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
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/territory of residence</th>
<th>Muslim population</th>
<th>% of total Muslim population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>168,788</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>109,369</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>24,187</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>20,318</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>10,521</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>4,373</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>1,083</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1,049</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthplace</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Birthplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Iran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>114,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>46,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>43,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>18,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>15,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dari</td>
<td>13,766</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
# Learning from One Another learning sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th><strong>Primary</strong></th>
<th><strong>Secondary</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Searching inside ourselves</td>
<td><strong>Arts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: Muslims, meaning and the media</td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Minarets and mosques – the art of Muslim buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: Calligraphy and Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Tessellating tiles of Alhambra</td>
<td><strong>Economics and business</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: Alkhwarezm’s six standard forms</td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Banking on Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Afghans, camels and the outback</td>
<td><strong>Cross-curricular perspectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: The Crusades – a Muslim perspective</td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Museum of Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: It’s all in a name!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geography</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary</strong>: Where in the world is Mecca?</td>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Secondary</strong>: Get the facts – Muslims in Australia</td>
<td><strong>Health and PE</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Languages</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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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 culture among Muslims in Australia, it is common to see more practical approaches for schools with significant numbers of Muslim students to source halal certified products for school Canteens, peace, drama, social events and camps. These products are easily available through networks across Australia, and from the growing number of halal butchers, meat suppliers and grocers. The prices are similar to equivalent products so cost is rarely an issue. You can request a list of halal certified products in Australia in the form of state government produced guides. You can also request a list of halal enteries in your city from the local Islamic council in your area 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 ask their own local alternatives.

Hijab

Many Australians are familiar with the word hijab, commonly translated into English as "headscarf". In Arabic, the word literally means, "to cover". In a religious context, 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 modesty. Islamic legal opinions vary on the requirements for the hijab for Muslim females. There are also a whole array of interpretations, modifications and hijab design in everyday life. Each Muslim woman has her own expression of hijab and there are individual borrowings of hijab styles. Also, for a range of practical reasons, Muslim women do not always fulfill the requirements of hijab that they accept to.

Two Muslim women in different hijab styles, Photography.
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
### Key Muslim organisations in Australia

### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>People of the book as referred to in the Qur’an, in particular Jews, Christians and Hindus who believe in one God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahl al-Hadith</td>
<td>Scholar often used by Muslims to refer exclusively to a school of Islamic law that bases its teachings on the hadith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allah</td>
<td>The name of God in Islam, derived from the Hebrew El Shaddai, meaning “the Strong” and often used with the Arabic personal pronoun “Allah”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajr</td>
<td>One of the five daily prayers carried out at any time between sunrise and sunset, consisting of two sets (two adhan), each containing two qiyam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isha</td>
<td>Call to prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumu'ah</td>
<td>High that includes a face cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikah</td>
<td>Monotone dress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salat</td>
<td>One of the five daily prayers carried out at any time between sunrise and sunset, consisting of two sets (two adhan), each containing two qiyam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarawih</td>
<td>Non-binding Islamic religious service often made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fajr</td>
<td>In Islam, it refers to the state of purity that living beings are born in due to their innate recognition of God (Heavily means/from nature).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ihram</td>
<td>Full body wearing a Muslim is required to perform for prayer after a prayer, or after a Muslim woman has finished menstruating and wishes to pray; literally means “leaving”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isha</td>
<td>Religious tradition of a mention from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) regarding his words about women, their souls, and their approval and/or circumstances; literally means “leaving”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijab</td>
<td>Five pillars of Islam to be carried out by Muslims who are physically and financially able to perform it (specifically in their lifetime): prayer, almsgiving in charity, fasting during the Ramazan month of the Islamic calendar, and keeping the five pillars of Islam. One of the pillars include the remittance of the poor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabat</td>
<td>Food that is permissible to consume in Islam; the Sunni-Rafidah school of thought state that food is permissible to eat for men, blood that flows from the animal during slaughtering pork, including all dishes produced, that which is sacrificed for other than God, and wine and its substitutes (like alcohol).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumma</td>
<td>“Jumma” in Islam, lea heals+lalyl, lea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikah</td>
<td>Religious ceremony conducted by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.
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