PRACTISING DIVERSITY
Engaging Muslims in Australian Schools

Eeqbal Hassim and Julie Hamston
Welcome

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Experienced in Islamic education, diversity education and Islamic Studies; lectured and researched at Asia Institute and Asian Law Centre, The University of Melbourne

Dr Julie Hamston
Education Consultant
Senior Fellow
Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne
Broad experience in teacher education; research on language and culture; Asian studies; intercultural understanding; global and multicultural education.
Purpose of the workshop

By participating in this workshop, you will:

- develop skills to meet the educational needs and expectations of diverse cultural, linguistic and religious groups, with particular reference to Muslims
- acquire whole-school and cross-school strategies to engage with diverse cultural groups
- acquire strategies to build interfaith and intercultural understandings in the classroom
- be able to identify subject-specific and cross-curricular links in the Australian Curriculum where interfaith and intercultural content can be introduced
Purpose of the workshop

This workshop will also familiarise you with two teacher resources:

1. Learning from One Another: Bringing Muslim perspectives into Australian schools
2. Building interfaith and intercultural understandings in Australian schools

This workshop is brought to you by the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS), The University of Melbourne, in partnership with the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA).

It is funded generously by the Myer Foundation.
Introduction: The broader context

It is important to contextualise the key learnings to be developed from this workshop in relation to international and national education contexts, initiatives and goals.
The United Nations (UNESCO)

Multicultural education uses learning about other cultures in order to produce acceptance of these cultures. Intercultural education aims to go beyond passive coexistence to (develop) a sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between different cultural groups.

The Melbourne Declaration

Global integration and international mobility have increased in the past decade. As a consequence, new and exciting opportunities for Australians are emerging. This heightens the need to nurture an appreciation of and respect for social, cultural and religious diversity, and a sense of global citizenship.

Ref: The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, 2008, p. 4.
Cont.

• (We need to) ensure that schooling contributes to a socially cohesive society that respects and appreciates cultural, social and religious diversity.

• (Students) are able to relate to and communicate across cultures, especially the cultures and countries of Asia.
The Australian Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Area (Including Assessment Standards) (Developed to date – 2011)</th>
<th>General Capabilities</th>
<th>Cross Curriculum Priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competence</td>
<td>Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Critical and Creative Thinking</td>
<td>Ethical Behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal note on general capabilities

• Many educators are pointing to the significance of the General Capabilities to The Australian Curriculum.

• They are also suggesting that these General Capabilities (including Intercultural Understanding) are the distinguishing feature of The Australian Curriculum.
A closer look at intercultural understanding

Review and discuss handout
Examples of links to General Capabilities

Ethical Behaviour

*Description*

In the Australian Curriculum students develop ethical behaviour as they learn to understand and act in accordance with ethical principles. This includes understanding the role of ethical principles, values and virtues in human life; acting with moral integrity; acting with regard for others; and having a desire and capacity to work for the common good.
Critical and Creative Thinking

Description

In the Australian Curriculum students develop critical and creative thinking as they learn to generate and evaluate knowledge, ideas and possibilities, and use them when seeking new pathways or solutions. In learning to think broadly and deeply students learn to use reason and imagination to direct their thinking for different purposes. In the context of schooling, critical and creative thinking are integral to activities that require reason, logic, imagination and innovation.
Personal and social competence

Description
In the Australian Curriculum students develop personal and social competence as they learn to understand and manage themselves, their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. This involves recognising and regulating their emotions, developing concern for and understanding of others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, working effectively in teams and handling challenging situations constructively.
Links to Cross-Curriculum Priorities

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives
- Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia
- Sustainability
A view from schools

Excerpts from video, *All of Us*, featuring the voices of principals and teachers in primary and secondary schools.
Reflection task

Headlines – A routine for capturing essence

This routine draws on the idea of newspaper-type headlines as a vehicle for summing up and capturing the essence of an event, idea, concept, unit etc. The routine asks one core question:

*If you were to write a headline for this topic or issue right now that captured the most important aspect that should be remembered, what would it be?*

Ref: Harvard Project Zero Visible Thinking Routines
http://pzweb.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/VisibleThinking1.html
Introducing Learning from One Another – A teacher’s resource
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

Why do you think camels, like this one, were sent from Afghanistan and surrounding areas to Australia during the 1860s 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 all over the outback... We carried tea, sugar, spirits, clothing. No motors then, no planes. Only my camels. Jezan Devonish, camelman

Why do you think camelman Jezan Devonish carried large quantities of supplies?

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# Learning from One Another learning sequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary:</strong> Searching inside ourselves</td>
<td><strong>Secondary:</strong> Muslims, meaning and the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary:</strong> Minarets and mosques – the art of Muslim buildings</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>Secondary:</strong> Alkhwarezm’s six standard forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Economics and business</strong></td>
<td><strong>Secondary:</strong> Banking on Islam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary:</strong> Afghans, camels and the outback</td>
<td><strong>Secondary:</strong> The Crusades – a Muslim perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Cross-curricular perspectives</strong></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>Secondary:</strong> Get the facts – Muslims in Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Science</strong></td>
<td><strong>Health and PE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Languages</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part B: Achieving positive outcomes for Muslim students

• Engagement and identity for Muslim students

• Facilitating religious practice and customs in schools
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

GLOSSARY

Bayâ\: Loose gown or wraparound cloak.

Bayâ\. ibn Cû\: People of the Book, as referred to in the Quran, in particular Jews, Christians and Sabians who follow divine revelation.

Ah\: Scholar, often used by Muslims to refer exclusively to a scholar of Islam; literally means "knowing person".

Al\: The name of God in Islam; comes from the Arabic Allâh, meaning "the God". Allah is also used by Arabic-speaking non-Muslims to refer to God.

Fajr: One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between midnight and sunrise; consists of four sets (sajidah) of the "prostration".

Salâ\: Salat or prayer.

Bun\: Aajal, that includes a face mask.

Daf\: Musical drum.

Jiy\: One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between down first light and sunrise, consists of two sets (sajidah); literally means "dawn".

Fitr\: Non-Muslims' religious verdict (law). It is.

Fir\: 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 of man and woman".

Ghad\: The full body washing a Muslim is required to perform for prayer after sajidah, or after a Muslim woman has finished menstruating and wishes to pray; literally means "washing".

Hal\: Prophetic tradition; a narration from Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saying: "If anyone fasts, his sins will be washed away".

Hal\: Prophetic tradition; the sense of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) that Muslims who are physically and financially able to do so at least once in their lifetime, should perform hajj to Mecca (or its equivalent). The time of hajj includes circumambulation of the Ka'bah, walking/standing seven times from Safa to Marwa; two small hills that Abraham's mother, Hagar, climbed in search of water, a day of supplication and prayer at Aqaba (a town close to Mecca), stoning of the devil, and the ritual stoning of the devil at the nearby town of Mina.

Hajj/Food: Food that is permissible to consume in Islam; the Quran mentions that all food are halal except for carrion, blood (that flows from the animal during slaughtering), pork (including all pig-related products), that which is snared (or other than God, and wine and its equivalent (law). It is.

Hajj: "Permissible in Islam (law) halal [Food]."

Istân: "Prohibited in Islam.

Hijb\: Refers to the headscarf and modest dress of Muslim woman 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, hijab refers to "a barrier" or "covering" in Arabic. Hijab is not always physical, it is also contains modest behavior.
Additional resources

*A World of Values*
http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values/

*Intersections of Identity*

*Australia Kaleidoscope*

*All of Us Resource Kit*

*The Really Big Beliefs Project*

*Beyond Beliefs: Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia*
http://www.ida.org.au
Returning to our focus

Muslim experiences in Australian schools
Muslims in Australia

- 340,393 Muslims, according to 2006 census
- 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>
<td>----</td>
<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>
Muslim Experiences of Education

*Muslim perceptions of education* – influenced by history, tradition, culture, heritage, religion, nationality

*Migrants and refugees* – challenges and opportunities

*Education culture shock* – different approaches to teaching, learning, assessment, teacher-student interaction

*ESL* – challenges, opportunities, attitudes toward mother tongue, Arabic as Islamic lingua sacra, interpreters

*Islamic schools vs. other schools* – reasons and challenges
Australian-born Muslim students – disparities with parent and community expectations

Muslim experiences are an example of broader interfaith and intercultural issues in Australian schools – diversity education and competence, issues not unique to Muslims

Muslim parent and student attitudes to schooling in Australia – engagement in teaching, learning and school social events through conversation, understanding and negotiation

Religious and cultural needs – dress, food, worship (prayer and fasting), holidays, sensitivities to certain content
Student and parent quotes workshop

Focus question:

What are the implications for you as a teacher at your school?
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.
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.
Morning Tea
Case studies workshop

The case studies we will examine have emerged from the Learning from One Another professional learning and resource development initiative. Since 2009, the initiative has involved over 700 primary and secondary teachers from all sectors across Australia.
The aims of *Learning from One Another* are to:

- Equip teachers with the skills to meet the needs and expectations of Muslim students and their parents in education
- Facilitate a whole school approach to supporting healthy relationships and engagement with Muslim students, parents and communities
- Offer teachers a greater awareness of the diversity of Islam and Muslims, nationally and globally
- Develop an appreciation of Muslim history and cultures in Australia.
The case studies showcase how some of the program objectives have been met in schools throughout Australia.

The schools selected for the case studies represent a diversity of locations, sectors and levels.

Some initiatives focus on curriculum content and others focus on whole-school approaches to building interfaith and intercultural understandings.
Introduction to task

• Work in groups of 4.

• Each person in the group reads through the case study.

• Share and discuss the case study as a whole group.

• New groups are formed, using the numbering system.

• Share and discuss your case study with your new group.
Group discussion – Focus questions

What do these case studies teach us about the importance of intercultural and interfaith understandings?

What do these case studies reveal about what is possible for schools to achieve in this regard?
Introducing *Building Interfaith and Intercultural Understandings* – A complementary resource to *Learning from One Another*
Case studies of building interfaith and intercultural understandings in Australian schools:

- 10 schools
- different sectors
- different capital cities
- different demographics
- regional representation
- former *Learning from One Another* participants
- 1 goal
Stereotypes session

What do you think of when you see/hear the word...
Hijab
JIHAD
SHARIA
FUNDAMENTALIST
EXTREMIST
TERRORIST
A personal reflection
Where to now?

Reflections and action plans
A personal reflection

• Think about what key learnings you have developed from your participation in this workshop.

• Use the Connect, Extend, Challenge strategy to reflect deeply on these learnings (Harvard Project Zero, Visible Thinking [http://pzweb.harvard.edu/vt/VisibleThinking_html_files/VisibleThinking1.html])
## Connect, Extend, Challenge
A routine for connecting new knowledge to prior knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECT</th>
<th>How are the ideas and information presented CONNECTED to what you already knew?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXTEND</td>
<td>What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE</td>
<td>What is still CHALLENGING or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sharing your reflection

Share and discuss your personal reflection with your group
Making a plan of action

• For your classroom – 3 things I can and will do

• For your school – 3 things I can and will do

• For you personally – 3 things I can and will do
Sharing your action plans

Share and discuss your action plans with the whole group
A final thought

.... cultural literacy has become the lifeline for today’s world, a fundamental resource for harnessing the multiple venues education can take… and an indispensible tool for transcending the ‘clash of ignorances’. It can be seen as part of a broad toolkit of worldviews, attitudes and competences that young people acquire for their lifelong journey…

Evaluations and close

Please complete the evaluation form and return to Eeqbal

Thank you for participating!
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