessary processes, while all members of the team must contribute in meaningful ways. The traditional teacher role who works in isolation and is only responsible for an assigned list of students ends in a true learning community where the strengths of various team members come together to make up for inherent weaknesses much like the “brick wall” that the Prophet (p) described when characterizing the believers. This is all the more important in most Islamic schools where small numbers magnify the impact that one teacher's flaws might have on a whole class for an entire year or longer.
3. **Clear goals and high expectations that are commonly shared:** Again, without seeming redundant, this is where mission, vision, values, and goals are aligned, communicated and permeate throughout the entire school. Clear, achievable, shared goals are followed naturally by aligned actions. High expectations are reflected by positive attitudes that also permeate the school environment and communicate a mutual confidence in the individuals that make the school community what it is. A key indicator here is in what you hear people say. Schools where the constant chatter reflects only low or negative expectations of its teachers will simply reap the self-fulfilling prophecy their own words have sown. The same is true in the classroom if teachers have low expectations of students. Such attitudes and behaviors do not reflect the optimistic belief that true educators must have in the human capacity to grow and succeed. Conversely, sincere positive verbalizations of high expectations are much like informal prayers, having the power to uplift and transform.
4. **Order and discipline:** to be clear, an orderly and disciplined environment has nothing to do with being strict or rigid or that behavior problems never occur. Behavior will be less of an issue where order and discipline are present and firmly in place. Order and discipline have more to do with providing the basic human need for safety, security, and fairness in accordance with Malsow's hierarchy. Clear effective policies and procedures create a solid structure within which the more creative activities of learning and applying knowledge can occur. Most schools do have policies which will provide for this if they are adhered to fairly. One major problem in some Islamic schools is when exceptions are made based on individual relationships and personal connections that are allowed to circumvent established procedures. Discipline here refers to a quality of leadership which allows order to be maintained on a consistent basis. A bit of wisdom is also helpful.

Aligning Resources, Motivating, and Communicating

"I'm so broke I can't even afford to pay attention!" – Anonymous

The nagging thought that accompanied your self-assessment quite likely has something to do with resources. This is often the first line of defense against change. After all, if I truly do not have the time, money, teacher talent, or some other external factor beyond my "circle of influence" I can then simply abdicate from the hard work that is certainly required to figure out how to start doing things differently. However, the fact is that most of these are "chicken-egg" type issues and the lack of anything substantial enough to stand in the way of change is largely a myth.

When considering time, we all have to admit that it's the one thing that everyone has the same amount of on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Rich or poor, bright or dull, ambitious or lazy, everyone has the same amount of time. In fact, Benjamin Franklin once said, "If you want something done, ask a busy person to do it." The fact that the person is already busy is a good indicator of how busy they will be for you too! Chip Wood (1999) outlines many creative ideas for reorganizing the time in a given school day to provide more investigation, reflection, and community building. An Islamic school empowered with teacher-leaders has more creative freedom to consider, discuss and decide on new plans for a more effective allocation of time that will align with its goals to foster collaboration among teachers for the sake of meeting student needs.

However, one of the most common issues for Islamic schools is the unfortunate perception that "the staff are weak, we need better teachers" in order to improve in any area, let alone developing teacher-leaders. But the fact is that it is highly unlikely that your school can attract better staff than what you have today until the school itself changes enough to attract and retain a higher caliber of talent. Even the best teacher-leaders will suffer rather than grow in a school climate where parents, board members and the community in general harbors and reinforces negative perceptions of its staff. Unfortunate assumptions such as "they must not be able to find work anywhere else" undermine the moral commitment that motivates many Muslim teachers and administrators to choose the Islamic school in the first place. Alan Loy McGinnis' book "Bringing Out the Best in People" details the only viable solution: to invest in and develop the people who currently work in the school. If they are aligned with the school's mission and share the same values they have the potential to become the people your school needs. As the goals are achieved and the perception of quality improves, a greater pool of talent will be attracted to the school.

All of this will be for naught if we do not have the money for the salaries required to attract and retain this blossoming new pool of talent... or perhaps this is a myth too. The only more damaging myth is when we tell teachers that they will be paid more someday when we are more established and have more resources, "inshallah", and then we never do. The point is, we have a better chance of attracting and maintaining a higher quality of staff when we offer a straight

forward square deal. Being clear up front that the salary is low, perhaps even only a token gesture, removes the distraction and the expectation that money is the real reward for working in the school. To be clear, I am not advocating for the use of moral guilt trips along the lines of working “fi sabeelillah.” What I am really saying is that when it comes to teaching, money is related to the most basic human needs on Maslow's hierarchy. If you cannot afford to meet those needs, you should not hire people who require this in the first place. If you can afford it, then by all means, we pray that God will bless your efforts to pay teachers a more deserving wage, especially if you sincerely work to get it, “fi sabeelillah, inshallah!” In fact, an effective school board will either collect the resources required to achieve its goals or hire experts who are capable of doing so.

The point though, is that is that AFTER meeting their basic needs, most educators are motivated by the higher levels on Maslow's hierarchy toward self-actualization. At least, if they are teacher-leader material, then they should be. As Daniel Pink (2011) states, “The joy of the task is its own reward.” While extrinsic rewards (or punishments) may work for more concrete, manual tasks such as factory work for example, such rewards can actually be counterproductive when it comes to work that requires creativity, intellectual ideas, or higher order problem solving. This has implications for both teachers and the students they educate. Given our focus here, it is important to remember the factory model origins of public schools and the inherent harm in continuing to duplicate them.

Recall Douglas McGregor's contrast of Theory X and Theory Y management approaches and consider which of the following you think is more fitting to the role of the teacher:

- Keep employees under close supervision, tight control, using strong directives. The average teacher dislikes doing any real work, must be watched closely under the threat of consequences, avoids responsibility and requires formal direction from authority, values job security over other incentives and has little personal ambition. A “soft” version of this approach employs the same assumptions, adding persuasion, paternalism, and a degree of manipulation to interactions with subordinates.
- Teachers like their jobs, will exercise initiative and self-direction if they are committed to the school mission, will actually seek additional responsibilities under motivating conditions, and value creativity, seeking opportunities to help make decisions and contribute to the overall success of the school.

If Theory X truly applies, teacher-leadership is out of the question. In transforming schools from the factory model to learning communities, it is vital to have teachers who are thought of, treated as, and who act like professionals rather than laborers. Pink offers three key elements in human motivation:

1. **Autonomy:** offers a person self-directed control over their own work which leads to increased engagement when a person has a degree of choice regarding what, when,

and how they will handle a given responsibility. Given autonomy, individuals take a more pro-active approach to issues that arise while willingly seeking opportunities to collaborate with others.

2. **Mastery:** fulfills a natural inner drive to be engaged at the perfect space between boredom and anxiety. Boredom occurs when tasks are too easy and anxiety occurs when tasks are out of reach. Teachers are typically motivated by their love of learning and the success of their students. Being a witness to that magical moment when the light comes on for the first time in a given student is usually all the reward a teacher needs; the teacher tastes the joy of mastery when facilitating mastery for her or his students.
3. **Purpose:** occurs when a person feels they are a part of something greater than themselves. This is where the mission, vision, values, and goals become vital. This is also where collaboration, teamwork, and community factor in.

Fostering conditions that leverage these three elements are key to motivating teachers toward becoming leaders. Most teachers began their careers with an unmatched sense of idealism about knowledge and learning that may have eroded over time into a gradual sense of cynical helplessness as expectations were increasingly piled on under circumstances that offered little autonomy, satisfaction, or any sense of a higher purpose. Provide teachers with opportunities to take responsibility for identifying and addressing issues using their own professional knowledge and ideas while collaborating with colleagues who share the same sense of purpose and the flame will rekindle.

This where “paying attention” comes into play. The above discussion on the myths surrounding certain key resources shows that it is not about whether we have them or not – we do have them. Rather, what matters is what is communicated. This is a basic “actions speak louder than words” approach to what we really pay attention to and thereby communicate to others in the school. DuFour and Eaker (1998) ask us to consider the following: What do we...

plan for?
 monitor?
 ask about?
 model?
 spend time on?
 celebrate?
 confront?
 say?

In analyzing our own responses to these questions, what is communicated in terms of the way we value key aspects of our mission and vision such as Islam, student achievement, character development, diversity, cultivating leadership, lifelong learning, and continuous improvement? In response to this exercise it is important to follow through with any necessary adjustments to

create stronger alignment. This in turn communicates a more consistent and deliberate message about what we really believe is important in the school.

Challenges

“Conflict is essential to any successful change effort.” ~ Michael Fullan

Effectively creating a shift toward an increasingly distributed leadership structure requires a tremendous amount of change. The message I hope to have communicated thus far is that Islamic schools enjoy a great degree of freedom and potential in terms of implementing cutting edge best practices in education. They do not have the historical, bureaucratic, or legal constraints that mitigate change in other schools and thus the door is wide open for Islamic schools to invent themselves as the embodiment of Islamic ideals and progressive educational practices. However, we do not intend to make light of some very real, even if socially constructed, challenges that exist even in the context described.

First, it may not be easy for current leaders to let go. Jim Collins' (2001) characterization of what he terms “Level 5 Leadership” is that of possessing “...a blend of personal humility and intense professional will.”

Much of what we are talking about goes beyond merely “letting go” and instead pro-actively seeking to give it away. The current leadership must be committed to developing the leadership potential in each teacher in order to prepare them for increasing responsibility. Such a leader recognizes the inherent benefits in shared leadership especially in terms of bringing out the best in each person to serve the mission of the school far more effectively than any one person could by shouldering this responsibility alone.

“A Level 5 leader has the humility to ask other people for their opinions—and the will to confront the “brutal facts” and do something about them. When you’re leading in a diffused power environment, where a lot of people have the power to stop change, that’s when you need real leadership,” Collins said. “True leadership exists when people follow even if they have the power not to,” he added. “And that only happens when people can see that a leader isn’t acting out of self-interest, but is interested only in the cause,” (Pierce 2013).

A school environment is already one where power is diffused. Various stakeholders including influential teachers, parents, and certain students can hinder the spirit and substance of the learning environment if they have not sufficiently bought in. Unacknowledged or inadequately addressed, this leads to a toxic culture that saps both morale and momentum. To address this and other issues Collins asserts that Level 5 Leaders know how to “confront the brutal facts of the current reality” with the faith that such issues can be effectively addressed and overcome. To create an environment where facts are heard and confronted with the full input of the teacher-leaders on your team:

1. **Lead with questions, not answers:** Don't always come up with the answers and expect everyone to follow your vision blindly. Instead ask the right questions to empower people to gather facts and make decisions based on them.
2. **Engage in dialogue and debate, not coercion:** Create a culture where people have heated discussions based on facts and intense dialogues like a scientific discussion. In this environment everyone's voice is heard and people are engaged to find the best answers.
3. **Conduct autopsies, without blame:** When a bad decision has been made, conduct autopsies that are based on discovering the facts and learning from mistakes, rather than blaming people and putting people down.
4. **Build a red-flag mechanism:** You need to create a culture and environment where the facts and metrics cannot be ignored, (Amin, 2013).

Another challenge is when the teacher's themselves are hesitant or even resistant to change. Some teachers may feel it is beyond their circle of influence or that they didn't sign on for this greater degree of responsibility. Obviously not all will be equally cut out for taking on leadership roles. Some may prefer working in isolation and in fact, may have been quite effective at teaching this way for the majority of their careers. Some may go so far as to accuse the leader who is seeking to implement this change of being weak or abdicating from key responsibilities. These issues cannot be taken lightly. It is important for teachers to receive training and opportunities to discuss and buy into change initiatives and the values that underlie them. Through all of this there is no substitute for the amount of time required for people to adjust and exhibit a readiness to move forward. At the same time it is equally ineffective to wait until everyone is on board. Wisdom must dictate how to navigate the waves of change, (Madden, 2012).

It is interesting to note that after one of the biggest errors in Islamic history, the revelation sent to console the Prophet (p) actually affirmed the importance of maintaining the input of the people when making major decisions. It is famously known that during the battle of Uhud a group of archers had directly disobeyed an order of the Prophet (p) by abandoning their post prematurely, thinking the battle was over. This crucial mistake turned a near victory into a stalemate and resulted in a personal injury to the Prophet (p) among other losses. In this context the revelation came:

“So it is through the Mercy of God that you were gentle with them. Had you been rough and hard-hearted they would have dispersed from you. So pardon them, ask forgiveness for them, and consult them in the matter. Then when you have decided, put your trust in God, for God loves those who put their trust in Him.” [Quran 3:159]

In this we see that the even when the leader experiences disappointment with his team, the guidance in the Quran is to pardon and forgive, and then continue to keep working with them and including them in making decisions, and trusting in God after a resolution has been reached.

Practical Examples

“Action cures fear.” – David J. Schwartz

As stated in the introduction, teacher-leadership helps principals meet ever-growing demands while providing teachers with new avenues for professional growth that do not require leaving the classroom. In fact, it never made a lot sense to take those with the strongest record of facilitating student success away from the classroom completely. Teacher-leadership may provide a means for principals to keep one foot in the classroom as well. The point is, there is not one correct way to implement and empower teacher-leaders. Rather, there is great potential for creative implementation in ways that best suit the needs of a particular school. The key is to engage teachers in leadership roles that they find to be meaningful extensions of their existing roles. This allows for differing interests and aptitudes to be tapped as the initiative moves forward. The following are only intended as suggestions:

One of the most obvious ways to empower teachers is to organize existing departments into teams and gradually phase in increasing opportunities for meaningful collaboration. Pacing of this initiative may even be based on the recommendations of the team itself around specific priorities members have identified. This might be according to elementary grade levels and secondary subjects or perhaps in smaller schools, teams would simply be organized into “schools” along the lines of preschool, elementary, and upper school. Each team would be responsible for establishing regular meetings with an established agenda focused on curriculum, instruction, student behavior, special needs, and special events as required by their students. Team members should not only discuss specific issues but also assign tasks as needed to research solutions to specific challenges and seek out professional development opportunities. As a cohort, these teachers can also engage in peer observations focused on implementing new pedagogies or even as a means of devising strategies for addressing learning and/or behavioral needs of specific students. The point is that a team of teacher-leaders collaborates to take responsibilities for the peculiar challenges of their circle of influence. The traditional administrator should remain supportive and involved to the extent of staying informed and offering necessary resources, possibly pushing and prompting as needed in the beginning to ensure issues are addressed with the appropriate depth. Care should be taken by the principal not to smother new teacher-leader initiatives by exhibiting dominant behaviors or assuming the traditional role.

Another way to empower teacher leaders is to form focus groups to address specific initiatives in the school. This may result in standing committees or temporary ad-hoc committees to be dissolved upon project completion. A few examples might include committees for curriculum and instruction, professional development, safety and security, technology, policy/procedure review, special events, or any other issue identified as a priority or action item in the school development plan. In this case the principal might maintain a more central role to the committee while seeking the input and assistance of teacher-leaders, or instead appoint a faculty chairperson to lead the committee while providing appropriate assistance and support.

A third example would be to establish a standing leadership team to advise and assist the principal. This would not only be consistent with the Islamic concept of “consultation” but it would have the practical effect of inviting teacher-leadership at the schoolwide level to ensure that those working the closest with students are informing the decision making process. It may also provide a forum to facilitate shared leadership where the principal might effectively delegate certain tasks and responsibilities to teacher-leaders with matching talents and interests in given areas.

Principal Jake Madden (2012) describes the impact made by a new school leadership team composed of teachers who facilitated the implementation of key 21st century learning practices and technology integration in their school: “The upshot of such opportunities raises not only the self efficacy of the individual teachers but increases the true meaning of learning as each teacher becomes more personally involved in sharing the learning journey.”

Conclusion

Much of what we have described here has been embodied in the work of DuFour and Eaker with regard to turning schools into professional learning communities or PLCs. While at first glance the terminology may imply an emphasis on professional development, the PLC is actually a model for turning factory based schooling into learning communities with teacher-leaders at the helm. Teachers are accorded the professional status they deserve while working collaboratively to more effectively address work that continues to be done in isolation to this day. While we lament our continued struggle to foster more student leaders who are self-directed conscientious critical thinkers with the leadership initiative and collaborative skills to meet the challenges of our modern world, it seems all the more obvious that teachers must model the characteristics they hope to inculcate in the next generation. Current school leaders must strive to create these conditions and foster opportunities for teacher-leaders to meet this challenge.

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The Big Picture: Promoting Global Citizenship in the Classroom

Zakia Rodriguez

Abstract

As educators, it is imperative that we provide students with the knowledge and skills that are necessary to understand the world around them, and to help make a difference. Enhance your curriculum with suggested resources, and key strategies that are essential to promoting global citizenship for 21st century learners.

About the Author

Zakia Rodriguez is a Social Studies teacher at Noor-Ul-Iman School located in New Jersey. She received a B.A. in History at Rutgers University. She is a certified Teacher of Social Studies. Over the years, she has used her professional development training to incorporate the latest in 21st century educational technology to enhance learning. She is currently working towards becoming a Google Certified Teacher, to contribute to the development of instructional technology in Islamic Schools.

The Big Picture: Promoting Global Citizenship in the Classroom

Our world needs global citizens more than ever. A global citizen is someone who identifies with being part of a world community. A global citizen will have the skills to contribute to building the community's values and practices. If today's students possess the skills of a global citizen, they can make decisions that will significantly contribute to the world we live in. The skills necessary for global citizenship include: understanding one's identity and role in an interconnected world, ability to communicate, and knowledge of important issues. An Islamic school curriculum can effectively achieve these goals, when designed to provide global citizenship skills to students. This can be accomplished through faith based learning. The role of the Social Studies class within the Islamic School is essential in order to instill in students a personal identity that is conducive to an interdependent world. While this is an arduous task, it is a task that is necessary for Muslims moving forward.

The role of the Social Studies curriculum

Since the Social Studies curriculum within the Islamic School is crucial to this mission, the first steps should be an evaluation of how this subject is being taught. According to the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, set forth by the National Council for Social Studies, the essential themes include culture, time, continuity, and change; people, places, and environment; individual development, and identity; individuals, groups, and institutions; power, authority, and governance; production, distribution, and consumption; science, technology, and

society; global connections; civic ideals, and practices. The curriculum is enhanced by these themes, and provides opportunities for students to learn more about the time periods they are studying, and the relevance to their own lives.

Customized lesson planning

When lesson plan objectives are consistent in following the themes of the Social Studies curriculum, it can provide the knowledge base that is necessary to attain global citizenship. Students need to have a proper, and accurate understanding of past world civilizations, and societies. This also includes the successes and failures that the previous global communities faced, how they resolved conflicts, and the relationship from these past societies to the rest of the world. Lesson plans can be supplemented by having students analyze how the Muslims lived during each time period that is studied. This observation will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how Muslims responded to different challenges that they faced.

Teaching the Islamic perspective of global interdependence

All students of the 21st century should be aware of the global interconnections that exist in our world. Muslim students, however, have additional responsibilities. The Islamic belief of accountability of one's actions in the dunyah, and the akhira, gives Muslims more insight on these issues. Teachers can create effective lesson plans that include topics that are relevant to today's society. The Social Studies curriculum content standards can cover a wide array of topics that teach students relevance of what they are learning. Topics may examine economic issues such as poverty, national debt, lack of resources, and social inequalities. Suggested methods to incorporate these topics in class, may include current events reports, research assignments that would enable students to collect, and examine data. Additionally, students can relate these topics to their own Islamic understanding, and discuss the role of zakat, and charity. Environmental issues such as global warming, climate change, pollution, and overpopulation can allow students to make more responsible choices in their daily lives. This correlates to the Islamic principles of stewardship.

The rights and responsibilities of Muslim citizens

Education that promotes global citizenship should be developed after students possess a proper understanding of local and national citizenship. This prerequisite can be acquired with the civics portion of the Social Studies curriculum. Civic duties and responsibilities such as paying taxes, voting, serving in the military, and obeying laws can be taught through class activities, and projects. Mock debates and class elections can be interactive ways for students to understand their roles in their local and national community. Students can recognize the impact they will have on the societies around them. These can bridge the gap between citizenship of one's immediate residence, to big picture: the world we all live in. Cross-curricular lessons with the Islamic Studies, and Social Studies departments, can integrate the fundamentals of citizenship of the world, Islamic law, and the Muslim Ummah. Teachers can use current events assignments in

order to keep students informed of the recent news all around the world. Whether it is political news, medical epidemics, or natural disasters, students should have some understanding of what other people are experiencing. An extension of this learning can lead to humanitarian efforts, or community service projects. Such actions can help to instill Islamic principles such empathy, and mercy towards others.

The goals of global citizenship in an Islamic School

One of the main goals of global citizenship is to provide real solutions to today's problems, such as poverty, social inequalities, the environment, and climate change. Students need to develop skills that are pertinent to making responsible choices that are effective, and fulfill Islamic values, and morals. Assets that support one taking action include communication, interpersonal skills, public speaking, leadership, academic competency, and geo-literacy. Islamic school students should also be provided with the correct Islamic understanding of the duties, and responsibilities of Muslims in the dunyah (e.g. stewardship, justice, environmental awareness, dawah). They should be equipped with the understanding of mercy towards humanity, animals, nature, and all creations of Allah (swt). The Islamic school administration can compile a library of references, and resources from the Quran and Sunnah that teachers, and students can use. The skills mentioned above can be developed through assignments, activities, and assessments that encourage higher level thinking, and reflection. Additional teaching methods that encourage collaboration with others can be cooperative learning, and the Socratic Method. When students work collaboratively on a common task, there is potential to improve social interaction, motivation, and achievement. These positive changes can continue throughout the primary school years, and adulthood.

How to encourage 21st century learning through technology

In an ever changing world, global citizens are able to adapt, and use new developments to contribute, and increase productivity. This is where 21st century technology fits in. In order for students to face, and contribute to global challenges, teachers should incorporate technology tools, and resources that are relevant to what they are learning. This will promote digital literacy for the next generation. There are a variety of web based resources that allow students to collaborate with peers, gain self-confidence, provide feedback, create, and engage in learning. For instance, project based learning activities such as online correspondence with classes around the world, requires knowledge, and availability of web-based tools. Below are a few examples of online tools that I have found useful:

School Tube: Safer Online Videos for teachers & students.

www.schooltube.com

Word Clouds: Free word generator. This can be used for vocabulary, spelling words, or concepts.

www.wordle.net

www.tagxedo.com

Storyboard That: Create online storyboards. Students can bring their writing to life by making illustrations.

www.storyboardthat.com

Animoto: Students can create short video presentations. They can upload images, audio, and video clips to present their assignments.

www.animoto.com

Map Maker: This is a National Geographic interactive tool that allows students to create maps, and input geographic data.

mapmaker.education.nationalgeographic.com

Current Events: Use these online news sources for current events assignments:

- www.nytimes.com
- www.cnn.com
- www.timeforkids.com
- <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/>
- <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/>
- <http://news.discovery.com/>
- <http://news.discovery.com/adventure/tags/kids.htm>

www.newspapermap.com

CNN Student News: www.cnn.com/studentnews

National Geographic Bee: The National Geographic Society sponsors this challenging competition of geography for 4th-8th grade students. This website provides competition information, as well as daily geography quizzes, and more study resources.

www.nationalgeographic.com/geobee/

Primary Sources: Supplement your lessons with primary source documents, original audio & video clips, and images.

The National Archives: www.archives.gov

Smithsonian Education: smithsonianeducation.gov

The benefits of Cross-Curricular teaching

The traditional K-12 education is designed to give students an equal understanding of the various academic subjects. While each of the subjects is taught separately from each other, there are many benefits to cross-curricular learning. There are opportunities for the Social Studies curriculum to be intertwined with other subjects such as Math, Science, Islamic Studies, Arabic, English, or Quranic Studies. This collaboration between different subjects will allow students to relate what they are learning in one class, to another. It is another form of communication that students will observe, since the skills taught from different subjects are being used

simultaneously. This also allows teachers to work together, discuss the instructional techniques that will work best for the students, and learn along the way!

The BIG picture: Progress

The goal of an Islamic school is to provide students with a quality, meaningful education, that inculcates traditional Islamic learning, and values. In addition to an emphasis on high academic standards, an ideal Islamic school education should prepare students to become moral, upright, citizens of society, and the Earth. Furthermore, students will always have an awareness of their role in the dunya, and akhira. Teachers should allow students to feel secure in their learning environments, by encouraging creativity, self-confidence, and expression. For this, school administrators need to provide opportunities for teacher preparation, and professional development in topics, and skills that are aligned these goals. The number of workshops, webinars, teacher in-service programs, conferences available for teachers, and staff increase each year. Schools need to take advantage of these opportunities, to promote growth, and combat ignorance on all levels. These are steps educators can take to promote global citizenship in Islamic schools, so we can finally understand the big picture.

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A Blueprint for Special Education Success in Islamic Schools

Lupe Raymond

Abstract

This session will offer a comprehensive approach to embracing a diverse population within the community and its school. Islamic Schools require a Special Education program in place if they are to meet the needs of the majority of the students in the Muslim Community. Special Education and the Islamic culture work hand in hand to address the need of teaching a diverse population of students. Our continued struggle lies within the social and economic constraints that every family faces. There must be consideration for specific challenges when combining faith and education.

About the Author

Ms. Lupe Raymond, MS. Ed., B.C.S.E. serves AYA – American Youth Academy as an ESE Coordinator. She has devoted much of her time to help the academic development of Special Needs students. She earned her Master's in Special Education from Grand Canyon University and her Therapist status in Applied Behavior Analysis from the Florida Institute of Technology. She is Board Certified through the American Association for Special Education Professionals and The National Association for Special Education Teachers.

A Blueprint for Special Education Success in Islamic Schools

The Blueprint for ESE – Exceptional Student Education with Success in an Islamic School has truly been part of our mission and goal for the 2014 – 2015 school year. There is much misconception for what ESE means. Here in Florida the challenge is steadfast on supplying our educators, administrators and schools with the necessary explanation to work through the challenges for effectively educating our students. The Florida Department of Education defines ESE as follows:

“The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services support school districts and others in their efforts to provide exceptional student education programs for students ages 3 - 21 who have disabilities and students who are gifted. Each school district is responsible for providing services to students who are eligible for the following exceptional student education (ESE) programs. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing (DHH), Ages Birth-5 Years, Birth Through Two Years, Established Conditions (EC): Ages Birth Through 2 Years Old, Developmentally Delayed (DD): Ages Birth Through 2 Years Old, Ages Three through Five Years, Developmentally Delayed (DD): Ages 3-5 Years, Dual-Sensory Impairment (DSI): Deaf-Blind,

Emotional/Behavioral Disability (E/BD), Gifted, Homebound or Hospitalized (HH), Intellectual Disability (InD), Language Impairment (LI), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Orthopedic Impairment (OI), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Speech Impairment (SI), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Visual Impairment (VI): Blind and Partially Sighted.” (FLDOE, <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/ese-home.asp>)

There are challenges we currently face at American Youth Academy to promote a better system for the prior to acceptance of ESE students. We are trying to rectify these challenges by having consistent meetings, which are held to revise the enrollment requirements that prepare us to effectively screen a candidate student with challenges in order to develop a plan for them to succeed in learning.

The State of Florida and their public schools work with the largest population of Special Students by offering FAPE – Free and Appropriate Education within our public schools. Public funding has made this program much more accessible for children within the State. AYA’s stance is that we will promote and agree to be “The Blueprint for ESE” in a Private Islamic School. Funding and resources have created specific challenges for the effective education with our Special Needs Students since we are a privately funded school.

There are various students that we have taken as models for the implementation of this plan. American Youth Academy as a community embraces the plan and work towards the belief from *Surah Al’Alaq*. “1. Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), 2. Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). 3. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, 4. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)], 5. Has taught man that which he knew not.”

The implementation for a special education program must be carefully approached by assuring that criteria specific trainings are developed. This takes many months if not years of working through guidelines to assure accountability and results for an effective educational program. The ESE department works in collaboration with its teachers and staff making sure that all facets for the students’ learning are met.

Najah Zaaed quotes and we relate to;

“Muslims with disabilities and impairments, as well as their caregivers, tend to face challenges when attempting to participate in regular congregational prayers, Islamic educational programs, holiday/special events, or general visitations to the masjid. Their struggles also extend to gaining access, participating with or obtaining resources from other Islamic organizations and centers.”

While working to educate our special students, we strive to ensure the edification of well-rounded individuals that can receive acceptance throughout the entire community.

There has always been much skepticism when discussing one’s ability as a teacher or instructor to facilitate special instruction for special needs students. Many teachers feel that they just don’t have what it takes but unfortunately they are left with little to no choice. Since the Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004 (IDEA) schools were required to accommodate children having

disabilities a free and appropriate education. Many teachers were not ready to facilitate these needs if not trained to work with these special students. Along with the plans for IDEA there was the recent introduction for a Response to Interventions (RTI).

IDEA and RTI partnered to assure student success by defining and using RTI in the following way: “the practice of providing high-quality instruction/intervention matched to student needs and using learning rate over time and level of performance to inform educational decisions” (Response to Intervention/What is RTI, www.ousd.k12.ca.us/domain/133). Of course this has created even more stress on our teachers to perform and assure successful outcomes for our students. AYA is sharing in the growing pains to meet the standards set by the state and community for implementing the same quality of education.

The school has managed to incorporate faith and state while meeting educational goals in supporting community involvement. The support given to our families, assuring parental training and consistent communication help in using the vital information and resources to educate our students. Education is no longer considered a simple lesson plan. Rather, it is an intricate and multi-level recipe for student success. AYA shares in the philosophy that each teacher must embrace experience and enhance what learning is all about. They must incorporate some of their own learning in order to understand and better work with the children they have entrusted to them. This is a huge responsibility, one that is priceless and everlasting.

We look to three major components for implementing a successful special educational plan. A team’s vision to educate students on many levels, careful planning and continuous monitoring has resulted in several student successes this year. Let us discuss the ways that AYA has worked to implement such a plan for embracing a diverse student population. Our progress in formalizing the ESE Department within AYA has experienced growing challenges within its first year. Development for a tremendous yet very sensitive process to implement such a plan takes the support of great visionaries within our Administration. Countless hours have been dedicated in just working through the resources, man power and support mechanisms that help to create a successful program for Exceptional Students. The idea has been forth coming and the collaborative efforts to first and foremost develop a team of professionals who would strategize to see the dream become a reality has taken over two years.

As noted, the first year has resulted in many successes thus confirming that the blue print validates reasons for why an ESE Department would be necessary in meeting the needs within the Islamic School. Each child who has been documented with special needs and or disabilities must have files created, RTI plans drawn and teacher training to implement each student’s service plan. Oversight for the process is monitored through the ESE Coordinator who manages all of the service plans. There are bi-weekly meetings set up with staff and administration to address required updates and changes to the service plans. It is necessary to assure that specific changes for better learning be monitored closely to assure that we are promoting progress.

The biggest hurdle has been the need to educate and train staff for the process that the ESE Department requires to see the plan go through fruition. We are an inclusionary school which means that students are taught in a general education classroom. The inclusion for special need

students within a general education classroom can be very stressful to teachers and even classmates. We carefully screen students prior to acceptance to assure that our resources can meet the student's needs. At current we are not equipped to work with special needs students in a self-contained classroom. These classrooms are set up within the Public Schools for the severely to profoundly disabled students. Many of our students require lesson plan modifications, co-teaching within the classroom and training to staff.

American Youth Academy looks to the future for effective learning, promoting our students and supporting our staff in order to be The Blueprint for Educational Success in Islamic Schools as well as across the country. We would like for the participants at the conference to look deeply into taking risks, allowing the challenge and embracing the difference in learning. It takes professionals and non-professionals alike to educate but when placed in an educational environment we must take it upon ourselves to lead by example. I ask that all participants take to heart the following values in order to surround themselves with the positive core values necessary when taking upon a challenge such as The Blueprint.

I conclude with the following words and take into practice and purpose for teaching fromAn educator's blog (My Philosophy on teaching)

MY PERSONAL VALUES

I believe that each person has the right to self-development and realization of their own potential. Therefore I will design my program to accommodate this for each individual child. I will take time each day to reflect how my program meets the needs of individual children.

I believe that the teaching profession is one aspect of my life that allows me to reach my own intellectual and spiritual potential. Therefore I will continue to reflect upon and celebrate my own achievements. I will endeavor to reflect individually and with others, as this will enhance my thinking.

I believe in the saying 'it takes a whole village to raise a child'. Therefore it is my responsibility to take part in caring for all children that are a part of my life; in my own family, in my community, in my own classroom, and in other classrooms.

I value learning as a lifelong process. Therefore I see myself as a learner and will continue to take on further study, take up opportunities for professional development, and engage with colleagues in discussion on curriculum matters. Make the most of every learning opportunity, from within and outside of the teaching profession, engaging in discussion and discovering other viewpoints about matters that really count in ensuring health and happiness on our planet.

I value imagination and creativity and believe that each human being possesses these qualities in unique combinations. Therefore I will provide opportunities for children to exercise imagination and creativity in as many varied ways as possible. I will also provide celebration and acknowledgement of these.

I value responsibility. I see this as each human's duty to honor the rest of creation: other people, other living creatures and the environment. Therefore I will model my own and develop the children's abilities to care for other people, animals and the environment.

I value wisdom. Therefore I will draw upon the wisdom of others to help me do my job, including families and colleagues. I will also draw on the wisdom of research, the official Curriculum documents and other curriculum documents to build onto my understandings. I will also examine, analyze and question the wisdom of research, Curriculum documents and the work of other thinkers to build onto my understandings (MY PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING <https://ecoradio.wordpress.com/my-philosophy-of-teaching-and-learning/>).

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Building a Practical Framework for a Data Driven School

Farhat Siddiqui

Abstract

This session recognizes the role that school leaders play in establishing and maintaining systems of data-driven instruction and inquiry. Understand the role of the teacher in achieving academic excellence for all their students using data as their guide. Identify evidence of a culture that supports data driven processes that improve student achievement.

About the Author

Farhat Siddiqui, founder and President of Allied Educational Services <http://www.aescglobal.com/>, obtained her B.A. in Elementary Education from Northeastern Illinois University, M.Ed. from Loyola University. She is a certified chair for AdvancED, speaker and trainer for the Illinois State Board of Education, has served on the planning committee for the ISNA Education Forum and on the Board for CISNA. Farhat has served as Principal of Universal School and College Preparatory School of America.

Building A Practical Framework for a Data Driven School

Before schools can make data-driven decisions, Wellman claims that schools need to hold ‘data driven conversations’. A conversation around data strengthens the participants’ comprehension of the data, creates a sense of collaborative inquiry and builds a shared understanding of their collective goals. This practice shifts teaching from a private engagement to a collaborative practice (Wellman, 2004).

Purpose of Data – A system that permits educators to quantify how well students are learning.

Data – A systematic measure to assess education and maintain educator accountability.

Types of Data Teachers Use

- Formative Assessments
- Summative Assessments
- Portfolio Assessment
- Student Grades

Types of Data Administrators Use

- Demographic
- Achievement
- Instructional
- Perceptual

How to Support Data Use in Your School

- Leadership Modeling of Data Use
- Partnership with other organizations for support
- Changing Management Strategies
- Linking Intervention to Needs
- Securing Resources

How to Use Data for Continuous Improvement

- Replace Guesses with Facts
- Gain a clear understanding of the facts
- Identify the root causes of the gaps
- Understand the impact of the process
- Ensure equity among the students
- Assess needs to target services
- Ensure effective use of available funds
- Demonstrate that objectives and goals have been met
- Determine how well the staff were able to implement the plan
- Promote the positive impact

Greatest monitoring systems have the greatest gain in student achievement. (Reeves, 2008)

Steps Principals Can Take to Improve Student Instruction

- Understand the Standards
- Identify the faculty leaders
- Create professional development opportunities
- Address student progress
- Analyze classroom activity
- Recognize outstanding performance
- Revise and Improve

Why Schools, Administrators, and Teachers are Not Using Data for Systematic Planning

- Access to Data
- Quality of Data
- Motivation to Use Data
- Timeliness of Data
- Staff Capacity and Support
- Curriculum Pacing Pressure
- Organizational Culture and Leadership

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Demystifying the Myth: Teaching Grammar is Difficult

Muhammad Eissa

Abstract

It is a commonly accepted notion that approaching the issue of grammar in the context of language teaching arouses a feeling of anxiety and concern. This presentation/workshop aims at demystifying the common notion of the difficulty of teaching Arabic grammar with specific focus on teaching/learning AFL. The participants will be involved in a number of group activities to examine the role of grammar in language use and how certain teaching strategies reveal the effectiveness of grammar knowledge in fostering language proficiency.

About the Author

Dr. Muhammad S. Eissa is the President of EISSA & ASSOCIATES, Inc., specialized firm in Consulting and Educational services in the areas of Arabic/Islamic studies. He serves as an Associate member in the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies at University of Chicago. Eissa holds a B.A., M.A. and a Ph.D. all from Al-Azhar University in Egypt. He also holds a Certificate of Philosophy from UCLA. Eissa has been a professor of Arabic at American University in Cairo, Illinois Institute of Technology, Northwestern University and Brigham Young University. He has been actively engaged in innovative projects promoting Arabic and Islamic studies with special interests in research and teachers' training, and is educational advisor to the League of Islamic Schools.

(This paper could not be included due to the fact it was not received before the printing deadline.)

Educating the Global Citizen: Integration of Technology in Classroom Teaching

Seema Imam

Abstract

This presentation is designed to explore and experience the use of technology for classroom productivity and integration in the classroom. Rapidly changing skill sets and new technologies present an exciting challenge in building technology rich classroom experiences for our students. Bring your tablet or smart phone.

About the Author

Seema Imam is an Associate Professor of Elementary and Middle Level Teacher Education at National Louis University. She is a former Islamic School Principal, a public school teacher, and currently teacher educator. She is a frequent speaker and provides professional development to schools both nationally and internationally. Seema is a Board Member of the Islamic School League of America. Seema also teaches the Curriculum course in The Teacher Certificate Program offered On Line by Islamic Teacher Education Program through Razi Education Group and Toronto University.

Educating the Global Citizen: Integration of Technology in Classroom Teaching

School Vision and Planning

Overall a school needs a vision and when at all possible a technology plan for the coming year, three years and five years. It is really important to have the stakeholders involved in the strategy for meeting the needs of students in the classroom. Schools should prepare children for their futures. I suggest looking at the ISTE (International Society of Technology Education) standards and those of the state where your school resides. Technology is used throughout the school for productivity and by the teachers for their own professional learning and in the classroom for teaching and student learning.

Productivity

This is an essential area of technology integration in schools. Productivity covers nearly everything in the administration and school office. It is important for users of technology to arrange for their own productivity but in order to do so there must be reliable internet access at a useful productive speed. Productivity includes calendar, word processing, assessment and more.

Learning

Learning with technology is to be able to use tools of the 21st Century. In today's world there is an endless amount of learning to do online with textbook sites, kindle, iPad, iBooks and more. Interactive webinars are available everywhere. Many social media sites are great places to connect professionally and to access information as well.

Teaching

This skill is enhanced by the use of technology when the teacher has ample time and support to use technology in the best ways. Teaching with technology is to integrate its use, making certain the technology is an enhancement for the learning and not just use technology for fun. The presentation covers a variety of tools to be used in teaching.

Engaging Students Through Cooperative Learning: Ideas for Success

Hanane Wahabi

Abstract

Cooperative Learning, sometimes called small-group learning, is an instructional strategy in which small groups of students work together on a common task. The task can be as simple as solving a multi-step math problem together, or as complex as developing a design for a new kind of school. In some cases, each group member is individually accountable for part of the task; in other cases, group members work together without formal role assignments.

About the Author

Hanane Wahabi has been the principal of Al Huda Islamic weekend school at Boston, MA, for more than 10 years. She is currently a doctoral student at UMass in the management department and has been part of several workshops and lectures on how to empower the teachers in the Islamic schools in her area.

Engaging Students Through Cooperative Learning: Ideas for Success

Introduction to Cooperative Learning

Cooperation is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. **Cooperative learning** is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's' learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). Carefully structured cooperative learning involves people working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that involve both *positive interdependence* (all members must cooperate to complete the task) and *individual and group accountability* (each member is accountable for the complete final outcome).

There are three basic ways students can interact with each other as they learn. They can compete to see who is "best," they can work individualistically toward a goal without paying attention to other students, or they can work cooperatively with a vested interest in each other's learning as well as their own. Of the three interaction patterns, competition is presently the most dominant. Research indicates that a vast majority of students in the United States view school as a competitive enterprise where one tries to do better than other students. This competitive expectation is already widespread when students enter school and grows stronger as they progress through school (Johnson & R. Johnson, 1991). Cooperation among students-who celebrate each other's successes, encourage each other to do homework, and learn to work together regardless of ethnic backgrounds or whether they are male or female, bright or struggling, disabled or not--is still rare.

There is a difference between simply having students work in a group and structuring groups of students to work cooperatively. A group of students sitting at the same table doing their own work, but free to talk with each other as they work, is not structured to be a cooperative group, as there is no positive interdependence. Perhaps it could be called individualistic learning with talking. For this to be a cooperative learning situation, there needs to be an accepted common goal on which the group is rewarded for its efforts. If a group of students has been assigned to do a report, but only one student does all the work and the others go along for a free ride, it is not a cooperative group. A cooperative group has a sense of individual accountability that means that all students need to know the material for the whole group to be successful. Putting students into groups does not necessarily gain a cooperative relationship; it has to be structured and managed by the teacher or professor.

Elements of Cooperative Learning

It is only under certain conditions that cooperative efforts may be expected to be more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. Those conditions are:

1. Clearly perceived positive interdependence
2. Considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction
3. Clearly perceived individual accountability and personal responsibility to achieve the group's goals
4. Frequent use of the relevant interpersonal and small-group skills
5. Frequent and regular group processing of current functioning to improve the group's future effectiveness

All healthy cooperative relationships have these five basic elements present. This is true of peer tutoring, partner learning, peer mediation, adult work groups, families, and other cooperative relationships. This conceptual "yardstick" should define any cooperative relationship.

Positive Interdependence

The first requirement for an effectively structured cooperative lesson is that students believe that they "sink or swim together." Within cooperative learning situations, students have two responsibilities: 1) learn the assigned material, and 2) ensure that all members of the group learn the assigned material. The technical term for that dual responsibility is positive interdependence. Positive interdependence exists when students perceive that they are linked with group mates in such a way that they cannot succeed unless their group mates do (and vice versa) and/or that they must coordinate their efforts with the efforts of their group mates to complete a task.

When positive interdependence is clearly understood, it establishes that:

1. Each group member's efforts are required and indispensable for group success (i.e., there can be no "free-riders").
2. Each group member has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort because of his or her resources and/or role and task responsibilities.

Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction

Although positive interdependence in and of itself may have some effect on outcomes, it is the face-to-face promotive interaction among individuals fostered by the positive inter-relationships, and psychological adjustment and social competence. Promotive interaction is characterized by individuals providing each other with efficient and effective help and assistance; exchanging needed resources, such as information and materials, and processing information more efficiently and effectively; providing each other with feedback in order to improve their subsequent performance; challenging each other's conclusions and reasoning in order to promote higher quality decision making and greater insight into the problems being considered; advocating the exertion of effort to achieve mutual goals; influencing each other's efforts to achieve the group's goals; acting in trusting and trustworthy ways; being motivated to strive for mutual benefit; and maintaining a moderate level of arousal characterized by low anxiety and stress.

Individual Accountability/Personal Responsibility

The third essential element of cooperative learning is individual accountability, which exists when the performance of individual students is assessed, the results are given back to the individual and the group, and the student is held responsible by group mates for contributing his or her fair share to the group's success. It is important that the

Group knows who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the assignment. It is also important that group members know they cannot "hitchhike" on the work of others. When it is difficult to identify members' contributions, when members' contributions are redundant, and when members are not responsible for the final group outcome, they may be seeking a free ride

To ensure that each student is individually accountable to do his or her fair share of the group's work, instructors need to assess how much effort each member is contributing to the group's work, provide feedback to groups and individual students, help groups avoid redundant efforts by members, and ensure that every member is responsible for the final outcome. Common ways to structure individual accountability include:

1. Keeping the size of the group small. The smaller the size of the group, the greater the individual accountability may be.
2. Giving an individual test to each student.
3. Randomly examining students by calling on one student to present his or her group's work to the instructor (in the presence of the group) or to the entire class.
4. Observing each group and recording the frequency with which each member-contributes to the group's work.
5. Assigning one student in each group the role of checker. The checker asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rationale underlying group answers.

6. Having students teach what they learned to someone else. When all students do this, it is called simultaneous explaining.

Interpersonal and Small-Group Skills

The fourth essential element of cooperative learning is the appropriate use of interpersonal and small-group skills. In order to coordinate efforts to achieve mutual goals, students must: 1) get to know and trust each other, 2) communicate accurately and unambiguously, 3) accept and support each other, and 4) resolve conflict constructively. Placing socially unskilled students in a group and telling them to cooperate does not guarantee that they have the ability to do so effectively. We are not born instinctively knowing how to interact effectively with others. Interpersonal and small-group skills do not magically appear when they are needed. Students must be taught the social skills required for high quality collaboration and be motivated to use them if cooperative groups are to be productive. The whole field of group dynamics is based on the premise that social skills are the key to group productivity.

Group Processing

The fifth essential component of cooperative learning is group processing. Effective group work is influenced by whether or not groups reflect on (i.e., process) how well they are functioning. Group processing may be defined as reflecting on a group session to: 1) describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful, and 2) make decisions about what actions to continue or change. The purpose of group processing is to clarify and improve the effectiveness of the members in contributing to the collaborative efforts to achieve the group's goals.

While the instructor systematically observes the cooperative learning groups, he or she attains a "window" into what students do and do not understand as they explain to each other how to complete the assignment. Listening in on the students' explanations provides valuable information about how well the students understand the instructions, the major concepts and strategies being learned, and the basic elements of cooperative learning.

There are two levels of processing -- small group and whole class. In order to ensure that small-group processing takes place, instructors allocate some time at the end of each class session for each cooperative group to process how effectively members worked together. Groups need to describe what member actions were helpful and not helpful in completing the group's work and make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change. Such processing: 1) enables learning groups to focus on maintaining good working relationships among members, 2) facilitates the learning of cooperative skills, 3) ensures that members receive feedback on their participation, 4) ensures that students think on the metacognitive as well as the cognitive level, and 5) provides the means to celebrate the success of the group and reinforce the positive behaviors of group members. Some of the keys to successful small-group processing are allowing sufficient time for it to take place, providing a structure for processing (e.g., "List three things your group is doing well today and one thing you could improve."), emphasizing positive feedback, making the processing specific rather than general, maintaining student involvement in processing,

reminding students to use their cooperative skills while they process, and communicating clear expectations as to the purpose of processing.

In addition to small-group processing, the instructor should periodically engage in whole-class processing. When cooperative learning groups are used, the instructor observes

the groups, analyzes the problems they have working together, and gives feedback to each group on how well they are working together. The instructor systematically moves from group to group and observes them at work. A formal observation sheet may be used to gather specific data on each group. At the end of the class period the instructor can then conduct a whole-class processing session by sharing with the class the results of his or her observations. If each group has a peer observer, the results of their observations may be added together to get overall class data.

Interpersonal Relationships and Acceptance of Differences

One of the most important and long-standing goals of American education is to promote constructive relationships and positive attitudes among heterogeneous students. Almost every academic organization has acceptance of differences as one of their stated goals for students. Legislation exists that proclaims it is unlawful to segregate any student for educational purposes unless it is absolutely necessary. Ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, none—English-speaking students, and even females interested in science and math are examples of areas of students who need to be integrated with a wide variety of peers. Acceptance of differences is a central issue for all students.

Cooperative learning experiences, compared with competitive, individualistic, and "traditional" instruction, promote considerably more liking among students (effect sizes = 0.65 and 0.62 respectively) (Johnson & R. Johnson, 1989a; Johnson et al., 1983). This is true regardless of differences in ability level, sex, disability, ethnic membership, social class differences, or task orientation. Students who collaborate on their studies develop considerable commitment and caring for each other no matter what their initial impressions of and attitudes toward each other were when they started. They also like the instructor more and perceive the instructor as being more supportive and accepting academically and personally.

Cooperative Learning Structures and Techniques

Three-step Interview

Three-step interviews can be used as an ice breaker for team members to get to know one another or can be used to get to know concepts in depth, by assigning roles to students. Faculty assigns roles or students can "play" themselves. Faculty may also give interview questions or information that should be "found." A interviews B for the specified number of minutes, listening attentively and asking probing questions. At a signal, students reverse roles and B interviews A for the same number of minutes. At another signal, each pair turns to another pair,

forming a group of four. Each member of the group introduces his or her partner, highlighting the most interesting points.

Jigsaw

This technique is beneficial if the material to be learned has many components. Each team member is responsible for a part. Members of different teams who have studied the same part convene, discuss their part, and then return to their teams, where they take turns teaching their part to other team members.

Roundtable

Roundtable structures can be used to brainstorm ideas and to generate a large number of responses to a single question or a group of questions.

Faculty poses question.

One piece of paper and pen per group.

First student writes one response, and says it out loud.

First student passes paper to the left, second student writes response, etc.

Continues around group until time elapses.

Students may say "pass" at any time.

Group stops when time is called.

The key here is the question or the problem you've asked the students to consider. It has to be one that has the potential for a number of different "right" answers. Relate the question to the course unit, but keep it simple so every student can have some input. Once time is called, determine what you want to have the students do with the lists...they may want to discuss the multitude of answers or solutions or they may want to share the lists with the entire class.

Focused Listing

Focused listing can be used as a brainstorming technique or as a technique to generate descriptions and definitions for concepts. Focused listing asks the students to generate words to define or describe something. Once students have completed this activity, you can use these lists to facilitate group and class discussion. Example: Ask students to list 5-7 words or phrases that describe or define what a motivated student does. From there, you might ask students to get together in small groups to discuss the lists, or to select the one that they can all agree on. Combine this technique with a number of the other techniques and you can have a powerful cooperative learning structure.

Structured Problem-solving

Structured problem-solving can be used in conjunction with several other cooperative learning structures. Have the participants brainstorm or select a problem for them to consider. Assign numbers to members of each group (or use playing cards). Have each member of the group be a

different number or suit. Discuss task as group. Each participant should be prepared to respond. Each member of the group needs to understand the response well enough to give the response with no help from the other members of the group. Ask an individual from each group to respond. Call on the individual by number (or suit).

One-Minute Papers

Ask students to comment on the following questions. Give them one minute and time them. This activity focuses them on the content and can also provide feedback to you as a teacher. What was the most important or useful thing you learned today? What two important questions do you still have; what remains unclear? What would you like to know more about? You can use these one-minute papers to begin the next day's discussion, to facilitate discussion within a group, or to provide you with feedback on where the student is in his or her understanding of the material.

Paired Annotations

Students pair up to review/learn same article, chapter or content area and exchange double-entry journals for reading and reflection. Students discuss key points and look for divergent and convergent thinking and ideas. Together students prepare a composite annotation that summarizes the article, chapter, or concept.

Send-A-Problem

Send-A-Problem can be used as a way to get groups to discuss and review material, or potential solutions to problems related to content information.

1. Each member of a group generates a problem and writes it down on a card. Each member of the group then asks the question to other members.
2. If the question can be answered and all members of the group agree on the answer, then that answer is written on the back of the card. If there is no consensus on the answer, the question is revised so that an answer can be agreed upon.
3. The group puts a Q on the side of the card with the question on it, and an A on the side of the card with an answer on it.
4. Each group sends its question cards to another group.
5. Each group member takes one question from the stack of questions and reads one question at a time to the group. After reading the first question, the group discusses it. If the group agrees on the answer, they turn the card over to see if they agree with the first group's answer. If there again is consensus, they proceed to the next question. If they do not agree with the first group's answer, the second group writes their answer on the back of the card as an alternative answer.
6. The second group reviews and answers each question in the stack of cards, repeating the procedure outlined above.
7. The question cards can be sent to a third, fourth, or fifth group, if desired.
8. Stacks of cards are then sent back to the originating group. The sending group can then discuss and clarify any question.

Team Expectations

Some of the common fears about working with groups include student fears that each member will not pull their weight as a part of the group. Students are scared that their grade will be lower as a result of the group learning vs. learning they do individually. One way to address this issue is to use a group activity to allow the group to outline acceptable group behavior. Put together a form and ask groups to first list behaviors (expectations) they expect from each individual, each pair and as a group as a whole. Groups then can use this as a way to monitor individual contributions to the group and as a way to evaluate group participation.

Guided Reciprocal Peer Questioning

The goal of this activity is to generate discussion among student groups about a specific topic or content area. Faculty conducts a brief (10-15 minutes) lecture on a topic or content area. Faculty may assign a reading or written assignment as well. Instructor then gives the students a set of generic question stems. Students work individually to write their own questions based on the material being covered. Students do not have to be able to answer the questions they pose. This activity is designed to force students to think about ideas relevant to the content area. Students should use as many question stems as possible. Grouped into learning teams, each student offers a question for discussion, using the different stems.

Dealing with Different Types of Students

Dominant Student

Many instructors who use the jigsaw method find it useful to appoint one of the students to be the discussion leader for each session, on a rotating basis. It is the leader's job to call on students in a fair manner and try to spread participation evenly. In addition, students quickly realize that the group runs more effectively if each student is allowed to present her or his material before question and comments are taken. Thus, the self-interest of the group eventually reduces the problem of dominance.

Slow Student

Teachers must make sure students with poor study skills do not present an inferior report to the jigsaw group. If this were to happen, the jigsaw experience might backfire (the situation would be akin to the untalented baseball player dropping a routine fly ball with the bases loaded, earning the wrath of teammates). To deal with this problem, the jigsaw technique relies on "expert" groups. Before presenting a report to their jigsaw groups, each student enters an expert group consisting of other students who have prepared a report on the same topic. In the expert group, students have a chance to discuss their report and modify it based on the suggestions of other members of their expert group. This system works very well. In the early stages, instructors may want to monitor the expert groups carefully to make sure that each student ends with an

accurate report to bring to her or his jigsaw group. Most teachers find that once the expert groups get the hang of it, close monitoring becomes unnecessary.

Bright Students Becoming Bored

Boredom can be a problem in any classroom, regardless of the learning technique being used. Research suggests, however, that there is less boredom in jigsaw classrooms than in traditional classrooms. If bright students are encouraged to develop the mindset of "instructor," the learning experience can be transformed from a boring task into an exciting challenge. Not only does such a challenge produce psychological benefits, but the learning is frequently more thorough.

Professor's Role in Structuring Formal Cooperative Learning Groups

Before choosing and implementing a formal cooperative learning strategy, there are several conditions that should be evaluated to determine whether or not it is the best approach for the situation. First, is there sufficient time available for students to work in groups both inside and outside the classroom? Second, are the students experienced and skillful enough to manage their work in formal cooperative learning groups? Third, is the task complex enough to warrant a formal group? Fourth, do other instructional goals (such as the development of students' critical thinking skills, higher level reasoning skills, or teamwork skills) warrant the use of formal cooperative learning groups. If several of these necessary conditions are met, then there is probably sufficient reason to proceed to planning a formal cooperative learning lesson.

Formal cooperative learning groups may last from one class period to several weeks to complete specific tasks and assignments--such as learning new conceptual material, decision making or problem solving, writing a report, conducting a survey or experiment, preparing for an exam, or answering questions or homework problems. Any course requirement may be reformulated to be cooperative. In formal cooperative groups the professor should:

1. **Specify the objectives for the lesson.** In every lesson there should be an academic objective specifying the concepts, strategies, procedures, etc. to be learned and a teamwork objective specifying the interpersonal or small group skill to be used and mastered during the lesson.

2. **Make a number of instructional decisions.** The professor has to decide on the size of groups, the method of assigning students to groups, how long the groups stay together, the roles the students will be assigned, the materials needed to conduct the lesson, and the way the room will be arranged. Although each of these decisions is complex, some general guidelines may be useful. Further elaboration is available in Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991). First, keep groups small, especially at the beginning. Groups of 2 or 3 maximize the involvement and help create a sense of interdependence and accountability. Second, you choose the groups. Random assignment works very well for many faculty. Stratified random (stratify students along some relevant criterion, such as computing skills or experience) and then randomly assign student from each category to all the groups. Permitting students to choose their own groups often leads to students working with friends who have a lot of other things to talk about beside the work and to some students being left out. Third, keep the groups together until the task is completed and

perhaps longer. Changing groups periodically gives students a chance to meet more of their peers and helps them gain skills for quickly getting a group up and running. Fourth, choose roles that are consistent with the requirements of the task and are important for the smooth functioning of the group. Many faculty only assign a recorder for the first group assignment.

3. Explain the task and the positive interdependence. The professor needs to clearly define the assignment, teach the required concepts and strategies, specify the positive interdependence and individual accountability, give the criteria for success, and explain the expected teamwork skill to be engaged in. To make a group project truly cooperative, positive interdependence and individual accountability must be structured in a variety of congruent ways. Positive interdependence is typically structured by asking the group to prepare a single product (goal interdependence), asking the students to make sure each person in the group can explain the groups' answer (learning goal interdependence), giving the group one copy of the assignment (resource interdependence), and assigning a special role to each member (role interdependence). Individual and group accountability is typically structured by assigning specific functions to each role, randomly calling on individuals to explain their group's answer, monitoring the groups and occasionally asking a student to explain his or her group's answer or method (individual oral exam), asking each member to sign the group's report, and of course, by giving individual quizzes, exams and writing assignments. Course with extensive formal cooperative learning usually use a combination of group assignments and individual assignments to determine each student's final grade. Typical distributions between individual and group are 95-5 to 70-30, that is, between 5 and 30 percent of an individual students grade is based on group work. Some faculty uses the group work as a base line or threshold that students must complete satisfactorily, but base grades on individual work only. A few faculty in project based courses base 100 percent of each student's grade on group work.

4. Monitor students' learning and intervene within the groups to provide task assistance or to increase students' teamwork skills. The professor systemically observes and collects data on each group as it works. When it is needed, the professor intervenes to assist students in completing the task accurately and in working together effectively. While students are working faculty can learn a great deal about what the students know about the material and can often identify problems students are having either with the academic material or working in the group. Typical things to look for are on-task, interactions (what happens when someone says something?), involvement, strategy the group is using, how the groups deal with task or group functioning difficulties, etc.

5. Evaluate students' learning and help students process how well their group functioned. Students' learning is carefully assessed and their performances are evaluated. A criteria-referenced evaluation procedure must be used, that is, grading must NOT be curved. Individual student's learning is typically evaluated by written exams, quizzes, and papers. The professor provides time and a structure for members of each learning group to process how effectively they have been working together. A common method for processing is to ask the students to list things they did well while working in the group and things that they could improve. A quick

process strategy is to ask each individual to list something they did to help the group accomplish its task and one that they could do even better next time.

Barriers to Using Cooperative Learning

When faculty have problems (the student who dominates, doesn't participate, etc;) I typically inquire about and look at the following:

1. Are the groups small (2-3) and are the members sitting close together?
2. Are positive interdependence and individual accountability structured in multiple ways?
3. Is a criteria-referenced grading procedure being used? Asking students to cooperate in an environment where they are being graded "on the curve" is one of the surest ways to destroy cooperation.
4. Is the professor monitoring the groups, checking on students' understanding of the material and how well the groups are working.
5. Is there a time and structure for students to process their work in the group?

Barriers to using cooperative learning can be minimized by starting small and early and then building. Giving students some rationale as to why you're using cooperative learning help reduce barriers. Providing a variety of forms of cooperative learning and doing something cooperative regularly helps build a habit of cooperation. Carefully monitoring the groups and helping with the problem they're having speeds the progress of cooperative learning. Being patient and positive, and especially having a problem-solving approach eases the transition to more cooperative leaning. Finally, working with a colleague to co-plan, discuss new ideas, and to problem-solve makes the transition to cooperative much more enjoyable. An extensive discussion of troubleshooting small groups is available in Tiberius (1990).

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Enhancing Instruction Through Technology-Based Resources

Bushra Haq and Shereen Qaddoura

Abstract

Teaching requires areas of expertise, including creativity and efficiency. This workshop exposes a range of internet-based resources that teachers can immediately implement in their classroom with little effort, time, or money. The focus will be on two core areas: lesson planning and communication.

About the Authors

Bushra Haq obtained her Bachelor's of Science from the University of Texas at Dallas. She expects to attain her M.Ed in Education Policy and Leadership with a specialization in Higher Education from Southern Methodist University in May, 2015. Bushra has worked in the field for five years, including three years at Lloyd V. Berkner High School and two years at Brighter Horizons Academy.

Shereen Qaddoura has her Bachelor's of Historical Studies from the University of Texas at Dallas. She started her teaching career at Brighter Horizons Academy in 2001 as a 2nd grade teacher. Shereen also taught 3rd & 5th grade Science, 9th grade U.S. History, and 10th grade World History. Shereen obtained her Master's Degree in Teaching from Texas Woman's University with EC-4th Certification. She currently inspires her 8th and 9th grade social studies classes by implementing technology, hands on, in-class group projects in her lesson plans.

Enhancing Instruction Through Technology-Based Resources

Introduction

Enhancing instruction through technology-based resources is a workshop aimed at improving the effectiveness of instruction and efficiency of communication with parents and students. A numerous amount of resources will be shared with attendees that can be implemented immediately with little or no time, effort, or money.

Though technology has a unique way of grabbing the attention of students, there are many reasons why teachers shy away from using it in their classrooms. Budgeting, lack of resources, lack of time, inability, and inexperience are some of the reasons given as to why it is not being used. The resources presented in this workshop require minimal to no budgeting, resources, equipment, time, or expertise in the area of technology.

We will present specific internet-based sites that can transform a routine lesson plan into something exciting and new, yet appealing to students. We will physically explore the resources with the attendees, focusing on how each can be maximized for instruction and what it will take for teachers and/or schools to implement them.

Furthermore, with schools continuously emphasizing classroom technology, we will present specific products schools can invest in that are a fraction of the cost of big technological investments, such as SmartBoards. These user-friendly devices are not only cost efficient, but also easy to install. Attendees will also learn how to maximize their use in the classroom.

Lastly, the workshop will present time-efficient techniques and specific resources teachers can use to maximize their ability to communicate with both parents and students. Communication is one of the main components of student success yet with all the responsibilities teachers have, it can be very time consuming and draining. Effective communication takes practice, patience, and it helps to have a few techniques and resources to maximize efficiency. All resources and their website links can be found in Appendix A.

Resource for Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is essential to enhance instructional time, teaching, and student development and success. Issues with classroom management are often cited amongst the reasons for leaving the field of education (Browers & Tomic, 2000; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). With a growingly diverse and complex student demographic in K12 and postsecondary institutions across the nation, educators and school administrators must address the issue of classroom management by incorporating innovative techniques that support research.

Such techniques can be acquired using the application, TeacherKit. The application, available on Google Play, Windows Store, and iTunes, has been used by over one million educators globally. TeacherKit integrates key features of classroom management into one simple application. For example, the “face detection” feature enables teachers to organize students with photographs, and use these photographs to manage students and rosters, create seating charts, and take attendance and set absence limits. Teachers can also create a student card for each student to track student performance, behavior, and grades. Common behavior types can be configured on TeacherKit to easily record student incidents, both positive or negative, and to create flags for each student that monitor positive or negative incidents. Student cards also contain student and parent contact information for easy access and communication. Educators can add as many classes as they need and receive a class summary that provides an overview of student attendance, behavior, and grades. Furthermore, the import and export data feature permits teachers to import student information, attendance records, behavior records, and grades into the application, and export the same data to CSV files to use on a desktop or laptop computer. The data also can be backed up to keep data safe using Dropbox and automatic backups. Lastly, TeacherKit enables educators to extract reports for individual students and classes and makes it easy to share and print reports.

Resources for Supplementary and Interactive Presentations

Interactive presentations help students engage in lessons by visually illustrating relationships between concepts to aid student comprehension and enhance student retention of information.

Skitch is an app that allows teachers to share a diagram that students can label. An example of such use would be to list the Five Pillars of Islam and have students label the Pillars on the diagram. Another way to use this app during English class, is for teachers to ask students to take a picture of a passage they are reading, annotate by adding shapes/texts/arrows, and then share with the teacher through email their annotations. In addition, students can present via AirPlay on Apple TV if they are using their iPhone.

Presentations in the classroom can be boring when teachers use the same tools such as Powerpoint or KeyPoint. There is always a flawless presentation that can easily be projected, shared and posted by presenting sites such as Prezi or Haikudeck, where presentations can be more fun and interactive. Haikudeck has decks that can grab students' attention without the hassle of attaching a big file onto an email or saving it on a USB. It is also simple as it limits text and focuses each slide on a single idea by including high-impact images and keeping the format consistent.

Final Argument is designed to enable teachers to create presentations using content from many sources. The app gives the presenter the ability to take advantage of existing PDF, Keynote, and PPT files, interactive whiteboard documents, and video recordings, while still being in control of what is visible to students. Final Argument's flexible and quick editing feature allows the presenter to efficiently create a new slide or add content to an existing slide right on the spot. The presenter can import pictures and videos from Photo Library and then import PDF, PPT, DOC, Keynote, and Pages, from a number of cloud sources. Then, the presenter can share through Evernote, Dropbox, Google Drive, email, and iTunes. In addition, instructors can record presentations to use it later and share with students or upload it to YouTube.

The Knowmia Teach iPad app incorporates interactive presentation tools with aspects from the pedagogical model of a flipped classroom. Knowmia Teach is especially useful when teachers aim to provide interactive supplementary resources for students or face problems with inadequate instruction time. The app enables instructors to create lesson plans and record lessons. Teachers can simply create instructional video lessons by importing visual aids or graphics, record illustrations as they are drawn, and record themselves. Moreover, educators can generate interactive assignments using the application's Assignment Wizard to easily engage with students. The Assignment Wizard can help teachers measure student comprehension of instructional video lessons and encourage student analysis of instructional content. In sum, the app enables teachers to create personalized lessons and assignments to meet their students' needs.

Animoto, an online video maker, is available on Google Play and iTunes and allows teachers to create unique canvases of information. This presentation tool serves a similar purpose as Knowmia Teach, in that it creates personalized video lessons for the classroom. The video maker can be used to develop stimulating projects for interactive group projects amongst students with guidance from an instructor. The resource can also be used in a variety of subjects and topics such as modeling media literacy, storyboarding, or teaching a poetry unit in English Language Arts, developing students Web 2.0 competencies and 21st century skills in technology and computer courses, teaching thematic units or creating news briefs in Social Studies, explaining steps to solve complex equations in Math, and introducing new learning concepts or modeling the

steps in an experiment in Science. Animoto provides users with several video tutorials and offers educators a free Animoto Plus account.

Similar to both Knowmia and Animoto, Educreations offers educators the opportunity to create interactive whiteboard lessons. Teachers can explain concepts by developing instructional videos in which they can narrate, animate, and annotate content. Lessons are securely stored on instructors' Educreations account and can be synched to student accounts accessed via iPads or desktop and laptop computers. The app provides instructional support outside the classroom, enables student self-paced learning, and can allow students to create their own videos for collaborative projects.

Explain Everything records on-screen drawing, annotation, object movement and captures audio on the iPad. The app allows teachers to import photos, documents from iWorks (Numbers, Keynote), and Dropbox, and export files and share with others. Teachers would be able to design dynamic lessons through explaining and presenting activities, assessments, and tutorials. This app can therefore be used as a whiteboard using the iPad2 video display using the Apple TV without paying thousands for a SmartBoard.

Resources for Social Learning and Learning Management System

Learning Management Systems (LMS) can cultivate collaborative opportunities for more than just an institution's faculty and administration, but also its students. Research has shown that LMS have a positive impact on students' motivation to learn and overall learning behavior (Wichadee, 2014). LMS can create blended learning opportunities for teachers to facilitate students' writing and critical thinking skills through interactive social platform tools like online discussion boards and blogs.

Schoology creates a unique learning management system for educators that promotes school-wide collaborative efforts. The platform focuses on student engagement in a secure and academically enriching social environment through group-based learning. Students can create an account after instructors provide them with the class access code. Teachers can create lessons, assignments, and discussion boards, and provide feedback to each student. The resource provides instructors with the ability to track student progress and performance, and assess student understanding through rich data systems that allow for in-depth analysis of individual students. Educators can thus participate in data-informed decision making and create flexible assignments that pace students individually and that promote skills-based learning and standards-aligned assessments. Teachers can also modify their pedagogical and curricular approach to meet academic and state standards. Schoology also helps institutions centralize curriculum across departments by aligning content to learning objectives, providing instructors with the ability to share and access instructional resources, and promoting professional learning communities. The resource also provides users with a calendar tool, online homework submission feature, assessment and assignment creation tool, online gradebook and attendance feature, and access to an app marketplace. Schoology's free mobile app enables educators to access their management system on their iPhone, iPad, Android device, and Amazon Kindle.

ScreenChomp is a great app to help with learning and idea-sharing in or outside the classroom. Students can help each other with homework, work on reviewing ideas, maintain consistent interactions between students and teachers, and even collaborate on projects when working together in class or at home. Also, teachers can use this app to help tutor kids while away from school, or record a few tips to send home and help students. Teachers are able to keep a record of the lesson and share progress with parents during parent conferences. The app can capture instructions on plain background or an image from camera roll on the iPad. Also, it allows the user to sketch ideas and talk through “how” and “why” conceptual frameworks while explaining major topics. Once done with capturing the lesson on ScreenChomp a teacher or student can share video by generating a web link and sharing with others.

Resources for Interactive Learning and Lessons

With a drastic increase in technological innovations in the 21st century, students desire time efficient and interactive activities in the classroom. Teachers can employ a variety of resources to facilitate critical thinking, enhance student social and academic growth with collaborative activities, and ensure student satisfaction and motivation through student-centered learning.

iBrainstorm, created by Universal Mind, is a multi-device collaboration tool to implement in various classroom activities to help students organize their ideas and thoughts. The app can support four connections per group, making it an excellent resource to enhance small group collaborative productivity. Users are given the ability to seamlessly share ideas between their iPhones and iPads through the use of virtual sticky notes and freeform drawings, and have the option of sharing their brainstorming. An excellent tool for group research projects and presentations, iBrainstorm also can be used by faculty, staff, and administrators in professional development seminars, and department or board meetings. Universal Mind intends to create an educator version of the app that supports more than four connections.

iAnnotate is a helpful app that allows teachers to share PDF, DOC, JPEG, or PPT files by sharing annotations and recording on passages. Students can take notes on lecture slides.

Documents and lessons can be easily annotated by highlighting, underlining, voice recording, and copying and pasting annotations from one document to another. Once done with annotations students can share their work with each other or the teacher by sending files through Dropbox, Google Drive, SkyDrive, and Box. Teachers can use this resource to have students summarize passages from variety of subjects. For example, a Quran teacher can ask students to read Ayat from the English Tafseer and students can annotate the Ayat in order to enrich their knowledge in Islam. Then students can share their annotations with other students or teacher and share in class their thoughts about the Ayat. Also, core subjects can use it to help with students’ comprehension by annotating and recording their thoughts.

Interactive storybook apps like Bookabi, by Tamajii Inc., and Story Creator, by Innovative Mobile Apps, are excellent interactive resources for elementary students. Bookabi enables young students to create virtual stories utilizing several of the application’s features including 2D and 3D characters, backgrounds, graphics, and photographs. Stories can be exported via email or printed. Story Creator combines text, videos, audio, and photos to create a story. Students are able to

personalize stories and design fun and intuitive creations. Both tools can be useful in collaborative projects in core subjects. For example, the apps can be utilized in English Language Arts when discussing plot development, in Science when outlining steps in experiments, in Social Studies when creating stories summarizing key historical events, and in Math when modeling the steps to solve an equation.

iBooks Author is a stunning way to share information in the classroom. Teachers can allow time for students to do in-class projects by making their own iBooks where they can add text information, pictures, videos, audio files, Keynote presentations, and even a quiz at the end of the book for a review. Also, teachers can create mini books and add information on ready to use templates that feature a wide variety of page layouts for students to use at home as supplementary enrichment activity. In addition, iBooks projects can be shared and accessed by students with special needs by using such features as VoiceOver technology, and other widgets or media tools for the vision impaired to use. After incorporating all the information you need in a book, a teacher or student can preview and then publish the book by submitting it to iBooks for download. This can be used in variety of subjects such as Islamic Studies and Quran by making stories and other valuable information using 3D objects, galleries, videos and interactive diagrams that come to life in ways 21st century students would love and engage in.

When teaching stories from Islamic History or even Wudu, a teacher can use the app, Sock Puppets. The app creates lip-synched videos where a teacher can add puppets, props, scenery, and backgrounds. By recording their voice, instructors are able to create conversations by tapping a puppet and that will lip-synch the voice. Also, switching backgrounds allows the puppets to be in different places while animating them. English teachers can integrate this in their lesson by allowing students to write a story and students transform their story into puppet show to share with the class as a fun way to learn writing

Science is a fun subject due to the different hands on experiments, however, it can be more fun when using Frog Dissection to teach dissection in the classroom. This app is more suitable for students in middle-school who are learning about the organ system or organs. The app features virtual experience with 3D images without the mess of dissection by providing dissection tools and voice instructions in order to complete the dissection work. Students can compare human anatomy with frogs.

If a teacher is looking for ways to enrich students' learning through experts on particular topics, then Learnist, Inc. is the app to use. Learnist contains information from across a wide range of subjects. Students gain context for what they read straight from people that are experts. Students and teachers can save and share learning from around the web with a couple of clicks from an iPad or iPhone. For example, a student can learn geometry from a real teacher save the video and share it with other students. The goal of the app is to make learning an improved process of learning new concepts with the help of other professionals.

PowToon! is a comic-strip that can be used as a warm-up at the beginning of the class by reviewing concepts from the day before, review a concept after teaching, or grab students' attention before starting a new topic. A teacher can select a template, add pictures related to certain topics learned in class, and add fun words with stickers to spice up the classroom. Text balloons can be

positioned, sized, and rotated, and font colors and text-size can be formatted to add impact to the comic-strip.

Students can struggle to comprehend complex concepts. Therefore, it is important to use apps that grab students' attention by using bright, colorful activities, and building and organizing diagrams to promote higher-order thinking. Kidspiration-Maps enable educators to achieve just that. The app allows students to learn how to organize and classify information and expand their writing ideas into written and verbal expression. Elementary students can create writing maps, edit text, stylize content, sort and classify information, organize projects, transform diagrams to outlines, and use built in activities to enhance their writing, reading, math, social studies, and science skills. Students can reinforce relationships between concepts through visual and kinesthetic means. After students are done with their work they can share the file with other iPads through Pages, Dropbox or iTunes.

TED-Ed allows instructors to create interactive lessons by incorporating educational TED-Ed videos. Teachers have the ability to search a conceptual term and select a video to customize their lesson around using the TED-Ed Lesson Editor. TED-Ed videos provide reliable and resourceful animated videos for students of all ages. The TED application, available on iTunes and Google Play, allows educators to access all TED videos that are organized according to a variety of subjects and educational themes ranging from activism to geology to microbiology.

Socrative enables teachers to assess and engage with their students through laptops, tablets, and smartphones in the classroom after students receive a unique Room Code for their class. Real time questioning allows for immediate aggregation and visualization of results, providing instructors with information regarding the overall class' level of understanding. Data reports further permit teachers to modify lessons and pedagogy based on student needs. From the teacher Dashboard, instructors can start a quiz, conduct a quick question activity, review using a space race game, which can be conducted in small groups to enhance student collaboration, or create an out-the-door exit ticket. Socrative is a useful tool for fun and effective formative assessment and can also enable educators to group students based on student responses for further review or collaborative activities. The versatile platform offers many features to support teachers' unique teaching styles.

ClassFlow allows for the use of engaging technology in lessons according to students' unique learning styles. Teachers can upload their lessons, create lessons from scratch, or use lessons that are shared by other teachers. During classroom time, students connect to ClassFlow and can engage with peers on content they are learning by viewing interactive lesson content distributed by instructors. Teachers can also create student groups based on teaching needs and send different content to groups or individuals with questions of different levels of difficulty. The resource permits teachers to send interactive lesson content, quizzes, polls, open ended activities to students, and further enables teachers to access and save real-time assessment data for later analysis.

Elevate is an app that can be used during free time or as a reward to allow students to use iPads after finishing work. Elevate helps improve student focus, speaking abilities, processing speed, memory, math skills, and more. Each student is provided with a personalized training

system that adjusts over time to maximize results. The more students use Elevate the more students will improve critical cognitive skills that are proven to boost productivity and self-confidence. The resource offers more than 25 games that help with critical cognitive skills such as memory, processing, math, precision, and comprehension, along with a detailed performance tracker for teachers to utilize in parent-teacher conferences, and a calendar to help students track assignments and stay motivated. In addition, the app concentrates on improving specific skills for each individual student through adaptive difficulty progression to ensure a challenging experience.

Today's generation learns differently from previous generations. Their attention can be caught through songs because that is the language and lifestyle they are used to; therefore, Floabulary is website that can be integrated in lessons to create and engage students while bringing lessons to life. Music tends to facilitate memorization and increase retention of academic content. Floabulary offers hundreds of songs and videos in order to teach specific content to meet Common Core objectives in English Language Arts, Math, and interdisciplinary literacy practice, and engaging material for Social Studies and Science. The content is designed to fit curriculum wherever a teacher needs them using a multisensory approach of using music, rhythm and rhyme where it is supported by academic research. Also, research has shown that Floabulary promotes vocabulary proficiency and raises scores on state reading tests.

Teachers always struggle when teaching new vocabulary, but if they can provide students an interesting way to learn new vocabulary, they will be more likely to remember the words.

VocabularySpellingCity is website based, but also offers a phone and tablet application. VocabularySpellingCity offers students a fun way to learn spelling and vocabulary words by playing efficient game-based study of literacy skills using any word list. VocabularySpellingCity can be used in Islamic Studies class in order to enrich students' vocabulary. Also, English, Math, and Science teachers can use the website and application to help students study spelling or vocabulary words for their subject matter.

Resources for Special Education

Communication and Speech Therapy. Ensuring students acquire effective communication skills can be an ongoing challenge for special education teachers. TapToTalk is communication aid for non-verbal children diagnosed with down syndrome, autism, apraxia, cerebral palsy and other speech delays. The app functions as a fun game that allows instructors to select pictures and add text and sounds to play in the background. The app includes five different languages: English, Spanish, French, German and Italian. Similar apps that serve as flexible and personalized communication aids and that help foster self-expression include iComm, See.Touch.Learn, Tom Taps Speak, abc PocketPhonics Lite, and Bugs and Buttons 2. Apps like Speech with Milo: Verbs and Splingo's Language Universe provide entertaining speech therapy tools to help students develop listening and language skills.

Routines. Children with special needs often benefit from a structured environment. Visual routines and schedules can increase student independence and help lower anxiety. First Then Visual Schedule permits educators to visually display daily events, routines, steps to complete an activity, and activities that require transitions. The app also allows for a checklist option, file

sharing, and printing capabilities, and can easily be customized and personalized for each student. Similar applications includes Choiceworks and Visual Routine.

Social Cues. Students with developmental delays that struggle with social communication can benefit from Let's be Social: Social Skills Development. The app includes customizable lessons organized in five major skill sets: personal interactions, school behavior, handling change, social relationships, and personal interactions. The tool includes high definition videos accompanied with subtitles and video narration, along with tools to allow for quick content creation to address hundreds of daily social interactions. An additional social skill builder resource is Social Skill Builder Lite.

Motor Skills. Educators can use Dexteria to help students improve fine motor skills through therapeutic hand exercises. The award-winning app helps students build coordination, dexterity, motor control, and strength through repetitive and engaging exercises. Teachers are able to track and compile reports to identify student progress. Apps such as Dance Party Zoo and iWriteWords serve similar purposes.

Resources for Teacher and Student Productivity

Teacher productivity remains a consistent concern amongst both new and veteran educators. With physical instructional time, and time spent outside the classroom creating lesson plans and learning objectives, grading assignments and tests, and attending meetings and professional development seminars, any resource to help teachers increase productivity is valuable.

For instance, MasteryConnect allows teachers to work collaboratively to assess effective implementation of standards and student mastery and growth. 43 states, four territories, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and the District of Columbia have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The state of Illinois fully implemented the Standards in the 2013-2014 school year (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2014). The lack of research and absence of research on the actual implementation of the CCSS, due to the recent implementation of the standards, has resulted in an insufficient amount of resources aligned with the Standards, and raises the question of how states and educators can implement the standards effectively. Through MasteryConnect's Pin Resource tool, teachers can collaborate with educators across the nation to share and access Standards-aligned resources and curriculum materials, videos, and activities for their classrooms. Educators can also use the feature to create curriculum maps and Pin Board Playlists for personalized student learning. The app allows for efficacious collaboration regarding data and student mastery, student performance, best practices, and Standards-aligned resources.

Another resource to further enhance the successful implementation of the CCSS is the Common Core ConceptBank application. The tool allows educators and parents to review and easily understand the CCSS in-depth, review concepts, and access sample questions and assessments. Standards are organized by grade, subject, and domain. The app can be downloaded for free on iTunes.

Popplet is a versatile organization tool for both students and educators, and can be used on iPads or on desktop and laptop computers. The resource provides students and educators to

generate and organize ideas and promotes student and school-wide collaboration. Popplet gives students the opportunity to learn visually by creating mind-maps and forming relationships between facts and ideas. Students can increase productivity by using the tool for mind-mapping, group projects, and creating diagrams. Also, students can add diagrams and process charts to help them with projects or studying for a test/quiz visually. This app can be used for Islamic Studies, Quran, or any other core subject. For educators, the app can be used to brainstorm, organize thoughts, generate process charts, and plan projects. Popplet boards can be shared amongst students and colleagues, and exported as a PDF or JPEG. A free account, which can be accessed through desktop and laptop computers, provides users to create up to five Popplet boards and the app on iTunes can be purchased for \$4.99.

EduTeacher-Backpack is an app that allows teachers to save time with lesson planning, make learning more enjoyable for students, and search thousands of educational websites that are gathered by teachers and educators. Teachers can look up links for different core subjects, and allows teachers to save links, write notes to keep for later, and share links with anyone. Also, teachers can connect with other teachers who are effectively using technology in their classroom and use forums to learn more.

Trello gives teachers the ability to easily visually organize and manage projects ranging from creating checklists to keep track of tasks, to posting due dates, to assigning a screenplay assignment for students. Users create a Trello board which is filled with cards. These boards can allow for easy collaboration with an unlimited number of students, and promote interactive activities through group projects. The app will send notifications about important deadlines and events, while enabling students to assign tasks to one another when working on projects to meet deadlines. Everything can be seen on Trello by glancing at a board and helps enhance student and teacher productivity.

Conclusion

Technology has become a fabric of our society. Hence, it is imperative that it should be incorporated into the classroom. With the understanding of the plethora of benefits that accompany technology use in the classroom, Common Core State Standards and state standards have incorporated standards for technological use. Technology shapes the way students learn, think, and experience the world, making technology, resources, and apps a necessity rather than a novelty.

By successfully implementing resources, technology can transform pedagogy, teachers, and students. This paper explores resources for six aspects of teaching: classroom management, supplementary and interactive presentations, social learning and management systems, interactive learning and lessons, special education, and teacher and student productivity. It presents specific resources available to address challenges of each one. Technology can be used for more than just instructional assistance, but a complete method of managing students and modifying teaching. With support and collaboration from administrators, staff, and fellow teachers, educators can cultivate a welcoming learning environment for students and facilitate an efficient class throughout the school year.

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A Framework for Sustained Professional Development for Islamic Schools

Saajida Kadim

Abstract

Using research on sustainable professional development, Islamic Schools can make the move from workshop based teacher development to sustained and on-going development through professional learning communities and mentorship programs. This framework considers cross-curricular and subject specific objectives that can be achieved within the school as well as collaboratively among schools.

About the Author

Saajida Khadim is currently a High School teacher at Islamic Foundation School in Toronto, Canada which she attended throughout elementary and Secondary Schooling. She completed her Masters in Teaching and Learning from McGill University and undergraduate from the University of Toronto. She is passionate about Islamic Schools, particularly in the field of teacher professional development and collaborative learning within schools.

A Framework for Sustained Professional Development for Islamic Schools

Professional Development in North American Islamic Schools

North American students, including those who attend Islamic schools, enter a world where critical thinking, technological awareness and multi-literacy are crucial for student success in a competitive world. The number of Islamic schools in North America has grown rapidly over the past decade, providing education for thousands of students. Each Islamic school follows its respective regional curriculum in addition to Islamic Studies, Quranic recitation and memorization, as well as Arabic language. Furthermore, most reputable Islamic schools model the public school system in striving to hire professionally certified teachers and support workers for core curriculum subjects, as well as provide extracurricular activities in keeping with the concept of developing the whole child. This modeling of the public school system is not only true for curriculum implementation, but also for professional development for teachers. Despite this, due to the lack of resources and expert support available to Islamic schools, Islamic schools may find themselves implementing only partial aspects of a complete professional development model or implementing professional development programs years after they have been instituted within public school boards.

My paper provides an overview of current approaches to professional development in Islamic Schools, outlines the issues with this current state of professional development as well as offers a

proposed framework for sustainable and systematic professional development for North American Islamic Schools.

The growth and improvement of Islamic schools is negatively impacted by the lack of systematic and sustained professional development for their teachers. Since the context of Islamic Schools is unique, professional development within these schools should also be specific to their context. It is critical that a research based, collaborative framework is established that provides a sustainable model for a mature process of professional development within Islamic schools. This framework should support teachers in keeping abreast of professional and pedagogical practices, and develop curricula that increase student success for both new and veteran Islamic School teachers.

Currently Islamic schools operate independent of each another. Each community creates its own professional development activities which are often determined by a school administrator. This professional development usually takes place on days that are designated as specific professional development workshop days which are “Sporadic, underdeveloped or inaccessible” (Razi Group, 2011). Like many other school systems, there is little or no support mechanism for subject specific teachers to ensure that they are up to date in pedagogical practices in their subject area.

Workshop-style professional development is not one that is unique to the Islamic School system. In fact, there has only recently been a gradual move toward ongoing and sustained professional development that is integrated in the teaching practice within the public school sector. A systematic and structured approach to professional development is still a relatively new and under-researched approach to teacher training. This approach is even more unfamiliar to Islamic schools which have only recently begun implementing specific teacher induction programs.

The complex structures of Islamic schools lead to further complication of this issue. Unlike public schools or other private schools, many North American Islamic schools run on a non-for profit model in which they are supported by a non-for profit community centre or mosque. The Board of Directors and community members of these organizations are often stakeholders who are involved in ensuring that teachers are hired, retained and perform to standard. This occurs within a close knit community where teacher performance is not only confined to the classroom, but also assessed within the greater community (Memon, 2010). Paradoxically, despite the pressure from stakeholders on teachers, there are no systematic or structured mechanisms in place to ensure that success is made possible.

Professional development in Islamic schools is affected by other issues within the Islamic school. One such issue is the lack of funding that can be used for resources that enhance student learning. Zine (2008) explains that the lack of resources and funding leaves schools without resources and sufficient regulation, which is an important factor when discussing professional development. In addition, there is a lack of specialized professionals, personal teacher development, and paid external professional resources who can conduct teacher appraisals and

provide mentorship necessary for teacher growth. The professional development organizations that are available are often not within the budget of an Islamic School (Merry & Driessen, 2007).

Without the addition of specific Islamic school training, the specificity of Islamic school communities makes the framework of provincial curricula superficial. This specific Islamic school training can be provided by teacher training programs that connect the requisite knowledge and philosophy of the objectives of Islamic education and cultural understanding with the curriculum taught by Islamic school teachers. However, an analysis of the offerings of current teacher education programs specific to Islamic Schools shows that there is little support for current teachers to improve their practice in areas of general competencies such as integrating information technology, collaborative or project based learning, inclusive education or other competency-based professional development models.

Organizations that support professional development for Islamic Schools take on the traditional method: single and infrequent workshops which are of little consequence within the classroom. Sessions are not given on a continuous basis and only provide support that is not integrated in the teaching practice or strategic development of the school. Furthermore, the sessions are at the expense and request of the school themselves. Islamic School Administrators do attempt to provide their own professional development; however, there needs to be a move from a reactionary, post-public school outlook towards one that is initiated by Islamic schools based on their unique needs. What is needed for Islamic school teachers are programs that provide a “framework for excellence” (Razi Group, 2011).

Effective Professional Development

A framework for excellence not only includes an understanding of how to integrate religious education and pedagogy into the curriculum, but it also requires teachers to be constantly aware of educational trends, new technology, and new ideas in pedagogy. The framework also includes how to adopt these trends, technology and pedagogy effectively in their unique school setting to become increasingly more competent practitioners in their field.

Based on literature of effective professional development models, as well as an understanding of the structure and context of Islamic Schools, a skeleton model is proposed that incorporates an overarching Islamic School professional development organization. This organization provides consulting, and works with school leadership to create strategic and systematic professional development plans. It will also assist in performing research, as well as an in-school professional development models that support individual teachers with personal and professional development. It will also create support groups that work towards an achievable goal and provide mentorship and collaborative professional development experiences. This model tries to incorporate established ideals for professional development in a way that maintains the individual school’s independence and values. Literature on professional development concludes

that some of the most effective professional development includes those that are research based, ongoing, collaborative and involve active learning - this will be the basis of this framework.

Considering best practices of professional development, it is clear that much work is yet to be done in Islamic schools to ensure that teachers are constantly supported and that professional development initiatives are effective. To date, not much empirical research has been done to determine the extent to which professional development is reflected in student achievement and teacher response (Garet et al, 2011). Generally, professional development includes, but is not limited to workshops and conferences which are the hallmark of many professional development days in and outside the Islamic school system. The traditional model of professional development has been criticized by teachers as being ineffective, both in their understanding of the material as well as their ability to implement it within the class effectively. This is partly due to time constraints, lack of feedback and ongoing support. Furthermore, workshops are disconnected from each other in that they do not fit into any learning plan that is apparent to teachers (Garet et Al, 2011). Due to the ineffectiveness of this “traditional” model of professional development, new education initiatives under the name “reform professional activities” have begun to make their way within schools and have been deemed effective as they emphasize continuity and ongoing support within teaching time. Emphasis is placed on professional development that is ongoing such as study groups, professional networks, task force work, and peer coaching (Garet et Al, 2011).

The reform professional development activities usually take place within the school day or during classroom instruction so that the teacher has regular feedback, and the majority of learning takes place within teaching hours (NSDC, 2011). These professional development activities often take place over a prolonged period of time which increases the likelihood of teachers trying new practices (Garet et Al, 2011). As Harwell (2003) put it: Professional development is not an event, but it’s a process. In order for professional development to be systematic and coherent, it must build on what the teacher already knows, emphasize content and pedagogy, and develop methods and support systems that foster ongoing and constant communication between teachers (Garet et Al., 2011).

Among many other aspects of effective professional development, coherence or a systematic method of professional development is one of the major improvements that can be made for professional development in Islamic Schools. Harwell (2003) explains that in order for professional development to reach its potential in relation to how it can affect the classroom, interaction among teachers must be fostered, professional development should be researched based, and take place over a prolonged period of time, and should provide feedback to teachers from their peers. Furthermore, collective participation of groups of teachers within departments is highly encouraged, and systems are put in place to ensure that frequent meetings, visitations and collaboration can occur (Garet et Al., 2011). Collaboration and team professional development activities can allow teachers to share common material, assist newer teachers with

standards and curriculum documents, assist veteran teacher in newer pedagogical practices, agree on assessment requirements and discuss students' needs in a way that is cross curricular (Garet et Al, 2011). Professional learning occurs when problem solving can occur within organized professional development groups that provide interaction that deepens learning (NSDC, 2011). Research on a group of successful American schools concluded that the professional development within these schools tended to have numerous group meetings often within the school and used more internal rather than external resources (Garet et Al., 2011).

It is crucial that Islamic school professional development create communities of practice within the Islamic school system. The most powerful development of communities of practice occurs in the form of ongoing teams that meet regularly, more than a few times a week for learning lesson planning and problem solving (NSDC,2001). The NSDC report on professional development states that 'well designed professional development creates learning communities that provide mutual support and focus everyone's attention and learning on a small number of high priority goals'(NSDC,2001,p. 3). The proposed framework considers how to create an effective community of practice for current Islamic Schools.

A Proposed Framework for Professional Development in Canadian Islamic Schools

Professional development according to Harwell (2003) should be primarily research based, foster organized communication and collaboration between teachers and should be ongoing. The need for an overarching organization or an organization dedicated to professional development that is not affiliated with any school is due to the structure of most Islamic schools as localized and community-based. It is also due to the lack of experienced pedagogical consultants available to individual schools.

First, research must be performed on aspects of professional development of the school based on teacher feedback, current pedagogical practices and classroom pedagogical practices. It is necessary to identify what characterizes high quality teaching as not to confuse student achievement with teaching excellence. Therefore, the school should work toward pinpointing aspects of teaching that teachers can improve on such as information and communication technology or encouraging critical thinking strategies. The NSDC (2011) encourages the use of peer feedback for ongoing professional development. Once aspects of teaching that need improvement and professional development initiative have been identified through initial research, Islamic schools can work in creating a two-tiered model that works within the school, as well as within the organization and supports other Islamic schools. This includes teacher – teacher feedback, in- class visitations and one-on-one discussion with other teachers or experts in the field.

In order to create communities of practice among teachers in the same subject area, Islamic schools must be creative and collaborative. I propose two models of professional development that allow schools to remain independent and to maintain current budgets without

added expenses. The evaluation and appraisals model, and the mentorship and collaborative model strive to provide schools with a model to support in-service teachers after much in school research has been completed and a school wide strategic plan for pedagogical improvement in each field has been developed.

The appraisals and evaluations model:

This model will allow for teacher performance to be evaluated without being dependant on student achievement. The proposed framework includes three aspects of evaluation in which teachers' approach to evaluation would differ according to position, experience and with pedagogical knowledge. All three aspects - within the school, outside of the school and by the overarching organization strive to provide teachers with specific and improvement-targeted feedback that is ongoing and integrated into classroom practice (Fig. 1). The appraisals and evaluative model is characterised by five primary forms of evaluation:

- **Visitations:** Teachers are visited in class by administrators and peers within their school, subject specific peers from other Islamic schools as well as professional subject specific and pedagogical experts provided by the overarching organization or community contacts. This comprehensive visitations format allows for the teacher to receive feedback from numerous, but equally informed professionals on how they can improve their practice. The multiple visitations allow for self-analysis on common threads among classroom visitors. The teacher also has the opportunity to receive different perspectives on subject specific and pedagogical content which they can implement at their discretion.
- **Teacher Feedback:** From visitations and evaluation situations, the teacher's feedback should be ongoing and concrete in a way that they can improve their practice. Due to the competitive nature of Islamic Schools, teacher feedback is an aspect of evaluation that should remain within the school and should be done by peers and school administration rather than between membership schools. Pedagogical experts from the overarching organization should be available to assist with giving specific feedback at the request of the individual school.
- **Teacher appraisals and Teacher Competencies:** Teacher appraisals should also not involve other schools. Appraisals should remain within the school and pedagogical experts from the overarching organization. Teacher appraisals should not only evaluate professional competencies as outlined by the Department of Education, but should also evaluate the integration of Islamic content and values into the curriculum.
- **Non-specific pedagogical training:** This aspect of the evaluation model looks less at teacher performance in terms of subject specific teaching, but rather areas of general effective pedagogy such as the appropriate use of information technology, promotion of critical thinking or the integration of cross curricular objectives. These goals are as critical as subject specific

training and should be established subsequent to the research phase and be included within the school's strategic plan.

- Standards and assessment discussions: Teachers within the school as well as between membership schools should evaluate their own progress as individuals and the collective in meeting curriculum standards. More important than meeting curriculum standards are setting agreed upon standards that are developed in the research phase and are included in the comprehensive strategic plan for the school's pedagogical development. It is important that evaluations are done with participants from outside the school to avoid norm-referencing when evaluating a school which can lead to over-confidence in the perceived academic excellence or teaching excellence within the school.

The mentorship and collaborative model:

The mentorship and collaborative model looks toward creating communities of practice where teachers can be supported through their peers as well as implement pedagogical goals created by the school and teachers (Fig 2.). The mentorship and collaborative group model is characterised by the following groups and partnerships:

- Teachers within a subject specific area form collaborative groups between membership school teachers. Ideally, collaborative, subject specific groups are effective within an individual school (NSDC, 2001). Groups should be supported by pedagogical specialists whose role is not to lead discussions but to provide a forum for productive, specific and targeted discussion on an ongoing basis
- New teachers are paired with experienced subject-specific teachers who are not necessarily from their individual school, as they may be the only teacher in that subject area. This relationship should be a reciprocal one, where the new teacher can be supported by an experienced one through resources, materials, ideas, standards and previous experience in the subject while new teachers assist in keeping the veteran teacher abreast with newer pedagogical trends, new ways of teaching and learning and providing the veteran teacher with resources, materials, and ideas.
- New teachers should also be paired with experienced teachers within the school that are not necessarily within their subject-specific area. Reciprocally, the new teacher will be a source for new ideas and contributions that the veteran teacher can assist the newer teacher in implementing.
- School administrators also develop pedagogical leadership partnerships among other administrators where educational leadership training is facilitated, discussions about standards, evaluations and appraisals can occur as well as ideas for collaborative projects between membership schools for the benefit of the larger community.

Although these two models for sustained professional development seem fairly simple, they have the potential to drastically improve the face of professional development in Islamic schools. One of the criticisms of overarching organizations for Islamic schools is that Islamic schools are hesitant to move outside of their own administrative structures. This framework allows individual schools to remain independent and their preserve financial resources, but still provide for professional development that is research-based, ongoing, and collaborative. This will assist teachers, school administrators and the community at large in providing quality educational services to students and providing teachers with the structure for teaching excellence.

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A Guide to Successfully Transforming Teachers into Curriculum Mapping Experts!

Souheil Zekri

Abstract

Plan a successful transformation of teachers from book/chapter/section automatons to enlightened and innovative curriculum developers. This session describes a five-year successful step-by-step plan to guide faculty toward collaboratively developing integrative maps that serve pre-determined goals.

About the Author

Souheil Zekri is the principal of American Youth Academy (AYA). He has served as an administrator at AYA for the past 7 years. He has a Ph.D. in Mechanical Engineering with a concentration in Nano-Bio-Materials from the University of South Florida. He worked closely with local public and private schools under the GK-12 NSF foundation program in Math and Science Education. Br. Souheil's current interests include developing innovative approaches in curriculum development and the optimization of technology in teaching in Islamic schools.

A Guide to Successfully Transforming Teachers into Curriculum Mapping Experts!

Introduction

Curriculum mapping is a global plan that is historically established by a team of “expert” educators to guide the teaching process throughout the academic year. The development of curriculum in general, has traditionally been an essential responsibility of outside experts, excluding teachers from active participation in the curriculum development process (Carl, 2009; Craig & Ross, 2008). Teachers tend to feel more comfortable with a preset curriculum that is compiled in a series of books to be followed methodically. The popular belief entails that the process of following a particular set of books insures close adherence to a specific curriculum with the hope that horizontal or vertical gaps do not exist. In reality, the contrary happens. As teachers narrow their focus on the particular books, they tend to become more comfortable with the material and become attached to the particular objectives listed in the teachers' Editions.

In an era of standard-based instruction, more teachers are being required to design and develop their own curricula with appropriate formative and summative assessments, which tie into the specific standards taught. This paper provides a comprehensive overview of curriculum design and development using the most recent web portal and document sharing solutions. Six

major reasons in support of curriculum mapping will be detailed with supporting examples implemented within an Islamic school setting.

A five year plan was devised and implemented to integrate a curriculum mapping portal as the main curriculum development tool at American Youth Academy. A case study is presented in this paper detailing a professional development model that took teachers from “book followers” to standard based educators to curriculum innovators.

This paper details the difficult road taken by the school administrators and teachers from a static curriculum based mainly on outdated individually developed scope and sequences to dynamic maps that are collaboratively developed using a backward design approach. This paper presents valuable information to Lead Teachers, Department Heads, Administrators, and Board Members of schools who are looking to take their curriculum planning process to the next level.

Methodology for Adopting a New Curriculum Mapping Process

This paper looks at curriculum mapping as a process that requires the involvement of every faculty member and administrator with a primary goal to establish a paradigm shift in planning and delivering instruction. Fullan’s (2007) theory of educational change suggests three phases in any major change process: initiation, implementation, and institutionalization. These phases cannot be viewed as straightforward, linear, and distinct processes. On the contrary, they should be understood as phases that “will merge imperceptibly into each other” (Marsh, 2009, p. 117), and “all phases must be thought about from the beginning and continually thereafter” (Fullan, p. 103). The following will detail how the aforementioned phases have been planned between 2009 and 2014. It is worth noting that this five-year plan started immediately after and accreditation visit and evaluated during a reaccreditation visit to the school.

Initiation phase:

The initiation, also thought off as an ideation phase involved learning as much as possible about the history and culture of the school as well as planning the implementation phase in a traditional short, mid, and long term fashion. There is no doubt that understanding the school culture and the teachers’ attitudes towards curriculum preparation/delivery and general change is vital to establishing a successful transformation. There were many aspects of school culture and teacher background knowledge that were studied during the initiation phase. For instance, teachers’ education background, understanding of current curriculum mapping theories, and overall adopted teaching styles has been studied through formal observations and one-on-one interviews. In 2008, more than 90% of the teachers were found to have very little understanding of standard based teaching and using the backward design methodology in planning for instruction. 95% of the teachers used direct instruction as the primary method (more than 90% of the instructional time) of delivering the curriculum. A clear gap was also found between the general knowledge base of Arabic, Quran and Islamic Studies teachers and the rest of the homeroom and subject teachers. This gap was predominately attributed to the educational

background of the different groups where homeroom and core subject teachers had more exposure to education related courses. Most teachers focused predominantly on creating lesson plans that mirrored the objectives found in chapters and sections of the adopted book without establishing a yearly plan based on a list of expected learning outcomes. As a result, a 5 year professional development plan was established to help teachers reach the following milestones:

- Adopt a standard based teaching method using the backward design approach
- Plan from yearly to monthly to daily with three documents to be produced (Yearly plan, Unit plans, lesson plans)
- Learn and adopt non-directive instructional methods that incorporate collaborative and differentiated approaches.

There was a number of teacher attributes that were investigated to evaluate school culture towards change. The following is a list of these attributes:

- Work ethics: This attribute was qualitatively studied through formal and informal observations. Overall, teachers were found to be very conscientious of their position and duties towards implementing the mission and vision of the school. However, a lack of professionalism and theoretical knowledge was observed. A short-term plan involving the establishment the following procedures was established:
 - faculty movement (timely sign-in and out, duties, timely arrival to meetings)
 - adherence to deliverables' deadlines
 - timely communication with administration, fellow faculty members, and parent
- Respect for authority: This is directly related to the strength of the organizational structure. Qualitatively speaking, a general respect for administrative authority existed and continues to exist. This is a vital attribute without which, any change would be very difficult to implement.
- Flexibility: One of the first reactions to change involves resistance. For certain individuals, resistance could lead to direct insubordination. Flexibility and open mindedness are attributes that, when combined with administrative responsiveness, empathy and clear communication highly increase the chances of successful change. The general mood towards change was found to initially be very resistive. This was attributed to the lack of basic understanding of the theory behind standard based teaching combined with a strong historical attachment to closely following teachers' editions as a primary mode of preparation and delivery of instruction. Individual faculty interviews along with departmental meetings showed signs of distress in a few teachers who had strong negative initial reactions.
- Collaboration/Team spirit: The historical faculty structure of the school was found to be less based on collaboration and more based on individual preparation. Since collaboration is crucial in establishing a school-wide curriculum mapping environment, departmental meetings were planned in the short term to establish a team spirit revolving around collaborative planning. These meetings were planning to continue and intensify in

frequency throughout the five year plan. This required certain budget modifications combined with changes in the faculty contract structure to allow for extra time outside of school hours. Furthermore, scheduling was optimized to create cross-subject and cross-grade meeting opportunities during planning periods. Finally, a two-week-long orientation was designed to be delivered immediately before the start of each school year to improve collaboration and bring new hires up to speed with the rest of the faculty.

- **Availability:** Due to the large number of female faculty members, and cultural expectations, it was necessary to study the availability of teachers after school hours, as well as, consider hiring as many full-time teachers as possibly to maximize the availability during and after school hours. After surveying the teachers, the majority of them emphasized conducting trainings and workshops during the school hours with very limited availability after 5PM Monday through Thursday. As a result, weekly faculty/staff meetings were planned during Wednesdays from 4 to 5pm. One staff day per month was also planned to provide teachers time for training and to catch up with their planning.

It was important during the ideation phase to select a medium/portal to be used by the teachers to create, map, and plan their curricula. A decision was taken to Rubicon's ATLAS mapping portal based on the author's research and experience. The following were selection criteria:

- **Ease of accessibility:** The portal must be accessible online from anywhere.
- **Ease of use:** Anyone with online browsing experience should be able to use the portal.
- **Adoption of Backward Design:** The portal must use Backward Design as a theoretical framework for developing thematic units.
- **Seamless online collaboration:** The portal must provide an easy way to share maps and notes.
- **Incorporated reference library:** The portal needs to provide a comprehensive library of theoretical material, access to a community of curriculum developers, and quality mapping rubrics.
- **Professional Development:** The portal should include a multitude of professional development platforms including online based audiovisual recordings as well.

The next section discusses in detail the implementation phase using the Six Big Ideas of Curriculum Mapping (Rubicon, 2015) adopted from the Rubicon ATLAS implementation model.

Implementation phase:

The implementation phase was initiated while the ideation phase was being conducted. One of the first tasks during this phase was to establish a core team of teachers who will receive intensive training during the last three months prior to the end of academic year proceeding the

first year of implementation. The model of train-the-trainer was used with the core team. One teacher from each department/subject was selected based having great attributes as mentioned in the initiation phase. Over the first five years of implementation, the core team was called upon frequently to help especially on years when turnover was relatively large.

Professional development was highly skewed towards training in the following areas:

- Standard based education: Training opportunities for teachers were scaffolded and spiraled to insure maximum retention. Two to three monthly hours were dedicated to training teachers during the first three months of each academic year of the first three years of implementation. Appendix A shows an example of the kind of documentation used to help teachers connect standards to be taught with the primary book resource used. Appendix A helps teachers produce a standard-based yearly plan.
- Planning with the Big Picture in Mind: Teachers are trained to transition from yearly to quarterly to unit to lesson planning. This approach helps the teachers produce thematic modules and lesson plans that consistently have the main yearly goals in mind
- Unit Development using the ATLAS portal: Weekly workshops that transitioned in monthly workshops focused on unit development in three main stages: 1) desired results; 2) assessment evidence; 3) learning plan. All plans follow a rubric which is used for teacher evaluation. All specific areas of the portal have been introduced during the provided workshops.
- Collaborative Planning: Modeling of collaborative planning was introduced early on during the implementation phase to demonstrate the effectiveness of developing curricula in a group setting. The main focus of this training was to bridge the communication and curriculum gaps across grades and subjects.
- Cooperative Learning: Six-hour-long Kagan Cooperative Learning training sessions have been planned during the first three years of the implementation phase. The goal behind these trainings was to minimize the use of direct-instruction.
- Differentiated Instruction (DI): Differentiation is very important in Islamic schools because of the large variety in students' abilities. Teachers received yearly trainings in DI to insure that their plans include differentiation.
- Project Based Learning: During the second year of implementation, monthly workshops were introduced to help teachers learn how to plan units and themes by incorporating projects.

Institutionalization phase:

The institutionalization phase is more of an evaluative phase as only the resulting global use of the portal is indicative of a successful and permanent transition. The fifth year of implementation coincided with a reaccreditation visit. The accrediting team was given a login and password to the mapping portal, which gave the school an opportunity to receive a third party evaluation of the quality of maps developed. The results were thankfully excellent based on

the provided commendations. Furthermore, a continued and relentless commitment to professional development is a major key to the proper institutionalization of curriculum mapping.

Lessons Learned

In developing such a paradigm shift in developing curriculum with a school, the five year reaccreditation process should be considered as one of the best opportunities to help in a successful transition. The main observed reason behind this could be attributed to how important accreditation is to Islamic schools and thus serves as a global motivator and a strong catalyst in “rallying the troops”.

There were many problems and hurdles that were experienced throughout the different phases. One of the main problems encountered was the large turnover rate during the five years of implementation. Year three and four saw 30 to 40% turnover rates which put strain on the administrative team. Certain modifications in the training that included differentiation were introduced to bring the new faculty up to speed with the curriculum mapping process. In addition, difficulties were experienced in developing creative ways to look at the curriculum due to historical reliance on books and traditional teaching approached. Finally, technology played a major role in accomplishing the paradigm shift. Although a few teachers which little to no experience with web 2.0 portals had major difficulties learning the process, every teacher realized the amazing possibilities offered by these tools and accomplished the requirements planned to complete the project.

Appendix A: K5 Science Sunshine Standard Alignment with Resources SCIENCE

| Sunshine Standards | | Corresponding Unit/Chapter/Lesson/Objective(s) |
|---|---|--|
| Big Idea | Benchmark | |
| Big Idea 1: The Practice of Science A: Scientific inquiry is a multifaceted activity; The processes of science include the formulation of scientifically investigable questions, construction of investigations into those questions, the collection of appropriate data, the evaluation of the meaning of those data, and the communication of this evaluation. B: The processes of science frequently do not correspond to the traditional portrayal of "the scientific method." C: Scientific argumentation is a necessary part of scientific inquiry and plays an important role in the generation and validation of scientific knowledge. D: Scientific knowledge is based on observation and inference; it is important to recognize that these are very different things. Not only does science require creativity in its methods and processes, but also | SC.K.N.1.1 Collaborate with a partner to collect information. | Unit: ---- Chapter ---- Lesson---- Objectives---- |
| | SC.K.N.1.2 Make observations of the natural world and know that they are descriptors collected using the five senses. | Unit: ---- Chapter ---- Lesson---- Objectives---- |
| | SC.K.N.1.3 Keep records as appropriate -- such as pictorial records -- of investigations conducted. | Unit: ---- Chapter ---- Lesson---- Objectives---- |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| in its questions and explanations. For Resources, go to: http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/FLStandardSearch.aspx | SC.K.N.1.4 Observe and create a visual representation of an object which includes its major features. | Unit: ---- Chapter ---- Lesson---- Objectives---- |
| | SC.K.N.1.5 Recognize that learning can come from careful observation. | Unit: ---- Chapter ---- Lesson---- Objectives---- |

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The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme in US Islamic Schools and the Promotion of Global Mindedness

Michael Matthew

Abstract

US Islamic schools are turning towards becoming IB (International Baccalaureate) world schools. This study examined challenges that US Islamic schools face to acquire the IB Programme and its maintenance after verification. The research studied responses to four questions with participants employed by three Islamic schools in different geographical locations. Recommendations are suggested to overcome foreseeable challenges in the process of becoming an IB world school.

About the Author

Dr. Michael Matthew earned his Doctor of Educational Leadership from Argosy University in 2014. He earned his School Administration and Supervision Certificate from Johns Hopkins University, and Masters of Science in Education and Bachelor of Arts from Central Connecticut State University. His current book is titled, “Attitudes of Teachers toward Professional Development: San Juan, Puerto Rico, Public School District II.” Currently, Dr. Matthew is the International Baccalaureate Coordinator and Staff Developer for American Youth Academy.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme in US Islamic Schools and the Promotion of Global Mindedness

Globalization is a phenomenon that extends beyond a simple cultural exchange of ideas or a synthesis of political and economic interests; it entails a *mindedness* that defines relationships with the world’s diverse views that can either change for the betterment of humanity or contribute towards its advancement. Global mindedness is therefore a progression of cognitive and affective expansion that is connected with globalization. As a result, it becomes an educational necessity to facilitate the knowledge and skills of a generation of learners who need to find their place in this world and then be able to collaborate in a global society.

The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) launched in 1968 with the essential mission to prepare high school learners for success in higher education with an educational foundation in global mindedness (The International Baccalaureate, 2015). The programme challenges eleventh and twelfth graders to think globally as they grow in knowledge, and to participate holistically in each of their six subject areas aligned with ten learner profiles: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers,

balanced, and reflective (The International Baccalaureate, 2015). The six subject areas of the IB DP curriculum are structured into groups:

- Group 1 (*studies in language in literature*) – Students apply their target language within an academic context.
- Group 2 (*language acquisition*) – Students focus on language acquisition and its use in cultural context.
- Group 3 (*individuals and societies*) – Students learn critically about human behavior, cultural expression, and the diverse economic and social environments in both historical and contemporary contexts.
- Group 4 (*sciences*) – Students observe and explore scientific questions through a development of their understanding of the scientific method.
- Group 5 (*mathematics*) – Students develop mathematical knowledge, refine their abstract thinking, and are encouraged to appreciate mathematics within cultural, historical, and international dimensions.
- Group 6 (*the arts*) – Students challenge their own creative and cultural expectations in order to develop their analytical skills and confidence in the arts.

In addition, students are required to complete Theory of Knowledge (TOK), Creativity Action and Service (CAS), and an Extended Essay (EE). These are central to the IB DP by providing opportunities for students to synthesize their knowledge, reflect on their learning, and apply their understanding (The International Baccalaureate, 2015).

Statement of Problem

Since its inception by a group of teachers at the International School of Geneva, the IB programme has blossomed into 3,923 schools in 147 countries, maintaining at least one of the IB programmes: diploma programme (DP, established 1968), middle year programme (MYP, established 1994), primary years programme (PYP, established 1997), and the career-related certificate (established 2012). The United States has 1,569 IB World Schools with one or more of the three IB programmes: 440 schools offer the Primary Years Programme (PYP), 544 schools offer the Middle Years Programme (MYP), and 828 schools offer the Diploma Programme (DP) (The International Baccalaureate, 2015). In terms of private schools, there are approximately 40 private schools in the US, among which only a handful of US Islamic schools are verified to house an IB programme.

Colleges, both in the US and abroad, tend to view favorably applicants who graduate with the IB diploma (IB DP) (Kyburg, Hertberg-Davis, & Callahan, 2007; Schumacker, 2014). Hence, why is there not an influx of US Islamic schools acquiring the IB DP when research demonstrated increase of success with college preparedness and preparation for global society? For those that have acquired IB verification status, what are the challenges that they face?

As US Islamic schools turn towards the possibility of acquiring an IB programme, various levels of readiness for its implementation and marketing strategies become apparent in planning for its longevity. A problem, though, is that once the programme is verified a challenge arises with marketing strategies to promote enrollment and sustainability of the programme. Other challenges may also emerge such as teacher preparedness and community acceptance of the premise and value of the IB programme. Hence, this paper addresses these challenges through an interview of representatives of schools already in possession of an IB programme, and provides recommendations for practical implications for those either seeking verification or to maintain its continuation.

Review of literature

Research on the efficacy of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme tends to focus on academic achievement with minority students (Kyburg et al, 2007; Mayer, 2008). Mayer (2008) found an association between IB teachers' positive attitudes that all students can achieve regardless of socio-economic disenfranchisement or racial inequality and their students' ability to meet academic rigor. In addition, Mayer (2008) attributed the academic success of minority students to the academic and social support systems in place offered by the school. Ultimately, a solid combination of IB teachers holding a strong belief in the success of their students regardless of cultural or racial background coupled with a strong school-wide support system led to the success rates of minority students (Mayer, 2008).

Other researchers argue that it is more about teaching with 21st century academic standards created by global demands for specific skillsets that produces academically successful college ready students (Silva, 2009). Silva (2009) clarified, however, that the skills emphasized for 21st century global citizenry such as being able to problem solve, think critically, and synthesize knowledge "are not new, just newly important" (p.631). What is a new phenomenon is how assessments are structured to measure the newly important skillsets (Silva, 2009). Silva (2009) pointed out that the IB programme provides a common curricula and assessments that ensure teaching and grading standards. For example, IB programme courses have three or four separate assessment components, "none worth less than 20% or more than 50% of the overall assessment" (p.633). Assessment components contain a range of performance tasks aligned with the course which can include traditional type of formats such as multiple-choice and short answer responses; but, the main aspect of assessment is justification of responses (The International Baccalaureate, 2015). Silva (2009) asserted that assessments such as promoted by the IB programme provide a model for 21st century new academic standards.

However, a common criticism of assessment driven instruction is the stress that students face due to the heavy workload needed to pass (Taylor & Porath, 2006). Taylor and Porath (2006) surveyed 16 (10 female and 6 male) IB graduates from the years 1996 and 2000 in British Columbia, Canada. The results indicated that graduates were of mixed opinion regarding the workload, with most feeling that the workload was not excessive although they stressed about

meeting the requirements for the BP DP (Taylor & Porath, 2006). However, there was a general consensus that they felt prepared for the IB exams after adapting to the rigor of a full academic schedule. As Taylor and Porath (2006) stated, “Although they indicated the pace was hectic at times, they valued the breadth and depth of the curriculum, and the critical thinking, study, and time management skills that they honed and carried forward into postsecondary school and beyond” (p.155). This study as well as others also pointed out that the key to managing student stress and adaptation to pace was to not procrastinate (Shaunessy, Suldo, Hardesty, & Shaffer, 2006; Taylor & Porath, 2006).

Considering the high academic demands of the IB DP placed on students, a legitimate question to ask is why would students choose to enroll in the programme? Paris (2003) conducted a case study in Australia of IB students in both public and private schools, and determined that there were six beliefs that attracted them to the programme: 1) smaller class size; 2) teachers are excellent; 3) smarter than average students; 4) acceptance into universities; 5) superior curriculum; and 6) opportunities to study overseas. Hence, when consideration is given on to how to market the IB programme to students, research has shown that these are probable key areas to emphasize.

In summary, although there is high academic rigor within the IB programme, IB student success is determined by a number of factors. Firstly, highlighting teachers’ strong belief that all students can achieve the International Baccalaureate Diploma regardless of background is pivotal to student achievement (Mayer, 2008). Secondly, emphasizing the IB DP assessment driven teaching is an important aspect of 21st century application of standards (Silva, 2009). Thirdly, promoting student awareness to not procrastinate is a key to alleviate the stress of a heavy workload; and finally, understanding students’ held beliefs regarding the IB programme as having certain benefits is important for narrowing down what is most important to students (Paris, 2003; Taylor & Porath, 2006). These factors are points to consider when marketing the IB programme.

Methods

Representatives (administrators and IB Coordinators) from three Islamic schools with either one or more of the IB programmes were interviewed telephonically via the following questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges that you face with your local community in promoting the IB curriculum?
2. How do you address various opinions regarding the concept of global mindedness?
3. How is open-mindedness promoted with faculty?
4. What types of marketing strategies have proven to be successful?

The responses from each of the three participants were analyzed using a qualitative approach of identifying emergent themes. Responses were highlighted and then compared to

each other for similar phenomenological experiences. Once the emergent themes were identified, recommendations of practical implementation of strategies to address challenges associated with the questions surfaced.

Recommendations of Practical Implementation

Data gathered from Islamic school administrators indicate parental and community acceptance of the IB programme; and, the local Islamic community of each school understood the concept of global mindedness as an educational need. Therefore, there were no challenges in the promotion of the IB programme in and of itself with parents, and within the community in general. This indicated an established positive impression that the IB programme has upon the local Islamic community, and in particular parents. However, more data is needed to determine which specific aspects of the programme are providing the impression.

Administrators expressed a high concern with programme sustainability due to faculty attrition, and their struggles with faculty comprehension of IB philosophy. Therefore, this is an area to focus on in developing a strategic plan for acquiring an IB programme. Recommendations include:

1. Selecting and aligning specific teachers according to the six subject areas of the IB DP curriculum.
2. Scheduling regular open forum meetings to discuss the IB philosophy with the group of teachers who are identified as qualified to teach the six subject areas.
3. Providing information on how the IB curriculum will enhance professional development and that support will be provided on a continual basis.

One critical point to consider is that although there have been schools functioning historically without a dedicated IB Coordinator, the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) indicates that this role is crucial to the success of the programme (The International Baccalaureate, 2015). Thus, hiring an IB Coordinator may impact positively the viewpoints and the understanding that teachers need to teach the programme.

Findings of this study also indicated that Islamic school administrators were limited on strategies towards promoting their IB programme once verification status was obtained. A pattern emerged thematically of a “single strategy” approach towards marketing. The common approach was a word of mouth strategy coupled with visual presentations on what the IB programme offers (at their school). However, when consideration is given that parents and community members are already aware of what the IB Programme essentially entails, attention should turn towards specific marketing to attract students.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, students hold specific beliefs regarding the IB programme, thus using this researched based information to design a marketing plan should empower this group in making a decision to enroll in the programme (Paris, 2003; Taylor & Porath, 2006). This should also include a projection for number of enrollments and a strategic

plan for maintaining the student levels of interests; and, in particular, a plan needs to include how to academically support students as the IB programme endorses an equal opportunity for students with a range of abilities as well as backgrounds (The International Baccalaureate, 2015).

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Islamic Novels and Short Stories in Literature and Social Studies Classes

Muhammed Al-Ahari

Abstract

This session will facilitate approaches to address literature and social issues from an Islamic point of view through the study of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, *The Autobiography of Umar ibn Said*, the short story “The Sultana’s Dream,” and the “Narrative of Job ben Solomon”.

About the Author

Muhammed Abdullah al-Ahari is an American scholar and writer on the topics of American Islamic history and literature. Muhammed has a Bachelor’s in Behavioral Arts and Sciences from East West University, a Masters in English Literature from Northeastern Illinois University, and is currently pursuing his Ed.D. at UOP and a Masters in Islamic Studies from the American Islamic College. Muhammed has published more than 20 books on Islam used in reading circles, and as supplementary texts and textbooks in college courses.

Islamic Novels and Short Stories in Literature and Social Studies Classes

Case study one: Inclusion of Islamic texts in an American Literature class

In my American Literature class we read Emerson’s essay “the American scholar” on the development of an American identity and the importance of literature in the development of the identity. As an assignment of the students understanding of the text the students annotated the text looking for Emerson’s use of literary and rhetorical devices, and his arguments and their supports. First the students wrote an essay on the philosophy of Transcendentalism and what it owed to Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The essay showed what Emerson, Thoreau, and other writers in the Transcendental Movement.

As continuing assignment on Emerson’s essay the students then wrote an essay defining what they thought American Islamic Literature would look like and how they would encourage its study and development as a genre using some of the arguments that Emerson used. There is a class in 19th century American Literature at Northern Illinois University that used some of the same techniques in teaching literature of the period. They tied a study of Emerson’s essay with Poe’s short story “The Fall of the House of Usher” and the poem “al-Araf.”

Another text that is planned to be studied in the American Literature class is one of the same texts studied in my Islamic Civilization class discussed below – *the Narrative of Job ben Solomon*. This time the text will be studied in conjunction with Frederick Douglass’ *The Heroic Slave*. *The Heroic Slave* is a novella in four chapters that tells the story of a runaway slave and his encounter with a budding abolitionist. Parallels with life in slavery, ideas of literacy and

slavery, and portrayal of different character types and motifs will be discussed with the idea of whether having a Muslim, white, and African-American Christian narrator will change the telling of the same events. As a way to assess student learning the poems in *the Heroic Slave* will be analyzed and students will retell each story as poems or write the next chapter of the narratives. Leonard (2003) posits that just as the idea of an American identity has developed in the past through the development of a separate literature, language, and political system, the same is true of the development of an American Muslim Literature and identity.

Case study two: Inclusion of Islamic novels, poetry, and short stories in an Islamic Civilization class

In my Islamic Civilization class the students worked on transcribing Bosnian Aljamiado poetry from Latin script to Arabic script and then read the poems on video in Bosnian and in translation. They worked on the poem “Ašiklijski Elif Be” by Fejzo Softić with each student doing about 16 lines. Each letter of the alphabet had a quatrain associated with it where the poet describes his wife by comparing her to each letter of the Bosnian Arebica alphabet. The poet was a student in the madressa who wrote the poem to his wife. Nothing is known about the author except that he was a student from a late 18th century Travnik, Bosnia madressa. The discussion of the poem brought up ideas of love, family, cultural differences, and cultural transfer. This is the stanza *be* (B) where Fejzo writes about Fata’s (Fatimah’s) *nokta* or fingernails.

You are the crescent beneath the nail
 You are the moon of the nail.
 The moon outshines the nail,
 The moon outrage the nail.

In this class we also looked at diplomatic letters between the Sultan of Morocco and President George Washington of the United States during the Revolutionary War era, the Treaty of Friendship between the two nations, an interview between Lamén Kebe (a repatriated teacher from the Senegal area in West Africa) and the Connecticut educator and travel writer Theodore Dwight, Jr. regarding Islamic education in West Africa. In conjunction with the article on Lamén Kebe we read excerpts from the *Kitab al-Shifa* of Qadi Iyad (a Sirah text popular in West Africa), the commentary of al-Fatiha from the *Tafsir Jalaleen*, the introduction of the *Risalah* of Ibn Abu Zayd al-Qayrawani which deals with the nature of Islamic education and the components of *Fiqh*, and part of the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik on the first revelation and on the *Miraj*.

According to Filipović (2006), in Bosnian literature, and in many literatures of Islamic people around the world, vernacular commentary of the Qur’ān and poems on the birth of the Prophet Muhammad and on the *Isra* and *Miraj* formed essential components of the development of national literature and Islamic identity. The Mawlid story had a strong ethical-moral example of the Prophet Muhammad that was particularly effective for pedagogical and community development. Bosnians who followed the example of the Prophet Muhammad and by extension

the earlier prophets were called Dobri Bošnjaks (Good Bosnians). Another piece of Bosnian literature that developed from the theme of Dobri Bošnjaks was Mak Dizd's epic poem *The Stone Sleeper* which told the story of people asleep in a cemetery awaiting the Day of Judgment by writing down the epitaphs on their tombstones (Filipović, 2006).

Other piece of Islamic literature were read from this time were the *Autobiography of 'Umar ibn Said* and the *Narrative of Job ben Solomon*. The *Autobiography of 'Umar ibn Said* was written in the 1830s by an enslaved former school teacher in Fayetteville, North Carolina. At 2000+ words it was the longest Arabic text in North America before the rediscovery of Job ben Solomon's Qur'ān in 2014. This autobiography starts with Surah Mulk and students were able to discuss the themes in the texts: longing for home, trust in Allah, education, travel, etc. and why he started it with Surah Mulk.

The *Narrative of Job ben Solomon* is an understudied text which is at the same time the start of British-African, African-American, and Muslim American literature. It is a brief text of less than 60 pages. I had the students divide the text by chapters with each student doing an outline, study guide, and study questions and discussion questions for each chapters. They presented their finding via PowerPoint and posters. This text details the life in West Africa in the early 18th century. It include details about agriculture, trade, religious life, education, clothing, leadership, and wildlife. This text could be used along with diaries and short stories about life in North America from the same era. Students could then do journals comparing and contrasting the lifestyles of the narrators of each text. The texts by Job and 'Umar ibn Said are available in my work *Five Classic Slave Narratives* (2006). Chicago: Magribine Press.

Case study three: Inclusion of Islamic short stories, poetry, and novels in an Advances Placement Language class

In A.P. Language we discussed themes of Feminism, penal reform, and ecology. For Feminism we read *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Wolff. In conjunction with it we read "the Sultana's Dream" by the Bengali writer Rokeya Shekhawat Hossein (1905). The story is categorized as science fiction and Islamic feminism. It discusses the role of education and societal norms in creating the position of women in society much like the later work by Virginia Wolff but through the means of an allegory. The narrator travels in a dream to a parallel world where women rule over an Islamic society and in doing so questions the place of women in the society in which she grew up. Hossein later started women schools and continued to write on Islamic and women's topics. As a way to evaluate the understanding of the text the students annotated the text looking for each argument Hossein was making and which literature and rhetorical techniques she was using. As a journal the students predicted what the narrator would do when she woke from the dream.

In the spring term, before the A.P. exam, we read articles about prison and education reform. During this period we also read excerpts from *the Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Rollo Walter Brown's educational study *How the French Boy Learned to Read*, the *Autobiography of*

Benjamin Franklin, and *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* by Winston Churchill. The class discussed the societal differences in education portrayed in each text. As an assessment the students wrote a five to six page essay comparing the educational experiences of Malcolm X with one of the other writers and wrote journal entries about each day's readings. The journal entries showed how education and societal norms shaped behavior and world view and how religion and life experience can change how one views the world.

Case study four: inclusion of Islamic short stories, poetry, and novels in a World Literature class

Some of the same texts I had previously taught in my Advanced Placement Language, Islamic Civilization, and American Literature classes also fit into the curriculum for World Literature. Additionally, poems, short stories and novels from the ancestral homes of the students in the class be taught with the students leading the discussion and readings of the texts.

Freda Shamma (2003) suggests that some texts that could be studied include Tayeb Salih's *Seasons of Migration to the North* and *the Wedding of Zein*, and selections from story collections like *1001 Nights*, the *Maqamat* of Hariri, Ibn Tufail's *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* (to be taught along with the William Golding's 1954 novel *Lord of the Flies*). I would also include Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* on the Harlem Renaissance, Zadie Smith's 2000 novel *White Teeth* and Gautam Malkani's 2006 novel *Londonstani* on Indo-Pak immigration to Great Britain as additional novels. Sells (2003) presents additional tools for teaching Salih's *the Wedding of Zein*.

In World Literature I taught a quarter on women's issues using the plays Sophocles' *Antigone*, Ibsen's *the Doll House*, and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. After the these texts I taught Rokeya Shekhawat Hossein's "the Sultana's Dream" and had the students find parallels with the ideas in the three plays and to have a class discussion on the portrayal of women in the four texts and how the differ from the actual position of women in society and whether the roles women held were contrary to social values.

Conclusion and suggestions for future application

Islamic schools should aim at having classes specifically geared to teaching Islamic literature, history, and culture. A step in this process would be to develop textbooks in American Islamic history and literature and readers in World Islamic Literature in translation. As a part of developing the readers, which texts have more literary or historical value needs to be determined.

Only following state standards when selecting texts cuts students off from their rich literary and cultural heritage. A committee of scholars with knowledge of literature and Islamic ethics, morala, and cultural values could help[select text and study guides with questions and essay prompts can be developed to ensure that the texts are taught appropriately and that the students and teachers can both gain fully from the reading and discussion experience.

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It's a Jungle Out There: Muslim American Youth Tell it Like it Is

Sharifa Abukar

Abstract

What happens to Muslim American students after they leave Islamic schools? Do certain factors hinder or support the development and maintenance of a salient Islamic identity? This session explores the educational experiences of Islamic school alumni after they've transitioned into public secondary and post-secondary school environments. The research findings, which highlight the perspectives and recommendations of a group of exemplar Muslim youth, offer valuable insights to educators, administrators, and community leaders.

Meet the Author

Sharifa Sheryl Steinberg Abukar, Ed.D., was the founding principal of the only Islamic school in San Diego County, California. She has been a guest lecturer at public schools, police officer trainings, universities, and a presenter at professional conferences such as AERA, ACSA, the Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity in Graduate Education, and the World Conference on Curriculum and Instruction. Her education includes a B.A. & M.A., from Wayne State University and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of California, San Diego.

It's a Jungle Out There: Muslim American Youth Tell it Like it Is

Introduction

Muslim American students are a unique minority group whose needs have been largely overlooked in the literature surrounding equity in education. Because of their diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds, they traditionally do not fit into one specific category or group. However, the one thing that they do hold in common is their religious identity. These youth struggle with defining and maintaining their Islamic identity in a pluralistic society that encompasses myriad values, beliefs, and cultures within a dominant set of racial, religious, and societal norms. Although many studies focus on ethnic, racial, gender, or religious identity in adolescents (Phinney, 1993; Sirin & Balsano, 2007), very few have looked at all of these dynamics as they interact in complex ways and pertain to the development of identity and the educational experiences of Muslim American students. The purpose of this paper is to highlight factors that hindered or supported the development of Muslim students' Islamic identity. It explores the process of acculturation in Muslim American students and examines how school environments, teachers, and social networks can impact the formation and maintenance of a salient Islamic identity.

Statement of the Problem

Many Muslim American students experience external pressures and internal struggles when it comes to maintaining their religious identity in public school settings. In addition to being marginalized, bullied, or ‘othered’ (CAIR, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2011), they face challenges related to issues of belonging, questioning, or practicing Islam as a complete way of life, especially in the context of public secondary schools. Because their Islamic belief system is frequently questioned, ridiculed, or even challenged by teachers and peers, these students must learn to cope with intellectual exclusion, social isolation, or moral alienation in various school environments (Zine, 2006; Peek, 2011).

Some Muslim youth attempt to fit in with their American peers by assimilating into the dominant popular culture. By doing so, they often lose connection with their religion and heritage culture. Islamic schools and institutions attempt to ensure that Muslim students preserve their heritage religious identity. However, little is known about how Muslim students successfully develop a strong religious identity and maintain their way of life (Deen) after leaving the Islamic school environment.

Review of the Literature

The political environment and acts of racial discrimination, religious bias, and gendered stereotyping all have a strong impact on the self-perception and identity formation of Muslim American students (Bigelow, 2008; Shah, 2009). Research shows that individuals’ reactions to negative information about the group with which they identify, is correlated with their self-esteem (Berry, 1997). As such, perceptions that members of the dominant culture hold about Muslims as a sub-group may be one of the key factors affecting students’ self-esteem and academic achievement (Abbas, 2002).

Peek’s (2005) three-stage identity formation model suggests that religious identity development is influenced by contextual, developmental, and psychosocial factors. The three stages include “religion as ascribed identity, religion as chosen identity, and religion as declared identity” (p. 215). In the ascribed stage, youth emulate the heritage identity of their parents. They observe Islamic practices and rituals because that is what they were taught to do, at home and at school, and they never question it. In the chosen stage of their identity development, they make an active choice to practice Islam because they began to question, learn, understand, and implement the teachings of Islam as opposed to being ‘cultural’ Muslims. In the declared stage of their identity development, Muslim youth not only chose Islam but also declare their identity openly through interactions with peers and teachers, through their outward appearance and dress, and by performing Islamic rituals publicly such as prayer. However, it is important to note that they have varying experiences in terms of the age and in which school environment they consciously chose and began to declare their religious identity. Moreover, the development of their identity can be influenced by other contextual factors such as the socio-political environment in the wake of 9-11 and the subsequent War on Terror (Abukar, 2014; Peek, 2005).

From a contextual perspective, school environments also play a big role in both the enculturation and acculturation of Muslim American students. Berry (2003) defines the process by which individuals learn a new culture as acculturation. He describes different strategies that people use to interact with members of their own cultural group and/or members of the dominant group. One such strategy, ‘assimilation’ is used by individuals that prefer to forgo their own culture in favor of interacting with individuals from other cultures. After leaving Islamic schools, some Muslim students find themselves trying to adapt to a whole new cultural world and use an ‘assimilation’ strategy that involves moving away from their Deen toward the more popular dominant culture.

Peek’s (2005) concept of “identity salience” was particularly relevant in this study. It holds that individuals’ commitment to particular roles determines the strength of the identity salience that is associated with that role. Muslim American youth, having a salient Islamic identity, often assume the role of being ‘ambassadors of Islam’, particularly in school environments where there were very few if any practicing Muslims (Abukar, 2014).

Methods

The major research questions addressed in this study were:

- What factors constrained or supported the development of Muslim students’ identity and sense of self-worth?
- What psychosocial processes and acculturation strategies impacted the formation and maintenance of a salient identity in Muslim American students?

The participant population included 13 Muslim youth, 18-25 years old, who attended primary, secondary, and post-secondary school in the U.S. They were representative of different ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds; five were female and eight were male. The participants were all alumni of a private K - 8 Islamic School that has been in operation for the past twenty-two years. However, they attended it for varying lengths of time, in different grade levels, and after leaving the Islamic school they all enrolled in various types of public secondary and post-secondary schools throughout California.

A *typical design* (Creswell, 2008) was utilized in this study. The subjects who were recruited were identified as being *exemplary* Muslim youth in the local community. Exemplary Muslim youth were defined as those who implement the fundamental practices and teachings of Islam in their daily life (Haddad & Lummis, 1987). This design allowed the researcher to narrow the focus of the study by exploring the unique challenges, resources, and factors that impacted the development and maintenance of an Islamic identity among ‘practicing’ Muslim students in private, public, and charter school environments.

The participants were identified through snowball sampling procedures. They were recommended by leaders of Muslim youth groups and Muslim student organizations, by an Islamic school principal, and/or by teachers. A convenience sampling procedure was utilized to

select the final group of participants who participated in the study. Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each subject in the study. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and then coded using HyperResearch, a qualitative data analysis software program.

Findings related to the literature

Prior research supports the findings of this study and acknowledges that among diverse Muslim American students, religion is a significant factor in their identity formation and is stronger than race, ethnicity, or national affiliations. When asked directly about their identity, most of the young Muslims interviewed consider themselves, first and foremost, to be Muslim. However, half of these youth also strongly identify themselves as Americans who struggle with their hyphenated identity because of the negative perceptions that their peers, teachers, and media hold about Islam and Muslims.

Some research findings suggest that factors such as race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and gender, may account for variations in the onset of stages and strategies that Muslim students experience in the development of their identity (Chaudhury and Miller, 2008; Schlein & Chan, 2010). The variety of experiences and perspectives among the participants in this study support prior research in this regard and emphasize the complex nature of factors impacting identity.

Considered by some to be Europe's leading Muslim intellectual and named one of *Time Magazine's* most important innovators for the 21st century, Tariq Ramadan (2004) addresses the problems Muslim students' encounter regarding their identity and proposes an integrationist strategy for tackling them. Ramadan posits that rather than being totally isolated in artificial private school environments, students need to have the opportunity to mix with others and view themselves as part of the society in which they live. According to Ramadan, there is no better way to learn to negotiate relationships and situations while maintaining one's values than to work side by side with diverse people in different settings. He stresses the importance of Muslims reframing their position in American society. Although they are a minority group and viewed as a subculture by many, Muslims should not think of themselves as 'others'. To accomplish this, they must learn to develop a sense of self-confidence and of self-efficacy. He recommends they must transcend having a "minority consciousness" (p. 107), one that insulates itself from and feels marginalized by society.

On the contrary, several of the participants in Abukar's (2014) study related that during certain stages of their identity development, it was critically important to insulate themselves from their non-Muslim peers and the dominant popular culture. Although these students chose a separation strategy, it was not due to a "minority consciousness" as Ramadan (2004) suggested but rather it was because of their "God consciousness" (Taqwa). Their narratives indicated that contrary to Ramadan's advice, while they were in the process of questioning and struggling with issues of belonging and identity, it helped to maintain friendships exclusively with those having similar beliefs, values, and/or mindsets. This is because, as one participant put it, "...Human

nature is to want to fit in and adapt and you don't want to be the outcast; you want to fit in. So of course when you try to fit in... you become like a sheep and you go with the flock".

Recommendations for Practical Implementation

It is the collective job of parents, teachers, and administrators to help students embrace the notion that ...“each of us is a part of learning a culture, transmitting a culture, and generating a culture in the multiple facets of our daily lives” (Wink, 2011 p. 62). Muslim students who are successful at this will not need to assimilate; they will be comfortable integrating and positively contributing to the society in which they live while maintaining a salient Islamic identity. However, to facilitate the development of students who possess a strong and salient Muslim identity, Islamic school leaders and teachers can and must do more than “... run the schools according to their cultures and traditions, with less knowledge about the Islamic educational philosophy or the context of the United States” (Elbih, 2012). Transformative leadership is needed to educate both the hearts and minds of Muslim American youth and address the identity crisis many are facing.

School principals and governing Board members must re-examine and re-prioritize the vision, mission, and values of Islamic schools. Now, more so than ever, it is time for leaders to give serious and critical attention to the adaptive work that is needed to support the development and preservation of a balanced and socially conscious identity in Muslim American youth. For example, Islamic school students are rarely given the opportunity to become involved in decision-making processes such as their public school counterparts are, through participation in the School Site Council, Governance Team, or Associated Student Body activities. Islamic school leaders would be well advised to consider developing policies and opportunities for student leadership that open channels for communication and include student voices in decision making processes.

Private Islamic schools can be a viable means for fostering a strong and healthy Islamic identity in Muslim American students, if they indeed provide a healthy foundation upon which the youth can build (Merry, 2007). Such was found to be the case with the Islamic school attended by the participants in this study. They all attributed factors in the Islamic school environment, such as the Islamic Studies curriculum, the nurturing teachers, and/or the social relationships as being key supports to the development of their identity. Most participants felt that they were well prepared for the public schools that they attend upon graduating, having adapted to the school's rigorous and challenging academic standards. The comprehensive and rigorous instruction they received provided students with a strong foundation for honors and advanced placement coursework. Furthermore, the Islamic school students were encouraged to recognize that although they are different, as citizens they have the right and the responsibility to contribute their unique perspectives, values, and beliefs to the fabric of America life.

Like it or not, Muslim American students in the 21st century think, feel, and act differently than their parents and teachers. Although the strategy of separatism as a means of

sheltering children from moral decline and opposing worldviews may be effective during certain stages of identity development, students who are “digital natives” living in America cannot be kept in an isolated bubble devoid of opportunities to interact with individuals or ideas within the larger society. The most salient implication is that there is an urgent need for public and religious schools to coexist as parallel systems that compliment one another. Cooperation, respect, interaction, and collaboration between public and religious schools are highly advisable. Ideally, it would provide mutual opportunities for students’ and staff’s growth and learning.

One such example of collaboration involves training middle school students in Islamic schools to give presentations about Islam and Muslims to students from local public and private schools in their community. 8th grade students at the Islamic School in Abukar’s (2014) study annually give presentations and dialogue with students from neighboring schools who are studying Islam as part of their History/Social Sciences curriculum. The Islamic Networks Group (www.ing.org) has resources available to affiliates that could aid with these efforts. Also, coordinating joint community service projects between schools (public, parochial, and Islamic) is a means of expanding multicultural proficiency for all of the staff and students involved.

Practical Suggestions for Educating Hearts and Minds. Undoubtedly, academic excellence is the hallmark of many private schools. However, Islamic schools must equally address this hadith and equip students accordingly: “...*There lies within the body a piece of flesh. If it is sound, the whole body is sound; and if it is corrupted, the whole body is corrupted. Verily this piece is the heart*” [Bukhari & Muslim]. Consider the following recommendations:

Build Students’ Self-Esteem. Counteract the impact of Islamophobia by implementing a Character Education program that connects common universal values with Islamic values (such as justice, fairness, compassion, perseverance, etc.). Encourage these traits to help Muslim students appreciate and internalize the beauty of Islam in spite of what the media portrays.

Islamize knowledge in all content areas. Both the Core and Islamic Studies curriculum should be integrated to reflect an Islamic worldview. Avoid compartmentalizing subjects.

Make Islam Relevant to Here and Now. In addition to Islamic History, teach students about current issues and events as well as contemporary accomplishments of Muslims.

Ensure all subjects are equally engaging to students. Principles of Islamic Pedagogy provides a detailed framework for engaging the hearts and minds of Muslim students (Ajem, R. & Memon, N., 2012)

Focus on the Foundations of Islamic Identity. Integrate and assess students’ understanding and application of Islamic principles into daily, weekly, and yearly lesson plans in all subjects. Recommended principles include: Tawhid –the Oneness of Allah, His names and attributes; Tathakur – Remembrance of Allah; Tassawuf – Reflection on Allah; Tawakkul –

Dependence Upon Allah; Taqwa – Fear of Allah; Tahwal - Transformation through action; and Tazkiyyah – Purification of the heart.

Practical Suggestions for Islamic School Teachers. The Muslim American students in Abukar's (2104) study related that they benefitted tremendously from the knowledge of Islam they gained, from the social network of friends they had, and from the nurturing environment they experienced in the Islamic school. Repeatedly they discussed the impact that their teachers had on their understanding of Islam. For several of the participants, this was the cause of their identity developing from being a 'cultural Muslim' with an ascribed identity, to being a 'practicing Muslim' who chose Islam as their Deen.

However, several participants felt there should be more opportunities for students in Islamic schools to interact with the larger society. They made reference to "being in a bubble" while attending an Islamic school. They appreciated that on the one hand, 'the bubble' provided a nurturing environment in which they were sheltered from the life styles of their public school peers that are inconsistent with Islamic teachings. On the other hand, they felt unprepared to answer the kinds of questions and comments that such peers often pose. They recommended that Islamic School teachers have more discussions, guest speakers, and assignments that are relevant to real-world problems and situations that occur in American public schools and society. They also suggested that teachers provide more opportunities for them to interact with non-Muslim peers through structured joint community service projects and interschool visits. The following collective recommendations are from the Muslim Youth (Abukar, 2014; Appendix D):

Help students to see what this Deen is really asking us to do. It's "just pure submission to the will of Allah and never putting our own will above the will of Allah.

Understand the pressures students are under. Teachers need to try to understand American culture. "It's very essential to know what kind of society that these kids live in and what kind of stuff they're actually going through"... "Maybe things were different at your time and when you... grew up overseas...and being Muslim was the norm".

Remember that it's hard being a Muslim student in America. Students would like for teachers to know that growing up as a practicing Muslim American student is difficult enough without teachers also being hard on them. "It's hard, when we're in this world that sees Muslims as bad; it's not like we can just blend in with the crowd. Especially Muslim girls who wear scarves and religious clothing that make us noticeable. It's hard but - we're trying...I've seen a lot of times when teachers will see their former students from the Islamic school on the weekends and they're totally different. And they'll be so mad at them and they'll yell at them, 'What are you doing? Look how you're dressed! I thought you were Muslim?!... look how you were in Islamic school...Why are you like this now?'

Be firm and yet at the same time not harsh in your approach. When it comes to educating students about what is right and wrong and giving advice or correcting them, teachers have to

first try to understand and get a feel for their personalities. This is more likely to influence students to actually change what is wrong in their behavior to what is better or right. “Sometimes, teachers and principals might think, ‘Okay, fine this is a religious value that needs to be inculcated and I’m going to do whatever it takes to get it inculcated but sometimes that could be more hurtful than it is calming and inviting’. Both the advice and the person that you’re giving it to, need to be understood correctly”.

أَدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided. (Sahih International, Surat al-Nahl 16: 125)

Be open to listening to students and avoid being judgmental. Don’t be their parent; try to be their friend and guide them. You should be there when they need you. They should feel comfortable coming to you when they need help...”...“I think the teachers [in Islamic school] were really good at saying ‘you are going to face certain things once you leave school. You are going to face certain things within society and just try and be strong and don’t do it’. What they didn’t address is the problem many youth face... ‘Well, what if you do, do it? Who do I turn to if that does happen and what do I do then? You know, if I do go through that struggle, who do I turn to? Maybe I would be embarrassed to tell them and so [I advise teachers] just to kind of have a more open mind that students are struggling with so many different aspects and be there to give advice and maybe not judge them”.

Never give up on your students. “Sometimes the worst ones, the most troubling ones, are the ones that prosper and become the leaders in society. As a teacher, just know that students, they’re living in America and, yes, you guys are teaching them about Islam, they’re in an Islamic setting but when they go home, when they go out with their friends, they’re not always in that setting. Some students are in confusion. Just be patient with your students...”

The most important thing is for teachers to support *all* the youth that they’re teaching and not let anyone of them down...Just be patient with the children and always be reinforcing to them and always affirm to them that they’re good Muslims. That’s it. Just never give up on any person. You don’t want a child to feel like you gave up on them.

Challenge students to be reflective. In Islamic school, I do wish the teachers tried to challenge the kids to start thinking about why they are Muslim. For a lot of people nowadays, Islam’s just almost a culture; the things we do are just going through the motions - it’s robotic, you know, you don’t think about it too much. So, I wish teachers would challenge their kids a little more to think about why they’re doing certain things, because they need to realize that at

some point they're not going to be teaching this kid...He needs to learn the skills to reason, access credible sources, and think critically in order to come up with the answers himself.

Teach students how to preserve their Muslim identity. Teachers in Islamic school always prepared us for things they read about in books, such as drinking alcohol or doing drugs but, those are not the main struggle for a lot of kids. That comes later after they've lost their Muslim identity. I think they need to focus on *how* to preserve the Muslim identity in a public school setting. For example, if I were a teacher in Islamic school, I would tell them, "Find other Muslims on campus." A lot of people didn't ... they weren't told that or maybe they didn't care and they didn't network with other Muslims on campus and all of them, [went on] their own separate paths.

Lead by example. "I've been in schools where teachers, even they didn't practice necessarily what they preached. It's pretty obvious. You see them in school and they're one way and then you see them outside, they're different. Definitely leading by example I think is the number one thing that you can do because there are people that I respect to this day through my Islamic school experience and then there are people that I don't respect as much".

"It takes Muslim teachers with a very strong personality...not just in speech but also in action...to touch kids in this society"



Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason? (Sahih International, Surat al-Baqarah 2:44)

Maintain relationships with your former students. Even after students have graduated, many want and need to retain the bond with their former teachers. "Whenever they come across us, [they should] be like a second mother; check on us just to make sure that we're basically on a good path academically and also religiously".

Realize the impact that you have on your students. Alhamdulillah, I don't think I would be the man that I am today if I was never exposed to Islamic school. That whole concept of loving Islam and serving [Allah through] Islam was born and a seed was planted in me at Islamic school. Just the way that they [the teachers] touch people, subhan'Allah, you never know what impact it can have...I *wish* that they could understand the impact that they have.

Repeatedly, the youth in this study discussed how difficult it is to hold on to their Deen when surrounded by temptation, distractions, and dangerous diversions from the Straight Path. They all requested that parents, teachers, and leaders recognize this fact, not be so hard on them, and don't ever give up on them. As one participant aptly pointed out, "It's a jungle out there"! We must understand the internal and external struggles that Muslim students experience, assist

them in developing a pure heart, and equip them with a healthy sense of belonging and identity as well as strong academic skills. Failure to do so could cause Muslim youth psychological and spiritual trauma – trauma brought on by either denouncing their Islamic identity altogether, by becoming ‘social chameleons’ (Goleman, 1985), or by adopting religious extremism.

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A Journey of Exploration in Standards-Based Arabic Thematic Units

Iman Hashem

Abstract

Examine model standards-based instructional units that were created under a QFI curriculum grant. Model units include everything teachers need to use in their classrooms. Participants will explore backward-design, and will analyze sample lessons and identify how to lead students to accomplish the end-of-unit integrated performance assessment. These lessons demonstrate grammar and literacy skills. The units are designed as first thematic units for kindergarten /first graders and middle/high school.

About the Author

Iman Hashem is Director of Arabic Language Programs at Occidental College Foreign Language, and teaches at Cal State-Long Beach. With her broad range of expertise in Arabic for K-12, she consults for major educational institutions in California, and she participated in the delivery of the Advanced Development of Language Proficiency Program at the Language Acquisition Resource Center, designing a certificate program for teachers of Arabic and Arabic speakers at California State University- Fullerton. Mrs. Hashem has been directing, designing and conducting STARTALK workshops for the last five years and has been a member on the STARTALK education advisory team since its inception.

(This paper could not be included due to the fact it was not received before the printing deadline.)

LangCred: Language Credentialing Made Easy

Mayeen Farooqui and Munir Shaikh

Abstract

In February 2015, CLASSRoad will launch LangCred.com, a website displaying US routes to language teacher certification. Teachers can create an account, participate in discussions, and identify requirements for state certification. Project Director Mayeen Farooqui will present LangCred and demonstrate the search function as a prospective Arabic language teacher.

About the Authors

Mayeen Farooqui has a B.A. in Political Science from UCLA, and an M.A. in Education from UC Davis. She is an expert teacher trainer and education consultant with over 7 years of experience. She has taught among and supervised excellent teachers in both K-12 public and private schools, and is pursuing doctoral studies in education. She is an experienced researcher and skilled teacher trainer.

Munir Shaikh M.A. is the Director of Academic Affairs at Bayan Claremont, a graduate institution educating American Muslim scholars and leaders. He has nearly 25 years of experience in education and administration. He serves as the Executive Director of the Institute on Religion and Civic Values, an organization providing textbook reviews, teacher training, and consulting on curriculum development

LangCred: Language Credentialing Made Easy

US K-12 “foreign” hereafter correctly referred to as “world” language teachers, increasingly seek certification, however obtaining accurate information about procedures and requirements on most state websites is not only complex, but also distinctive across states. Noriko Ishihara (2010) posits that unlike non-native speaking world language teachers, native speaking world language teachers (the majority) are new to the US and may have difficulty navigating through the unfamiliar institutional discourse of the American education system. Many such teachers rely on informal networks for clarification, or independently piece together the steps needed depending on their individual circumstances. Information is limited, or several layers deep in existing online sources.

Teacher certification is a central issue connected to adequate teacher supply. The National Foreign Language Center (NFLC) at the University of Maryland’s 2010 white paper, *The Teachers We Need: Transforming World Language Education in the United States*, suggests teacher supply impinges directly on the availability and quality of world language education, yet, “categories of certificates and licenses vary widely from state to state and are difficult to

navigate, align, and compare. These non-standardized categories and requirements create confusion and a lack of portability from state to state. Prospective teachers may have difficulty obtaining accurate information about requirements...” (p. 15). As of 2014, the NFLC estimated that 41% of language teachers in the US are currently interested in obtaining certification.

In the Spring of 2014, CLASSRoad, a non-profit education/technology initiative and leader in online professional development for world language teachers, obtained the STARTALK Infrastructure Building Initiative Grant to develop LangCred.org, a first-of-its-kind interactive resource website displaying world language teacher certification routes from 50 states, districts and territories. CLASSRoad has provided numerous STARTALK summer teacher programs to hundreds of language professionals, and enthusiastically sought to help address the credentialing challenges faced by US K-12 world language teachers.

The CLASSRoad research team traveled to conferences, colleges, and public and private schools, consulting with numerous K-12 world language teachers, administrators and personnel. Feedback revealed a dominant theme: although state agency websites are informative, they lack explicit, “step-by-step” instructions, and the complex language and layout can be “intimidating.” Additional comments from world language teachers and administrators include:

- I don’t understand all the regulations.
- English is fine with me but [I] need to have simple [,] direct steps on how to apply...
- This will be so helpful to teacher candidates, but also to school districts needing to figure out how to get their candidates moving through the process based on their current education and experience.
- A resource website would be a treasure house of useful information as well as a travel guide on the path to language teaching.

Arabic Language Teacher Credentialing

CLASSRoad surveyed over 100 K-16 Arabic language professionals in the US regarding Arabic language teacher credentialing. Results confirmed the need for a resource on world language teacher certification. Approximately 80% of teachers were working in private, mostly religious, schools. Regarding credentialing, 13% of respondents held general US teaching credentials, and 17% held a US Arabic language teaching credential. Approximately 19% held Arabic teaching credentials from outside the US and expressed interest in degree equivalency. Of the respondents, only 9% were enrolled in a traditional or alternative TEP issuing an Arabic language teaching credential. Common challenges cited by Arabic language teachers were Arabic program access, availability, and cost. Many indicated that employing agencies such as private and religious schools do not require certification and provide little incentive and, or support toward certification.

Arabic language teachers and other teachers of the Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs)¹ greatly benefit from a resource like LangCred that simplifies complex state procedures for certification.

On LangCred.org Arabic language teachers can search, save and compare potential credential routes, and discuss critical issues on the LangCred Community forum.

The California Example

California (CA) credential issuance is based entirely on an applicant's academic and professional background, and private school experience is valued. To obtain the initial, traditional, five-year Preliminary Single Subject Teaching Credential, main requirements include a bachelor's degree (or equivalent), passing scores on a basic skills (English, Math) exam, (CBEST, CSU Exams) and subject matter exam, (CSET: {Content Language}), and completion of a state-approved TEP for formal training, including a clinical, or student teaching component. Exam scores, Grade Point Average (GPA), and letters of recommendation determine admission into many TEPs. Internship options exist for district employees. Upon completion of a TEP, the program sponsor must apply directly to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) for the credential. Employment is not required.

Private School Teachers

Prospective teachers with three or more years of private school teaching experience in an accredited private school, may qualify for the Preliminary or subsequent, Clear Single Subject Teaching Credential. Teachers may apply directly to the CCTC, granted they meet the following requirements: background check, basic skills, subject matter, US Constitution, reading, technology, First Aid, CPR, and English Language Learner (ELL) authorization.

To obtain the alternative, Sojourn Certificated Employee Credential, requirements include the following: one year of employment as a language teacher in a CA public school prior to applying, at least 90 units of college coursework (transcript evaluation required), a district administered Basic Skills exam², and Subject Matter exam³. One must also obtain confirmation from the employing school district that they are biliterate-bilingual. The Sojourn is renewable every two years and consistent employment under the Sojourn leads to a Preliminary Single Subject Teaching Credential.

An induction period or program is required for all teachers holding Preliminary Single Subject Teaching Credentials who seek the subsequent Clear Single Subject Credential. The CCTC does

¹ All languages except English, French, German, and Spanish,

² A one-year non-renewable credential is offered to those who have not yet completed the Basic Skills exam.

³ Teachers educated outside the US can request a waiver of subject matter requirements if the language of instruction in their college outside the US was in the content language they desire to teach.

make exceptions and an applicant's academic and professional background is evaluated carefully. Both the aforementioned traditional and alternative credentials guarantee the individual a credential to teach a world language in California public schools.

LangCred.org

Upon completion of research into traditional and alternative routes in California, Michigan and Illinois, CLASSRoad identified a series of steps for language teacher certification: Step 1: Possess a minimum academic background of a bachelor's degree, Step 2: Fulfill general and content language pedagogy requirements via exams, courses, experience, and/or degree evaluation, and Step 3: Apply to the state for certification as an individual, via a traditional or alternative TEP, or through an employing agency.

CLASSRoad's team designed a relational database to enable standardization of state-specific data. After standardizing collection of unique procedures and multiple credential routes in each state, and obtaining expert feedback from world language professionals, we developed the website, LangCred.org, launched in February of 2015.

Each state credential route on LangCred.org details the following:

1. State Agency Contact Information, Credential Identification
2. Minimum Academic Background Requirements
3. Pedagogy and Content Language Requirements
4. Oral Language Proficiency and English Language Proficiency Requirements
5. Background Check, First Aid, Transcript Evaluation Requirements
6. Application Procedures, Fees
7. Renewal Procedures, Fees
8. Unique State Requirements

LangCred.org, is a first-of-its-kind interactive resource website for world language teacher certification. Teachers can search for routes from the 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the US Virgin Islands. After making a user account teachers can search, save and compare credential routes, upload documents, and participate in the LangCred Community forum. A rich resource section with a glossary of terminology and articles related to world language teacher certification is available on the site.

Recognizing that world language teachers with degrees from outside the US must obtain transcript evaluations to determine if they are eligible to pursue certification, CLASSRoad is developing a detailed list of state approved transcript evaluation agencies to be available soon. CLASSRoad hope's to conquer roadblocks to world language teacher certification by developing much needed resources and simplified information for language teachers.

Conclusion

LangCred is the first site to ever deploy such a plethora of information on world language teacher certification in one location. While particularly exciting for teachers of Arabic, the website has been of tremendous value to all world language teachers, program administrators, and personnel. Individual language teachers should no longer feel alone hitting roadblocks on their path to certification.

The work presented here has profound research value for future studies of language teacher certification and preparation, and we are confident it will play an important role in alleviating the problem of the dearth of highly qualified language teachers.

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Let Us Play in the Arabic Classroom

Naji Abduljaber

Abstract

This presentation aims at engaging students in the Arabic classroom and keeping them on task by using various games that meet the needs of all students who complain that Arabic is difficult and dry. Students from K-2nd graders, 3rd-5th graders and 6-8th graders will learn and achieve their goals while they are having fun at the same time.

About the Authors

Dr. Naji Abduljaber earned his Ph.D in Arabic Linguistics and Masters in Teaching Arabic from the U of Michigan at Ann Arbor. He also has degrees from the University of Jordan, worked at Birzeit University, and recently earned his Leadership certification from Eastern Michigan University.

Dr. Abduljaber is Principal of Bridge Academy, serving grades PreK-8 with 750 students.

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Making Learning Fun Again

Kamran Qadri and Yasmeeen Qadri

Abstract

This interactive workshop will focus on making learning fun again. Students are often turned off from school because instruction is presented in traditional methodology, which is primarily teacher centered rather than student centered. The session will focus on implementing simple and cost effective ideas that will develop the love of learning for the students.

About the Authors

Dr. Kamran Qadri currently teaches Introduction to the Teaching Profession and Technology for Educators at Valencia College's Winter Park Campus. He holds professional teaching licenses and Educational Leadership Certification in the states of Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina. Dr. Kamran has a Bachelor degree in Science Education, and a Master degree and Doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Central Florida.

Dr. Yasmeeen Qadri is a tenured professor of Education at Valencia College in Orlando, FL. She holds double M.A. degrees in Social Sciences and Child Psychology, and a Doctorate in Curriculum & Instruction. As Founder of the first Islamic school in Central Florida, she has over two decades of experience in K-12 schools and numerous global awards. The Dr. P. Phillips Foundation Chair in Education for the Physically Challenged Award will take her to Turkey.

Making Learning Fun Again

Introduction

A sign of effective learning taking place is the active engagement and direct involvement of the student in the learning process. Often missing from the lectures is the opportunity for hands-on experiences, critical analysis, feedback and improvement. Therefore, the latest trends in educational research confirm that the lecture methodology of delivering instruction results in the least learning gains, and in doing so provides for a compelling argument for educators to revisit how they teach their students (Felder and Brent, 2003).

An integral part of learning is to provide students with the opportunity to develop and work on certain skills while in the presence of their teachers. This student centered approach presents the students with the opportunity to showcase their mastery of the subject matter and for the teachers to provide direct feedback to their students. In a teacher centered model, not only can the students miss out on this opportunity, but compounding this missed opportunity is that time allotted for instruction during an average school day without taking into account time for class

changes, lunch, and prayers further limits the access to active learning

Role of Active Learning

Active learning can be an effective way to implement the student centered approach where the students are engaged in discussions that help them derive answers to complex problems, work in class on a short presentation that utilizes visuals such as thinking maps, or brainstorm ideas at both the individual and collective levels to solve complex problems. It can also be an integral component for learning gains to take place as certain concepts that can be difficult to grasp can be reinforced by pairing students of varying abilities; through the collaborative efforts and teaching the concept to a peer, it can be both understood and reinforced (McManus, 2003).

Active learning does not mean that teachers need to completely abandon lectures; rather, it works to provide a balance between both the teacher centered and student centered approach. So how can teachers make learning fun? Janelle Cox in her article, *5 Ways to Make Learning Fun Again*, writes that teachers can take the following simple steps to put the love of learning back into the classrooms: Incorporate technology, follow up lessons with a fun activity, allow students to conduct experiments, make review time fun, and go on a field trip (Cox, n.d.).

As educators embark on the journey of making learning fun again, the paper will expand on the ideas presented by Cox and introduce additional strategies that will enhance the student's learning experience. These ideas are not just limited to the core content areas, but can be modified and used with other subjects including Arabic, Quran, and Islamic Studies.

Strategies to Make Learning Fun Again

Technology

As technology continues to advance and becomes more accessible, it can be a wonderful tool that is capable of making learning interactive and fun. Everyday technology items such as smart phones and tablets can be incorporated into the classrooms with very little to no expense. While there is the possibility of technical issues and the necessity to set guidelines and policies, the numerous amounts of programs and applications that can serve a diverse student body cannot be overlooked. The following three applications are currently available for free, with premium options available as well, and are bound to make learning fun for the classroom.

- Prezi (www.prezi.com) is a web-based presentation program which is similar to PowerPoint. However, it provides the students with greater flexibility as it is cloud based allowing the presenter to create, modify, and present from anywhere, enables Windows based platform presentations to operate without an Internet connection, stores all the presentations in one place regardless of where they were created, and is not dependent on the speed of the Internet connection (Prezi, 2015).
- Digital story books can help bring the student's creativity and imagination to life. A simple, yet powerful program that can be used for digital story telling is Little Bird Tales

(www.littlebirdtales.com). In this program, students are able to type, draw, import images, and provide a narrative using their recorded voices. This easy and fun storytelling tool provides for an interactive experience that promotes a passion for reading, writing, self-expression and creative technology (Little Bird Tales, 2015).

- Timelines can be an essential component for a history class. In order to make the activity interactive and fun, students can utilize the digital timeline website called Dipity (www.dipity.com). Through this site the students are equipped with the necessary tools to bring history to life; they can create, share, and collaborate using this interactive and engaging application that also enables the user to integrate various forms of media including video, audio, images, text, links, and social media (Dipity, 2011).

Follow-up with a Fun Activity

A follow-up activity provides closure to the lesson and gives the teacher the opportunity to formatively assess their students. Additionally, certain topics presented may not be of interest to all of the students no matter how much effort and time the instructor dedicated towards planning for it; following this up with a review that requires the students to sit at their desks answering questions on worksheets can compound their lack of interest. The activities provided below are interactive and will help in making learning fun again.

- Teachers can make learning enjoyable by simply adding an active learning component. A popular activity that requires minimal effort is four corners. In this activity, teachers designate the four corners in their classrooms with a letter to indicate a multiple choice response. They can then pose a question to the class and have the students move to the corner they think has the right answer; when the correct answer is identified, those that are at the wrong corner can sit down until there is either one student remaining or the review is complete with no more questions to answer.
- Another tool that can be utilized in making the follow-up activities fun are the dry-erase boards. The same review questions used for the four corners activity can be utilized with students working individually or in groups. The teacher can make use of the projector to display the questions and students can write down the answer choice and show it to the instructor. The student or group with the most correct answers to the review questions can get a reward at the end of the class.
- This follow-up activity only requires index cards as part of its supplies. In advance the teacher can write down review questions on one card and the answer on another. The students are then timed and given the opportunity to move around the classroom and try to match the question with the answer; as they find their partner who has the answer to the question, they are to take a seat next to them. Once all students are seated, each paired student can read the question and their partner provide the answer.

Allowing Students to Conduct Experiments

Experiments can provide the bridge between the theoretical and practical knowledge; they are

also great in encouraging active learning, can help breakdown complex concepts, and work to maintain student attentiveness and a focus on learning. Experiments can also help develop critical thinking skills and can channel the students in taking a more proactive role in assessing the responsibility of their own learning. The following examples of experiments are simple, cost effective, and can easily be completed within one to two class periods.

- 1 The concept of independent vs. dependent variables can be reinforced by using yardsticks and a marble. Students can adjust height of the yardsticks to see the distance the marble travels. They can also calculate the average distance the marble travels and plot their findings on a graph.
- 2 Another activity that can reinforce independent and dependent variables requires a rubber band and a ruler. Students stretch the rubber bands in increments utilizing the measurements on the ruler and then release the rubber band to see the distance it travels. Their findings can be plotted on a graph and questions related to the activity can be answered.
- 3 Stations can be created for simple activities such as testing the hypothesis regarding whether or not air has mass by using materials such as balloons and a digital scale or whether an item is a magnet or magnetic material using magnets and various items within the classroom.

Make Review Time Fun

Reviewing for a lesson or an exam can be cumbersome; however, it does not have to be this way. The following 3 activities will show how reviewing can be interactive and fun.

- 1 With 70% of input to the human brain being visual, creating 3-dimensional interactive study organizers called foldables can help introduce students to new vocabulary, ideas, and concepts. It can also serve as a note taking tool to help compartmentalize information, utilized as a study guide, and can function as an alternative form of assessment all within a tactile learning environment that encourages creativity (Zike, n.d.). Foldables are part of an active learning environment, are student-centered, and have been proven to enhance student achievement. They can also help reach a diverse student population, effectively be applicable across the curriculum and can be integrated within different subjects.
- 2 Simplistic board games such as BINGO can be adapted to a variety of different subject areas. Nasco (www.enasco.com) provides games for both math and science. A brief description as to how the game works is as follows: The play cards are given to each student along with the markers; in order to ensure the longevity of the game pieces, the play cards can be laminated. A designated caller asks questions to the class. If students know the answer, they will place the marker on top of their answer on the play card. If they are successful in having their markers placed on the five consecutive squares in a row, either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally they can say BINGO. The caller then checks the answers as the player reads off their five marked spaces. If the answers are correct, the player is the winner; if any one of the answers is incorrect, then the markers within the row must be removed.

- 3 Topics such as blood type compatibility can be difficult to understand. However, through making review time fun by incorporating engaging ideas, the concepts can be simplified and easier to comprehend. Explaining the concept of blood types and transfusions can be done with clear cups, eye droppers, water, and food coloring. Students can utilize the solutions that they have created and see if there is a color change when mixed into other types; a change in color means that the blood types are not compatible. The complete activity can be accessed by visiting <http://www2.mbusd.org/staff/pware/labs/BloodTypeLab.pdf>. While textbook readings and classroom lectures can introduce the topic, it is interactive activities such as this that will make reviewing time fun.

Field Trips

Field trips are a great way to make learning fun again and can help reinforce the content. They also allow students to connect what they are learning in their classes with the outside world (Cox, n.d.) While students can go off campus for a field trip, there are also opportunities for virtual field trips and field trips that can take place at the school. Below are examples of all three types of field trips.

- X) Theme parks such as Six Flags host educational events such as the Physics Day. On these designated days, the parks have special timings and offer discounted tickets for schools to visit. Students who participate on these days are provided with informational sessions and workshops to teach them about topics such as the physics of roller coasters. This helps bring science to life.
- Y) For the budget conscious teacher or due to the lack of time, students can take a fieldtrip outside of the classroom without ever leaving it. Virtual field trips are easily accessible, cost effective, can be tailored to all grade levels and range from simple photo tours of museums to more detailed ones that offer both video and audio components to make the visit more interactive (Steele-Carlin, 2014).
- Z) If it is a challenge to get students out of the school on a field trip to visit the museum, there are opportunities to bring the museum to school. Museums in cities such as Boston offer exhibits such as the portable planetarium and exhibits which introduce students to the intricacies of dinosaurs at a fraction of the cost that it would take to plan an off campus field trip (Social Studies for Kids, 2010).

Conclusion

Educators have an important responsibility of reaching all students; this can be accomplished with greater ease by making learning fun. Students who are engaged in their learning will grasp the knowledge better, have less discipline problems, and will make learning a pleasant experience for all parties involved. Transforming from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered requires time, dedication, creativity, and reflection. However, it can result in immeasurable educational benefits in the areas of both personal and intellectual gratification, and instructor-student interactions (McManus, 2003).

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Making Your Work, Work: Classroom & Behavior Management through Daily 5

Kiara Abdullah

Abstract

Ever see pictures or videos of Daily 5/centers in action and think, "I wish this could work in my classroom"? Well, the good news is, it can work in your classroom, and even better, it can work well! This session focuses on how to set-up your classroom and introduce centers to support small group and differentiated instruction. It's also jam-packed with tips and hacks on how to avoid common center pitfalls and how to organize your classroom.

About the Author

Kiara Abdullah is a current Teach For America corps member & bilingual third grade teacher proudly serving in Dallas, Texas. In her first years teaching she was awarded one of Dallas Independent School District's "New Teacher of the Year" awards for her innovative teaching strategies, strong classroom culture, and invested student and parent participation. She continues to drive her students towards academic success in hopes of ending educational inequity for all.

Making Your Work, Work: Classroom & Behavior Management through Daily 5

Statement of the problem

Acclaimed author Howard Seeman defines behavior management and discipline problems as "the number-one deterrent to our educational process." He offers theories for why attempts at solving classroom discipline problems have failed and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of existing literature on the subject. Perhaps his most beneficial advice to teachers struggling with classroom and behavior management is his description of how teachers, not students, respond when submerged in a behavior crisis.

Seeman expands on this idea by noting that when behavior issues arise teachers first think: "*What is the solution?*" as opposed to asking, "*What caused the problem?*" This – the process of being solution oriented as opposed to being problem preventative- is what Seeman argues is the underlying cause of behavior and discipline issues in the classroom.

| PREVENTION | RESPONDING |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Personality ⇒ Instructional wisdom ⇒ Assessment wisdom ⇒ Curriculum wisdom ⇒ Classroom culture ⇒ System discipline procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Low key responses ⇒ Squaring off ⇒ Choices ⇒ Implied Choice ⇒ Power struggles ⇒ Informal Chats ⇒ Formal Chats |

Patricia Kyle, PhD, of the University of Idaho & Larry Rogien, PhD, of Boise State University agree with Seeman stating that, “classroom management requires an orchestration of effective teaching, proactive preventive strategies, practical corrective strategies, and positive supportive techniques.” Further, the professors describe preventative strategies as, “the glue that holds the classroom management plan together;” making the case that planning and designing the class ahead of time will eliminate problems and lead to long-term success.

Kyle and Rogien, argue that a combination of proactivity, student accountability, student choice, and classroom learning environment are the essential elements to creating a classroom founded on long-term success and student investment.

In short, several experts on classroom and behavior management agree that in order to attain student academic success the teacher must first build a classroom learning system centered on student choice and teacher preventive strategies.

Proposed solution

While there are several options in behavior management, few methods incorporate the aforementioned problem preventative strategies while also establishing a strong sense of community and student accountability quite like the Daily 5.

The Daily 5, established by experienced teachers Joan Moser and Gail Boushey, is a comprehensive literacy structure that allows for differentiation and consistency in the classroom. Gail and Joan, actual sisters, struggled for years to find a method of classroom and behavior management that was a replicable and reliable way to teach children how to be independent lifelong learners, starting in their earliest years. "We want what every teacher wants: effective teaching methods that can adapt as things change, and to lead our children to a lifetime of learning," the sisters urged. So, after over a decade of trial and error, the Daily 5 (or Café) was born.

Today, the Daily Five runs as an integrated literacy instruction and classroom management system for use in reading and writing workshops. Its primary focus is on developing student independence and critical thinking in the elementary grade levels. As a student driven management structure designed to fully engage students in reading and writing, the Daily Five returns ownership of learning and opportunity to students over the teacher.

As the name suggests, students are responsible for completing five daily tasks in reading and writing. These five daily tasks are: Read to Self, Read to Someone, Work on Writing, Word Work (vocabulary/phonics), and Listen to Reading. In each of these tasks students are expected to engage in independent, differentiated work, designed to building fluency, stamina, and comprehension in reading and writing.

A major strength in the Daily Five is the component which focuses on student-leadership and independence or liberation from the teacher as a manager. This allows students the teacher to move from simply managing students to instilling principled life-long habits including but, not limited to:

- Trusting students
- Providing choice
- Designing a nurturing community
- Creating a sense of urgency
- Building stamina

As discussed earlier both in the works of Howard Seeman and Patricia Kyle and Larry Rogien, the only way to build a sustainable classroom learning environment with minimum disruptions is to build a community of student-led learners invested in building life-long habits versus gaining grade level content. While there are numerous methods and techniques that can be used to achieve this community, arguably the most popular and time tested method remains the Daily Five. Through this system teachers learn to release control of knowledge and allow students the space and opportunity within which to learn and explore how to best master content.

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One Size Doesn't Fit All - Differentiated Instruction

Zahra Williams

Abstract

As administrators and teachers, do we look at our students as the same? In many schools, students are thrown into a classroom with little teaching diversity in instruction, and with a focus of learning the same way, at the same time, and with little attention to the individual academic needs and differences these children have. Included in this presentation will be case studies targeted to differentiating instruction in a classroom, and how teachers and administration can help serve their students better. After all, it is no longer a one-size-fits-all world.

Meet the Author

Mrs. Zahra Williams is one of the founders of Al-Amal School in Fridley, MN. Educated at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota and the University of Illinois at Chicago, she holds a Masters in Educational Leadership and Administration, and an undergraduate degree in child studies, education, and psychology. Mrs. Williams joined Al-Amal School, again as principal, in 2010, and also serves on the Board of the Council of Islamic Schools of North America (CISNA).

(This paper could not be included due to the fact it was not received before the printing deadline.)

Planning Curriculum for Global Minded Students

Freda Shamma

Abstract

In order to include global education in our Islamic schools, we need to consider three areas. First, is to determine what ‘global education’ or ‘global minded students’ means to the community thinking to make a curriculum about it. Second, we need to look at available worldview-based curriculum, which can serve as our framework. This includes both the secular worldview which most of the non-Islamic subjects in our schools are based on, and an Islamic worldview curriculum, which is in very short supply. Finally, what are the necessary steps to developing a curriculum focusing on global minded students?

About the Author

Dr. Freda Shamma has an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Cincinnati. She helped develop curricula for Islamic schools in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, and South Africa. Dr. Shamma is the Director of Curriculum Development at FADEL (Foundation for the Advancement and Development of Education and Learning) in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is also the prime reviewer of ‘Books Suitable for Islamic School Libraries’, available at the Islamic Schools League of America website, www.theisla.org.

Planning Curriculum for Global Minded Students

In order to include global education in our Islamic schools we need to consider three areas. First is to determine what ‘global education’ or ‘global minded students’ means to the community thinking to make a curriculum about it. Second, we need to look at available worldview-based curriculum which can serve as our framework. This includes both the secular worldview which most of the non-Islamic subjects in our schools are based on, and an Islamic worldview curriculum, which is in very short supply. Finally what are the necessary steps to developing a curriculum focusing on global minded students?

I. Before we can start work on a global education curriculum, we must first agree on a definition of what it is. Some schools see it simply as adding more cultural diversity of stories in the language arts class. Others add to that a foreign language and a trip to a country where the population speaks that language. Some focus on an internal change in the students, more empathic towards other cultures and ethnicities, and a desire to help these others with their problems. Others stress a study of world issues like global warming, poverty, human rights. One of the interesting aspects of this ‘global education’ interest is that everyone writing about it on

the internet is from a western oriented culture. It is wise of us to remember that this is not a global view, but a western view of the globe. One article, for example, praised the International Baccalaureate curriculum as having a global orientation. For sure it is better than our nationalistic curricula, but as one Japanese observer mentioned, it is still written from a western perspective which does not necessarily match with Asian thinking.

For our purpose today, let's look at some ideas from the different areas of the western world. These views may or may not reflect a national agreement on what constitutes global education.

A. www.unesco.org includes *A Rational for Global Education*, by David Hicks in which he states:

- “Global education is the term used internationally to describe a form of education which:
- enables people to understand the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world
- increases understanding of the economic, cultural, political and environmental influences which shape our lives
- develops the skills, attitudes and values which enable people to work together to bring about change and take control of their own lives
- works towards achieving a more just and sustainable world in which power and resources are more equitably shared.”

Notice that he claims to speak on behalf of most nations.

B. www.globaleducation.edu.au in Australia defines it as:

- “The heart of global education is enabling young people to participate in shaping a better, shared future for the world.
- Global education emphasizes the unity and interdependence of human society, developing a sense of self and appreciation of cultural diversity, affirmation of social justice and human rights, as well as building peace and actions for a sustainable future in different times and places.
- Global education promotes positive values and assists students to take responsibility for their actions and to see themselves as global citizens who can contribute to a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.
- Australian global educators place particular emphasis on developing relationships with our neighbors in the Asia–Pacific and Indian Ocean regions.
- Ideas different from the ‘international’ definitions of Mr. Hicks are given in bold.

C. Canadians have posted quite a number of topics concerning global education, including:

(1) www.global-ed.org which breaks down global education into 4 broad strands:

- a. Development Education – looks at International Development programs and the conditions in developing countries, examines Canada’s international role, and encourages us to address global issues and look critically at the notion of ‘development’

- b. Environmental Education – fosters an awareness of and concern for environmental issues that aid in developing new patterns of behavior that will promote environmental responsibility.
- c. Human Rights Education – teaches about civil, political, economic and social rights, with the goal of promoting social justice for all.
- d. Peace Education – studies war and disarmament, and encourages movement towards peace both globally and in the classroom.
- e. Two elements they add as important are: celebrating cultural diversity in the classroom, the school, Canada and the world, and
- f. Providing opportunities to care for self, for others at home and abroad and for the global physical environment.

(2) Another Canadian entry is www.etfo.ca by Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario who think in terms of what to teach within the classroom. Their Core Learning Goals are:

- a. Global themes, structure and systems
- b. Global issues and managing and deliberating conflicts
- c. Privilege, power, equity and social justice
- d. Informed and purposeful action
- e. Critical civic literacy capacities
- f. Diverse beliefs, values and worldviews
- g. Rights and responsibilities within the global context
- h. Identity and membership through a lens of world mindedness.

Here is their sample framework for teaching global issues in the Intermediate and Junior levels.
FOCUS – ‘Children’s Rights’ (the Intermediate level)

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| September/October | A Child’s Right to Food |
| November/December | A Child’s Right to Water: Examine global water facts. |
| January/February | A Child’s Right to Shelter: a child refugee’s experience. |
| March/April | A Child’s Right to Education: |
| May/June | A Child’s Right to Play: Various ‘Right to Play’ activities. |

Junior Level

| | |
|-----------|---|
| September | Child Soldiers |
| October | Poverty/Famine |
| November | HIV/ AIDS |
| December | Human Rights (focus on ‘refugees’) |
| January | The Holocaust |

| | |
|----------|--|
| February | Black History/Civil Rights |
| March | Fair Trade |
| April | Animal Testing (Locally and globally) |
| May | Environmental Protection/Global Warming |
| June | Child Labor/Sweatshops |

It is not necessary to spend much time evaluating all these ideas at the moment. This is just to show how different are people's ideas about a 'global' approach to education. However, when you start to develop such a curriculum, it is vital for everyone to agree on what constitutes the global education they want to include.

D. Americans also have a lot to say about dealing with the globe. Willard Kniep, *Next Steps in Global Education: A Handbook for Curriculum Development* has some other thoughts on global education. He does not talk about knowledge about world affairs, "since the facts they learn today may very well be false by the time they grow up" Instead Kniep writes about "a durable feel for:

- * Basic human needs
- * Global change
- * 'National security'
- * The way world economy works
- * Cooperation and consent building.
- * Cultural Diversity and Political Pluralism
- * The Nature of Leadership "since whatever the issue, the USA is bound to be elected to the global executive committee that must deal with it."

E. Other American sites suggest topics like Trade, Technology, Culture, Migration, Human rights (civil, political, economic and social rights with the goal of promoting social justice for all); Energy, Education, Health, International Law, Interdependence, peace building and Peace and Justice, universal primary education, gender equality, empowerment of women, environmental sustainability, global partnership for development, and in the case of at least one US city, 'global education leading to desirable international trade.'

Many or most of this listing sounds good and important to have in a curriculum. There are quite a number of other sites that also have useful information.

The problem is, as far as I can tell, every one of these sites was developed solely by western educated people living in the west (which includes Australia as far as ideology goes). It is extremely difficult to truly understand how people with a different worldview think, so any

‘global education’ done by people with just one way of thinking is going to be less than ‘global’. Most Americans, for example, have trouble working in other parts of the world because the people seem ‘lazy’ or ‘inefficient’ because they don’t value time (time = money) as Americans do. There is no understanding that when people are more important than time, it will take longer to get things done so that everyone agrees with the proposal. When western thinking people attack the problem of famine, they rush in with what they can sell (i.e. insecticides and fertilizers) to improve production, even if the DDT will cause widespread cancer, or the gmo wheat which grows faster and more efficiently is however deficient in nutrients. When the west talks about improving the lives of women, it is usually in terms of educating them so they can go to work to earn money. When the west ‘helps’ educate others, it is either done by supplying the schools with western books or computers which bring western ideas, or they commission textbooks written in the vernacular language according to their western needs. America is very critical of the Afghani madrasas teaching violence to their students. During the time of the Russian occupation America funded and approved textbooks for Afghani schools which used ‘violence against invaders’ in every subject. In the math book for example, we see drawings of several different types of assault rifles next to the question, “How many rifles can you count in this picture.” Now that America is the invader we criticize the Afghanis for using these books! Is this how Muslims should improve peoples’ lives?

In review, there are many good ideas in the global education curriculum, but God consciousness is not the basis, so the results may not be exactly what our Islamic schools should be focused on.

II. Curricula are based on the worldview of the people making them. We can either use the western model which currently dominates most of our Islamic schools, or we can work to develop a model based on an Islamic worldview.

A. Using the western model seems much easier because it is already in our schools. Most of our teachers were educated in the western model so it is familiar. Except for Arabic and religious studies, all of our textbooks are written according to the western model. There are, however, three major problems using this model.

One is that it creates an unfortunate dichotomy where western values, like materialism, individualism and atheistic rationalism are taught in the secular classes while the religion class is trying to teach a God-conscious model.

The second problem is that all the textbooks are designed to be as nationalistic and individualistic as possible, quite the opposite to the aims of global education. How can you expect students to value and respect others when they ‘know’ from their social studies classes that it is only Europeans and Americans/Canadians who have influenced history, invented everything, are better at everything than anyone else. And further more we did it all on our own, benefiting nothing from the Almighty, and nothing from the people who lived before us or in different parts of the world. Remember we have the “World Series” baseball games every year, but only American teams are eligible to participate. And ‘World history’ in our social

studies/history classes is western history with only a small nod to nations economically like us, like Japan and Israel. The people involved in ‘global education’ see the need to enlarge the scope of history beyond the nation. However their idea of using a wider, chronological study still totally omits any Muslim contribution to the West or to the world. Whatever we can do to integrate global education will be only a small drop in the bucket, with small chance of changing any student’s mind.

There is a third handicap for Muslims in that this Euro-centric education carefully omits any good reference to Muslims, Islam and the Muslim world. The Muslim world receives the least attention in the history class where students study Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, then jump to the dark ages in Europe and then suddenly appear in the Renaissance ready to lead the world in everything intellectual and culturally ‘advanced’. Textbooks now include diversity in their stories of Hispanics, Asians and African (non-Muslim of course) but Muslims and Islam are not seen – at all – except of course when terrorism is the subject.

B. A curriculum based on an Islamic world view where all subjects are integrated in the system designed and created by Allah, and in which many of the ‘Global Education’ concepts are found, is a much wiser choice – but also much more difficult because this Islamic worldview curriculum for primary and secondary schools does not yet exist fully.

We will use parts of FADEL’s Integrated Islamic Curriculum (unpublished work, 1998) as our framework. This curriculum is a work in progress, but it may serve to illustrate how important aspects of ‘Global Education’ can be inserted into an Islamic based curriculum (rather than trying to fit Islamic ideas into a Euro-centric secular curriculum).

GOAL 1 or Mission Statement

The primary goal of an Islamic school, which must act as the underlying goal of every aspect of the school, is to develop committed, educated Muslims, persons for whom Islam is a complete way of life. These are people who love Allah and His prophets and willingly strive to worship Allah in the best manner, actively trying to fulfill their role as vicegerents on earth. In order to fulfill this obligation they must have a positive attitude, knowledge about the major concepts of Islam and the skill to apply these concepts.

One small phrase includes all of the beneficial goals of global education. Muslims “actively trying to fulfill their role as vicegerents on earth.” One of the major problems of trying to fit global education into the western system is figuring out how to convince western students that they should really care for others and for the environment. Muslims should have no such dilemma.

You can see from this goal that the people involved in writing this curriculum were most concerned about their children growing up in a non-Islamic environment. They have ignored, for the most part, the good aspects of global education that we are now considering. Therefore the goals would need to be modified or changed to suit the needs of those concerned with producing Muslims who will benefit all the world, not just

themselves and their Muslim community. We will only deal with the goals that directly connect to the goals of global education.

GOAL 3 is also directly related, or could be easily modified to include global education.

The third goal is to give each pupil an understanding and appreciation of the Islamic culture and the part his own culture contributes to it. Thus literature classes will contain not only English literature, but Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu and Malay literature as well. Art classes will prominently feature Islamic geometric and floral art as well as Arabic calligraphy.

HISTORY

The guiding principle of the Qur'anic view of history is *tawhid*, the unity of Allah, and the unity of all He created. Included in this principle is the fact that Allah created all of mankind, and He sent prophets to all of mankind. Therefore, we conclude that we must study the history of all mankind, from the Americas to Asia, from Australia to Siberia, and from Prophet Adam to the present time. The Qur'an tells us that Allah created us as tribes that we might get to know each other. Therefore we find that goodness and knowledge are found in all areas of the world. We also find that pursuit of wealth and power with the accompanying avoidance of ethics and morality leads to the downfall of civilizations, and that God-consciousness is a necessary attribute of real success in this world, and in the hereafter. Furthermore, we do not study just for our own sakes, but **learn in order to be of benefit to mankind.**

Language Arts:

Language should be used to express truth and advance the cause of good. Not only is language a tool to be taught, but it is also the means by which we understand ourselves. No language is value or cultural free. A major goal of our school is to provide both the best of western culture, which our children are part of and the best of Islamic and Muslim culture which is an even more important part of their cultural heritage.

Continuing the development of this Islamic worldview based curriculum, religion scholars from more than 30 countries worked on a list of concepts from the Qur'an that should be taught throughout all subjects, but stressed in the religion class. Blue highlights the common elements with 'Global Education' and red offers an example of a few ideas we might take from this program.

CONCEPTS

I. Quranic concepts, related to human endeavors:.

1. Unity - *tawheed*
2. Justice-*adl*
3. Responsibility - personal and collective - *kasb*
4. Cooperation -*ta'awun*
5. Tolerance - *ta'aruf*
6. Honesty-*sabr*

7. Loyalty-*wala'*
8. Leadership - *imamah*
9. Trust - *amanah*
10. Equity - *qist*
11. Preparation/planning - *i 'dad*
12. Reform - *islah*
13. Consultation - *shura*
14. Reciprocation - *wafa'*
15. Culture – *imran*
16. Rights - Quran gives at least 12, including the right to:
 - a. life
 - b. freedom of religion, belief, conscience and association
 - c. work, earn
 - d. own property
 - e. personal honor and dignity
 - f. protection against one's religion being reviled
 - g. privacy, including freedom from surveillance
 - h. offer advice, opinion and constructive criticism
 - i. participation in public affairs
 - j. equal treatment under the law without discrimination
 - k. justice
 - l. free provision by the state of the necessities of life to the disabled and deprived on any account

- II. Rights given by the Sunnah include the right to:
- a. free basic education
 - b. be provided with productive and remunerative work
 - c. such social and economic facilities as are necessary for the maintenance of human health, happiness and dignity
 - d. public health services

III. Other basic concepts and ideas to be included

1. Islam is a way of life - encompasses all aspects
2. Islam offers solutions to man's multidimensional problems.
 - a. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS TO FOOD, WATER, SHELTER, EDUCATION
 - b. PROBLEMS LIKE CHILD SOLDIERS, POVERTY AND FAMINE, HIV/AIDS, CIVIL RIGHTS, ANIMAL TESTING, CHILD LABOR/SWEATSHOPS, ETC.
3. The Islamic social order consists of three levels: collective, family, individual
4. God is owner of all resources

a. Interaction with the environment

1. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION/GLOBAL WARMING

As you can see, an Islamic based curriculum is already a global education. The people originally working on the FADEL curriculum were most concerned about the problems of Muslims in a non-Muslim environment. Educators focusing on global education will want to add or modify some of the goals listed here. Many of the individual ideas mentioned earlier are already part of a curriculum based on an Islamic world view. There are many good ideas in the 'Global Education' model that we can make use of to teach the Islamic principles, but we add them to our Islamic based curriculum, not vice versa. We start with the best model and make use of whatever aids us in teaching our goals and objectives. Why would we use a program like 'Global Education' which ignores the role of Allah, ignores the prevalence of nationalistic teaching already present in the secular system, and in general is based on the premise that the secular west has the only answer to the problems of the rest of the world. The advocates of 'Global Education' mainly want students to be familiar with some other cultures (that are not too different from western cultures) and learn a different language or two and visit a country (anywhere except in the Muslim world). Then they can discuss how to solve the world's problems in their classroom. What are otherwise excellent ideas (learn about different cultures, learn other languages) is quickly skewed into an undesirable aim if the basic principles are not based on God-consciousness.

III. Steps in developing a curriculum. *Next Steps in Global Education: A Handbook for Curriculum Development*, by Willard Kniep gives a standard guideline of how to write a curriculum, which is given in the Appendix. One of the most important points he makes is that writing a curriculum is not a one person job. Input must be received from all groups with an interest in using that curriculum. At the very least the committee should include representatives from the teachers, school administration, board of directors, parents, greater community (in our case the Muslim community which contributes students to the school), a curriculum developer, and experts in the various fields (history, English, etc.) which will be impacted. It is not the job of the curriculum developer to come up with the goals. He/she is there to organize what the committee comes up with, and later to help with the scope and sequence which is built on these goals. It is the job of the experts in the fields to make sure that adding units/approaches of global education enhances rather than dilutes what else needs to be taught in their subject field.

The major steps in developing a curriculum are:

- I. Mission statement
- II. Goals leading to the mission statement
- III. Program Priorities and Organizing
- IV. Objectives and Competencies
- V. Scope and Sequence

The appendixes attached provide more information about these steps as there is no time to go into detail here.

In conclusion, there are a number of useful ideas from ‘Global Education’ that we can use as we develop our teaching of Islamic concepts, and some good ideas on how to teach these concepts, and good internet aids. We welcome the attempt by western educators to combat the Euro-centric nationalistic set-up currently in western schools. Certainly Muslim students in public schools will be the beneficiaries of cultural diversity. However we must be careful to start with Islamic principles and refer to them often as we integrate ideas from non-religious sources into our curriculum for Islamic schools.

Social Studies within a Global Education

by Willard M. Kniep

Educating for citizenship — being fullyfranchised as a member of a political community— has been and remains a central mission of the entire curriculum in elementary and secondary schools. A global education extends that mission by enlarging the vision and meaning of citizenship to include the local community, the state, the nation and the global community.

This vision of citizenship is rooted in two realities that have become more and more apparent since the end of the Second World War. First, today as never before, all human beings live in a multiboundary world: not simply a world of nation-states, but one with a diversity of worldwide systems in which all people affect and are affected by others across the globe. Second, humanity is increasingly threatened by problems that cannot be solved by actions taken only at the national level. For a number of our most pressing environmental and social problems — contamination of the environment, warming of the atmosphere, world hunger, international terrorism, the nuclear threat — there will either be international solutions or no solutions at all .

Global education is anchored to a belief that there is a critical need in the U. S. for schools to better prepare young people for life in a world increasingly characterized by pluralism, interdependence and change. The most common approach to bringing global education into schools has been through infusion into the existing curricula rather than by restructuring, replacing or creating courses. That is changing as state legislatures and boards of education, recognizing the need for global/international dimensions in education, increasingly support curricular changes and appropriations for global education. This in turn has created a need for better descriptions of the substance of global education and for tools to assist in the process of curriculum development.

In the extended view of citizenship embodied in a global education, social studies continues with a specific mandate and special responsibility for providing citizenship education: to equip every student in American schools to live and participate fully and responsibly in all aspects of a global society.

In a global education, the goals of social studies will be derived from the requirements of citizenship in a democratic society that is one of the most dominant and powerful actors in today's interdependent world. Our nation is robust and energetic, and our culture influences — for better or worse — the entire world. Our dominance of the international economy and our high standard of living both depend on and affect peoples and nations in all parts of the earth. This extraordinary position, and the privileges and responsibilities that it implies for U.S. citizenship, must be reflected in our definition of the social studies.

The content of social studies is drawn from history, the social sciences, and, to some extent, from the humanities and natural sciences. But we must also acknowledge the contributions of other, sometimes new and often interdisciplinary, fields to what we know about the contemporary world fields like journalism, future studies, policy studies, development studies, and environmental studies. Furthermore, we should emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of social studies itself, since the future is likely to require more integrative thinking and interdisciplinary problem-solving, not less. In a global education, the content of social studies will serve to illuminate current national and international realities — diversity, interdependence, conflict, and change — in the context of history and the human and natural systems that involve us locally and globally.

The way we teach must reflect the experience and development of our learners. But even more important, if we are to achieve our citizenship goal, we must place our students actively in the center of the learning process. If our students are to think globally as they act locally, if they are to be actively at the center of their world,⁶ and if they are to be engaged with what we want them to learn,⁷ then social studies must be taught in ways that make learning active, interactive, hands-on, and engaging.

GOALS

Knowledge

The 1979 Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines envisioned three particular functions for the knowledge component of the curriculum: to provide a historical perspective, to help a person perceive patterns and systems, and as the foundation for social participation.⁸

Abilities

Among the most important goals of a global education is the development of abilities in identifying perspectives, seeing patterns, tracing linkages and cause and effect relationships, and expanding, the repertoire of choice in solving problems. Social studies obviously has a key role to play in the development of these abilities.

In forming our goals within this domain we would do well to differentiate between our students' capacities to do certain things by virtue of being human and their needs to acquire certain abilities and skills.

Valuing

In social studies, as in all subjects, values are embedded in the content we choose, in the teaching and learning processes we employ, and in the structure of social and physical environments. Our choices in these areas should be guided by our goals.

A primary goal of social studies should be for our students to develop perspectives, concerns, tendencies, and standards for their role as citizen of a democratic society in an interdependent world.

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The scope of any curriculum should not be limited by tradition or by familiar topics that have always been taught, even if in a new way. Rather, the determinants should be the purposes that we have set out for social studies, our best analysis of the current realities in which our students live, the requirements of citizenship in the

21st century, and an understanding of the basic nature and elements of those realities from the scholarship of history, social science, and other disciplines.

The scope of the social studies curriculum, then, should reflect the present and historical realities of a global society. As a way to bring some order to thinking about those realities I propose four essential elements of study in a global education which set the boundaries for the scope of the social studies curriculum.

The Study of Human Values — both universal values defining what it means to be human and diverse values derived from group membership and contributing to unique world views.

The Study of Global Systems — including the global economic, political, ecological and technological systems in which we live.

The Study of Global Issues And Problems including peace and security issues, national and international development issues, local and global environmental issues, and human rights issues.

The Study of Global History — focusing on the evolution of universal and diverse human values, the historical development of contemporary global systems, and the antecedent conditions and causes of today's global issues.

The sequence of a curriculum is the plan for organizing its scope. The plan should be developed according to principles consistent with the nature of the subject and reflecting the best of what we know about human development and learning.

Basic to a global education is the principle that the subject must retain its holistic character to ensure that students can capture the sense of interdependence characterizing the modern world. Furthermore, it should lead to broad and transferable conceptual understanding of patterns and relationships. And it must keep students at the center of their learning and their world.

These elements of structure translate into the three types of themes forming the framework for the thematic model. While there is overlap and interaction among the categories, the nature and focus of each category differ significantly.

Conceptual Themes for the Social Studies

1. **Interdependence:** The idea that we live in a world of systems in which the actors and components interact to make up a unified, functioning whole.

Related Concepts: causation, community, exchange, government, groups, interaction, systems.

2. **Change:** The idea that the process of movement from one state of being to another is a universal aspect of the planet and is an inevitable part of life and living.

Related Concepts: adaptation, cause and effect, development, evolution, growth, revolution, time.

3. **Culture:** The idea that people create social environments and systems comprised of unique beliefs, values, traditions, language, customs, technology, and institutions as a way of meeting basic human needs; shaped by their own physical environments and contact with other cultures.

4. **Scarcity:** The idea that an imbalance exists between relatively unlimited wants and limited available resources necessitating the creation of systems for deciding how resources are to be distributed.

Related Concepts: conflict, exploration, migration, opportunity cost, policy, resources, specialization.

5. **Conflict:** The idea that people and nations often have differing values and opposing goals resulting in disagreement, tensions, and sometimes violence necessitating skill in co-existence, negotiation, living with ambiguity and conflict resolution.

Related Concepts: authority, collaboration, competition, interests/positions, justice, power, rights.

Persistent Problem Themes

These themes embrace the global issues and problems characterizing the modern world. By engaging with persistent problems students can see the interdependent nature of problems and how a variety of actors, themselves included, can contribute to the problem itself or to its solutions. The study of persistent problems would be incomplete unless it contributes to an understanding of their historical antecedents and the ways in which problems, and their solutions, relate to cultural perspectives and human values.

It is possible to generate a lengthy list of specific persistent problems that plague us globally and locally. However, the vast majority of problems seem to fall into the following four categories.

- **Peace and Security** the arms race East-West relations terrorism colonialism democracy vs. tyranny
- **National/International Development** hunger and poverty overpopulation North-South relations appropriate technology international debt crisis
- **Environmental Problems** acid rain pollution of streams
- **Environmental Problems (continued)** nuclear waste disposal maintenance of fisheries
- **Human Rights** apartheid indigenous homelands political imprisonment religious persecution refugees

Persistent problems, by their very nature, permeate every level of existence—from global to national to local—with their symptoms and causes. Moreover, the solutions to persistent problems will come both through individual behaviors taken collectively and through policy decisions taken multilaterally. Because of this, themes in this category consistently provide opportunities for students to find their role as citizen and to develop their abilities for social participation in local versions of global problems or local efforts to alleviate global problem.

Suggested Readings:

Books:

Evans, M., Ingram, L, etc. *Teaching and Learning Practices associated with Global Citizenship Education..* 2009.

Griffen, Wiesner; Jennifer and Chris Maser. *Teaching Kids to Change the World: Lessons to Inspire Social Responsibility for Grade 6-12.*

Hicks, D. *Global Education, 2009.*

Knep, Willard. *Next Steps in Global Education: A handbook for curriculum development, 1987.*

Miller, John, *The Holistic Curriculum. Toronto, On., 1996.*

Standish, A. *Global Perspectives in the Geography Curriculum: Reviewing the Moral Case for Geography. 2009.*

Young, M. and Commings, E. *Global Citizenship: The handbook for primary teaching.* Cambridge, 2009.

Internet:

www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/gci Global Classroom Initiative.

www.curriculum.org/csc/resources/provincials.shtml

www.etfo.net Global Issues. Includes websites to help teach the Intermediate and Junior schedules mentioned in the presentation.

www.globaleducation.edu.au. An Australian look at global education.

www.globaled.org/guidelines “Global Education Checklist” by Fred Czarra.

www.imminentshift.com/active/activism.pdf “A Planning Checklist to Develop Global Awareness” by Sara Coumantarakis.

www.unesco.org includes an article: *A Rational for Global Education*, by David Hicks.

Sources for Multi-Cultural Literature for Islamic Schools:

www.theisla.org/page.php/ReadingList. Stories from many different cultures, including but not limited to stories of good Muslims and of good Christians in different countries as well as in North America. (the Islamic Schools League of America)

Conover, Sarah and Freda Crane. *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for children and parents*. Muslim stories from all over the Muslim world, including West Africa and China. Very popular with children pre-school to age 12.

Shamma, Freda. *Treasury of Muslim Literature: 750-1250 C.E.* 35 authors from the Abbasid period, writing in 17 different genre, including religious, historical, geographical, autobiographical, memoir, essays and what is usually included in the western term ‘literature.’ It is aimed at middle school students and can be used as a classroom text. Lesson plans are available at www.muslimlit.com.

For more information on the FADEL Curriculum and a complete list of its Islamic concepts, please go to www.muslimlit.com.

Sharing Is Caring: Arabic Teaching Material Sharing Session

Iman Hashem and Dr. Salah Ayari

Abstract

In this session, participants will have a chance to explore various teaching materials and activities proven to be very successful in teaching Arabic. Also, participants are encouraged to bring hard copies of their favorite resources to share at the workshop.

About the Authors

Iman Hashem is Director of Arabic Language Programs at Occidental College Foreign Language, and teaches at Cal State-Long Beach. With her broad range of expertise in Arabic for K-12, she consults for major educational institutions in California, and she participated in the delivery of the Advanced Development of Language Proficiency Program at the Language Acquisition Resource Center, designing a certificate program for teachers of Arabic and Arabic speakers at California State University- Fullerton. Mrs. Hashem has been directing, designing and conducting STARTALK workshops for the last five years and has been a member on the STARTALK education advisory team since its inception.

Dr. Salah Ayari is an Instructional Associate Professor of Arabic and Arabic Studies at Texas A&M University. He holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Minnesota and has taught Arabic for more than 20 years. He also serves as a consultant who provides mentoring, training and evaluation for teachers of Arabic.

(This paper could not be included due to the fact it was not received before the printing deadline.)

Strategies for Dealing with Resistance to Change in Islamic Schools

Mehtap Kandara

Abstract

Resistance to change is a major obstacle in Islamic schools just like any other organization. Most people can be moved toward supporting the change if given enough time and information. School leaders need to consider possible resistance from the key stakeholders and address them accordingly.

About the Author

Mehtap Kandara is the principal of Brighter Horizon School of Baton Rouge in Louisiana. She holds a B.S. in Computer Science and an M.S. in Business Administration from Louisiana State University. She is currently a PhD candidate in Public Policy from Southern University where she is working on her thesis on Dealing with Resistance to Change in Islamic Schools. Prior to becoming a principal, she served as an elected member of the Executive Committee for many years.

Strategies for Dealing with Resistance to Change in Islamic Schools

INTRODUCTION

The only thing that does not change is change itself and there is no simple recipe for it. However, if you are forced to make changes in your organizations due to internal or external reasons such as: national or state education policy, school culture, needs of students, or a new strategic plan for the school, then it means it is time for the status quo to change. One of the greatest challenges facing leaders of all types of organizations, be they for-profit, nonprofit or educational, is leading that change. You cannot improve the current status without changing how you do things. The intent of this article is not to review the theoretical background on organizational change or school change, in our case, but to give suggestions to help with the great challenge of the change process from a practitioner's perspective.

Resistance to change is a major obstacle for any organization, and Islamic schools are no exception. People respond to change in a variety of ways. Some embrace the innovations eagerly whereas others may choose to never accept the changes, or even work against them. However, most people can be moved toward supporting a change if given enough time and information. The school leaders who are responsible for improving the status quo of their schools need to expect possible resistance from the key stakeholders: board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Major resistance to change occurs when one is attempting to establish new policies and procedures in place of long-standing practices which have become deeply embedded in the culture of the school. When it comes to the issue of change, people will resist for two

primary reasons: either they don't see the value of the change, or they are not sure that the change will be a success (Williamson & Blackburn, 2010).

LEADING CHANGE

As a school leader, we are too familiar with the problems associated with the educational reforms of today. Some reforms are conceptually sound but poorly implemented, others should never have even been seriously considered. For example, block scheduling is in place but instruction is delivered in 45-minute segments. Accelerated Reader Program is initiated but some teachers are not following up with their students' progress. New technology is purchased but no technical training is provided. With the tremendous amount of time, effort, and resources that are being devoted to education reform, school leaders must develop the capacity to guide their schools in making deep, meaningful changes that result in higher student achievement that is sustainable (NASSP, 2009).

NASSP (2004) and NASSP (2006) provide a framework to help schools become more student-centered by personalizing programs, support services, and academic challenges for every student. These publications identified three core areas for improvement: (1) collaborative leadership and professional learning communities, (2) personalization of school environment, and (3) curriculum, instruction, and assessment. These two publications addressed the "what" of school change whereas NASSP (2009) addresses the "how" of school change. Through a focus on collaborative leadership, NASSP (2009) provides a process that school leadership teams can use to implement and sustain change. Leadership teams will work through the six steps listed below to ensure a fit for the context and culture of their schools and the communities they serve.

Process Circle for Guiding Change

At the core, all efforts to change our school must ultimately be focused on improved student performance. To be successful, the change process must be based on a shared vision, promoted by collaborative leadership, and supported by professional development. In NASSP (2009), they suggest using the following six steps for systematic school improvement.

Step 1. Gather and Analyze Data to Determine Priorities

Carefully examine all available data to determine priorities. To paint an accurate big-picture of the school, data must be gathered from a wide variety of sources and used to determine the areas of greatest need. After collecting data, look for patterns, growth/declines over time and correlations across subjects, etc. Let the data tell you what needs to be changed and prioritize the list.

Types of Data to Gather:

- a. *Demographic:* Ethnic population, poverty indicators, parents' education, housing, etc.
- b. *Academic:* State test scores, other testing data (ACT, SAT, etc), progress reports, transcripts, etc.
- c. *Diagnostic assessment:* Reading, writing, mathematics
- d. *Behavioral:* Attendance, suspensions, expulsions, interventions, etc.
- e. *Miscellaneous:* Satisfaction surveys (staff members, parents, students), exit interviews.

f. Student perception: Student shadowing, student forums, etc.

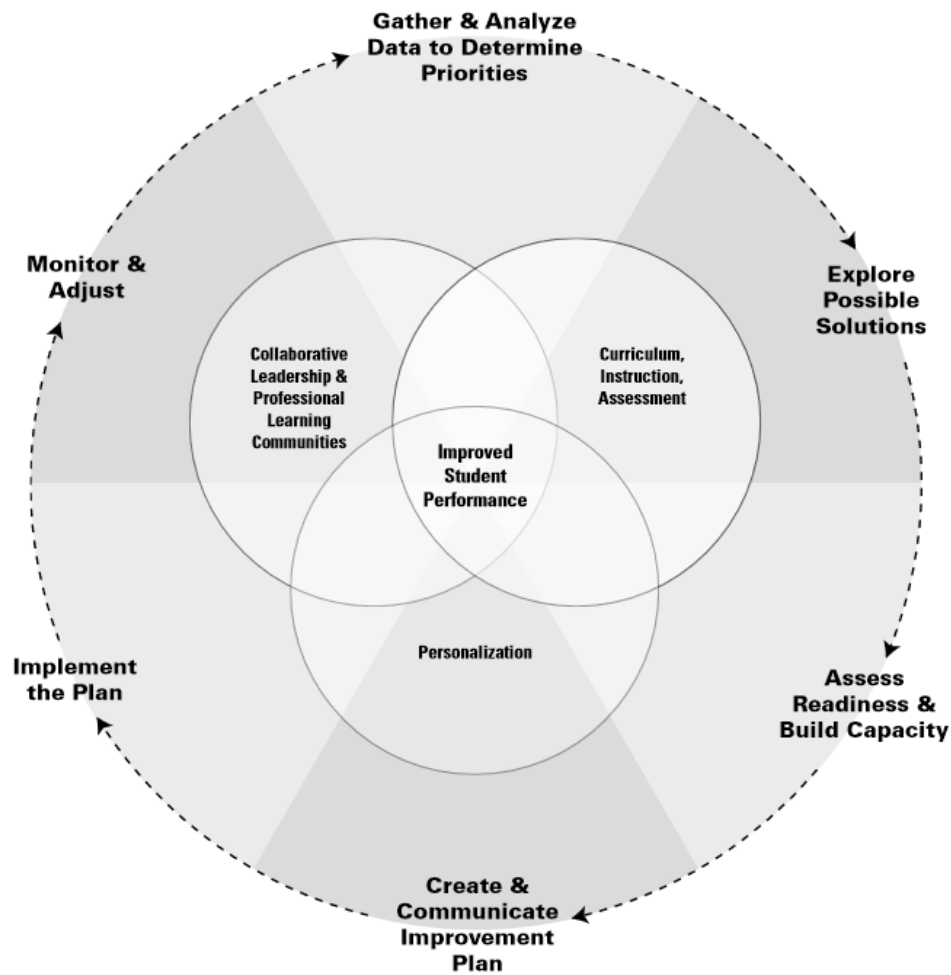


Figure 1. Process circle for guiding change (From NASSP, 2009)

Step 2. Explore Possible Solutions

From the priorities derived from analyzing the data, explore possible solutions that will deliver desired outcomes. Consider categories such as curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, equitable access to programs, academic support, and interventions as potential goal areas.

Step 3. Assess Readiness and Build Capacity

Determine what must be in place to successfully implement the needed changes. Assess staff needs, organizational structures, programs, curricula, and the like to determine the school's readiness and overall capacity to address the identified priorities. Build capacity to address these needs through professional development, reallocating resources, revising schedules, etc.

Step 4. Create and Communicate Improvement Plan

Based on stakeholder input and information gained from the previous steps, establish goals for an improvement plan. Incorporate those goals into all aspects of school planning and ensure clear communication with all involved parties. Stay away from vague or unrealistic goals. Make sure these goals are measurable. For example, instead of saying our goal is to have good ACT scores, say our goal is increase ACT scores in all subjects by at least 1 point.

Step 5. Implement the Plan

Carry out the improvement plan step by step.

Step 6. Monitor and Adjust

As the plan is being implemented, determine regular check points to monitor progress. Repeat surveys as appropriate. As additional data is collected and analyzed, make adjustments or refinements as needed. Be sure to share results and progress. You should be on the lookout to read the cues in your organization. The fundamental flaw in most innovators' strategies is that they focus on their innovations, on what they are trying to do - rather than on understanding how the larger culture, structures and norms will react to their efforts(Senge et al.,1999).

There are quite a few books in the market written from practitioner's point of view to help school leadership implement change within their school systems. “*Breaking Ranks II: Strategies for Leading High School Reform*” by NASSP, “*Breaking Ranks in the Middle: Strategies for Leading Middle Level Reform*” by NASSP, “*Breaking Ranks: A Field Guide for Leading Change*” by NASSP,” *Breaking Ranks: The Comprehensive Framework for School Improvement*”by NASSP, “*Leading Change in Your School: How to Conquer Myths, Build Commitment, and Get Results*”by Reeves, and “*Leading Change Step-by-Step*”by Spiro are among them.As their approaches might be different, the underlying concept is still the same. These readings will give you an idea on how other school leaders are dealing with change.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Although the school change is inevitable, we should accept the fact that a considerable number of staff, administrators, board members, parents, and students in fact simply do not want to hear anything about change, innovation, new forms of teaching, new forms of scheduling, testing and the like. Quite frequently they feel forced to take part in the change and improvement process. This doesn't come as a surprise; the culture and convictions of educational administrators and reformers and the culture and convictions of other stakeholders really are far apart (Terhart, 2013).

There is a good chance that resistance can be prevented if the process is matched to the readiness of the participants, and strategies are in place to engage key stakeholders. Nevertheless, resistance to change is likely to occur. It is important to realize that you may encounter resistance even from individuals who are members of groups you have determined to be supporters. Individuals who make up the group are likely to feel insecure, threatened, confused, or anxious.

You need to be able to recognize this reaction as it is occurring (Spiro, 2011). The good news is most people can be moved toward support given sufficient time and information.

People resist change for two primary reasons: they do not see the value of change, or they are not sure that they will be successful with the change. Some of the most frequent concerns involve changing long standing practices (Williamson & Blackburn, 2010). The easiest type of resistance to overcome is when someone is outspoken with his concerns or objections. At least you know what you are dealing with. Less obvious is someone who is silent about his objections. The most difficult kind of resistance comes from someone who appears to agree in public, but resists in action and works against the change initiative secretly. You have to be very observant of the staffs' behavior. Actions speak louder than words (Spiro, 2011).

OVERCOMING RESISTANCE

Overcoming resistance to change will become easier if there is a shared vision by the stakeholders. When working towards the implementation of a new vision, having a clear, concrete objective and explaining the goals to the stakeholders is one way to ease the pressure of overcoming resistance. If your change plan is clear, detailed, and effectively communicated, you will face less resistance (Spiro, 2011). Another strategy in dealing with resistance is to continually focus and refocus the conversation towards the shared vision. It is very easy to become distracted by personal agendas. Sometimes you will have to reframe the conversation in order to move beyond personal agendas and focus on the bigger picture. It is important to always keep your vision about change and about how to improve rigor in your school at the forefront of any conversation (Williamson & Blackburn, 2010).

Ultimately, it all starts and ends with each individual's personal vision for his or her school or classroom; commitment to make changes to ensure student improvement; willingness to take risks, support one another work collaboratively, and abandon long-standing practices that are not successful (Williamson & Blackburn, 2010).

SEESAW MODEL FOR CHANGE



Figure 2. Seesaw model for change

Collaboration and support of all stakeholders will define how much change you can actually accomplish. We will introduce a new model that we will call Seesaw Model for Change to illustrate the importance of collaboration and support of all stakeholders. This is not a mathematical model. It originated with intuition. We will use simple physics of a seesaw to explain the effect of resistance to change. Our assumption is that we have a well planned out change plan. The left side of the seesaw is where the load is and the right side of the seesaw is where the effort is. If you have all stakeholders' support, everyone will be giving their full effort to make the changes happen. Maximum change is possible when you have the full support of all the stakeholders; load only consists of planned change as illustrated in *Figure 2*.

Let's assume one of the stakeholders, for example one of the board members, is resisting change. Instead of being part of the effort, now he is part of the load. The implication is that you will be able to accomplish less change where you face resistance. In this case in order to balance the seesaw, the stakeholders that support the change will either put in more effort or decrease the load by scratching out some of the changes initially planned from the list as illustrated in *Figure 3*.



Figure 3. Seesaw model for change that shows the effect of board member resisting change

Commitment level of the stakeholders is also important. If they are only giving you partial support, instead of being at the right edge of the seesaw, they will be closer to the pivot, meaning they will have less effort. Consequently, less change will take place. *Figure 4* illustrates the effect of level of commitment and willingness to change. To maximize the effect of change plan, full support of all the stakeholders is needed.

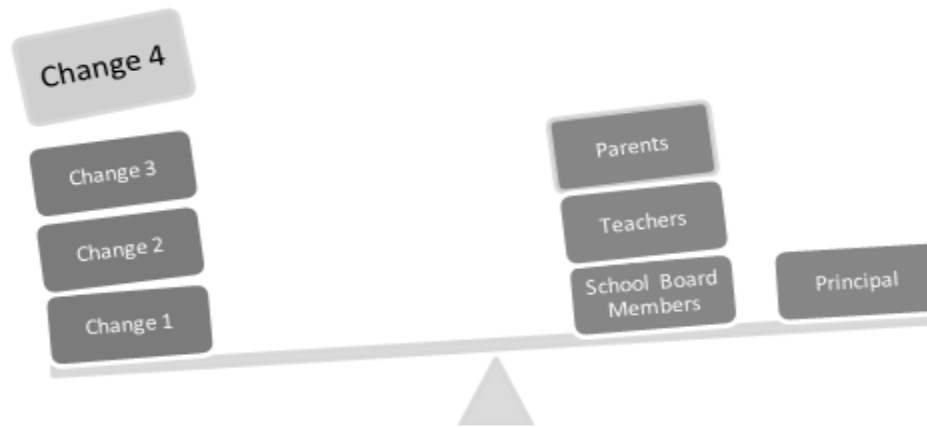


Figure 4. Seesaw model for change that shows the effect of level of commitment and willingness to change

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Organization culture is the culture that exists in an organization, something akin to a societal culture. It is composed of many intangible phenomena, such as values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, behavioral norms, artifacts, and patterns of behavior. It is the unseen and unobservable force that is always behind the organizational activities that can be seen and observed (Shafritz, Ott, & Jang, 2011). According to Kilmann et. al (1985), “Culture is to organization what personality is to the individual – a hidden, yet unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilization.”

Since the late 1980s, the literature on organizational change has had a dominant theme; lasting organizational reform requires changes in organizational culture. Organizational cultures that reflect unwanted values, such as hierarchy, rigidity, power based on authority and associations in closed networks, and reliance on rules restrict flexibility and can be formidable barriers to effecting lasting change. The most important outcome of any fundamental change process must be a change in the stakeholders' mindsets and beliefs about education. Without changes in the users' mindsets, no fundamental change is likely to succeed (Squire & Reigeluth, 2000). Organizational members even in the cases where they are willing to change the status quo are not willing to change their “old ways” that are no longer working. If the root of the problem is coming from the organizational culture, or the school culture in our case, successful and lasting change cannot be implemented.

Most Islamic schools have been established by immigrants who also brought their cultural values with them from their respective countries. As the Islamic schools matured, administrators began to see problems arising due to this traditional mentality. It is incumbent that one identifies the problems with the school culture and addresses these issues appropriately. Quite often, there is a lack of professionalism, accountability, and communication among the leadership that is partly due to this old-fashioned mentality. The problems are obvious to everyone yet no one is willing to deal with them right now. This being the case, immediate

school culture change is necessary, but it will cause a lot of resistance from the stakeholders who are accustomed to the way things have always been.

One must keep in mind that with any organization, there will be resistance to change. But if it is the culture of the organization one is attempting to change, one must realize the magnitude and nature of resistance that is coming from the different stakeholders. For example, if some school board members have been micromanaging a school for the last twenty years, they are not going to be willing to change overnight and stop interfering with the daily activities of the school administration. Likewise, if the parents are accustomed to settling issues by disregarding the teachers and going directly to the principal to complain, some of them will undoubtedly be unhappy about having to face the teachers about any matter in question. Keeping the scope of the issues in mind is key.

Changing school culture is the only road to significant and lasting school improvement. School culture is more powerful than any single individual in our schools. For better or worse, a school's culture is perpetuated to new members. Since culture is the sum of collective assumptions carried in our minds about every aspect of school life that shape how we behave and how we work with students and adults, honest and open conversation is the only way to disrupt assumptions and bring about change. Changing culture requires a change in beliefs and a willingness to rethink mental models and assumptions that underlie stuck behaviors. The goal in changing culture is to get people to work together more effectively. Examples of cultural changes are common set of beliefs; shared mission, vision, values, and goals; heightened expectations; and new ways of interacting.

Too often, when implementing improvement plans, schools neglect to focus on the importance of altering school culture. Change in school culture can allow improvements to take hold, flourish, and sustain over time. Transformations do not take place until the culture of the school permits it, and no long-term significant change can take place without creating a culture to sustain that change.

CHANGE LEADERSHIP

Change leadership is one of the greatest challenges for organizations, for-profit or nonprofit alike, including educational institutions around the world. Reaves (2009) believes "change leaders share a common commitment to the notion that ideas are more important than personalities. They challenge the popular leadership literature that elevates charisma over character, machismo over modesty." Furthermore, individual and small group actions, which formulate the essence of successful change, can be nurtured and sustained with effective coaching (Reeves, 2009). Transformational leadership is a style of change leadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the group. To lead from transformational viewpoint, a leader must follow these seven rules, guidelines, or covenants (Brower, 2006):

1. Always make decisions based on what is best for the institution as a whole.

2. All decisions must be made empirically, scientifically, factually, or objectively. Opinions, beliefs, gossips, "I think", "I feel", "I believe," and other subjective viewpoints have no place in transformational thinking.
3. The highest (umbrella) institution always takes precedence over the lower level institutions (those institutions directly under the supervision of the higher institution).
4. Always support the leaders of institutions at all levels all the time unless a decision is immoral, illegal, unethical, or objectively incompetent.
5. Occasionally, there are state and/or federal laws and guidelines that confound transformational thinking. In these instances, leaders are compelled to follow these laws and guidelines as mandated.
6. Transformational leadership theory and decision making must be taught to everyone within the institution so that everyone understands how decisions are made.
7. Leaders of institutions must be the final decision makers, not committees, not a consensus of opinion, and not teams of people.

Furthermore transformational leaders should follow the following criteria in making decisions based on what is in the best interest of their institution (Brower, 2006):

1. Decisions must be absolutely objective with regard to what is best for the institution; Personal beliefs, opinions, and feelings must not factor into decision making.
2. Personal gain on the part of the leaders must never be a factor in decision making. Not only is this unethical, but it may very well be illegal.
3. Do not let individuals, whether they be parents, students, teachers, or patrons, influence the mission of deciding what is best for the institution one leads. Everyone tends to act on personal interest. Leaders of institutions cannot have this luxury and must understand how others try to unduly influence sound decision making.
4. Individuals may be harmed by certain decisions, but that is an expected phenomenon when making tough decisions.
5. The leadership must understand that there are confounding laws in place that create problems for leadership. These laws and guidelines may seem unfair or untenable, but must be followed.
6. Do not allow additions, bad habits, unethical temptations, illegal activities, or immoral actions destroy one's leadership. These maladies of character will destroy proper decision making and, ultimately, one's leadership.

Jim Collins' Level 5 Leadership

Jim Collins and his research team set out to answer the question "Can a good company become a great company and, if so, how?" during a five-year research study and Collins wrote *"Good to Great"* to report their findings. They have developed all the concepts in Collins's book by making empirical deductions directly from the data. They built a theory from the ground up, derived directly from the evidence. Collins thinks of transformation as a process of buildup followed by breakthrough, broken into three broad stages: disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action. Within each of the three stages, there are two key concepts. Wrapped around the entire framework is a concept called flywheel, which captures the gestalt of the entire process of going from good to great (Collins, 2001).

Collins calls the good-to-great leadership style Level 5 Leadership. Level 5 leaders build enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will; self-effacing, quiet, reserved—even shy. They are ambitious, but ambitious first and foremost for the organization, and not themselves, while displaying a compelling modesty. They do not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk. Level 5 leaders look out the window to attribute success to factors other than themselves. When things go poorly, however, they look in the mirror and blame themselves, taking full responsibility. They are not the celebrity type leaders; they do not like the spotlight. Level 5 leaders first get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats and then they figure out what to do. The right people for the right position are the most important asset of an organization. You can get more information about Level 5 leadership from Collins' book.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We are constantly changing as individuals, organizations, and communities. Needless to say, we have to work diligently to better ourselves, our organizations, and our communities. Change begins at the micro level. As change leaders, we need to be ambitious, determined, and motivated stakeholders to be part of the change process. Resistance to change is inevitable, but through clear communication and focusing on the shared vision, effects of resistance can be minimized. Always remind yourself: *"Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves."* Rad:11

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Systemizing School Functions for Sustainability

Fawzia Tung

Abstract

School management can be pro-active, not reactive. An efficient system for all functions is a sign that a school is out of the start-up phase and established as a smoothly functioning institution. School functions are divided into the following: a) school governance, b) school administration and management, c) curriculum and instruction, d) school culture, PR and marketing. Does your school have a system in place for each aspect? This workshop will attempt to help you assess your present system, and start you on the road to develop an individualized system that will optimize all functions in your school.

About the Author

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Systemizing School Functions for Sustainability

1) Introduction

The following message has been making the rounds for at least ten years by now, first as an email and now as an audio clip. Although it is definitely a hoax, not a true story, it however survived this long because it resonated with many of us, school administrators.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7aiO6S0UNA>

Hello! You have reached the automated answering service of your school. In order to assist you in connecting to the right staff member, please listen to all the options before making a selection:

- To lie about why your child is absent - Press 1
- To make excuses for why your child did not do his work - Press 2
- To complain about what we do - Press 3
- To swear at staff members - Press 4
- To ask why you didn't get information that was already enclosed in your newsletter and several flyers mailed to you - Press 5
- If you want us to raise your child - Press 6
- If you want to reach out and touch, slap or hit someone - Press 7

To request another teacher, for the third time this year - Press 8
 To complain about bus transportation - Press 9
 To complain about school lunches - Press 0

If you realize this is the real world and your child must be accountable and responsible for his/her own behaviour, class work, homework and that it's not the teachers' fault for your child's lack of effort: Hang up and have a nice day!

If you want to hear this message in another language, move to a country that speaks it.

If you think you need this phone message in your school, then you are in need of better systems!

2) Basic Principles

Before we start discussing case studies, we should agree on some basic principles.

- a) Sustainability, School-centered (not self-centered):
 - When we evaluate various functions and design a system for it, we should keep in mind that the ultimate goal is sustainability. It is not “how to keep myself in this position forever.” For instance, you may want to train your Assistant Principal (get one if you don’t have one yet) in all major functions in case you drop dead (or quit, which is more likely). If you think that you will pave the way for your AP pushing you out the door, then you are only self-serving, not planning for school sustainability.
- b) Time- and energy-saving:
 - If you bring in a system that uses up more time, more energy or more money, then it is obvious you are better off without that system.
- c) Stakeholder Buy-in:
 - Never think you can institute a new system if no one is supporting it. It will never get implemented properly, and you will never get a chance to prove it works better.
 - Spend the time to lobby and convince all stakeholders of its viability.
- d) Nothing is set in stone:
 - If the new system is aimed at improved efficiency, then there should be no problem about getting rid of it if it really does not achieve its stated goal. However, the system must be given a chance to be properly implemented before evaluation.
- e) But the “School Constitution” should be on paper and saved electronically.
 - Eventually, just as all court cases must refer back to the Constitution, every issue in the school should be referred back to the School Manual/Handbook.

Basically, there are two thick books your school should have, and where all answers should lie:

1. The **School Handbook**: also called Parents’ Manual/ Student Handbook/ etc
 This is the equivalent of the Constitution or Book of Laws for the school. It should have a section for parents; another for teachers; and another for students. These could also be separate manuals.

2. The **Operations Manual**: This is the “how to” bible. Every major function in the school should be listed here and all staff should be trained according to it.

Today, these do not have to be paper books. They could be online documents, or even folders with separate sub-folders and documents, especially in the case of the Operations Manual.

You can always start with a generic template and add and subtract with time to grow these into your very own tailor-made manuals. Annual fine tuning will always be needed, as schools are living and growing entities, and nothing will ever be set in stone.

3) **School growth milestones**

Schools, as all institutions or organizations do, grow through a series of phases. We can simplify these phases into:

1. Start-up phase
 2. Transition phase
 3. Mature phase
- a. The Start-up Phase: can be said to begin when a group of people starts brainstorming, through the opening of the school, until the school starts functioning. It may last up to three years after the start of school operations. All stakeholders are very enthusiastic and tend to donate heartily of their time, energy and money.
 - b. The Transition Phase: can last from one to ten years, depending on how fast the school starts systemizing its functions. Original stakeholders lose steam and complaints start to surface. This is the vital time when the school administration must survey how well the school system is functioning, diagnose its weaknesses and gaps, and design effective solutions.
 - c. The Mature Phase: can be said to start when complaints decrease in frequency, intensity and number. Stakeholders are less passionate but more compliant towards the school system. Administration is able to predict patterns.

No phase is clear-cut. The school might be well systemized in many functions but not in one or a few areas. A sudden change in policy might throw off the balance of systems.

4) **Types of functions**

1. School governance
2. School administration
3. Curriculum and instruction
4. School culture, PR and marketing

As a school leader, how much time should you spend systemizing each area? This really depends on the stage your school's growth is in. A rough guide could be something like the following chart:

| | S. governance | S. administration | Curric./ Instruxn | Culture/PR/Markt |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Start-up phase | ++++ | +++ | ++++ | ++ |
| Transition phase | ++ | ++++ | +++ | ++++ |
| Mature phase | + | ++ | ++ | +++ |

Fig. 1: How much systemization work goes into each stage of a school's growth

1. School governance

We can see that a lot of work goes into systemizing school governance at the planning and start-up stage. If done well, the amount of work fine tuning it should decrease as the school matures.

My goal is not to discuss these functions in depth. However, I will just touch a little upon School Governance since it is extremely vital yet often unclear or hazily defined.

School governance should be well-systemized from the very beginning, before the school even opens. The crux of the governance system should be the mission and vision. Is every stakeholder familiar with it? Or at least with a shortened version of it, such as a motto?

It may seem unimportant to many inexperienced stakeholders. However, it is precisely this that can cause a school to fall on its face and self-destroy. Is your school claiming to cater to all Muslim children in the community? Is it promising a high-school degree to all, whether openly or indirectly? Is your school promising a high-quality education? In which case, have you defined what that means in concrete measurable terms? Is your school exam-oriented or education-oriented? Can the two views co-exist? Is the Islamic identity and practice of the school equally, less or more important than the academic one?

Once the board is unanimous on these basic premises, it can then design the flow of authority. There is no perfect design, only one that fits your individual school and particular community. Here are a few basic designs:

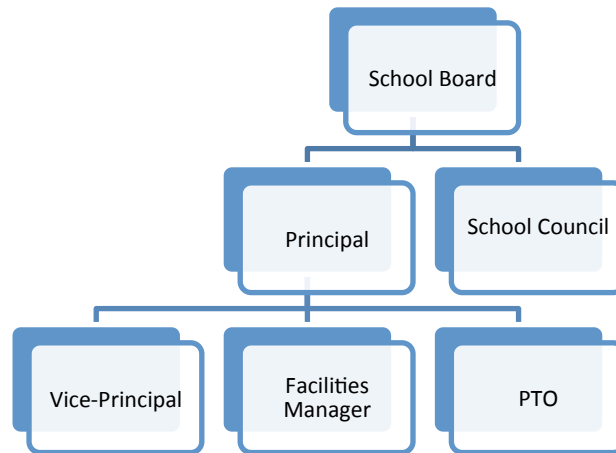


Fig. 2 -- Type A, flow of authority

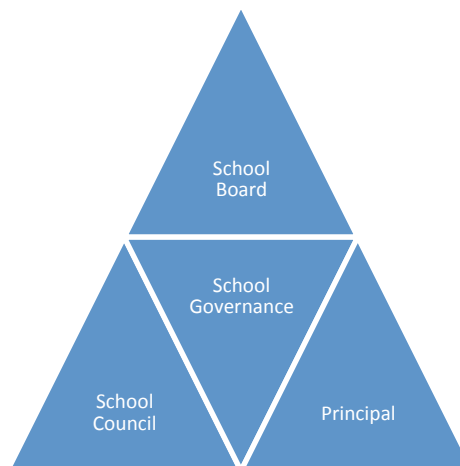


Fig. 3 – Type B, Flow of authority patterned after the checks-and-balances model of the US government

Basically, definitions, roles, rights and duties must all be clearly defined. All meetings must proceed according to Roger's rules of conduct and have recorded minutes. If your school is a non-profit, then all minutes should be public and accessible to all stakeholders.

If your school does not have a school council, and your board consists mainly of people not related directly to the school, then you should consider having one. A school board consists of stakeholder representatives in a representational proportion, meets regularly and can be likened to Congress. The Principal, as head of administration, is similar to the President as head of the executive branch. The school board of directors is somehow like the Judicial branch.

If your board has never been trained, make sure they do take some kind of board training and help you avoid major governance problems.

All parts of the charts should be given a copy of the chart and a narrative description so they are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

2. School administration

There is certainly a lot of work in setting up forms and processes in the start-up phases. But even more work needs to be done during the transition phase, if the school is to move swiftly into a mature stage.

There are really two roles the administration needs to play in terms of systemization. One is as a central pivot in the continuous process of school improvement while the other is in streamlining its own functions through systemization.

3. Curriculum and Instruction

A lot of work needs to be done in C&I in the planning and start-up stages. If the school has a well-defined profile and mission, it is easy to derive then its teaching philosophy and therefrom, its curriculum and teaching methodology.

If you find that you have a reverse pyramid in C&I systemization, it probably means the school has not defined its education philosophy well and therefore is stumbling around groping.

4. Culture, PR, Marketing

This area is often given the least thought and thereby the least work in terms of systemization. Marketing might be worked on at the planning stage and from the start-up stage onwards, it's often reduced to a simple ad in the local Muslim paper.

PR is an area that should not happen haphazardly but researched, and planned. So is school culture. Very little thought is given to this extremely vital area. As the composition of students, parents and staff changes from year to year, so does the culture. Do you, as a leader, work actively to maintain the culture proposed by your mission?

In fact, school culture should take up a lot of work during the mature stage. Re-evaluate the situation annually or even twice a year, and figure out whether you need to take action.

5) Systemization: nuts and bolts

The questions we must answer here are:

- ❖ When to set up a system?
- ❖ When NOT to set up a system?
- ❖ How to set up a system?

- ❖ How NOT to set up a system?
- ❖ What type of school function does this problem involve?
- ❖ Which areas of systemization does this include?
- ❖ Is (a particular) systemization a “change”? And therefore subject to all aspects of “change”?
- ❖ Do you need to *sell* your new system to its audience? To all stakeholders?

In medicine, when a patient presents with signs and symptoms, a doctor makes a diagnosis based on:

1. History
2. Examination
3. Tests

And only after making a diagnosis, does the doctor plan on the treatment. This treatment may come in several choices, and the doctor may have to discuss these choices with the patient, to decide together on the optimal path to take.

In a school setting, there is not much difference. The patient is a particular set of problems. The signs are what people see/hear/taste/smell/touch; the symptoms are what the patient complains about. Are teachers or students (any stakeholder) complaining of anything?

Once you identify a problem area, you then “take a history”. Find out the history of the problem. This means asking/interviewing. Then perform an “examination”, which means look through the problem both physically and on paper. Finally, you may perform “tests”, which will vary depending on the issue.

So let us re-write these steps in school administration terms:

1. Problem presentation: complaints from the outside or the inside
2. History: interview the complainer; look for precedence in other peer schools; research the literature;
3. Examination: interview, observe, read, and ask for. Specifically find solid evidence such as electronic or written documents, photos, recordings, etc.
4. Tests: this might be actually tests, such as student test scores. But this might be taken also in the widest definition possible, such as small limited trials of new solutions.

When you have done these, only then are you ready for a diagnosis. If your diagnosis is correct, then you are able to prescribe a treatment.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <i>Problem presentation</i> |
| <i>Complainer</i> | |
| <i>Complaint</i> | |
| <i>History</i> | |
| <i>Exam</i> | |
| <i>Tests</i> | |
| <i>Diagnosis</i> | <i>Problem?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>YES</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>NO</i> |
| | <i>Define:</i> |

Chart #1: Analyzing a problem area.

So, you have identified a problem based on signs and symptoms (complaints). Now you need to take a history.

Use the 5 W's: What, when, where, who, how.

Should you set up a system? Putting things down on paper always helps to see the big picture. Compare and contrast study the *before and after* picture. If there is an advantage – that outweighs the cost-- then, yes, you should set one up.

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | <i>Before</i> | <i>After(wishful thinking)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
| <i>What</i> | | | |
| <i>When</i> | | | |
| <i>Where</i> | | | |
| <i>Who</i> | | | |
| <i>How</i> | | | |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | | | |

Chart #2: Charting the Before and After of a problem

6) Examples

Example 1:

Every month/quarter/ semester (whenever your tuition payment dates are), you feel that there is a messy riot of parents trying to pay after dropping off the children. The receptionist/cashier/secretary is swamped. There is a long line/ throng of parents waiting impatiently. When a few days later, the tide ebbs, you still have to track down some late payers. Is there a need for a system? Is it worth setting one up?

What type of problem is this? What type of solution does it need?

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | <i>Problem presentation</i> |
| <i>Complainer</i> | Admin staff, board |
| <i>Complaint</i> | Messy collection, financial: low income |
| <i>History</i> | Got worse as school grew; |
| <i>Exam</i> | Talked to cashier; talked to board |
| <i>Tests</i> | Look at financial spreadsheet; check front desk at payment time |
| <i>Diagnosis</i> | <i>Problem?</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Yes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i> |
| | <i>Define:</i> collection inefficiency |

| Problem and Solution Analysis | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--------------------|
| | <i>Before</i> | <i>After(wishful thinking)</i> | <i>Comment</i> | <i>Cost</i> |
| <i>Problem & Solution</i> | Tuition payment seems a mess. Many parents (?%) do not pay on time and are not penalized. Staff overwhelmed. | Minimal tracking. Most (?%) parents pay on time. | Installing Paypal and online credit card payments. Should you add fee for direct or cash payment? | \$ manpower |
| <i>What</i> | Physical crowding Tracking down late payers | No physical crowding No need to track down late payers | Place a sign: please wait for your turn | training |
| <i>When</i> | Around tuition payment dates | Before or on tuition payment dates | ? Install an online system that automatically adds penalty for late payments? | \$ manpower |
| <i>Where</i> | At front desk | Online/ front desk | Set up a computer station near the front desk. | \$ training |
| <i>Who</i> | Secretary/cashier | Accountant/ secretary | Principal can check online at any time. | |
| <i>How</i> | Checks/cash/ cards | Paypal/card/check/cash | Set up a parents meeting to walk through the steps. | training |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | | | <i>Yes</i> , there is a benefit. Check the financial cost. | Approximate \$? |

Example 2:

Parents are constantly criticizing the school's Arabic, Qu'ran and Islamic Studies program. Commonly heard complaints include: "My child has been 3 years here and yet when I asked him in Arabic what he had for lunch, he couldn't understand or reply." "My child still makes mistakes when he prays. What are you teaching him?" "**Everyone** says that Teacher X (or textbook Y) is terrible and useless.."

What type of problem is this? At which level does it need a solution? Is it a "teacher" problem, or an "administration" problem? Or a parent problem? A communication problem?

One way to find your way through the Gordian knot (other than axing it) is to feel your way up from the free end. Start with the specific complaint. Move up to the immediate cause. What are the reasons for this? Then move up from the reasons of the cause, and so on, until you reach the ultimate top reason. This, is where you need to put the treatment.

This type of complaint needs a thorough study since it is directly related to the mission of the school.

The best way to study this complaint is to take a statistical/scientific approach. Who is "Everybody"? (or "everyone I talked to") Is it 10% or 50% or 90% of the parents? Of the staff? Of the community not involved with the school?

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | <i>Problem presentation</i> |
| <i>Complainer</i> | Parents |
| <i>Complaint</i> | Mission not fulfilled |
| <i>History</i> | How long? How many complaints? Talk to teachers/ students. |
| <i>Exam</i> | Visit classrooms; look at textbooks, worksheets, tests, homework samples. |
| <i>Tests</i> | Run survey |
| <i>Diagnosis</i> | <i>Problem?</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| | <i>Define:</i> Academic inadequacy |

Questions to be tackled are divided into three sections: Arabic, Qur'an and Islamic Studies. Complaints should be categorized accordingly. You then design your questions around these complaints.

The main goal is to find out what the majority of parents think. Do they want Arabic as a foreign language or as a Qur'anic tool? Do they want more memorization, more understanding or more application of the Qur'an? And so on.

Once your survey results are out, you can safely plan a curriculum, and approach /methodology that will cater to your goal (the stakeholders' goal).

Example 3:

You are the principal/janitor (=D) of a small school of about 100 students. You are overwhelmed with work. You have a front desk lady who is also your secretary, the staff coordinator, the student coordinator, the cashier, the school nurse and the receptionist.

You need more staff in the administration office. What do you need?

- a) An Assistant Principal/ Vice Principal (who will try to take over your position)
- b) A principal's assistant (glorified secretary)
- c) An administrative assistant (another name for secretary)
- d) A part-time nurse, a part-time librarian, a part-time accountant, etc adding up to 1 FTE
- e) None of the above
- f) Other: (specify)

How do you determine which staff solution you need? How do you convince your board to pay for the extra position?

Again, use concrete, scientific data to drive your decision. Depending on the special aspects of your individual school, the amount of time you spend on each of your functions will vary. Although you might think this is very time consuming, start by keeping a diary of how you spend your day (chart #3). Then enter these into a daily hour chart such as the one below (chart #4):

| Week of February 1 to February 7, 2015 | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| | <i>Monday</i> | <i>Type of activity</i> |
| 12:00 AM | going through work emails | office |
| 1:00 AM | | |
| 2:00 AM | | |
| 3:00 AM | | |
| 4:00 AM | | |
| 5:00 AM | | |
| 6:00 AM | getting kids ready, driving to school, breakfast in car | |
| 7:00 AM | checking phone messages, calling and coordinating substitutes | admin/ teacher coordination |
| 8:00 AM | leading morning assembly, checking late teachers | Leadership/ admin |
| 9:00 AM | Appointment with a parent. | PR |
| 10:00 AM | meeting with accreditation committee | leadership |
| 11:00 AM | Teach a class | instruction |
| 12:00 PM | "sweeping" students for wudu and prayers. Attending dhuhur. | Student coordination/ |

| | | |
|----------|--|------------------------------|
| | Checking lunch. | facilities management |
| 1:00 PM | meet with students who had lunch detention. Grab sandwich. | discipline |
| 2:00 PM | Meet with front desk lady and discuss various issues | admin |
| 3:00 PM | unclog boys' toilet, clean and deodorize. Meet with parents who walked in during pick-up time. | janitorial. PR. |
| 4:00 PM | coordinate after school activities. Draft flyers to parents. | coordination/ secretarial |
| 5:00 PM | Discuss burst pipe and flooding of flower beds with manager | Facilities management |
| 6:00 PM | commute home | |
| 7:00 PM | | |
| 8:00 PM | | |
| 9:00 PM | | |
| 10:00 PM | work on planning for upcoming school event, International Day | event planning |
| 11:00 PM | work on planning for upcoming school event, International Day | event planning |

At the end of each week, tally the number of hours spent on each type of activity. Include the weekends. Attending workshops and conferences go towards leadership time, since it's PD for you. Do this for a few weeks, then analyze your data. After 4 weeks, you can now tally your hours in a chart as follows. Can you see where the bulk of your time is spent?

In the next column, enter the ideal number of hours you WOULD like to spend on each category of activity. You are a leader for a reason. Do leadership work. So your time should reflect that.

| <i>Type of activity</i> | <i># of hours</i> | <i>Ideal # of hours</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|---|
| leadership | 30 | 40 | More time to focus on leadership |
| administration | 27 | 40 | More time to get systemization work done |
| coordination | 42 | 20 | |
| secretarial | 18 | 4 | |
| Event management | 30 | 4 | Although important, events do not have to be managed by principal |
| Discipline | 8 | 1 | |
| Instruction | 40 | 40 | I want to keep my finger on the pulse of the school |
| PR | 9 | 8 | Principal should show face to stakeholders |
| janitorial | 10 | 0 | |
| nursing | 6 | 3 | Willing to help out |
| | 220 | 160 | |

Now you can see in the above example that your work as a leader does NOT take up the majority of your time. Maybe there was an event that month, granted. But then again there will be future

events again and again. You just reduced your work load by 60 hours a month. You know that there are another 60 hours worth of work left undone. This is 120 hours a month, or 30 hours a week. Should you find a part-timer or a full-timer?

Looking at the chart again, what you need is one part-timer for 20 hours a week or so, to work on coordination, secretarial jobs, event management, some nursing, etc. We all know that many of the nursing, janitorial and other jobs do not happen neatly in pre-ordained time slots, but coordination, secretarial and event management can be pre-planned into time slots.

One option in this case would be to either hire a part-timer. Another option could be to promote an existing staff member to half-time administrative assistant then hire a part-time teacher to cover the balance of teaching hours. Should you decide (for budget reasons) to just spread out those balance instruction hours among the rest of the teaching staff, remember that you should do this only between semesters to avoid dissatisfaction among other teachers who suddenly got an increased load of teaching hours.

The decision depends on the particular situation you are in. Look again at the chart of

Example 4:

Recently, the picture below was circulated on Facebook:



Is this what the outside of your school masjid looks like? Is this a problem? What system can you institute to improve the situation?

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| | <i>Problem presentation</i> |
| <i>Complainer</i> | Admin staff, parents, visitors |
| <i>Complaint</i> | Messy look, not Islamic |
| <i>History</i> | Shoe racks specially commissioned from local carpenter. Number of students grew. Number of outside visitors during jum'ah also grew. |
| <i>Exam</i> | Walk through during prayer time: Dhuhr, jum'ah. Observe behavior of people walking into mosque |
| <i>Tests</i> | Does this happen when there are less people? |
| <i>Diagnosis</i> | <i>Problem?</i> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Yes</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i> |
| | <i>Define:</i> Messy shoe placement outside masjid at prayer time |

It is obvious that there are two aspects to this problem. First, the human aspect: people, students, teachers and visitors alike, are used to kick off their shoes anywhere. Psychologically speaking, crowd psychology is at work here. Follow the leader. Be a sheep of Panurge. Secondly: a space aspect: There aren't enough cubby holes for the number of pairs of shoes, and there the entrance space is very narrow. Thirdly: the administration might feel that since money has been already spent, no more money should be spent on shoe racks.

The next step in this case would be to compare and contrast the three aspects for solutions:

| | Human | Space | Financial |
|----------------|---|--|---|
| Problem | Wrong behavior | Not enough shoe cubbies, not enough width space on floor | Already spent money on building shoe cubbies |
| Solution | Train everyone to line shoes up | Use floor space in length. Move shoe cubbies to further space. | Recycle cubbies for other use. Get donations from visitors. |
| Feasibility | Only students and staff are trainable | Doable. | Feasible, especially during Jum'ah. |
| Other comments | Parents and visitors to be let in later than students, so they will follow example. | May put up signs and pictures | Get quote from carpenter. Need to make sign and donation box. |
| Decision | | | |

Should you decide to implement one, two or all three of the areas?

Example 5:

Let's finally take as a case study, the phone message we heard in the beginning. Looking again at the list of phone options, which of the functions do they fall under?

| | <i>Complaints</i> | <i>Category</i> |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Excessive absences | Administration/ motivation |

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 | Missing homework | Classroom management/ parental involvement |
| 3 | Complaints about everything | School-home communication/ parental expectation |
| 4 | Unacceptable speech or behavior | School-home communication |
| 5 | Poor communication | School-home communication |
| 6 | Character education | School culture/ curriculum/ administration |
| 7 | Parent communication and behavior | School-home communication |
| 8 | Unsatisfactory teaching | School-home communication/ professional development |
| 9 | Inefficient services | Parental expectations/ administration |
| 10 | Unsatisfactory benefits | Parental expectations/ administration/ governance |
| 11 | Misaligned expectations | Parental expectations/ school-home communication/ mission/vision |
| 12 | Diversity with unattended needs | Administration/ mission |

If you see a preponderance of problems in the areas of “parental expectations”, then what is the problem? Is it really just parental expectations? Or is it a communication problem? Communication occurs in two directions.

You also see 6-7 problems with school-home communication. Add to these the three items for parental expectations. What do you see? Yes, the primary problem with this school is one of communication. You can pair that with the two items that fall under admin/mission/ motivation. And you can see what the picture is.

You may need to add communication questions to your annual survey to find out what the majority of parents think about this issue. You formulate your policy accordingly. Then you *communicate* the policy to all stakeholders. I repeat, *communicate*.

Other possible discussion areas:

- 1) The flow of book and supplies distribution, ID pick up, class schedule, and uniform pick up is too slow and not effective.
- 2) The flow of parents’ cars at drop-off and pick-up time is not efficient.
- 3) There is very little participation from parents in school activities.
- 4) Teachers do not use the school software system efficiently.

In summary:

Areas of weakness can show up in various manners. Once detected, a thorough study of the area should be conducted. The solution should then be planned around the diagnosis and analyzed for cost in terms of finances, human resources and feasibility. Putting down the steps or details on paper helps concretize, report and analyze the issue. Once the solution is applied, it needs to be communicated to all stakeholders by any and all means including if needed, through workshops.

1. Troubleshooting/Detecting areas of weakness
2. Design or Redesign (Backwards by Design)
3. Communication
4. Implementation
5. Celebration

7) Conclusion

Your Operations Manual is not set in stone. All of us keep adding new items every summer to our School/Parents Manual and our Operations Manual. What we need to remind ourselves of is: review the entire manuals during the summer after our new additions, then check which items can be combined or removed altogether.

Remember: if the Parents' Manual is too thick, no one will read it.

As for the Operations Manual: each new employee needs to be trained on the relevant section. It is meant to be used and applied, not to sit on a shelf on in a folder on your computer.

“Tarbiyah Twist”: Intentionally Integrating Islam into Research-based Academic and Guidance Curricula

Hafiza Khan

Abstract

Tarbiyah, tarbiyah, tarbiyah! The word bounces off the walls of Islamic schools throughout America, but too often resonates only in the Islamic Studies classroom. Instead of being an incidental or occasional part of the academic and guidance curriculum, Tarbiyah principles can and should be intentionally incorporated school-wide to create a robust Islamic environment.

About the Author

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“Tarabiya Twist”: Intentionally Integrating Islam into Research-based Academic and Guidance Curricula

Introduction:

Sadly, a tension often exists between the secular evidence-based curriculum and instructional methodology popular in education circles, and the fundamental Islamic principles of Tarbiyah. Even though most if not all Islamic schools have as their raison d’etre to educate the next generation of Muslims in a safe and supportive Islamic environment that instills traditional Islamic values, few manage to hit the mark. The will is there, but the way is often lost in the daily demands, deadlines, benchmarks, standardized tests, student activities, parent-teacher conferences, discipline, and the list goes on. The dilemma is clear, and with intention and a systematic approach, the answer is readily achieved. Rather than keeping the sound educational research of Marzano, Erickson and others on one shelf, and the Quran and the Seerah of the Prophet PBUH on the other, why not intentionally integrate the latter into the former by adding a “Tarbiyah Twist.”

Instructional Strategies: Educational Research and Practices of The Prophet PBUH

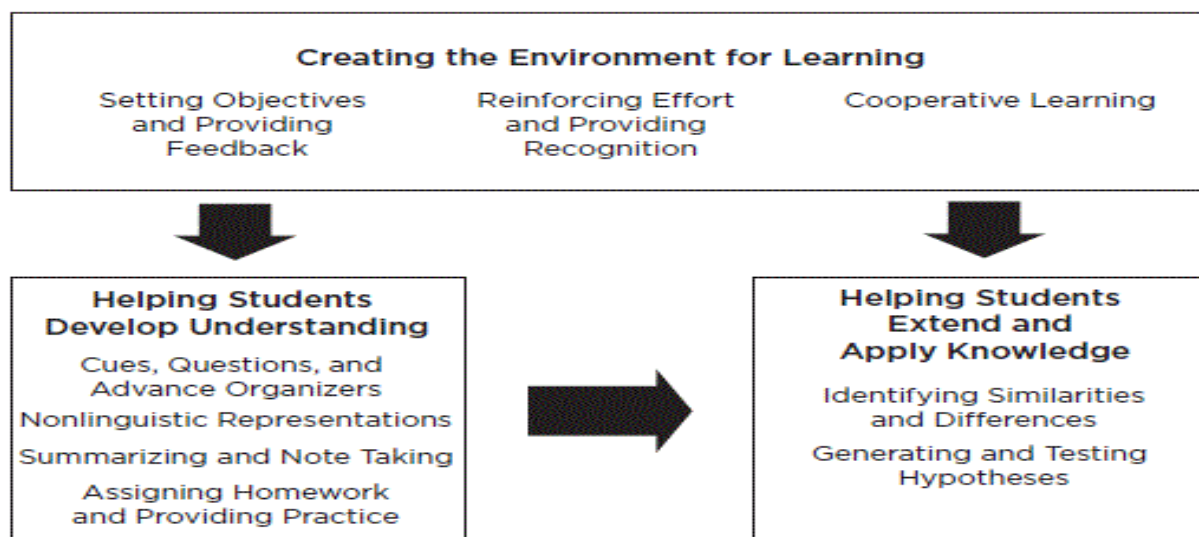
Current educational research provides a framework for accomplishing the goal of integrating Islam into instructional strategies. As teaching methodology shifts away from the traditional “sit

and get” educational model to the more engaging concept based curriculum and instruction, learners are better positioned for success in the framework of 21st century learning. In today’s global economy, teachers are faced with the demanding task of preparing students to master the skills, knowledge, and expertise they need to succeed in academia, the world of work, and in life at large. Teachers are preparing students for professions and industries that are yet to be created. Students are faced with the challenge of mastering the essential skills in critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and collaboration in a global community.

In the first edition of “Classroom Instruction that Works,” noted educational researcher, trainer and speaker, Robert Marzano (2001) identified Nine High Yield Instructional Strategies (“Notable Nine”) that teachers should use to increase student achievement. A decade later, in the second edition of “Classroom Instruction that Works,” Dean et al (2012) build on Marzano’s research and organize these strategies within the instructional planning framework, to guide teachers in how to use them intentionally and effectively throughout the instructional process.

Figure A.1: The Framework for Instructional Planning

(Figure A.1 Retrieved from An ASCD Study Guide for Classroom Instruction that Works – 2nd ed. on 11-30-2014)



In her book “Concept-Based Curriculum and Instruction for the Thinking Classroom,” internationally renowned Educational consultant H. Lynn Erikson addresses the complex task teachers confront in preparing their students for this global community. She incorporates insights from cognitive science, learning theory, and her over 40-years’ experience in education to address the relationship between curriculum design, instruction, and development of intelligence. The traditional curriculum design model is two dimensional and rests on the “...misguided assumption that knowing facts is evidence of deeper, conceptual understanding” (p.7). In other words, if students “know” (facts) they are able to “do” (skills), so that the educational curriculum model becomes one of “content coverage”. A concept based curriculum and design model, on the other hand is three dimensional. If students “know” (facts) and “understand” (concepts) then they

are able to “do” (skills). As a result, the three dimensional concept based teacher is able to take research-based best practices, such as Marzano’s “Notable Nine” and merge it with brain-based pedagogy, to engage students emotionally, creatively, and intellectually to prepare them for life-long learning. Consequently, students are actively engaged in critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration skills.

The “tarbiyah twist” comes in when we realize that the current educational research supports what our beloved Prophet PBUH modeled over 1400 years ago. In the classroom, these instructional strategies become transformed into Islamically sound principles. Intentionally bringing this to the forefront as a part of the instructional objective helps both the teacher and the student to understand that Islam is the foundation of all education. The following supplemental material from the Islamic School of Irving District Academic Improvement Plan illustrates this premise. (See Appendix 1: Marzano’s (Nine) High Yield Instructional Strategies)

Classroom Management and Islamic Manners

Current educational research provides a framework for accomplishing the goal of effectively managing classrooms at all levels by integrating Islamic manners. As part of his Safe and Civil Schools curriculum, Dr. Randy Sprick devised a proactive and positive approach to classroom management, which he called CHAMPS. Within the system are five school voices that help teachers control the noise level in the classroom. Interestingly, those five voice levels correspond to specific voice levels mentioned in the Quran. By intentionally incorporating this knowledge into the system of Islamic education, we teach students the Islamic etiquette. (See Appendix 2: CHAMPS Tarbiyah-based Classroom Poster)

Response to Intervention or Remediation Through Islam

Yet another opportunity to integrate Islam into the curriculum is provided through Response to Intervention (RtI). With the “tarbiyah twist,” RtI becomes “Remediation through Islam”. As opposed to the purely academic and behavioral strategies offered by Dr. Sprick, academic and particularly behavioral challenges can and should be addressed in Islamic schools, in accordance with the R.E.L.A.T.E strategies propounded by noted Islamic Educator and former ISNA presenter, Muhammad Aftab Diwan.

R – Respect

*Respecting the student and separating the behavior from the individual.
Disciplining the student with dignity and letting the consequences of the behavior do the teaching.*

E – Encourage

Encourage the student by taking advantage of teachable moments, focusing on positive reinforcement, utilizing the attributes of Allah SWT, and the teachings of the Prophet PBUH.

L- Love

Nurture the student and show them that you genuinely care through your actions.

A – Accommodate

Understand the problem and the situation before correcting; differentiate according to the needs of the student.

T – Trust

Command trust versus demanding it. Give students the benefit of doubt and do not explicitly question their honesty.

E – Educate

Show versus Tell. Intentionally use instructional strategies to promote critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and collaboration.

The overall environment and values of an Islamic institution can be enhanced with the introduction of positive themes and programs such as “Islamic Manners Month” in place of secular-based anti-bullying campaigns. By accentuating the positive characteristics of our beloved Prophet PBUH, who possessed the most excellent manners, students’ learn through activities and incentive programs that good manners are the surest antidote to bullying and are rewarded both here and in the hereafter. For those students needing more enhanced academic and or behavioral intervention, Remediation through Islam (RtI) infuses greater Islamic intentionality to evidence-based instructional strategies. (See Appendix 3: RtI Documents)

By expounding on these core teachings of Islam, discipline is approached with dignity and academic achievement flows organically. Intention is the key. Islam is the answer. A school environment that promotes Islamic values results, when you add a Tarbiyah Twist.

Appendix 1: 2014 – 15 ISI Academic Improvement Plan Supplemental Material
Marzano’s (NINE) High -Yield Instructional Strategies

Adapted from the book: Classroom Instruction that Works: Research based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, by Robert Marzano (2001)

| High Yield Instructional Strategies | What research says: | How it looks in the Classroom | Practices of The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) |
|--|---|---|--|
| Identifying Similarities and Differences (Yields a 45 percentile gain) | Students should compare, classify and create metaphors, analogies and non-linguistic or graphic representations | Thinking Maps, T-Charts, Venn diagrams, classifying, analogies, cause and effect links, compare and contrast organizers | Technique 4: Analogies; Technique 5: Using Diagrams or Drawings; Technique 19: Using Stories and Accounts from the Past |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Summarizing and Note-taking (Yields a 34 percentile gain) | Students should learn to eliminate unnecessary information, substitute some information, keep important information, write/rewrite, and analyze information. Students should be encouraged to put some information into own words. | Teacher models summarization techniques, identify key concepts, bullets, outlines, clusters, narrative organizers, journal summaries, break down assignments, create simple reports, quick writes, graphic organizers, column notes, affinity diagrams, etc. | Technique 5: Using Diagrams or Drawings |
| Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition (Yields a 29 percentile gain) | Teachers should reward based on standards of performance; use symbolic recognition rather than just tangible rewards. | Hold high expectations, display finished projects, praise students' effort, encourage students to share ideas and express their thoughts, honor their individual learning styles, conference individually with students, authentic portfolios, stress-free environment, high-fives, Spelling Bee, Constitution Day, School Newspaper, etc. | Technique 11: Allowing Others to Answer the Question; Technique 12: Take Advantage of Teaching Moments; Technique 20: Pay Attention to Focus Groups |
| Homework and practice (Yields a 28 percentile gain) | Teachers should vary the amount of homework based on student grade level (less at the elementary level, more at the secondary level), keep parent involvement in homework to a minimum, state purpose, and, if assigned, should be debriefed. | Retell, recite and review learning for the day at home, reflective journals, parents are informed of the goals and objectives, grade level teams plan together for homework distribution; SLCs; teacher email. | Technique 15: Repeat, Repeat, Repeat |
| Nonlinguistic Representations (Yields a 27 percentile gain) | Students should create graphic representations, models, mental pictures, drawings, pictographs, and participate in kinesthetic (hands-on) activities in order to assimilate knowledge | Visual tools and manipulatives, problem-solution organizers, spider webs, diagrams, concept maps, drawings, graphic organizers, sketch to stretch, storyboards, foldables, act out content, physical models, etc. | Technique 5: Use of Diagrams and Drawings; Technique 6: Using Gestures While Talking; Technique 7: Using Tangible Examples, Exhibits, or Artifacts |
| Cooperative Learning (Yields a 23 percentile gain) | Teachers should limit the use of ability groups, keep groups small (3-5 students), apply strategy consistently and systematically but do not overuse, assign roles and responsibilities in groups | Integrate content and language through group engagement, reader's theatre, pass the pencil, circle of friends, cube it, radio reading, shared reading and writing, plays, science projects, debates, jigsaw, group reports and presentations, choral reading, affinity diagrams, students tackle TAKS word problems in groups and explain their answers, etc. | Technique 1: Do Not Bore the Listener; Technique 11: Allow Others to Answer the Question |
| Setting Objectives and | Teachers should create specific but flexible goals, allow some student choice. Teacher feedback should be corrective, timely | Articulating and displaying learning goals, K-W-L, contract learning goals, etc. Teacher can display objectives on the in- | Technique 2: Speak At the Intellectual Level of the Listener; Technique 8: Answer Questions |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Providing Feedback (Yields a 23 percentile gain) | and specific to a criterion. | focus projector and follow up on the mastery of the objective at the end of the lesson. | Before They Are Asked; Technique 9 Answer More Than What Is Asked |
| Generating and Testing Hypothesis (Yields a 23 percentile gain) | Students should generate, explain, test and defend hypotheses using both inductive and deductive strategies through problem solving, history investigation, invention, experimental inquiry and decision making. | Thinking processes, constructivist practices, investigate, explore, social construction of knowledge, use of inductive and deductive reasoning, questioning the author of a book, finding other ways to solve same math problem, etc. | Technique 3: Questions and Debate; Technique 8: Answer Questions Before They are asked; Technique 9: Answer More Than What Is asked; Technique 10 Turn the Question Into Something That Will Be of More Benefit |
| Questions, Cues, and Advance Organizers (Yields a 22 percentile gain) | Teachers should use cues and questions that focus on what is important (rather than unusual) use ample wait time before accepting responses, eliciting inference and analysis. Advance organizers should focus on what is important and are more useful with information that is not well organized. | Graphic organizers, providing guiding questions before each lesson, think-alouds, inferencing, predicting, drawing conclusions, skimming chapters to identify key vocabulary, concepts and skills, foldables, annotating the text, etc. | Technique 3: Questions and Debate; Technique 5: Using Diagrams or Drawings; Technique 8: Answer Questions Before They Are Asked; Technique 9 Answer More Than What Is Asked; Technique 10 Turn the Question Into Something That Will Be of More Benefit |

Note: Supplemental Material by Dora Karim-Silat (2014) has been modified to reflect the “Teaching Techniques of the Prophet” as stated by Muhammad al Shareef (2013).

CHAMPS
A Proactive & Positive Approach
to Classroom Management

CHAMPS

Voices

الصَّوْتِ دَرَجَاتُ



Voice 0: No talking
لا تَتَكَلَّم

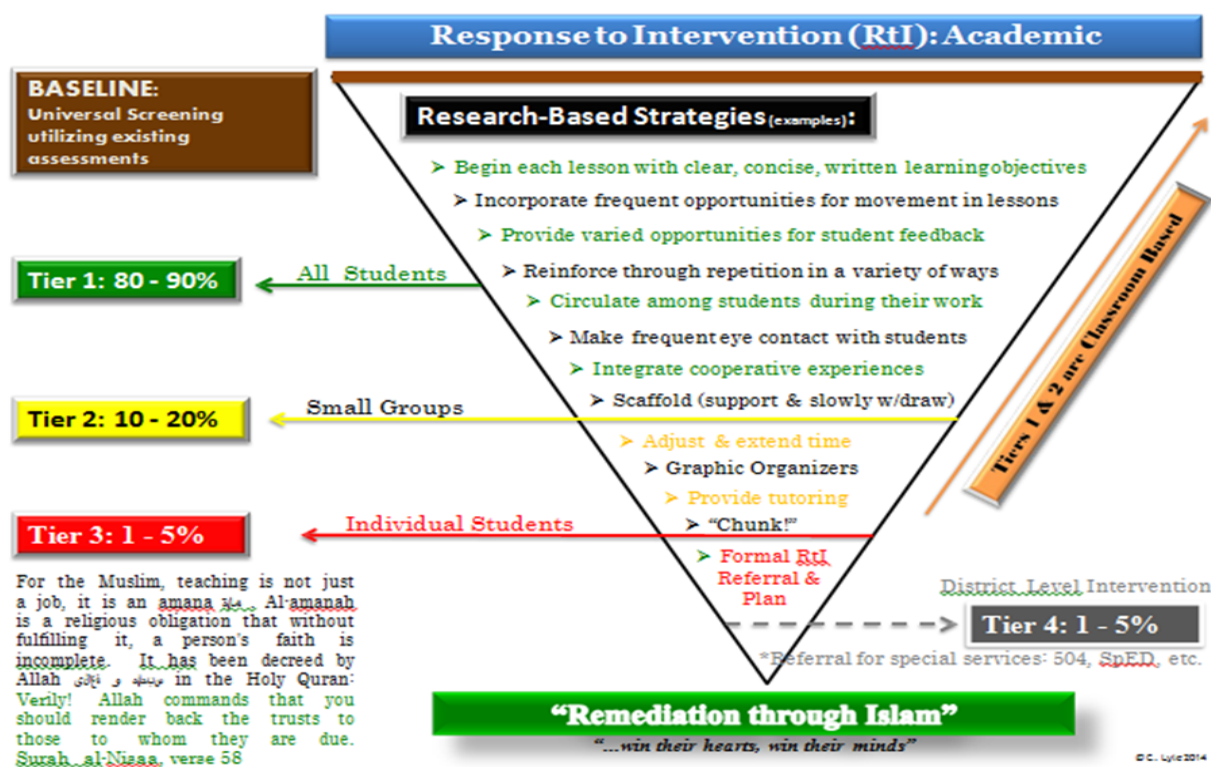
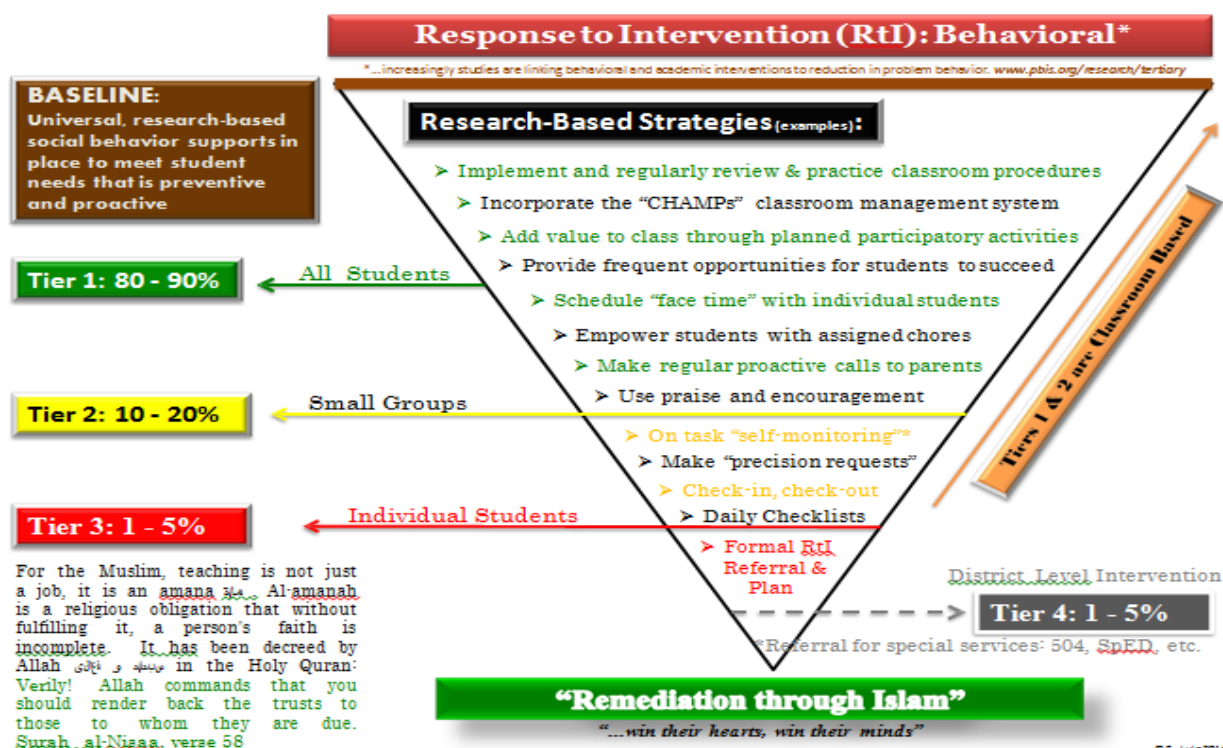
Voice 1: Whisper
الْهَمْسُ

Voice 2: Quiet Voice
الصَّوْتِ الْهَادِي

Voice 3: Presentation Voice
صَوْتِ الشَّرْحِ

Voice 4: Outside Voice
الصَّوْتِ الْخَارِجِي

Procedures Posters© c. Lyle 2014



Response to Intervention (RTI): Student Intervention Plan Worksheet

Teacher: _____ Date of Intervention Meeting _____

| Student | Subject | Score | Issue (s) | Intervention Plan | Tier |
|--|---------|-------|---|-------------------|------|
| _____ Last Name _____ First Name | | | | | |
| ___ New Student ___ Cum Folder Reviewed | | | ___ Documented Behavior Issues: Date(s) _____ ___ Parent Conference: Date(s) _____ | | |
| _____ Last Name _____ First Name | | | | | |
| ___ New Student ___ Cum Folder Reviewed | | | ___ Documented Behavior Issues: Date(s) _____ ___ Parent Conference: Date(s) _____ | | |
| _____ Last Name _____ First Name | | | | | |
| ___ New Student ___ Cum Folder Reviewed | | | ___ Documented Behavior Issues: Date(s) _____ ___ Parent Conference: Date(s) _____ | | |
| _____ Last Name _____ First Name | | | | | |
| ___ New Student ___ Cum Folder Reviewed | | | ___ Documented Behavior Issues: Date(s) _____ ___ Parent Conference: Date(s) _____ | | |
| _____ Last Name _____ First Name | | | | | |
| ___ New Student ___ Cum Folder Reviewed | | | ___ Documented Behavior Issues: Date(s) _____ ___ Parent Conference: Date(s) _____ | | |

Created by G. Kipke 2004

Behavioral Leadership Plan: Check-In, Check-Out "CICO" Sheet

Student: _____ Grade/Section: _____ Home Phone: _____

| Day | Arrival | ✓ After 1 st Period | ✓ Lunch | ✓ Prayer | ✓ Dismissal | ✓ | Evaluator Initials & Notes |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------|
| MONDAY | Uniform | Arrived on time | Arrived on time | Wudu | Proper Class Behavior | | |
| | Homework | Books & Supplies | Loose | Arrived on time | Homework Assignments | | |
| | Assembly | Respectful to all | Respectful | Silent & Behaved | Locker & Books Needed | | |
| | Locker Needs | On task | Seated, Correct Voice | Seated | | | |
| *Parent: | | | | | | | |
| TUESDAY | Uniform | Arrived on time | Arrived on time | Wudu | Proper Class Behavior | | |
| | Homework | Books & Supplies | Loose | Arrived on time | Homework Assignments | | |
| | Assembly | Respectful to all | Respectful | Silent & Behaved | Locker & Books Needed | | |
| | Locker Needs | On task | Seated, Correct Voice | Seated | | | |
| *Parent: | | | | | | | |
| WEDNESDAY | Uniform | Arrived on time | Arrived on time | Wudu | Proper Class Behavior | | |
| | Homework | Books & Supplies | Loose | Arrived on time | Homework Assignments | | |
| | Assembly | Respectful to all | Respectful | Silent & Behaved | Locker & Books Needed | | |
| | Locker Needs | On task | Seated, Correct Voice | Seated | | | |
| *Parent: | | | | | | | |
| THURSDAY | Uniform | Arrived on time | Arrived on time | Wudu | Proper Class Behavior | | |
| | Homework | Books & Supplies | Loose | Arrived on time | Homework Assignments | | |
| | Assembly | Respectful to all | Respectful | Silent & Behaved | Locker & Books Needed | | |
| | Locker Needs | On task | Seated, Correct Voice | Seated | | | |
| *Parent: | | | | | | | |
| FRIDAY | Uniform | Arrived on time | Arrived on time | Wudu | Proper Class Behavior | | |
| | Homework | Books & Supplies | Loose | Arrived on time | Homework Assignments | | |
| | Assembly | Respectful to all | Respectful | Silent & Behaved | Locker & Books Needed | | |
| | Locker Needs | On task | Seated, Correct Voice | Seated | | | |
| *Parent: | | | | | | | |

*Parent Initials Required

Created by G. Kipke 2004

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Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values

Nadeem Memon and Zahir Bacchus

Abstract

Character development initiatives in Islamic schools involve teachers, not solely students, as central to the program. Conventional character programs comprise of activities and approaches to nurture student character without recognizing the role that a teacher's character plays. Essentially, the Islamic approach to character education is captured in the verse of the Qur'an where Allah questions: "You command people to goodness, and you forget about yourself?" (Quran 2:44). An effective school-wide character education program must begin with educators first.

About the Authors

Shaykh Zahir Bacchus is the founder and Principal of Lote Tree Learning & Resource Centre in Toronto, Canada. He is a qualified Islamic scholar whose focus is on developing character education programs for K-12 Islamic schools. Shaykh Zahir is also a co-founder of Razi Education and the Islamic Teacher Education Program (ITEP).

Dr. Nadeem Memon is the Director of Education of Razi Education and a founder of the Islamic Teacher Education Program (ITEP). He completed his PhD at the University of Toronto with a focus on the history and philosophy of Islamic Schooling in North America. Nadeem has authored numerous articles about Islamic schools and has presented workshops related to the vision and purpose of Islamic schooling globally.

Tarbiyah: Creating School Climate with Islamic Values

Introduction: Why Character Education in Islamic Schools is Important?

The difference between conventional character education programs and character development initiatives in Islamic schools is that teachers, not solely students, are central to the program. Conventional programs comprise of activities and approaches to nurture student character without emphasizing the role that a teacher's character plays. Essentially, the Islamic approach to character education is captured in the verse of the Qur'an where Allah questions: "You command people to goodness, and you forget about yourself?" (Quran 2:44). An effective school wide character education program must begin with ourselves as educators first.

We cannot underestimate the importance of self-development, self-reflection, and self-assessment when shaping character education initiatives in our schools. As educators we are the role models by which students will measure their growth. Taking ourselves to account constantly

and in a structured way will by virtue model effective approaches for students.

Among the most challenging aspects of teaching is finding ways to motivate students to habitually and spontaneously reflect good character. As a reaction to the challenge, classroom management is staple area of professional development. To be proactive, however, effective classroom routines are needed that transfer good habits from teacher to students and from students to each other.

Based on the Prophetic example we know that character is not taught, it is transferred. Our *haal* (state), actions, intentions, body language, and etiquette all transfer to our students explicitly and implicitly.

Seven approaches will be outlined in this paper that will serve as routines to create habits inside our classrooms and by virtue our homes and communities:

1. Nurturing Taqwa (God Consciousness) by Example
2. Praise and Shukr (Thankfulness)
3. Power of Dua'
4. Muraqaba (Observing Oneself)
5. Turning Away From What Does Not Concern You
6. Building Bonds While Humbling Oneself
7. Smiling

By the end of the paper, readers can expect to a) value and appreciate how character-based routines can transform their classroom culture; b) gain practical strategies that effectively implement each of the 7 approaches mentioned above.

Good character is central to our faith. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, is not only called the “best example” in the Quran but is also praised for his “exalted character.” He, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, also stated that he came to perfect noble character traits. As teachers, our role is to further this objective by refining the character of the students under our care. Preparing young adults that are ready to engage society thoughtfully, respectfully, and morally is the key. The role that teachers play in supporting this development is critical.

In this paper we outline the goals of character education and provide concrete methods to use in the classroom to develop good character in students.

What Makes Character Education in Islamic Schools Distinct?

Character development is a duty upon the community as whole. It is not something relegated to the home or school solely. This is an important distinguishing element of how we should approach character education in Islamic schools. Any character education initiative that is developed must establish collaborative and interdependent structures with parents and the

community around the school.

The premise of character education in the Islamic tradition is to nurture an individual's attachment to their Lord. This attachment is exhibited through drawing out our innate nature to be moral human beings who naturally exhibit good character. Character education cannot therefore be reduced solely to programs, posters, and checklists. Students need to see good character around them and have the opportunity to reflect on it consistently. Seeing and reflecting on good character softens the heart and the essential elements that define character in Islam – *tazkiyah* (character refinement) and *taqwa* (God consciousness) – are connected to the heart.

Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, trained his companions in character through his own example; not in any specified training session. He created an environment that was conducive to the improvement and growth of individuals through his own character and examples. He inspired others to be like him—they wanted to hear him because it was so pleasing to them. He created an environment of growth—growth in certainty of Allah. Creating such an environment begins with a willingness to improve ourselves which starts with the top: school board members, school principal, teachers, and parents – before we can ask students to reflect on their own character. This can be achieved in a few critical ways:

- **Be a Student:** Recognize that no matter how old you are, you are a student of life and on-going learning. Learn from those around you and in particular your students.
- **Be Observant:** Acknowledge the details of the world of a school. Understand the school environment, the community around the school, the socio-economic background of students, and the social and emotional needs of students.
- **Take Advice:** Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, took advice from Salman al Farsi about the digging of the trench (*Nur al-Yaqeen*, Allama Muhammad 'Afifi al-Bajouri); this is the example of the Prophet seeking the advice of his companions. Similarly, make it a point each day to ask a fellow colleague, parent, or student for their advice on something and make it a point to act on it.
- **Influence Others:** Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, influenced his companions by his own state (his *haal*); good companionship is a transfer of *haal* to *haal*.

Imam Ghazali codifies the inward traits of a believer in the *Ihya Ulum Ud Din*. In the second section of this work, he writes about those who expose us of our own weaknesses. He writes we may despise people who expose us even though we should really be grateful to them. We harbor resentfulness towards the one who shows us our weaknesses and when they show us our faults, we say “what about you and your faults?” This, he says, is a sign of hardness of the heart and weakness of faith. Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said: Those of

you nearest to me in the Day of Judgment are those best in character and the most hated and furthest from me are those who are pompous and extravagant and pretentious (those who are arrogant and do not take advice) (Tirmidhi). ‘Umar ibn Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: “There is no goodness in people who don’t give advice, and there is no goodness in people who don’t like to be advised” (*Risalat Al-Mustarshidin*, Imam al-Muhasibi).

Imam Ghazali in the *Ihya* lists the following as signs of good character:

- Modesty and Shyness
- Little Harm and Much Good
- Truthful of Speech, Few Words and Many Works
- Few Sins
- Mind Ones Own Business
- Kind and Solicitous
- Faithful in Keeping Ties with Others
- Dignified Conduct
- Patient in Difficulty
- Ever Thankful
- Satisfied with Little, Clement
- Gentle Without Lust or Greed
- Empathy Toward Others
- Not to Curse, Revile, Bare Tales, or Slander
- Not to be Rude, Maliciousness, Stingy, or Envious
- Cheerful and Pleasant
- Love for the Sake of Allah
- Hate for the Sake of Allah
- To be Pleased for the Sake of Allah and Angry for the Sake of Allah

(*Ihya’ ulum al-din*.5 vols.1998, Aleppo. Dar al-wa’I, Translation, Nuh Ha Mim Keller in *Sea Without Shore*)

These signs of good character listed by Imam Ghazali comes from the characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, mentioned in hadith and in statements from the companions about the Messenger, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. The signs are the outward manifestation of an inward purification of the heart and the attachment of the heart to one’s Creator. They are called signs because they point to the fact that the person is someone who one can take from, learn from, and pattern oneself after. Good character leads to good mentoring which leads to exemplar individuals which lead to good communities. In schools, the environment fostered by people exhibiting such signs would yield a harmonious community of learners.

Imam Nawawi states that all good character is derived from 4 hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace:

An-Nawawi reported: the Imam Al-Khaleel Abu Muhammad Abdullah ibn Abu Zaid, the leader of the Maliki scholars in the West in his time, said that all good manners are derived from four traditions. 1) The [saying](#) of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: *Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak goodness or remain silent.* 2) *It is from a man's excellence in Islam that he leaves what does not concern him.* 3) His [saying](#) to the man who asked him for advice: *Do not get angry.* 4) His [saying](#): *None of you has faith until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.* And Allah knows best (Commentary of Sahih Muslim, Imam Nawawi).

Defining Good Character

The Oxford Dictionary defines good character as “mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual; strength and originality in a person's nature; and a person's good reputation (Oxford Dictionary).

In the Islamic tradition, the term *khalq* (creation) and *khuluq* (nature) are derived from the same root word and serve as the roots of character. *Khalq* relates to the outward appearance and *khuluq* relates to the inward nature of the person that should complement the outward form of creation.

Khuluq is a habitus (natural or habitual) or disposition (*malaka*) with which the spirit produces certain acts spontaneously, without the need for reflection, seeing, and pretense.

Khuluq is the spiritual dimension of the person. The noble traits an individual possesses will be identified by their outward actions, words, and states. The person's temperament and natural disposition gives a clue to a person's character. It is reported that the Prophet Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, whenever he looked in a mirror he used to pray: "O Allah, make my *khuluq* (خلق) (manners) as good as my *khalq* (خلق) (looks) اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ حَسَنْتَ خُلُقِي فَحَسِّنْ خُلُقِي (Adhkar, Imam Nawawi)

Aims of Character Education

The goals of character education in the Islamic worldview can be derived from Allah's sunna of sending Prophets to mankind. All Prophets came to lead mankind to worship Allah and to restore justice, fairness, and balance to the world and to individuals.

Our Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said that this is why he was sent: “I was only sent to perfect noble character.” (Muwatta, Imam Malik)

انتمأ بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق

We can learn from this hadith many things and connect many things. We know that Prophets were sent to direct people back to their Lord and as a reminder to worship their Lord. Also, some were sent with specific rules, regulations, and laws to help people gain the pleasure of their Lord and harmony within their communities and societies. So we can connect that the way to ensure this is through the working on one's character.

We live in an age when character education programs are ubiquitous. In the absence of religious education in secular public schools, character education programs have become the informal curriculum that reinforces national values and foundational human ethics. The distinction between a secular character education program and one rooted in the Islamic tradition is the end goal. Islam-based character education should not solely be for nurturing good citizenship or the ability to effectively communicate, interact, and live with others but to achieve both of those with a deeper end goal of becoming better believers. Tawhid (consciousness of Allah's oneness) is the end goal of character education programs and by virtue being lawful citizens, being morally upright, being a caretaker of the earth, and a person who respects themselves and others. The essence of Islam-based character education then is to live the principles of Islam in practice. It is to *be* Muslim.

Foundational Elements of Character Education

Consciousness of Allah (Taqwa)

The hadith of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, that states, "Fear Allah (*Ittaqullah*) and follow a bad deed with a righteous one for it will erase the bad one, and treat people with the best of character" illustrates that the foundation of treating people with good character is our consciousness of Allah. This is a very personal aspect of character education that we must foster in students but one that may not always be visibly noticeable. In some instances it is possible that students may explicitly rectify stealing another student's lunch, for example, with bringing lunch for the whole class the next day. But more than the actual outward, public rectification is the consciousness that must be reinforced and reiterated through a classroom code of conduct or classroom ethic co-constructed by the students and teacher. When asked where *taqwa* resides, the Prophet pointed to his chest symbolizing the inward nature of true consciousness.

Understanding of Religion ('Ilm)

Abu Hurayra said, "I heard Abu'l-Qasim say, 'The best of you in Islam is the best of you in character when they possess understanding (of the deen)'" (Adab al Mufrad). As obvious as the concept of learning one's religion is to perfecting one's character the point must still be reinforced consistently to students. Students must embody the interconnection between *'ilm* (knowledge) and *'aml* (action). Doing good simply for the sake of pleasing elders or because it is mandatory or for some form of extrinsic reward of a character education program undermines the essential benefit of the action itself. Students need to appreciate the sweetness of learning about Islam and then living it.

Strengthening the Heart

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said in a hadith related in Sahih Bukhari: "Allah will not look at your outward appearances, nor at your forms, however He will look at

your hearts.” Character education stems from a good heart, a heart that is attached to Allah and filled with the love of Allah. In practice, any character education program is a program of making the heart pure, either through preventative means of securing the *fitra* state of the child, or treating it in order to rid it from the vile traits and diseases that can penetrate it (Yusuf, 2004).

Classroom Approaches to Character Building

Those of you nearest to me in the Day of Judgment are those best in character and the most hated and furthest from me are those who are pompous and extravagant and pretentious (those who are arrogant and do not take advice) (Tirmidhi).

Many approaches to character education can be implemented in classrooms, however equally important is the messaging of the purpose and benefit of such an emphasis in the overall objective of Islamic schooling. The message of perfecting one’s character being a lifelong process is for instance one aspect that needs to be constantly reinforced. Students need to acknowledge that they will make mistakes; they will have lapses, and do things that they regret. But it is not about how hard you fall, it is about whether you can pick yourself back up.

Secondly, we as educators in Islamic schools need to acknowledge that ***we are*** the character education program. Putting aside any and all of the character education approaches, activities, and tools, in the end, how we as educators conduct ourselves, what we aspire for, what we say and do not say, and how we act and interact is the character education program of our school. And distinct from other school settings, students have a right to take from our character within the walls of the school and outside of it. If we expect students to embody good character always, then equally, our Islam (as educators) cannot turn on and then off from one setting to the next.

Most often character education tools comprise of checklists, activities, and recognition schemes. The following list of strategies is different. These strategies ought to be more accurately considered as approaches that should serve as essential elements to be incorporated within your school’s character education program. Read the following 7 approaches also as ways to informally and implicitly nurture character through the rhythm and culture of your classroom.

1. Foster Taqwa: Consciousness of Allah

Sahl ibn 'Abd Allâh al-Tustarî said, 'When I was three years old I used to say the ‘Isha (night) prayer, because I watched my maternal uncle Muhammad ibn Suwâr doing so. One day he said to me 'Do you not remember God, your Creator?' and I asked, 'How should I remember Him?' He said, 'When you put on your bedclothes, say in your heart three times, without moving your tongue, "God is with me. God beholds me. God watches over me". This I did for several nights, telling him what I had said. Then he instructed me to say the same words seven times each night, which I did, and then eleven times, upon which I felt a sweetness growing in my heart. After a year had passed, my uncle said to me, "Keep doing what I have told you until you enter your grave, for it will help you in this world and the next". I continued to do it for several years,

finding a sweetness within myself, until my uncle said, "Sahl! If God is with somebody, and beholds him and watches over him, can he then disobey Him? You will never do so" (Ihya' ulum al-din.5 vols.1998, Aleppo. Dar al-wa'i).

This story of Sahl bin Tustari and his uncle, is a practical example of character development. It illustrates that we as educators need to nurture *taqwa* through routines in our classrooms followed by reminders and then consolidated with the wisdom within the routine. In the example of Sahl his uncle shared a very simple and yet powerful daily routine. A year later his uncle encouraged and reminded him to continue doing this routine. And years later his uncle shared the wisdom of it. Much can be extrapolated from this story but one aspect that ought to be highlighted in the age appropriateness of character education. In the example of Sahl, the focus of his uncle at an early age was simply to establish the routine. Sharing the wisdom of the routine with Sahl at such an early age may have been premature or may have been lost on Sahl. Similarly, in Islamic schools we need to consider how we differentiate our character education approach for the distinct age levels of our students.

2. Praise and Thankfulness

Building on the importance of routines from the story of Sahl, praise and shukr are two core elements of good character in the Islamic tradition. Some 'ulama say that these are the two most praiseworthy traits to have. One way of fostering a culture of praise and thankfulness in the classroom is to have children at the end of the day before going home make dua' to Allah out loud as they stand and face the qibla. Encourage them to thank Allah for three things that occurred during the day. We can also encourage them to do the same at home before they sleep in order to reinforce school-home connection.

Another way of fostering praise and shukr into the routine of the school day is to require them to always be cognizant of goodness even during distress. For example, during the school day when a student comes to you with a problem – ask them to sit, be calm, and think of something they should be thankful for first – before sharing the problem. This simple action will make them constantly reflective of the positives around them without being overly consumed in the negative. It will also serve as a way of softening their hearts and recognizing that the problem they had intended to share may not be as traumatic as they had thought. Lastly, by requiring students to first think of something to be thankful for, it will allow them to more clearly think of solutions to their problems. Research shows that creative thinking is at its optimum when our minds are at ease (Pink, 2006).

3. The Power of Dua'

Nurturing an ethic of dua' among students is arguably one of the greatest contributions an Islamic school can make. Students need to recognize that power of dua' in calming oneself when angry, encouraging hope when feeling helpless, and engendering satisfaction with what Allah has granted when comparing oneself to others. A teacher who models making dua' after

congregational prayer, at the beginning or end of the school day, when difficulties arise or successes are achieved throughout the school year make dua' habitual for students.

For example, have students solve their problems by themselves and have them make dua' for their fellow students when something arises or if they have a dispute so that it does not fester in their hearts. Build dua' into the classroom code of conduct that serves as a reminder of what to do when particular situations arise. This will ensure that they follow the advice of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to love for others what you love for yourselves. Also the Hadith of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, testifies to: "There is no Muslim servant who makes dua' for his brother behind his back (without his knowledge), except he (an appointed angel) says, "and for you likewise" (Ahmad).

4. Muraqaba (Observing Oneself)

Umar Ibn Khattab, may Allah be well pleased with him, said: "Take account of yourself before being taken to account." This is the system of character development in Islam, to give people the tools for them to watch themselves, to have muraqaba of themselves.

Nurturing good character is rooted in self-reflection. Students need to be nurtured into being conscious of their own actions, the implications of their actions (or lack of action), and aware of the social-emotional needs of others. Emotional intelligence can be nurtured through self-reflection (Goleman, 2007). But teachers need to hone these skills of reflection through classroom routines.

Some of the strategies that we have used in elementary Islamic school classrooms are to require journaling and tracking of one's sins and then making tawba (asking for forgiveness) at the end of the school day. We would begin by teaching students about common classroom interactive behavior such as backbiting, spreading rumours, and gossiping. These would be part of our character education talks through stories from the Seerah, contemporary examples and storybooks, and simply sharing personal experiences that students have experienced. We then expect students to carry a small notebook where they track the number of times they commit one of these traits throughout the school day or outside of the school. Having them reflect inside and outside the school ensures their *muraqaba* is not turned on and off when entering and then leaving the Islamic school. At the beginning and sometimes at the end of the day we would then track on the board (anonymously) the number of times these traits have been committed and as a class track the decrease in such behavior – and celebrate days where no instances of these traits took place. To deepen reflection further, especially with older students, it is helpful to build in 5 minutes at the end of the day for students to silently make *tawba*.

5. Turning Away From What is not One's Business

Avoidance is as important as doing good acts. Students need to understand that making the right decision is part of intelligence and sometimes that right decision means not being part of

something. This is particularly relevant to refraining from what does not concern us. For example, speak to the students about turning away from conversations that they are not apart of when a teacher is speaking with another student, or a Principal is speaking with a teacher, or fellow students are speaking to each other. Eavesdropping is a dangerous habit in this age particularly where one can muster themselves into someone else's business even through Facebook or other forms of social media. Technically, what is shared in social media is public information but our intention in how we approach public information makes a difference. Students need to acknowledge there is a difference between prying into someone's life on Facebook out of envy versus out of genuine happiness.

Tell the students that if they ever see anything or someone else is talking about something to someone, then move away from hearing their conversation. This is especially true when the teacher is talking to another student or censoring them for something. This is in keeping with the hadith, "from the excellent of a person's Islam, is leaving what does not concern one" (Tirmidhi). Teach the students about gossiping and sharing information that is useless or immoral. The best strategy is to teach them through stories. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to tell his companions that he did not want to hear anything concerning another companion because he wanted to go to them with a clear heart.

6. Building Bonds While Humbling Oneself

Character education must also be communal. Perfecting one's own character without learning to positively interact, support and build bonds with colleagues is incomplete. Once a week, let the students approach another student and tell them of something that they learnt from them or that they saw them doing that was good and inspiring, or something that they did that reminded them to do the same. This is about purifying one's heart and protecting oneself from narcissism. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "He has not thanked Allah who has not thanked people." (Abu Dawud).

These actions build community in the classroom. All students should feel that they have something positive to contribute and at the same time areas to improve. Students should not feel they are worthless or perfect. To reinforce both humility and confidence teachers must be cognizant of student social-emotional states and determine whose ego needs to be uplifted and whose needs to be humbled in a positive way.

7. Smiling

Smile and make it a point to tell students to smile during the day. It starts with the teacher and administration. Turn it into a weekly challenge to see who smiles the most in the class or in the school. There can even be friendly competitions between the teachers. Hadith: "Smiling is charity." One of the great 'ulama and pious person's description of good character: Abdullah ibn Mubarak, may Allah be pleased with him, described good character saying, "It is a smiling face, doing your best in what is good, and refraining from harm" (Tirmidhi).

Scientist and [spiritual](#) teachers alike agree that the simple act can transform you and the world around you. Current research (and common sense) shows us that a smile is contagious. It can make us appear more attractive to others. It lifts our mood as well as the moods of those around us. It can even lengthen our lives (Abel and Krugar, 2010).

Conclusion

To perfect our character requires that we allow ourselves to take correction and critiques from others. Our society does not promote this as this is tantamount to being taken advantage of. Our society promotes narcissism (selfishness) above everything else. This is truly what we need to ensure that children under our care do not adopt this characteristic. Develop in them to understand that if someone corrects us, that they are benefiting us more than if they praised us.

Jabir ibn Abdullah reported: the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, said, “Verily, the most beloved and nearest to my gathering on the Day of Resurrection are those of you with the best character, and verily the most hated of you to me and the furthest from my fathering on the Day of Resurrection will be the pompous, the extravagant, and the pretentious.” They said, “O Messenger of Allah, we know the pompous and the extravagant, but who are the pretentious?” The Prophet said, “**The arrogant.**” (Tirmidhi).

Nurturing character can be done in many ways. The essential point of this paper is that the conception of character education and the approaches we use must be distinct in Islamic schooling. We as educators must continue to reiterate the objective for ourselves and for our students. We must also continuously take ourselves to account while having high expectations for our students. And we need to deeply reflect on the ways that we make character education not simply a list of checklists and columns to fill on a report card but consider how we make it part of our classroom routines to nurture habits of high character.

Resources

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Teaching Critical Thinking Skills to Preschoolers! Can It Work?

Julia Nabaa

Abstract

Promoting and developing critical thinking skills in young children can help them in understanding and living Islamic values. Using a modified version of the Five Intellectual Standards developed by The Foundation for Critical Thinking can help our children learn how to cope within, and outside of, their Muslim environment.

About the Author

Julia Nabaa has spent over 35 years seeking and developing ways to enhance the learning of young minds. She taught kindergarten at the University of Islam in South Bend, Indiana. Julia has a B.S. in Public Administration from Indiana University and an Early Childhood Administrator professional certification. Presently, she is employed by the South Bend Community School Corporation as a Special Education paraprofessional and teaches Sunday school at the Islamic Society of Michiana, where she has taught preschoolers for the past seven years.

(This paper could not be included due to the fact it was not received before the printing deadline.)

Using Authentic Materials in the Arabic Classroom

Salah Ayari

Abstract

When students' exposure to Arabic is limited to textbook language, they miss out on learning how language is used in real life. This session will discuss what authentic materials are, why they are important to use, and how to maximize their positive impact on student learning. Sample materials derived from authentic sources and examples of classroom activities will be examined.

About the Author

Dr. Salah Ayari is an Instructional Associate Professor of Arabic and Arabic Studies at Texas A&M University. He holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Minnesota and has taught Arabic for more than 20 years. He also serves as a consultant who provides mentoring, training and evaluation for teachers of Arabic.

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