Supporting Modern Teaching in Islamic Schools: Pedagogical Best Practice for Teachers

EDITED BY ISMAIL HUSSEIN AMZAT
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The unprecedented challenges of the 21st century confront Islamic education with the pressing need to recenter its foundations to empower students through holistic flourishing. Against a backdrop of volatile uncertainty and ambiguous complexity, Supporting Modern Teaching in Islamic Schools: Pedagogical Best Practice for Teachers is a much-needed contribution to an under-explored field of study. Shedding light on contemporary educational practices in Islamic schools across the world, the book comprises both theoretical and empirical studies that address the gap in existent literature through insightful recommendations and a review of best educational practices. Edited by Ismail Hussein Amzat, an Associate Professor in the Department of Social Foundation and Educational Leadership at the International Islamic University Malaysia, the volume’s diverse array of studies unravels the richness and multiplicity of educational practices in Islamic schools that nonetheless are faithfully aligned and in tune with the heterogenous nature of the Islamic Ummah.

The book’s three parts cover a panoply of topics ranging from classroom instructional practices to whole-school approaches. The first part tackles content knowledge, pedagogy, and teaching methods. Chapter one sheds light on effective and ineffective pedagogies in teaching Islam among Canadian Muslim educators who, coming from 17 countries, represent the nature of education in a globally diverse Ummah. Moving from the present to the past, chapter two explores the contemporary landscape of Islamic education through a historical lens and proposes a pluralist framework centered upon the multifarious needs of students. Chapter three presents an inspiring case study of a green initiative undertaken by an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. The case demonstrates how religion can play a progressive role in raising awareness about environmental education through an innovative, project-based approach. The discussion in chapter four focuses on the assimilation of Western traditions in English Language Teaching in Islamic schools in Thailand and the neglected role of non-native norms, proposing that the learners’ sociocultural realities should be represented in textbooks. Chapter five alternatively explores the need for adopting student-centered teaching approaches, underscoring the value of
integrating prophetic instructional strategies as well as inductive, deductive, and constructivist methods to prepare learners for the 21st century. The “community of philosophical inquiry” method is explored in chapter six as it can be used in Islamic education to promote deep learning as well as boost higher-order thinking skills in a stimulating, learner-centered environment. Chapter seven advocates integrating instructional design models and technology in Islamic education to create more relevant and authentic learning experiences for “digital native” students.

The volume’s second part contrasts the first by addressing professional development, responsibility, and lifelong learning with the aim of innovating teacher practices in Islamic education. Beginning with chapter eight, the focus shifts to the role of measures of physiognomies in predicting teachers’ development and professionalism in Integrated Model Schools in Nigeria. Chapter nine recommends the assimilation of different instructional resources to develop teacher professionalism, presenting guidelines on the processes of their selection and application. Exploring the relationship between boosting self-motivation and professional development, chapter ten showcases a successful case study of an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. Chapter eleven presents a theoretical exposition of Islamic education, considered as a regeneration of the soul, that explores the role of family and society as factors affecting teacher professionalism. Returning once again to Indonesia, chapter twelve reviews how Islamic schools there aim to utilize and implement the multiple intelligences theory to the best interest of their students. Chapter thirteen is a conceptualisation of lifelong learning in Islamic studies that offers a lengthy discussion of the significant role it plays in educational attainment and teachers’ professional development.

The book’s third section is focused on assessment, Islamic curriculum reform, and the Islamization of knowledge. The research-to-practice gap is addressed in chapter fourteen, where the authors examine a research-based methodology used to reform and develop the curriculum of madrasas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Shifting to another continent, chapter fifteen examines the educational strategies employed in Arabic teaching at Australian Islamic schools. These draw on the relevant literature to suggest educational policies and practices that help teachers create meaningful learning experiences. The Islamization of knowledge and its related theoretical framework are the subjects of chapter sixteen, highlighting the holistic nature of education that should aim at nurturing the learners’ spiritual, intellectual, and moral capacities. Exploring how Muslim children in the United Kingdom engage in \textit{Maktab} learning (studies undertaken outside
full-time schooling), chapter 17 delineates relevant findings to help Muslim teachers develop their makātib in relation to well-being, safety, and holistic development. Tackling a different topic, chapter 18 addresses the issue of Islamic religious education in the Netherlands in relation to sex education and presents recommendations for the professional development of teachers. Based on an extensive study of around 50 different madrasas, chapter 19 then examines the role supplementary schooling plays in developing the Islamic identity of Muslim young people in Europe, analyzing the strengths and limitations in that structure. Rounding out the book, chapter 20 proposes methods to help teachers in Islamic studies more effectively conduct assessment and evaluation strategies to best address the needs of their students and their own learning skills.

*Supporting Modern Teaching in Islamic Schools* makes a significant contribution to the growing canon on Islamic education. It resourcefully presents a mélange of pedagogical practices and reforms that could make meaningful contributions to address the challenges Islamic education currently faces. Strengthened by the academic and cultural diversity of its contributors, the book brings together and enriches the traditional, holistic objectives of Islamic education and the reimagined promises of its development in the 21st century. As it spans a multitude of topics, the book will be a valuable resource for researchers and academic scholars as well as a practical guide for teachers, educators, and practitioners working in Islamic educational settings.

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