**MODULE TWO: UTILIZING ROLE MODELS AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL**

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Help teachers understand that role models can be used as a key instructional tool, and that there are two types of role models: personal (e.g. teachers, parents) & aspirational (e.g. prophets, celebrities, etc). Each of these role models play different roles in instruction.
2. Help teachers understand that in order for a role model to be effective he/she must be: relatable. That is, a role model must have feelings, desires, relationships, strengths, and weaknesses.
3. Provide practical strategies for teachers to: (a) practice being a role model for their students, and (b) utilize role models as an instructional tool.

**Part One: Generate awareness & curiosity for role models. Discuss why role models matter**

1. Exercise: I want you to close your eyes, and go back to when you were ten years old. This means you were probably in the 4th grade:
   1. What is the name of your school? What did that school look like? How about your classroom? Who was your teacher? What did he/she look like?
   2. What did your house look like? What about your room?
   3. Who was your best friend?

* 1. *Key Question: At this point in time in your life,* 
     1. *What types of clothes did you wear? Why did you do that?*
     2. *What did you want to be? Why did you want to do that?*
        1. *Key learning: role-models play a critical role in upbringing.*

1. Not a new concept; Allah (SWT) Himself provided role models as one of the earliest forms of instruction. The institution of Prophethood.
2. As infants, we learn to talk through watching the way our parent’s tongue moves. We are observing and imitating to such a degree.
   1. Lois Bloom, 1973, Columbia University
3. As children, we learn our beliefs and attitudes through a system called “vicarious reinforcement.” That is, when we observe how others are treated after doing something -- for example if a child observes that after finishing dinner, he/she gets dessert, then they learn this behavior.
4. As young adults, we believe in what is possible for us through the presence or absence of identity-matched role models in different social positions.
   1. For example, if we’ve never seen a Muslim governor, we may not believe that is possible.
   2. Black community and role models: “The presence or absence of like others [i.e. identity-matched role models] in different social positions implicitly conveys information to young people…regarding what is possible for them as members of specific social groups.”
5. In this module, we’ll be discussing the idea of role models. Specifically, we’ll be discussing: (a) the different types of role models, (b) how each type of role model influences learnings, and (c) how you can bring this into the classroom.

**Part Two: Understand the different types of role models and what makes a role model a role model**

1. Question: If I were to ask you, who are your role models, what would you reply?
   1. Generally speaking, there are two types of role models:
      1. Personal (e.g. parents, teachers, friends, aunts, uncles, teachers) -- these are people who you interact with closely
      2. Aspirational (e.g. prophets, leaders, businessmen, athletes) -- these are people who you don’t interact with but can observe

1. Exercise: Let’s go back to list of role models, and ask the contributors why that person is your role model… If “Stephen Curry,” for example, why not “Adrian Peterson?” If “Prophet Mohammed,” why not, “Prophet Isa?”

* Key Learning: As a minimum basic requirement, your role model must be somebody who you relate to because of your own unique identity.
  + The reality is, every “teacher” or “older brother” or “celebrity” is not a role model. Or at least, we don’t look at them as a role model. We seek out role models that are “relatable to us.”
  + The Prophets were human beings, not angels
    - “And We never sent before you any of the Messengers, but verily, they ate food and walked in the markets (25:20)

**Part Four: Bringing Role Models into the Classroom**

* The critical question then: how can we, as teachers, become more relatable to our students, and further, how can we provide role models (e.g. Prophets, Companions, Family of Prophet) in a way that children relate to?

* Being a Role Model:
  + Sharing Personal Stories - When talking about a subject, think about when it had impacted your own life and share a personal story. To do this, think about the subject that you are about to teach and re-call when you had learned about it or when it had most impacted you.
    - Example: In a discussion about the importance of “Family,” I talked about my own experience with my mom.
    - Use props whenever possible
  + Developing a Personal Relationship - Building a personal relationship with students will allow us to be more credible in every message. Strategies include:
    - Call students by their name
    - Ask for their opinion and be genuinely interested
    - Give them compliments
      * Example: “Jaffer”

* Bringing Role Models into the Classroom:
  + 5 Sense Storytelling - When telling stories of people, utilize all five senses (or as many as possible) to help children build empathy for the story. In doing so, it makes the situation more relevant.
    - Example: Story of Lady Hajra. Tell it once regular. Tell it once with the 5 senses.
  + Case Studies - When teaching a lesson, create a potential story and put the child in the role in the protagonist. Generally, case studies can be direct, or metaphorical.
    - Example: To demonstrate the importance of aqeedah, I create a case study of the founder of Groupon, Andrew Mason. I put the person in his shoes and ask them to make a decision.
    - Another example: Greed versus contentment, story of brother-in-law
  + Real-Life Role Models - Whenever possible, try to integrate real-life role models into your lesson plan. This can occur through guest speakers, utilizing YouTube, or hosting a Skype-based session.
    - Example: In the digital fellowship, we invited guest speakers to share their stories, especially the role of Islam in their careers
  + Role Play - Role play is a powerful tool, that is
    - Example: Practicing doing wudhu; practicing tawaaf around the Kaaba