

PRACTISING DIVERSITY

Engaging Muslims in Australian Schools

Eeqbal Hassim and Julie Hamston



Welcome

Dr Eeqbal Hassim

Consultant in Islamic Education and Diversity Education

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

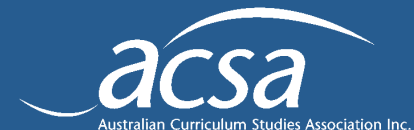
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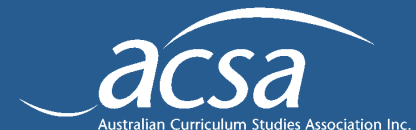
Broad experience in teacher education; research on language and culture; Asian studies; intercultural understanding; global and multicultural education.



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



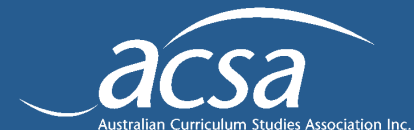
Purpose of the workshop

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.

Ref: *UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education*, 2006, p. 18.





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

Learning Area (Including Assessment Standards) (Developed to date – 2011)	General Capabilities	Cross Curriculum Priorities
English	Literacy	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
Mathematics	Numeracy	Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
Science	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Competence	Sustainability
History	Critical and Creative Thinking	
NOTE: Geography, Languages, The Arts (Phase 2) Design and Technology, Health and Physical Education, ICT, Economics, Business and Civics and Citizenship (Phase 3).	Ethical Behaviour Personal and Social Competence Intercultural Understanding	



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.






Cont.

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.






Cont.

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:

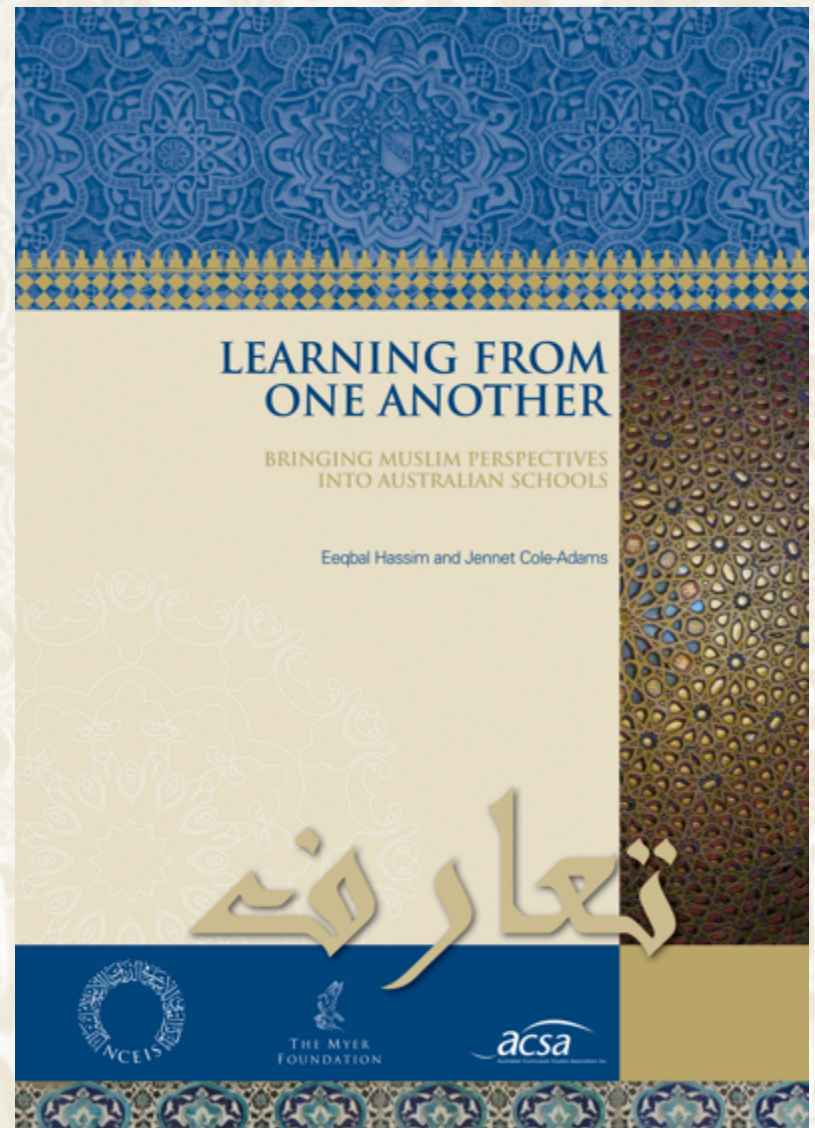
If you were to write a headline for this topic or issue right now that captured the most important aspect that should be remembered, what would it be?

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

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 steamer at Port Augusta, South Australia, in 1929. Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, no. B 02016.



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 all over the outback... We carried tea, sugar, spirits, clothing. No motors then, no planes. Only my camels. (Bejah Dervish, cameleer)

Why do you think cameleer Bejah 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. (Goodphoto)

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 Photost.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 rasulillah

(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

<i>Abaya</i>	Loose gown or wraparound cloak.
<i>Ahlu'l-Kutub</i>	'People of the Book' as referred to in the Quran, in particular Jews, Christians and Sabians who follow divine revelation.
<i>Alim</i>	Scholar; often used by Muslims to refer exclusively to a scholar of Islam; literally means 'knowledgeable one'.
<i>Allah</i>	The name of God in Islam; comes from the Arabic <i>al-lah</i> , meaning 'the God'. Allah is/was also used by Arabic-speaking non-Muslims to refer to God.
<i>Az</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between mid-afternoon and sunset; consists of four sets (see <i>rakat</i>); means 'mid-afternoon'.
<i>Azan</i>	Call to prayer.
<i>Burqa</i>	<i>Hijab</i> that includes a face cover.
<i>Daf</i>	Monotone drum.
<i>Daf</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between dawn first light and sunrise; consists of two sets (see <i>rakat</i>); literally means 'dawn'.
<i>Fetwa</i>	Non-binding Islamic religious verdict (see <i>mufti</i>).
<i>Fitr</i>	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'.
<i>Ghusl</i>	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'.
<i>Hadith</i>	Prophetic tradition; a narration from Prophet Muhammad reporting his words, deeds, actions, tacit approvals and/or circumstances; literally means 'news' in Arabic.
<i>Hajj</i>	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.
<i>Halel (food)</i>	Food that is permissible to consume in Islam; the Quran mentions that all food are <i>halel</i> except for carrion, 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>halel</i>).
<i>Halel</i>	'Permissible' in Islam (see <i>halel (food)</i>).
<i>Haram</i>	'Prohibited' in Islam.
<i>Hijab</i>	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.

Additional resources

A World of Values

<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/values/>

Intersections of Identity

<http://identities.asiaeducation.edu.au/default.asp>

Australia Kaleidoscope

All of Us Resource Kit

<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/>

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

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



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






Cont.

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.

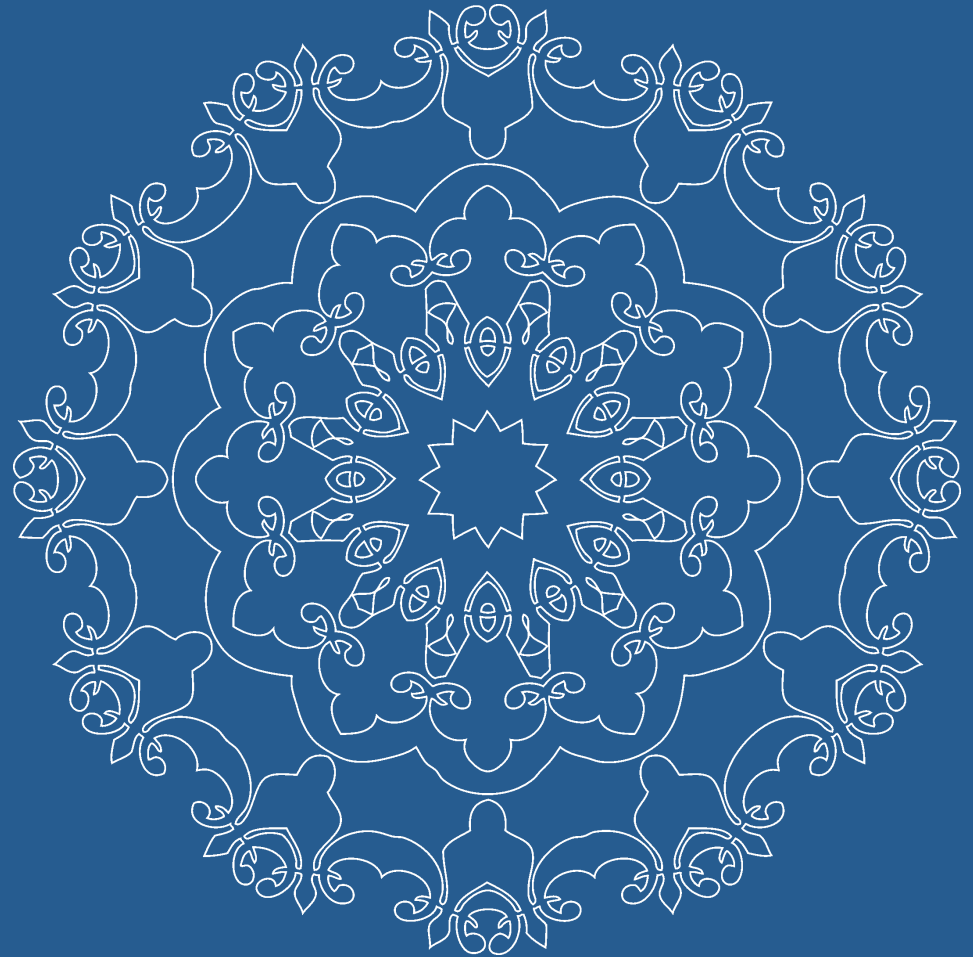
Muslim student voice

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.

Muslim student voice

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.






Context

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.
- 




Cont.

- 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.
- 



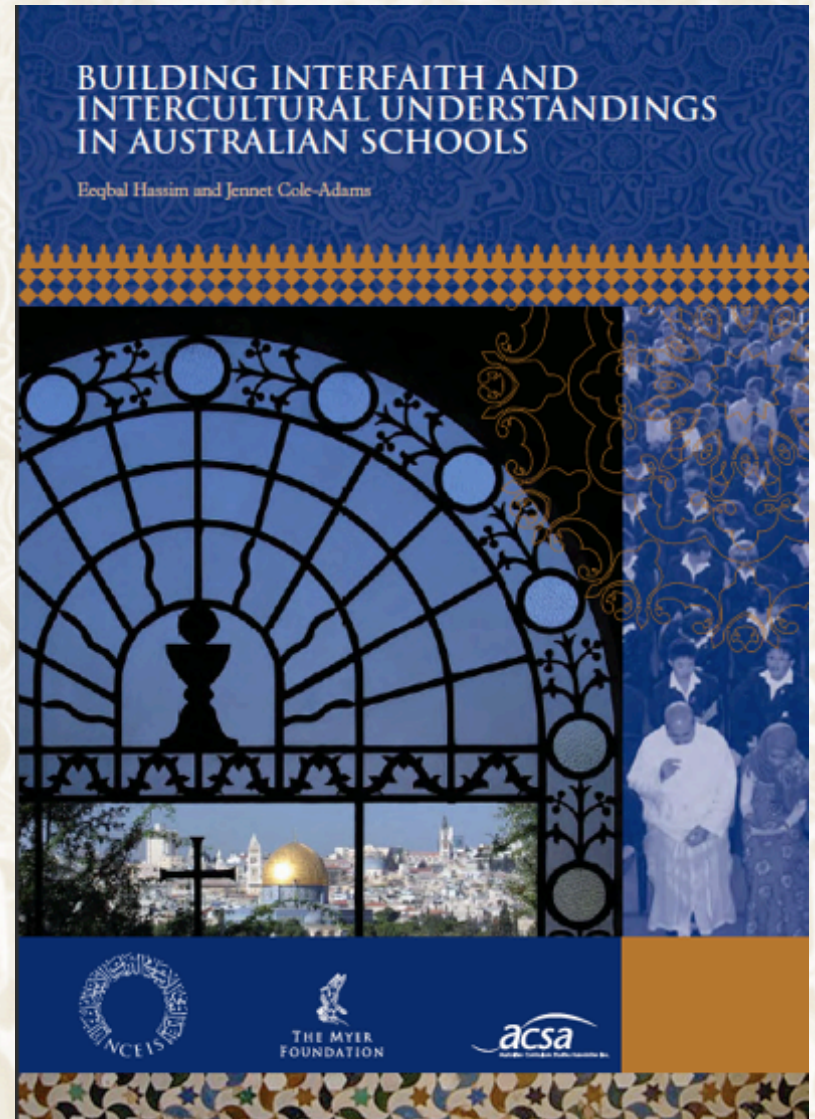
Group discussion – Focus questions

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***



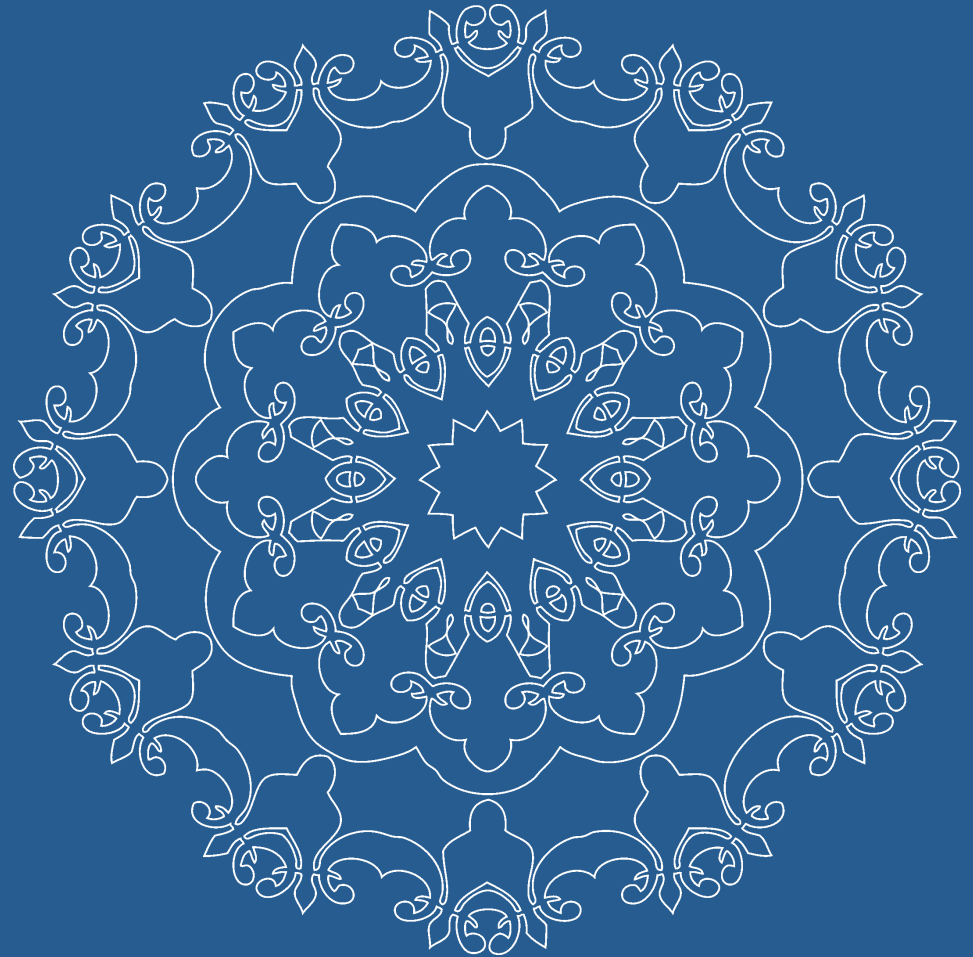
Case studies of building interfaith and intercultural understandings in Australian schools:

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

CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Berwick Grammar School, Officer, Victoria <i>This independent boys school has established a whole-school approach to fostering intercultural and interfaith awareness with neighbouring schools.</i>	9
Birrong Boys High School, Birrong, New South Wales <i>This government high school is multicultural and a majority of the students are Muslim. Its teachers have implemented a number of strategies to meet the diverse needs of all their students.</i>	13
Corio South Primary School, Corio, Victoria <i>This government school has witnessed a marked increase in the diversity of its student population, and is meeting this challenge through whole-school initiatives to foster intercultural awareness.</i>	16
Heidelberg Primary School, Heidelberg, Victoria <i>This government primary school is located in a predominantly Anglo-Saxon area but has recently seen a slow yet steady increase in cultural diversity amongst its student population.</i>	20
Isik College, Broadmeadows, Victoria <i>The majority of this independent school's primary students are Muslim, but it does not identify as being Islamic. It is committed to meeting the religious and cultural needs of its students.</i>	23
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Enfield, South Australia <i>Located in a low socio-economic area, this Catholic school has a long history of meeting the educational needs of girls from diverse cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds.</i>	27
Redlands College, Wellington Point, Queensland <i>This is a Christian school where senior students are encouraged to think deeply and critically about all religions and their contemporary contexts.</i>	32
St Laurence's College, South Brisbane, Queensland <i>The Homework Help Club is an initiative of this Catholic boys' school, which sees senior students volunteering their time to work with ESL students at several primary schools.</i>	37
St Rita's School, Victoria Point, Queensland <i>This Catholic primary school does not have any Muslim students but it is striving to broaden perspectives by introducing content about Islam and other religions across curriculum areas.</i>	40
The Friends' School, North Hobart, Tasmania <i>This progressive independent school has a rich array of curricular and co-curricular initiatives aimed at increasing intercultural and interfaith understandings.</i>	43

Lunch



Stereotypes session

What do you think of when you see/hear the word...



HIJAB

The slide features two vertical decorative borders. The left border is a narrow strip with a repeating pattern of blue and gold floral motifs on a dark background. The right border is a wider strip with a complex, interlocking geometric pattern in shades of blue, gold, and red, resembling a traditional Islamic tile design.

JIHAD

SHARIA

The slide features two vertical decorative borders. The left border is a narrow strip with a repeating pattern of blue and gold floral motifs on a dark background. The right border is a wider strip with a complex, interlocking geometric pattern in shades of blue, gold, and red. The central area of the slide is white and contains the text.

FUNDAMENTALIST

The slide features two vertical decorative borders. The left border is a narrow strip with a repeating pattern of blue and gold floral motifs on a dark background. The right border is a wider strip with a complex, interlocking geometric pattern in shades of blue, gold, and red, resembling traditional Islamic art. The word "EXTREMIST" is centered in the white space between these borders.

EXTREMIST

The slide features two vertical decorative borders. The left border is a narrow strip with a repeating pattern of blue and gold floral motifs on a dark background. The right border is a wider strip with a complex, interlocking geometric pattern in shades of blue, gold, and red. The word "TERRORIST" is centered in the white space between these borders.

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

CONNECT	How are the ideas and information presented CONNECTED to what you already knew?
EXTEND	What new ideas did you get that EXTENDED or pushed your thinking in new directions
CHALLENGE	What is still CHALLENGING or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?




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 indispensable 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...

Ref: *UNESCO World Report: Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue*, 2010, p.118.





Evaluations and close

Please complete the evaluation form and return to Eeqbal

Thank you for participating!

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