

3rd Annual West Coast ISNA-CISNA Education Forum 2014
“Empowering Educators to Prepare Students for the Future”
Final Paper Submission

Instructions in Special Education: Classroom Strategies for the Muslim School

Abstract:

This paper provides a general overview of inexpensive and accessible techniques to Muslim school teachers and educators to better address the needs of *all* students. Although designed specifically for students with special needs, these simple methods can also be implemented for the general student population, and used to enhance the overall learning environment while maintaining the current school curriculum.

Tracks:

- Instructional Strategies
- Differentiated Instruction

Author/Presenter: Omaira Alam

Omaira Alam currently teaches for the Islamic Teacher Education Program (islamicteachereducation.com). She holds a Masters in Transition Special Education from the George Washington University specializing in at-risk students with emotional and learning disabilities. With over 15 years of experience in teaching and training, she continues her research focusing on Islamic education, special education in Muslim schools, urban Islamic education, discipline with dignity, instructional strategies based on gender, and homeschooling. Her blog, Black Board, White Chalk (blackboardwhitechalk.wordpress.com), explores traditional and contemporary issues in education.

Introduction

While striving to meet the spiritual and academic needs of Muslim students, Muslim schools are struggling or unable to meet the needs of students requiring special education. In this paper, techniques and strategies are presented that can be incorporated into any classroom in a manner that allows not just the individual student to benefit, but all students. Students within and without the special education spectrum can benefit from what can be termed as a form of empathic learning: a concept where educators and parents focus on the individual needs of the student or child in order to further enhance their Islamic educational experience. Many students have needs based on their individual strengths and weaknesses that can be addressed through these techniques without overhauling the entire Islamic education curriculum. These teaching methods further augment the informal and formal curriculum.

Stemming from the lack of trained special education teachers, lack of resources – financial and otherwise – and no legal requirement to provide special education services in Islamic schools, this paper hopes to provide inexpensive and accessible techniques to Muslim educators to better address the needs of all students. Through this empathic approach teachers are better able to anticipate the needs of the students.

Defining Special Education

When considering special education images of children with physical disabilities are conjured up. The reality of special education is that although children with physical disabilities are part of the spectrum, there are a number of diagnoses that have no or minimal physical manifestations. For these children, because they look “normal” receiving services is difficult especially in settings where such services, like private schools are not required.¹

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, the general definition of special education is

“a child after evaluation is found to have a mental retardation, a hearing impairment, a visual impairment, a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness or multiple disabilities, and who by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.”²

According to the Ministry of Education in Ontario, Canada, there is a recognition that all students, irrespective of their abilities, require support from educators, peers, family and friends to truly benefit from their educational experience. In addition to these students, there are those with special needs who require additional supports. These students are defined as having exceptionalities which could include one or more of the following: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, or physical. These are special educational needs “that cannot be met through regular instructional and assessment practices.” They are, therefore, met through accommodations and/or a modified education program which depending on the needs of the individual student could be above or below grade level expectations. In the United States and Canada formal identification through a review process by the school must be made for a student to receive special education services.³

The main point that one must remember, however, is that most students requiring some level of additional support may not have any outwardly physical indicators that they need additional supports. Most students with mild to moderate levels of behavioural and specific learning disabilities, as well as with autism fall into this category. Educators need to be aware of the spectrum of special needs and how they can manifest in any student.

Nature of Special Education in Muslim Schools

Although many educators, parents, and other stakeholders assert that school programs need to be more inclusionary, the real message is that such an effort is not just about a place, a structure, or a method of instruction, but rather a philosophy about the very culture of schools. The unique ecology and culture of Catholic [READ: Muslim] schools makes this effort all the more complex.”⁴

An informal survey of Muslim schools reveals very minimal to non-existent special education services. Although no formal study has taken place, parallels can be taken from a study conducted by Dr Denise Bello, professor of education at The George Washington University, on special education services within Catholic schools. Like Muslim schools, Catholic schools function within the private sector and are, therefore, not required by law to provide special education services for identified students. Like Muslim schools, Catholic schools have no formalized system for students with special needs.⁵

Unlike Muslim schools, however, Catholic schools “have traditionally excluded students with special needs due to the nature of the schools’ limited academic curriculum and college

preparatory focus.” This is especially true at the high school level. Muslim schools, on the other hand, generally do not turn any student away even if lacking the necessary resources, simply out of a sense of religious obligation to ensure that every Muslim child receives the required Islamic education. Post-entry, however, many Muslim schools find themselves unable to address the needs of some students and find that the best option would be to re-integrate them into the public school system where the vital services are available to them. For this reason, like Catholic schools, Muslim schools have been seen as exclusionary as opposed to inclusionary.⁶

The general makeup of the students with special needs in Catholic schools were those “with learning disabilities (94.4%) and other health impairments, which included students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders (ADHD; 79.6%). A small percentage enrolled students with emotional disabilities (27.8%), autism (9.3%), traumatic brain injury (9.3%), and moderate and severe disabilities (5.6%).” A formal survey of Muslim schools would have to be done to determine if there is a similar breakdown in enrollment.⁷

Some of the challenges that Catholic schools face may be similar to what Muslim schools face when attempting to implement some level of accommodation and/or special education services:

“The inclusion of students with special needs presents a unique educational challenge for Catholic schools, and specifically for Catholic high schools. With limited fiscal resources and no official governing body to authorize and coordinate educational support and services for students with disabilities, inclusion efforts have often been hampered, inconsistent, and for the most part, without evaluation.”⁸

Other challenges faced by Catholic schools include:⁹

- Limited faculty and staff interest
- Limited knowledge and skills on the part of administration and/or faculty on how to incorporate into curriculum and assessments
- Need for professional development of faculty
- Difficulty identifying students who need special education services as there is no central Catholic school governing body
- Although professional development was cited as necessary, limited resources and time do not make this possible.
- More staff collaboration needed for what is referred to as “staffings.”
- Although given the option of team teaching, many regular education staff did not utilize this resource when made available.
- Some schools assigned regular education teachers to the resource room for one period a day in an effort to help them better understand student needs and accommodations.
- Used a training consultant supplied by diocese on an irregular basis.
- Teachers desired knowledge in alternative assessments and grading practices, and curriculum development and instructional resources.
- Limited fiscal resources: like Muslim schools, Catholic schools for the most part are required to generate their own income with primary expenditures for teacher and staff salaries.
- Developing public school partnerships which were eventually discontinued due to the school’s restricted authority of the service.

Although this list of challenges is specifically for Catholic schools, many parallels may be drawn with Muslim schools. In addition to these challenges, it is necessary that a supportive

administrative infrastructure and the development of an accountability and evaluation process be set up as it would be beneficial for Muslim schools as much as for Catholic schools. Finally, Bello brings up the key point of sustainability of any such program:

“Building and maintaining an inclusive culture is a challenging task for any school, whether public, private, or parochial. There have been widespread efforts to restructure schools for inclusion, yet the capacity to not only create, but sustain inclusive educational communities has yet to be consistently realized.”¹⁰

Accessibility for All Students

*The Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) said:
"Attainment of knowledge is a must for every Muslim."*

Muslim schools and the administration, staff and faculty that support them must follow the prophetic injunction of making knowledge accessible and available to all Muslim students and those who desire it. Bello, although referencing Catholic schools, adequately highlights the crux of the issue for Muslims schools in discussing further studies and investigation on the nature of special education services in Catholic schools:

“Perhaps, even more importantly, this investigative effort can help Catholic educators formulate a vision for educating students with disabilities and in turn, support the broader mission of ensuring that their schools become available for all Catholic parents who wish to send their children to them.”¹¹

Muslim schools are fiscally limited and lack the time available to actually train teachers in special education teaching methodology. What is being presented in this paper are techniques that can be taught at minimal financial and time cost to the teacher and/or school.

Again, the goal is to be able to reach all students to enhance their learning of Islam as well as related studies; to encourage and motivate students such that their needs are met without draining the energies of the teachers. That said, it must be noted that some amount of effort, work and training on the part of teachers and administrators is required in order for these techniques to be adequately implemented. In an effort to understand and anticipate the needs of students, empathy is required on the part of the faculty, staff and administration. As mentioned earlier, a paradigm shift must also take place to make special education services part of the overall culture of the school.

A Learning Needs Assessment for the Classroom: Empathic Teaching

*“Speak to people according to their intellectual capacities.
Do you desire that they reject God and His Messenger?”
(Ali ibn Abi Talib)*

The Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) was among the greatest of empathic teachers. He incorporated a form of teaching that took into account the developmental level and the knowledge level of the person he was teaching. In this way he placed himself in the position of his students. As a role model for Muslims, generally, and educators specifically, teachers should look to his example and teach from the child’s frame of reference. This framework is based on recognizing and cultivating the child’s potential through a strategized recognition of the needs of the student, thus, engaging the student in a way which was not previously achievable.

Realistically, without especially keen insight and considerable time with the student, any teacher would be unable to determine the particular needs of the student. However, as educators, one must prepare by becoming aware of the potential possibilities in student learning approaches. These would lead to an understanding and acknowledgement of students' strengths and weaknesses.

That said, it is next to impossible, to cater any lesson to about thirty-five students. However, by designing worksheets, lessons plans, activities and curriculum that focus on the uniqueness of each student, there will be only minimal changes to the curriculum or the program of study required.

In making a needs assessment or a needs survey, educators spend some time focusing on each individual student, making observational notes. Categories in this learning needs survey include triggers of interest and excitement. In addition, what does the teacher notice as strengths of the student? What are his or her weaknesses? When does the student show the most interest during a lesson? Does the student need a break from learning? By answering these questions and having these answers available when planning lessons, teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of all students. This simple task of observing and recording not for grading purposes, but to assess and determine the best way to get and keep the student engaged in the learning process makes for a significant changes in how educators become empathic teachers and reflective practitioners.

A Note about Multiple Intelligences

Most educators are aware of Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences.¹² It is critical to incorporate them into a regular Islamic education program in order to enhance the Islamic curriculum of any school and/or learning environment. These intelligences are:

1. Linguistic
2. Logical-Mathematical
3. Bodily-Kinesthetic
4. Spatial
5. Musical
6. Interpersonal
7. Intrapersonal

Recently, Gardner added two more intelligences which would be of particular interest to Muslim schools. The eighth intelligence is the *naturalist*. Children who possess this intelligence notices patterns and things from nature easily; they like animals and like to know and remember things about them; they enjoy the outdoors and outdoor activities; they have a heightened level of sensory skills – sight, sound, smell, taste and touch; they collect, classify or read about things from nature.¹³ A later section focuses on the need for children to be intimately involved with and be directly in nature.

The ninth intelligence that Gardner has described is referred to as *existential intelligence*. It is defined as

“the ability to be sensitive to, or have the capacity for, conceptualizing or tackling deeper or larger questions about human existence, such as the meaning of life, why are we born, why do we die, what is consciousness, or how did we get here.”¹⁴

This is particularly critical for Muslim schools who aim to develop a level of God-consciousness in students. An awareness of this intelligence will allow educators to cater lessons around this natural state of children who are inquisitive about God, the spiritual understanding of Islam, and its place in their lives.

Gardner also mentions two implications for educators regarding the Theory of Multiple Intelligences:¹⁵

- 1) “Individuation (also termed personalization) – Since each human being has her own unique configuration of intelligences, we should take that into account when teaching, mentoring or nurturing. As much as possible, we should teach individuals in ways that they can learn. And we should assess them in a way that allows them to show what they have understood and to apply their knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts.
- 2) “Pluralization – Ideas, concepts, theories, skills should be taught in several different ways. Whether one is teaching the arts, sciences, history, or math, the seminal ideas should be presented in multiple ways. If you can present the art works of Michelangelo, or the laws of supply and demand, or the Pythagorean Theorem in several ways, you achieve two important goals. First of all, you reach more students, because some students learn best from reading, some from building something, some from acting out a story, etc. Second, you show what it is like to be an expert—to understand something fully, you should be able to think of it in several ways.”

What becomes apparent with the MI theory is that there are direct applications towards differentiated instruction. In the next section of this paper, an exploration of the possibilities of bringing MI into the classroom is explored using differentiated instruction.

Differentiated Instruction

*“No two children are alike.
No two children learn in the identical way.
An enriched environment for one student is not necessarily enriched for another.
In the classroom we should teach children to think for themselves.”*
Marian Diamond¹⁶

One of the most critical tools for any educator is the ability to differentiate instruction. Although curricular goals – whether for Islamic education or otherwise – remain relatively similar for all students, the pedagogy differs such that these methodologies are varied to meet the individual needs of all students. In order to engage students and be effective, learning must be differentiated.¹⁷ *Differentiated instruction* is defined as:

“... creating multiple paths so that students of different abilities, interest or learning needs experience equally appropriate ways to absorb, use, develop and present concepts as a part of the daily learning process. It allows students to take greater responsibility and ownership for their own learning, and provides opportunities for peer teaching and cooperative learning.”¹⁸

There are four ways in which differentiated instruction can occur in the classroom. These can include the content of the material presented, the process through which a student completes an assignment, the actual product or completed assignment, and the environment in the classroom.¹⁹

Educators have the ability to control and develop multiple avenues for students to learn in this manner.

1. Differentiating the Content/Topic²⁰
 - Content refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes teachers want students to learn
 - Compacting the curriculum: Pre-test required so that teachers can determine which students need directed instruction and which students can proceed to the application of the concepts to problem solving.
 - Use of independent projects for students who have grasped the concepts faster than other students
2. Differentiating the Process/Activities²¹
 - Varying learning activities or strategies for exploration of the concepts
 - Provide alternative paths (i.e. graphic organizers, maps, diagrams, charts) by varying the complexity to investigate the ideas within a concept
 - This changes the levels of cognitive processing which generally would match the differing abilities of the students.
3. Differentiating the Product²²
 - Provide a variety of options in product (i.e. completed assignment) that students may use to determine mastery of concepts.
 - Those students working below grade level may produce less complex products while those above grade level may present products that are higher in complexity and demonstrate advanced thinking skills.
 - Allowing for alternative product ideas give students a certain level of motivation because they feel empowered by having options in their education.
4. Differentiating by Manipulating the Environment or Through Accommodating Individual Intelligences.²³
 - Using the concept *multiple intelligences*, and determining how students would respond to variations and stimuli within the environment and to each other.
 - There are many approaches to multiple intelligences, but all have some level of merit and when combined increase the engagement of the student to the learning process.
 - Some approaches support the ability of the teacher to manipulate the light and sound levels, minimize visual distractions, or provide a more casual seating arrangement for students.
 - Providing a variety of teaching strategies plays on the strengths of individual students and increases their level of engagement with the material being presented.
 - The multiple intelligence theory allows teachers to ascertain how personality can enhance or detract from the teacher's ability to communicate the lesson to the student.
 - A concept developed by Benjamin Bloom, mastery learning is an element of differentiated instruction where students master concepts and skills before going onto other learning. They progress forward based on how they do on "tests", and if they have not reached mastery, then they go back and study more, and then take the test again until they pass it. It is a self-paced program where students monitor their own progress as determined by the teacher.²⁴

Some practical examples of differentiated instruction based on the four methods presented above are preferential seating, small group instruction, extended time on assignments, frequent and immediate feedback, positive reinforcement, graphic organizers, reading supports, reduced reading/language level, opportunities to discuss/verbalize subject matter, peer tutoring/paired working arrangement, shortened assignments, highlighted text/materials, assignment/homework notebook, and the use of manipulatives. Using differentiated instruction in the classroom and in any teaching environment provides opportunities to engage various students at various levels. When students are engaged, learning occurs in ways where it was not possible.

Classroom Management

“I have come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that determines the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.”

Haim Ginott

a) Prevention

As many educators are aware or have come to realize, the best form of classroom management is prevention. This requires educators to anticipate potential problems and prepare ahead through simple measures that ensure that the student feels some level of empowerment, and where the educator remains manager of the classroom.

Before addressing some key practical suggestions for classroom management, there must be an attitude shift on the part of the educator. The educator must follow the attitude of “assume nothing”. This refers to realizing that although a student may have a behavioural history with the school and with other teachers, they must be treated in a fair and objective manner. Assume nothing also means that all educators must realize and recognize that their students may not ever have heard the guidelines that they are being taught. The attitude of assume nothing is a serious paradigm shift for many teachers and educators. It is however, the ethos of great educators who excel as effective teachers in the classroom.

Muslim educators in particular must be keenly aware of the directive of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) to leave that which does not concern us. If a teacher feels that any of the behavioural and academic history may in fact affect how the student may perform in the classroom, be acutely aware, that each classroom dynamic is different and the educator has the power and authority to determine the climate of the classroom. Some key components of developing a viable *Instructional Classroom Management System* are listed below:

- 1) Part of prevention is being proactive:
 - To avoid behavioural issues before they start requires educators to set guidelines and limits from the outset. Educators and classroom teachers must be aware of what limits are comfortable for them. In addition to this, although educators can easily post rules, it is important to empower students in developing their own rules, within the guidelines set by the educator.
 - Educators must also be very specific in the behaviour that they are looking for. It is important to model this behaviour for the students repeatedly.

- Every new school year, educators must identify, teach and post the rules or guidelines. Again, one must assume nothing about the students and sincerely believe they are starting with blank slates.
- 2) As a part of understanding the assume nothing concept, educators must not get frustrated when they have to repeat and remind students of the rules throughout the entire year. Children require this repetition, as do adults, but to a lesser degree. This repetition and reminding ensures that eventually the student will get it.
 - 3) Developing a positive and inviting learning environment allows for an internalization of the rules. A pleasant outcome of this is that students in turn begin to readily remind one another of the rules with minimal teacher intervention. This in turn has the class holding students accountable which can be more powerful and encouraging than when it comes from just the teacher.
 - 4) In greeting students by name whether at the door or as soon as they enter the classroom the teacher establishes a much needed rapport and dynamic in the classroom.
 - 5) Although this point will be elaborated upon in the next section, the manner in which a room is arranged determines how quickly a conflict can be defused, and how many interruptions or disruptions will be in class. Much thought by teachers must be taken in designing a room arrangement that works for them and minimizes distractions for students.
 - 6) Design and develop a system that objectively rewards students in a balanced and fair manner. The number one reward for students is the positive reinforcement they receive in the form of verbal praise. It must be specific to the activity and must praise the behaviour of the student.
 - 7) Establish clear consistent routines. Students are less likely to get distracted and disrupt the class if they know generally what to expect. Educators must stick to the routines for the most part as consistency is a security for students and promotes a stable learning environment. In addition to this, teachers and educators should feel comfortable to post the daily agenda on the board or somewhere in the room so that students can refer to it easily.
 - 8) When transitioning from one activity to another in class, strive to make those transitions quick and quiet. If transitions are part of established routines then students will on cue know how and where to move for the next activity.
 - 9) Monitor student learning and adjust the lesson plan accordingly. The lesson plan is a guideline for the teacher, not a script. Therefore, in preparing a lesson plan a teacher should take into account the points and suggestions mentioned for differentiated instruction. Educators must be acutely aware of students who may not understand a lesson as there are usually 5% of students who do not.
 - 10) Accommodate and anticipate student needs. Without too much effort a teacher should take an inventory of each student's strengths and weaknesses to ensure that by playing on the student's strengths and differentiating the instruction to meet their needs the learning objectives will be fulfilled. If the lessons are designed to meet the

students' needs, then learning is enhanced and the educational experience is enjoyable for all involved.

b) Room Arrangement

According to Dr Fredric Jones, an educator and teacher trainer, the further students are from the teacher, the more likely they are to distract and disrupt either on their own or with other students. Effective teachers take advantage of the concept of “working the crowd” whereby they remain mobile throughout the classroom. In addition to mobility, these teachers also use proximity to students as a means of classroom management. In this way, “teachers constantly disrupt the students’ impulse to be disruptive.” Students are also saved the embarrassment of a public reprimand from the teacher as the teacher is within close proximity to the student. This furthers decreases the amount of disruptions in the classroom.²⁵

In order to use proximity and mobility to the teacher’s advantage, the classroom must be arranged in such a way that a teacher has the minimum possible distance between all students. This means that moving the teacher’s desk away from the front of the room and any other obstacles that impede the teacher’s ability to freely move about the room. Desks should be arranged such that no student has their back to the front of the room. Consideration should be given to the general types of activities that students will be engaged in on a regular basis. These could include cooperative learning activities, group activities, learning centers and others.²⁶

c) Defusing Situations – The Conflict Cycle

No matter how prepared a teacher or educator may be there are many times in a classroom setting that conflicts between the student and teacher as well as with other students arise. In order to better address these situations educators must equip themselves with an understanding of how conflicts develop, how they are viewed by the student, and what are the mechanisms to de-escalate them. This is referred to as the *Conflict Cycle* and was coined by Mary Wood and Nicholas Long.²⁷

For students, a conflict may arise from a trivial event, but then escalate based on their set of belief systems as to the expected outcome. For educators, breaking down the steps in the conflict cycle will help them to empower students with mechanisms that allow them to focus their energies on positive outcomes. Below, the four phases of the conflict cycle are highlighted. Further detail is beyond the scope of this paper, but it must be emphasized that educators must begin to understand their own beliefs and attitudes about conflict in order to handle it effectively.

The four phases of the conflict cycle are:²⁸

1) Phase One: Attitudes and Beliefs

- In this phase, response to any conflict stem from preset beliefs and attitudes about the conflict.
- These can be based on any of the following:
 - a) Childhood messages that were received about conflict
 - b) Behaviours modeled by parents, teachers and peers
 - c) Attitudes presented in the media
 - d) One’s own experiences with conflict

2) Phase Two: The Conflict

- The second phase of the conflict occurs when an individual’s needs do not meet his or her expectations.

3) Phase Three: The Response

- The third phase is the point where the teacher is required to take some form of action in response to the student's behaviour. Whether a student begins to shout, withdraw, leave or attempt to talk about the situation, a teacher's response is a manifestation of the teacher's personal set of beliefs and attitudes. A teacher's reactions reveal their own patterns of behaviour in conflict situations.

4) Phase Four: The Consequence

- Every response will lead to a consequence. Many times the consequence will reinforce the student's beliefs and attitudes about the conflict, which feeds the conflict cycle and begins the process all over again.

It is here that educators must understand their own attitudes and beliefs, and patterns of behaviour. Their response to conflict must be such that they do not mirror those of the student, thus perpetuating the cycle. The goal is to break the cycle to elicit positive and unexpected outcomes, and this must be the response of the educator to students caught in the conflict cycle.

d) Team Teaching

Muslim schools who are particularly under-funded should consider the idea of collaborative teaching or team teaching. In order to meet the needs of all students, it may be beneficial to have a teaching assistant in the classroom, or a school-wide resource teacher to ensure that students receive the attention they need to be successful in the classroom. Given the high student-to-teacher ratio in most schools, this may prove to be a plausible solution to many of the issues that arise from teaching students with varying abilities.

Nature for Nurturing the Classroom Community

Many Muslim schools struggle with students who display symptoms of hyperactivity, minimal attention spans, and an inability to concentrate and remember classroom routines. As previously mentioned these students may be displaying an intelligence known as naturalist intelligence. Study after study has highlighted students' need to be exposed to the natural environment. In September 2004, in a study published by the American Journal of Public Health, researchers determined that children exposed to natural settings helped reduce the symptoms of ADHD or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children.²⁹ That same year, a study done at the University of Illinois found that children with ADHD experienced a significant decrease in symptoms after spending time outdoors.³⁰

The following year, the California Department of Education showed a 27% increase in student science scores after students spent classes in outdoor education settings. In addition to this, several University of Michigan studies indicated a significant increase in concentration for students who are close to nature. Where schools are unable to provide this proximity to nature, visits to nature centers, extended themes about animals, their habitats, human impact on the environment and visits to outdoor education centers provides cross-curricular opportunities for students to enhance their learning experience.³¹ Tying this learning to the role of Muslims and the role of the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) as well as pairing this with Quranic injunctions allows for a holistic approach to learning about nature and its place in the world.

Flipping the Classroom

In flipping the classroom, Muslim educators embrace technology and provide videos of their lessons as homework. The next day, after watching the lessons, students are under the watchful eye of the teacher as they work through problems, questions and other such homework assignments. This method requires little technology except a camera, a youtube account, and a dedicated teacher.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to present teaching methodologies framed within special education in a way that is inexpensive and accessible for Muslims schools. Muslim schools will be better equipped to address the needs of students with diagnosed special needs, as well as those who show various symptoms and who may not have a specific learning or emotional disability. These methodologies when incorporated into any classroom setting or learning environment inadvertently enhance the Islamic education for all students. Requiring minimal resources, these options increase the tools that teachers and educators can use. The most that is needed is the training and support from administrations, and support from parents and faculty.

Meeting the individual needs of all students follows the prophetic paradigm of empathic learning in that the Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) was able to cater his teaching style to that of each of his companions, his students, and even the curious onlooker and observer.

And God knows best.

Reference List

- Bello, D. A. "[The status of special education services in catholic high schools: attributes, challenges, and needs](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3130/is_4_72/ai_n29277758)". Exceptional Children. FindArticles.com. 30 Jan, 2009.
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3130/is_4_72/ai_n29277758
- Dizikes, P. (2007) *Nature Nurtures Learning: National movement touts benefits of outdoor education*. .
http://www.boston.com/news/globe/health_science/articles/2007/12/31/nature_nurtures_learning/?page=1 [2009, January 30]
- Gardner, H. *About*. <http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/about/> [2013, November 22]
- Government of Manitoba. (1999) *The Conflict Cycle*. <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/beh/pdf/1.pdf> [2004, September]
- Government of Ontario. (2004) *An Introduction to Special Education in Ontario*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/ontario.html> [2009, February 2]
- Johnson, B. (2013) http://www.edutopia.org/blog/mastery-learning-success-difficult-students-ben-johnson?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=blog-johnson-link-difficult-students [2013, November 11]
- Jones, F. H. (2000) *Tools for Teaching*. Santa Cruz: Frederic H. Jones & Associates, Inc. pp.21-39.
- Krisberg, K. (2007) *Movement to reconnect kids with nature growing nationwide: Working to improve children's health*. <http://www.apha.org/publications/tnh/archives/2007/Oct07/Nation/KidsandNatureNation.htm> [2009, January 30]

Lamp. *The Seven Types of Intelligences*. http://www.professorlamp.com/ed/TAG/7_Intelligences.html [2009, January 28]

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (2007) *Handouts to Theme A: Welcome to IDEA*. http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Documents/Training_Curriculum/A-handouts.pdf [2009, February 2].

Theroux, P. (2004) *Differentiating Instruction*. <http://www.members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiating.html> [2009, January 31].

Wilson, L. O. (2005) *Newer Views of Learning, Exploring The Ninth intelligence – Maybe*. <http://www.uwsp.edu/education/lwilson/learning/ninthintelligence.htm> [2009, January 31].

Wilson, L. O. (1998) *The Eighth Intelligence: Naturalistic Intelligence*. <http://www.marthalakecov.org/~building/strategies/environmental/wilson2.htm> [2009, January 31].

¹ There is a document available on IDEA website that discusses special education services/requirements for private schools: <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CTopicalBrief%2C5%2C>

² National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. (2007). *Handouts to Theme A: Welcome to IDEA*. http://www.nichcy.org/Laws/IDEA/Documents/Training_Curriculum/A-handouts.pdf [2009, February 2]

³ Government of Ontario. (2004). *An Introduction to Special Education in Ontario* <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/ontario.html> [2009, February 2]

⁴ Bello, Denise A. "[The status of special education services in catholic high schools: attributes, challenges, and needs](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3130/is_4_72/ai_n29277758)". *Exceptional Children*. FindArticles.com. 30 Jan, 2009. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb3130/is_4_72/ai_n29277758

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lamp. *The Seven Types of Intelligences*. http://www.professorlamp.com/ed/TAG/7_Intelligences.html [2009, January 28]

¹³ Wilson, L. O. (1998). *The Eighth Intelligence: Naturalistic Intelligence*. <http://www.marthalakecov.org/~building/strategies/environmental/wilson2.htm> [2009, January 31].

¹⁴ Wilson, L. O. (2005). *Newer Views of Learning, Exploring The Ninth intelligence – Maybe*. <http://www.uwsp.edu/education/lwilson/learning/ninthintelligence.htm> [2009, January 31]

¹⁵ Gardner, H. *About* <http://multipleintelligencesoasis.org/about/> [2013, November 22]

¹⁶ Theroux, P. (2004) *Differentiating Instruction*. <http://www.members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiating.html> [2009, January 31]

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Johnson, B. (2013) *Mastery Learning*. http://www.edutopia.org/blog/mastery-learning-success-difficult-students-ben-johnson?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=blog-johnson-link-difficult-students [2013, November 11]

²⁵ Jones, F. H. (2000). *Tools for Teaching*. Santa Cruz: Frederic H. Jones & Associates, Inc.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Government of Manitoba. (1999). *The Conflict Cycle*. <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/beh/pdf/1.pdf> [2004, September]

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Krisberg, K. (2007). *Movement to reconnect kids with nature growing nationwide: Working to improve children's health*. <http://www.apha.org/publications/tnh/archives/2007/Oct07/Nation/KidsandNatureNation.htm> [2009, January 30]

³⁰ Dizikes, P. (2007). *Nature Nurtures Learning: National movement touts benefits of outdoor education*. . http://www.boston.com/news/globe/health_science/articles/2007/12/31/nature_nurtures_learning/?page=1 [2009, January 30]

³¹ Ibid.