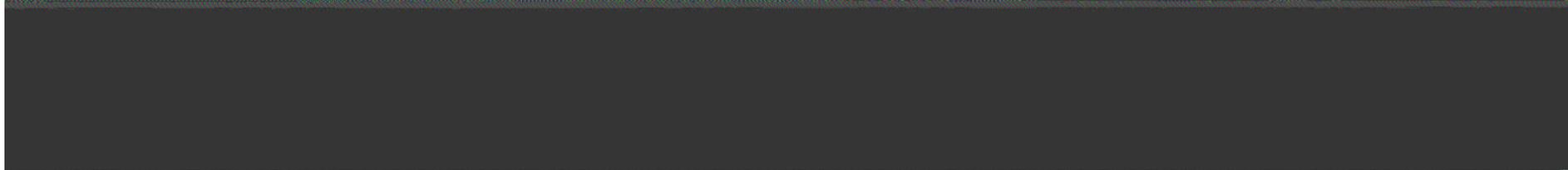


LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

BRINGING MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES
INTO AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Eeqbal Hassim and Jennet Cole-Adams





What is Islam?

Who is a Muslim?

What is the difference between 'Islamic' and 'Muslim'?

What is the Qur'an?

What is the Prophetic Tradition (Hadith and Sunna)





The most fundamental requirements of Islam are to believe in and worship Allah Alone, and to believe that Muhammad is God's final messenger who faithfully conveyed the Qur'an (God's spoken word in Arabic) to human beings.





Basic Beliefs of Islam

Oneness of God (Allah)

Angels

Divine Scriptures

Messengers of God

Day of Judgement

Fate and Divine Predestination



Basic Practices of Islam

Testimony of faith (*shahada*)

Prayer (*salat*)

Almsgiving (*zakat*)

Fasting (*siyam*)

Pilgrimage (*hajj*)

Halal dietary requirements



تعارف

تقديم نظرات المسلمين إلى المدارس الأسترالية

Misconceptions and stereotypes workshop



Women are inferior to men in Islam



Muslims are potential terrorists and
a threat to national security



Muslims want to be different and
dress differently



Islam is against democratic values



Islam is intolerant of other religions



Muslims do not want to integrate





Muslims in Australia

- 340,393 Muslims, according to 2006 census
- Australia's Muslims are a relatively young group More than 80% of Australian born Muslims are under 25
- Over 80% live in NSW and VIC

State/territory of residence	Muslim population	% of total Muslim population
New South Wales	168,788	49.6
Victoria	109,369	32.1
Western Australia	24,187	7.1
Queensland	20,318	6.0
South Australia	10,521	3.1
Australian Capital Territory	4,373	1.3
Northern Territory	1,083	0.3
Tasmania	1,049	0.3





Birthplace	%	Birthplace	%
Australia	37.9	Bangladesh	3.9
Lebanon	8.9	Iraq	2.9
Turkey	6.8	Indonesia	2.5
Afghanistan	4.7	Bosnia & Herzegovina	2.2
Pakistan	4.1	Iran	2.1





- 86% of Australia's Muslims speak a language other than English at home
- 80% have a good command of English
- Only one third speak Arabic

Main language	Number
Arabic	114,034
Turkish	46,914
English	43,139
Urdu	18,142
Bengali	15,304
Dari	13,766





Diversity of Australia's Muslims – Theology

Majority are Sunni; minority Shia

Cultural Muslims

Non-denominational Muslims

There are many sub-groups within the Sunni and Shia factions





Diversity of Australia's Muslims – Islamic law

In Islamic law, the five main schools are represented (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali and Jafari)

Some Muslims do not follow a school (*madhhab*) of Islamic law





Diversity of Australia's Muslims – Language, culture, nationality

Country of origin, language and cultural background influence interpretation of Islam

There are three levels of culture: personal; family; and communal/societal

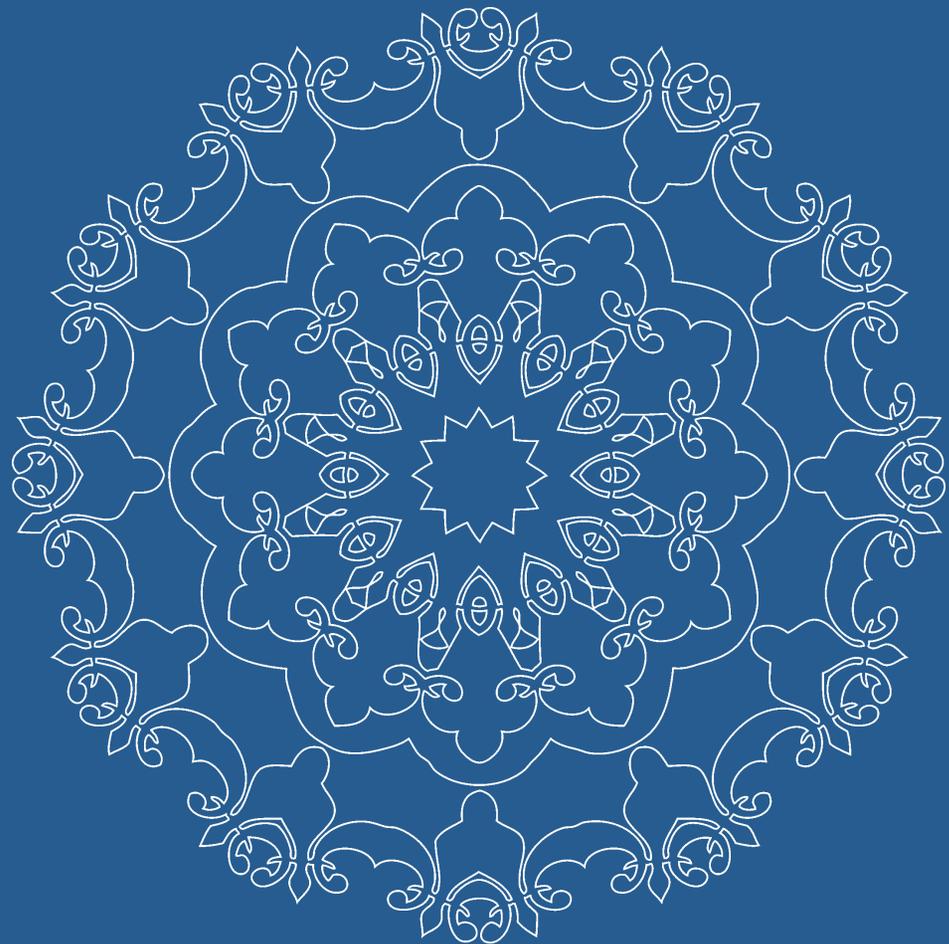
Muslims are so diverse – it is hard to represent them; they are beyond generalisation

Some Muslims are rethinking their interpretation and practise of Islam

Don't judge a Muslim by their cover



Morning Tea





Muslim perspectives across the curriculum

English

Moral and religious concerns including: sex; drug use; music; immorality and crime; non-Islamic religious celebrations; other celebrations (such as birthdays and parties); religious bias.





Science

Concerns include Darwinism, evolution theory, cloning, artificial insemination, images of the naked body.

Maths





History

Muslims often have a different perspective on history and world events, e.g. the Crusades, European history, American history, War on Terror, history of Islam in Australia.

Muslims often hold different views about their own history.





Geography

Look out for disputed national and geographical boundaries e.g. Israel and Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Southern Philippines; division of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and Malaysia, Singapore and Southern Thailand; Aceh.

Socio-economic disadvantage of much of the Muslim world.





Arts

Concerns may include: drawing of animate objects; photography; music.

Health and PE

Sex education

Dress requirements for PR, sports and swimming.

Ramadan and fasting.





Economics and Business

Concerns include: interest (*riba*); capitalism.

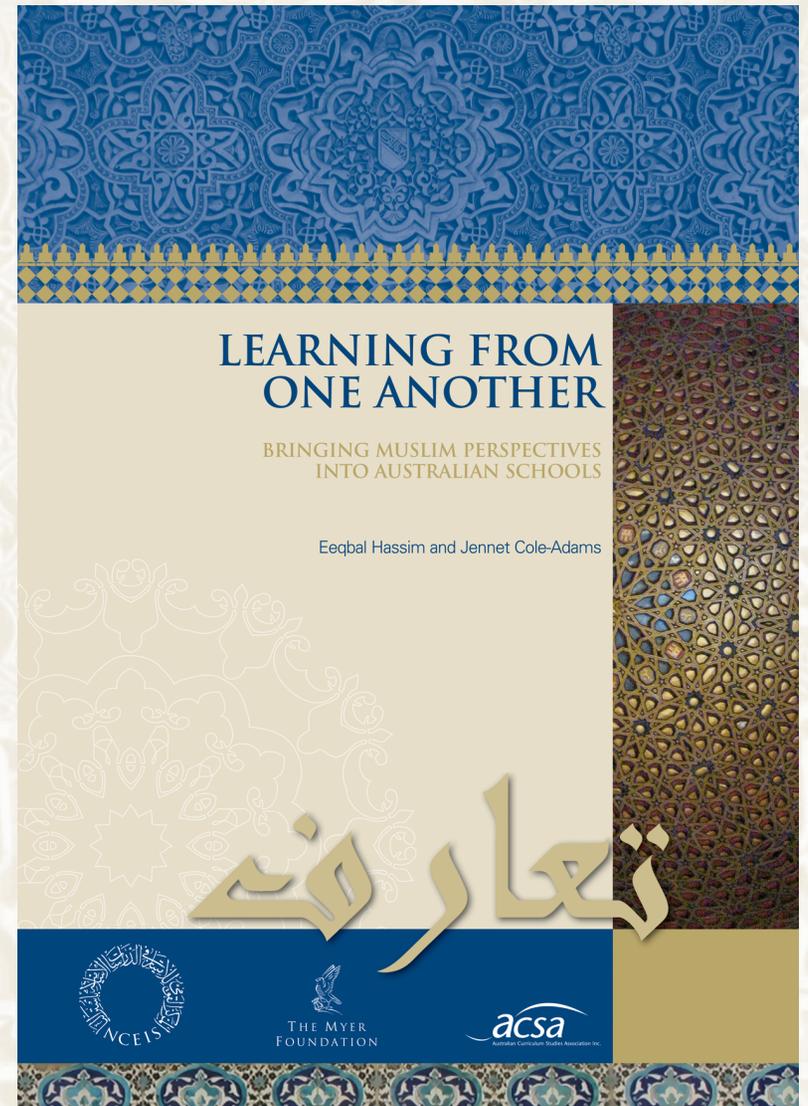
Cross-curricular Perspectives

Concerns include: stereotypes, prejudice, ignorance, misinformation, misconceptions and racism; role of the media and politics; questions of allegiance.

Muslims can also display prejudices and stereotypes towards others.



Resource overview



Part A: Islam and Muslims in the classroom

- Introduction
- Issues to look out for
- Suggested strategies and content
- Learning sequences



Worksheet: Afghans, camels and the outback

What contribution did the cameleers make to the development of Australia? Explore the following pieces of historical evidence to find out.

A camel being unloaded from a steamship at Fort Augusta, South Australia, in 1824. Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, no. B 68916.



Source one

Why do you think camels, like this one, were sent from Afghanistan and surrounding areas to Australia during the 1800s and early 1900s? Think about why camels were useful in the Middle East and why they would be useful in Australia.

Source two

We went *af* over the outback... We carried tea, sugar, spirits, clothing. No motors then, no planes. Only my camels. (Bejsh Dervish, cameleer)

Why do you think cameleer Bejsh Dervish carried large quantities of supplies?

Learning from One Another learning sequences

English

Primary: Searching inside ourselves

Secondary: Muslims, meaning and the media

Maths

Primary: Tessellating tiles of Alhambra

Secondary: Alkhwarezm's six standard forms

History

Primary: Afghans, camels and the outback

Secondary: The Crusades – a Muslim perspective

Geography

Primary: Where in the world is Mecca?

Secondary: Get the facts – Muslims in Australia

Arts

Primary: Minarets and mosques – the art of Muslim buildings

Secondary: Calligraphy and Islam

Economics and business

Secondary: Banking on Islam

Cross-curricular perspectives

Primary: Museum of Religion

Secondary: It's all in a name!

Science

Health and PE

Languages

Part B: Achieving positive outcomes for Muslim students

- Engagement and identity for Muslim students
- Facilitating religious practice and customs in schools

Despite the wide range of opinion among Muslims in Australia, it is certainly safer and more practical for schools with significant numbers of Muslim students to source *halal* certified products for school BBQs, picnics, dinners, social events and camps. These products are widely available in supermarkets across Australia, and from the growing number of *halal* butchers, meat suppliers and caterers. The prices are similar to equivalent products so cost is rarely an issue. You can request a list of *halal* certified producers in Australia in the form of state government produced guides. You can also request a list of *halal* eateries in your city from the local Islamic council in your state or territory (see the Appendix — Key Muslim organisations).

However, if your school only has a small number of Muslim students, it may be simpler to get them to specify their dietary requirements. Often, they will seek their own food alternatives.

Hijab

Many Australians are familiar with the word *hijab*, commonly translated into English as 'headscarf'. In Arab-Islamic terms, it implies 'a barrier' both physical and spiritual. Physically, it involves covering the body in a certain manner and acting in a modest way with the opposite sex; in a spiritual sense, it connotes morality.

Islamic legal opinions vary on the requirements for the *hijab* for Muslim females. There are also a whole array of interpretations, manifestations and *hijab* designs in everyday life. Each Muslim culture has its own expression of *hijab* and there are intercultural borrowings in *hijab* fashion. Also, for a range of practical reasons, Muslim women do not always fulfil the requirements of *hijab* that they ascribe to.



Two Muslim women in different *hijab* styles. (Stockphoto.)

Part C: Wide world of Muslims

- Key Muslim beliefs and practices
- Who are Muslims?
- A very brief history of Islam
- Muslims in Australia
- Misconceptions and stereotypes

Islam also makes allowances for Muslims so that they will never need to miss prayers. For example, a traveller may shorten four *raka* prayers to just two. In fact, the original prayers in Islam were just two *raka*, except for *fajr* and *maghrib*. When the Muslims were more stable in Medina, these were increased to four *raka*. Aisha, Prophet Muhammad's wife, said that when the early Muslims travelled, they would revert back to the original prayer.

Muslims may also combine the prayers if necessary, such as during travel, illness, studying an important subject, and any other pressing or unforeseen matters:

- *Zuhr* may be prayed in the time of *asr* and vice versa.
- *Maghrib* may be prayed during the time of *isha* and vice versa.

Combining the prayers is considered praying on time in Islamic legal terms. Shortening and combining the prayers may be relevant when dealing with Muslim students at school.

When the time for prayer arrives, the call to prayer (*azan*) is often made at a mosque (*masjid*) or even at home. In Muslim countries, this call is made from a minaret and is heard far and wide. In many Muslim minority countries such as Australia, however, local regulations stipulate that the *azan* can only be heard inside the mosque.

Minaret. Photo courtesy of Photoo8.com



Call to prayer
Allahu akbar. Allahu akbar
(God is great. God is great) x 2
Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah
(I testify that there is no god but God) x 2
Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasulallah
(I testify that Muhammad is God's messenger) x 2
Hayya alaa-sala
(Come to prayer) x 2
Hayya alaa-falah
(Come to success) x 2
Allahu akbar
(God is great) x 2
La ilaha illallah
(There is no god but God) x 1

Before prayer, Muslims perform a ritual cleansing (*wudu*), which involves washing the hands, face, arms and feet. They must repeat this procedure before praying again if they go to the toilet or pass wind. If a Muslim has had sexual relations, they must perform a full body wash (*ghusl*). The *ghusl* replaces the *wudu* in this case. When there is no water, Muslims purify their face and hands with dirt.

Muslims are allowed to pray anywhere clean except in the middle of a street or walkway. Often, they will use a prayer mat as a precaution. When they are ready to pray, they turn to face Mecca (*qibla*). According to the most common opinion, Muslim men must at least be covered from the navel to the knee and women should cover everything except for the face and hands.

Apart from the five daily prayers, there are optional prayers throughout the day and night that a Muslim may choose to do to get closer to God. Muslims can also supplicate directly to God at any time, and believe that all good deeds are a form of worship as long as the intention is to please God.

Key Muslim organisations in Australia

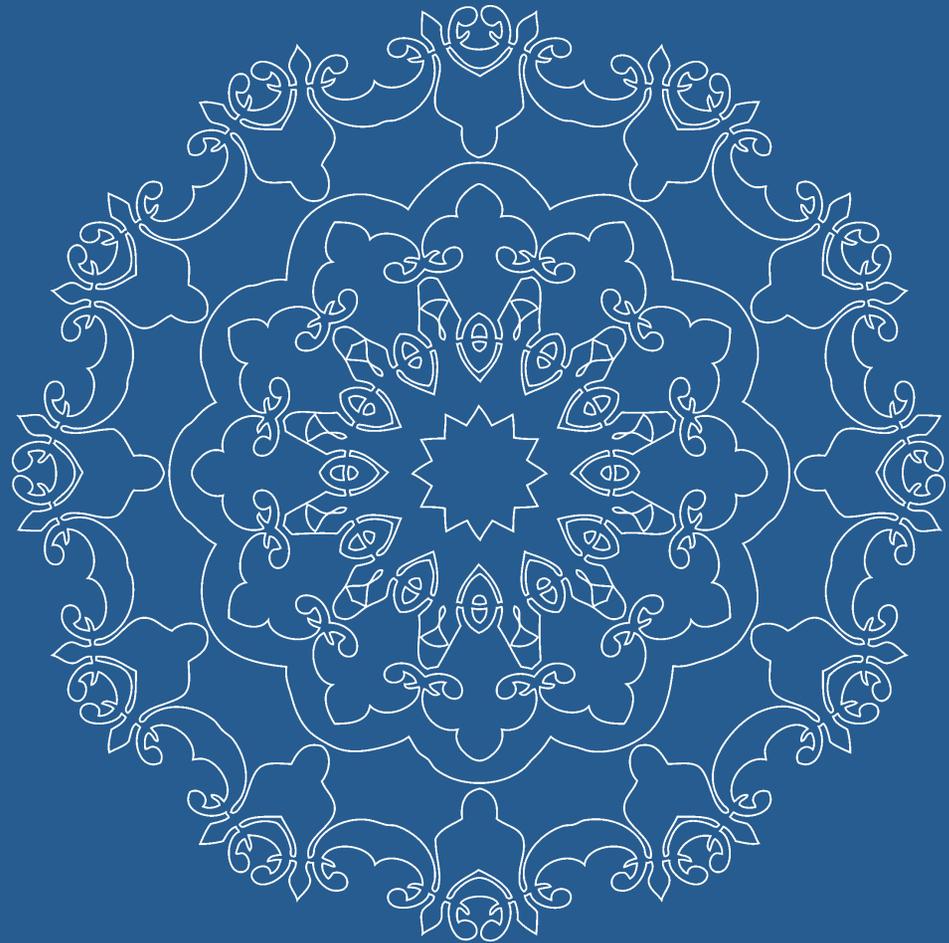
Glossary

GLOSSARY

Abaya	Loose gown or wraparound cloak.
Ahlu Kitab	'People of the Book' as referred to in the Quran, in particular Jews, Christians and Sabians who follow divine revelation.
Alim	Scholar; often used by Muslims to refer exclusively to a scholar of Islam; literally means 'knowledgeable one'.
Allah	The name of God in Islam; comes from the Arabic <i>al-Ilah</i> , meaning 'the God'. <i>Allah</i> is/was also used by Arabic-speaking non-Muslims to refer to God.
Az	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between mid-afternoon and sunset; consists of four sets (see <i>rak'at</i>); means 'mid-afternoon'.
Azan	Call to prayer.
Burqa	<i>Hijab</i> that includes a face cover.
Da'ir	Monotone drum.
Dhuhr	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between dawn (first light) and sunrise; consists of two sets (see <i>rak'at</i>); literally means 'dawn'.
Fatwa	Non-binding Islamic religious verdict (see <i>mufti</i>).
Fate	In Islam, it refers to the state of purity that all human beings are born in due to their innate recognition of God; literally means 'innate nature'.
Ghusl	The full body washing a Muslim is required to perform for prayer after sex, or after a Muslim woman has finished menstruating and wishes to pray; literally means 'washing'.
Hadith	Prophetic tradition; a narration from Prophet Muhammad reporting his words, deeds, actions, tacit approvals and/or circumstances; literally means 'news' in Arabic.
Hajj	Fifth pillar of Islam to be carried out by Muslims who are physically and financially able at least once in their lifetime; major pilgrimage to Mecca carried out only during the 12th month of the Islamic calendar (Zul-hijja). The rites of <i>hajj</i> include circumambulation of the Kaaba, walking/jogging seven times from Safa to Marwa (two small hills that Ishmael's mother, Hajar, climbed in search of water), a day of supplication and prayers at Arafat (a town close to Mecca), sacrificing of cattle, and the ritual stoning of the devil at the nearby town of Mina.
Halal (food)	Food that is permissible to consume in Islam; the Quran mentions that all food are <i>halal</i> except for carion, blood (that flows from the animal during slaughtering), pork (including all pig-based products), that which is sacrificed for other than God, and wine and its equivalents (see <i>halal</i>).
Halal	'Permissible' in Islam (see <i>halal</i> [food]).
Haram	'Prohibited' in Islam.
Hijab	Refers to, in popular terms, the headscarf and modest dress of Muslim women in a range of styles; generally involves covering all parts of the body except the face and hands. Some Muslims believe that Muslim women should also cover their faces. Linguistically, <i>hijab</i> refers to 'a barrier' or 'covering' in Arabic. <i>Hijab</i> is not always physical; it also connotes modest behaviour.



Lunch





Muslim Experiences





Muslim parent voice

One of the greatest disadvantages for Muslim children living in Australia is too much freedom, especially when they abuse that freedom, then neglect their studies and follow their desires that are very often destructive. Our rights as parents in Islam are being undermined by the new freedoms available to our children in Australia.





Muslim parent voice

We entrust the education of our children to the teachers – it is for the teachers to educate them well. We do not have the time to ask about our children’s education or to play an involved role. We go to work before they go to school and come home after school has finished. We do not understand why they never have homework.





Muslim parent voice

In my country children are very fearful of their teachers. They also respect them very much. If they see them in the street they fear them sometimes more than they fear their fathers and mothers.





Muslim student voice

I've grown up here as a Muslim and I've found that hard sometimes. My parents came here about 20 or 30 years ago and they want to live in the same way as in their home country, and they want their kids to be 'full-on' religious. But how can we do that when we've got all this peer pressure on us and when they're not that religious themselves? Do you know what I mean? Sometimes their cultural beliefs are actually against the teachings of Islam.





Muslim student voice

I've never felt any discrimination by teachers or by my tutors – quite the opposite. Sometimes they'll try to make a point to help you more, I mean, they exaggerate their kindness.





Muslim student voices

We know a lot of people who are token Muslims – they're just Muslim by name but do not practice Islam. Many of them hang around the wrong places.





Meeting the needs of Muslim students

3 key approaches: appreciating different perspectives;
managing diversity; negotiation

Don't try too hard to please Muslims

Coming to a meeting point – school expectations vs.
Muslim needs

Muslims are so diverse – there is no one right answer





Engagement in learning

Feeling isolated

Education culture shock (teaching, learning and assessment, classroom participation, teacher-student interactions)

Breaking the ice (e.g. introduce content relevant to them; learn how to say 'Hi' in their native language)





Identity, citizenship and belonging

The 'Australian Muslim' problem

Empower them to evaluate their actions and make the right decisions regardless of obstacles

Other key issues are: role models; peer pressure; parental expectations and rebellion; parent and community involvement in school





Facilitating religious practice and customs in schools

Prayer

Ramadan and fasting

Id absences

Halal food

Hijab

Co-curricular activities (music, drama, camps, sports)

Shaking hands with opposite sex

