Rethinking Curriculum Mapping in Islamic Studies

Dr. Nadeem Memon
Overview
Overview

In the age we live in, Islamic Studies is a contested subject. Fears around Islamic Studies being taught in ways that are overly teacher-centered and irrelevant are, however, empirically valid. Studies (Abdalla, 2018; Bakali et. al, 2018) have shown that students and parents themselves feel that Islamic Studies is at times disconnected from the lives and experiences of students, fostering more disengagement than engagement, and not achieving the outcomes intended of spiritual balance and ethical awareness. There is an urgent need to rethink the way Islamic Studies curriculum is mapped. This full day workshop will provide three important considerations for rethinking how curriculum is mapped and facilitate a series of practical re-mapping exercises.
Outcomes

1. Critical analysis of existing Islamic Studies curriculum

2. Three considerations of how Islamic Studies curriculum is mapped

3. Three ways forward for initiating a curriculum mapping strategy in-house

4. High level re-mapping of essential Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

5. High level re-mapping of a curriculum progression maps
### Agenda

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00am – 10:30am</td>
<td><strong>Session 1</strong>: Establishing Context and Priorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30am – 11:00am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00am – 12:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Session 2</strong>: Analyzing Islamic Studies Curriculum</td>
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<td>12:30pm – 2:00pm</td>
<td>Lunch and Prayer Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00pm – 3:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Session 3</strong>: How Curriculum is Mapped / Mapping KSA</td>
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<td>3:30pm – 3:45pm</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:45pm - 4:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Session 4</strong>: Mapping Progression</td>
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<td>4:45pm – 5:00pm</td>
<td>Wrap Up</td>
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Approach / Ground Rules

1. You have a wealth of knowledge, experience, and insight

2. My role is to push thinking and facilitate learning

3. You will make this experience as useful or not as you like

4. Ask, challenge (respectfully), engage, adapt and adopt

5. At the end of the day we will NOT all agree
Starters
Why are you here?

Whole Group
Who’s In The Room?

Whole Group
My Essential Take Away

Whole Group
Personal Background
Background
Pioneers in Islamic Education
## Approaches to Islamic Studies Curriculum

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<tr>
<th>Appended</th>
<th>Integrated</th>
<th>Transformative</th>
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<td>2000s</td>
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<td>- Add subject</td>
<td>- Islam across curriculum</td>
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Approaches to Islamic Studies Curriculum

**Appended**

**Most Common**
- Add subject
- Beliefs and practices
- Religious environment
- Catholic school model

**Integrated**

**Most Aspired**
- Islam across curriculum
- Theme-based
- Character focus
- IB school model

**Transformative**

**Oft Experimented**
- Islamic lens
- Worldview driven
- Principled living
- Aboriginal Ed model
Achievements Islamic Education

Engaging

Authentic

Relevant
Achievements Islamic Education

Islamic Studies Standardized Test

National Islamic Studies Standards (NISS)
Jigsaw Small Group Discussion

**Key Curriculum Questions:**

How has curriculum been mapped?

What’s included and what’s left out?

What’s the end goal?

Are you satisfied with existing curriculum?
Criteria for Change

Toward a rubric for analysis
Break
Session 2: Analyzing Islamic Studies Curriculum
Curriculum Contentions
Contention One:

Reconsider spiral curriculum model
The same topics are introduced to students each year with increasing complexity while reinforcing previous learning.

Breadth Over Depth
Example: Punctuation

• Year 1: Full stops, question marks and exclamation marks
• Year 2: Capital letters for proper nouns and commas in lists
• Year 3: Word contractions and apostrophes
• Year 4: Quotation marks
• Year 5: Apostrophes for possessive nouns
• Year 6: Commas to separate clauses
Example: Seerah

Year 1: Prophet is born, family, companions, prophecy

Year 2: Year of the elephant, orphan, praised child, marriage

Year 3: Prophecy, early Muslims, struggle, Isra wal mi'raj

Year 4: Hijrah (Makkah to Madinah), Badr, Uhud

Year 5: Muslims under siege, Khandaq, Salman Al Farisi

Year 10: Life Story of the Prophet Muhammad
Example: *Wudu*

- Year 2: Correct steps of *wudu*’
- Year 3: Nullifies *wudu*’
- Year 4: *taharah* (purity) versus *najasa* (impurity)
- Year 5: Meaning and rules of *zakah*
- Year 6: *Ghusl, wudu’, tayammum*
Father asks daughter: How’s your Islamic Studies class? What are you learning these days?

Daughter responds: “We’re still learning about wudu.”
Mastery Curriculum Model

A mastery-based curriculum model is concentric: knowledge and skills are presented as foundational and become the prior knowledge all students share.

Curriculum is developed from a core outward
Mastery-Based Alternative

Year 6: Life of the Prophet - Overview

Year 7: Companions of the Prophet

Year 8: Women in early Islam

Year 9: Revelation and preserving the Qur’an

Year 10: Spread of Islam after the Prophet

Year 11: World history pre-Islam

Year 12: World history since the Prophetic Era
Mastery-Based Alternative

Oneness

Alms-Giving

Pilgrimage

Fasting

Prayer
Key Question for Consideration

Is the spiral model stretching out key content and concepts in Islamic Education to the detriment of mastery?
Contention Two:

Skills have been underemphasized
Knowledge
Skills
Attitudes
K
Ibadaat, Seerah, Fiqh, Aqida, Sunnah

S
Memorization, Logic, Rhetoric, Grammar

A
Akhlaaq, Tarbiyah, Adab
“The investigations of the Islamic sciences are virtually incomprehensible to anyone who does not possess knowledge of [logic, rhetoric, and dialectics] these sciences.”

—Sajiqli Zada

)Ottoman Educational Theorist(
Lost Tools of Learning
A Personal Story
Contention Three:

Stages of development are required
Question

Should a 6-year old be introduced to the concept of God’s wrath?
Play with them for the first 7 years, discipline them for the next 7 years, and befriend them for the 7 years following.

Sayyidina Ali (R.A).
Each theory of development provides a justification for what to teach when and why.
Example: **Montessori Second Plane**

- **Ages 6-12**
- Independence
- Do for Self
- Role Modelling
- Moral Order
- Right/Wrong
- Learn Through Observation
- Model Behaviour
- Charity
- Volunteering
- Give Space
## Stages of Development Grounded in the Islamic Tradition

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### Definition

- **Fitrah**: is raw to be nurtured
- **Discern harmful**: Employ modesty
- **Religious accountability**:

### Curriculum Implications

- **Nurture fitrah**
- **Relationships**
- **Memorization**
- **Core ‘aqida**
- **Stories**
- **Qur’an**
- **Play**
- **Nature**
- **Foundations**
- **Core beliefs**
- **Role modelling**
- **Application**
- **Implementation**
- **Fiqh**
- **Shariah**
- **Mentorship**
- **Tafseer**
- **Seerah**
## Small Group Activity: Analyzing Curriculum

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2. Do you feel the intended outcomes are urgent, important, relevant? |
| **Emphasis / Not Emphasized**         | 1. What’s emphasized and what’s left out?  
2. Do you feel anything should change? Explain. |
| **Spiral or Mastery**                 | 1. How has the curriculum been mapped? Spiral or mastery or other?  
2. Do you feel the mapping of outcomes will achieve intended outcomes? |
| **Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes**      | 1. Is there a balance between Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes?  
2. If yes, explain what makes it strong. If not, explain what’s missing? |
| **Developmentally Appropriate**       | 1. Is the content developmentally appropriate?  
2. Explain your answer with 3 examples of why it is developmentally appropriate or not. |

Groups of 5 – One Curriculum
## Small Group Activity: Analyzing Curriculum

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### Jigsaw: Rotate into Expert Groups
Whole Group: SWOT Analysis
Lunch and Prayer Break
Session 3: Mapping Knowledge Skills, and Attitudes
Knowledge

Skills

Attitudes
K: Ibadaat, Seerah, Fiqh, Aqida, Sunnah

S: Memorization, Logic, Rhetoric, Grammar

A: Akhlaaq, Tarbiyah, Adab
Case In Point: IB Learner Profile

1. Review each.
2. Analyze relevance.

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

**INQUIRERS**
We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

**KNOWLEDGEABLE**
We develop and use conceptual understandings, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

**THINKERS**
We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

**COMMUNICATORS**
We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

**PRINCIPLED**
We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

**OPEN-MINDED**
We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and are willing to grow from the experience.

**CARING**
We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

**RISK-TAKERS**
We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

**BALANCED**
We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intelectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve wellbeing for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

**REFLECTIVE**
We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.
Question

Would a learner profile for Islamic Studies classes be any different?
Centrality of Character

Arguably, the essence of Islamic Studies is to learn *adab* (etiquette)
Duties of Brotherhood
Ihya Ulum Ad Din (Imam Al Ghazali)

Table of Contents
- Material Assistance
- Personal Aid
- Holding One’s Tongue
- Speaking Out
- Forgiveness
- Prayer
- Loyalty / Sincerity
- Informality
“Every science in the madrasa curriculum was organized around questions (*masa’il*) with precisely defined subjects and predicates.... A science was then mastered by progressively studying its teaching texts with a professor until one had at one’s fingertips its most important questions, their **evidence**, the scholarly **disagreement** around them, the evidence of each **scholarly position**, and the **responses to the evidence of each**. Studying a science in this manner required the two sciences of critical thinking: logic (*mantiq*) and dialectics (*adab al-bahth wa al-munazara*). (p.8-9)
Questions students ask most:

WHY?
Activity 1: Embedding Critical Thinking Skills

Task 1: (Chart Paper 1)

1. What kind of questions do students most commonly ask?

2. How do you generally respond?

3. How might you respond in a way that proactively and explicitly develops their use of logic, dialectics, and critical thinking?

Task 2: (Chart Paper 2)

1. Develop a classroom strategy (step by step process) for every time a student asks a critical question – what they need to do before it is answered.
Activity 2: Islamic Studies Learner Profile

Task 1: (Chart Paper 1)
1. What would you change in the IB Learner Profile to make relevant for the aims and objectives of Islamic Studies?
2. Revise and redraft the Learner Profile

Task 2: (Chart Paper 2)
1. Develop a classroom strategy (step by step process) to integrate the Learner Profile into your teaching. Use examples where necessary.
Gallery Walk
Session 4: Mapping Progression
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Activity: **Four Corners**

- Teach children when they are responsible / when it's necessary
- Teach children early so that key ideas are ingrained
- Repeat learning in stages and levels of complexity so learning grows over time
- Teach different topics at different ages
Whole Group: **Implications for Remapping Curriculum**

1. What are concrete examples of things you would teach at different ages based on ages of development?

2. What are implications for re-mapping Islamic Studies curriculum given curriculum?

3. Where do we go from here?
Closing: Wrap Up
Considerations Forward

Across Schools
1. Establish a process
2. Agree on a framework
3. Create curriculum maps

Within Schools
1. Establish curriculum committee
2. Agree on outcomes
3. Match current curriculum to outcomes