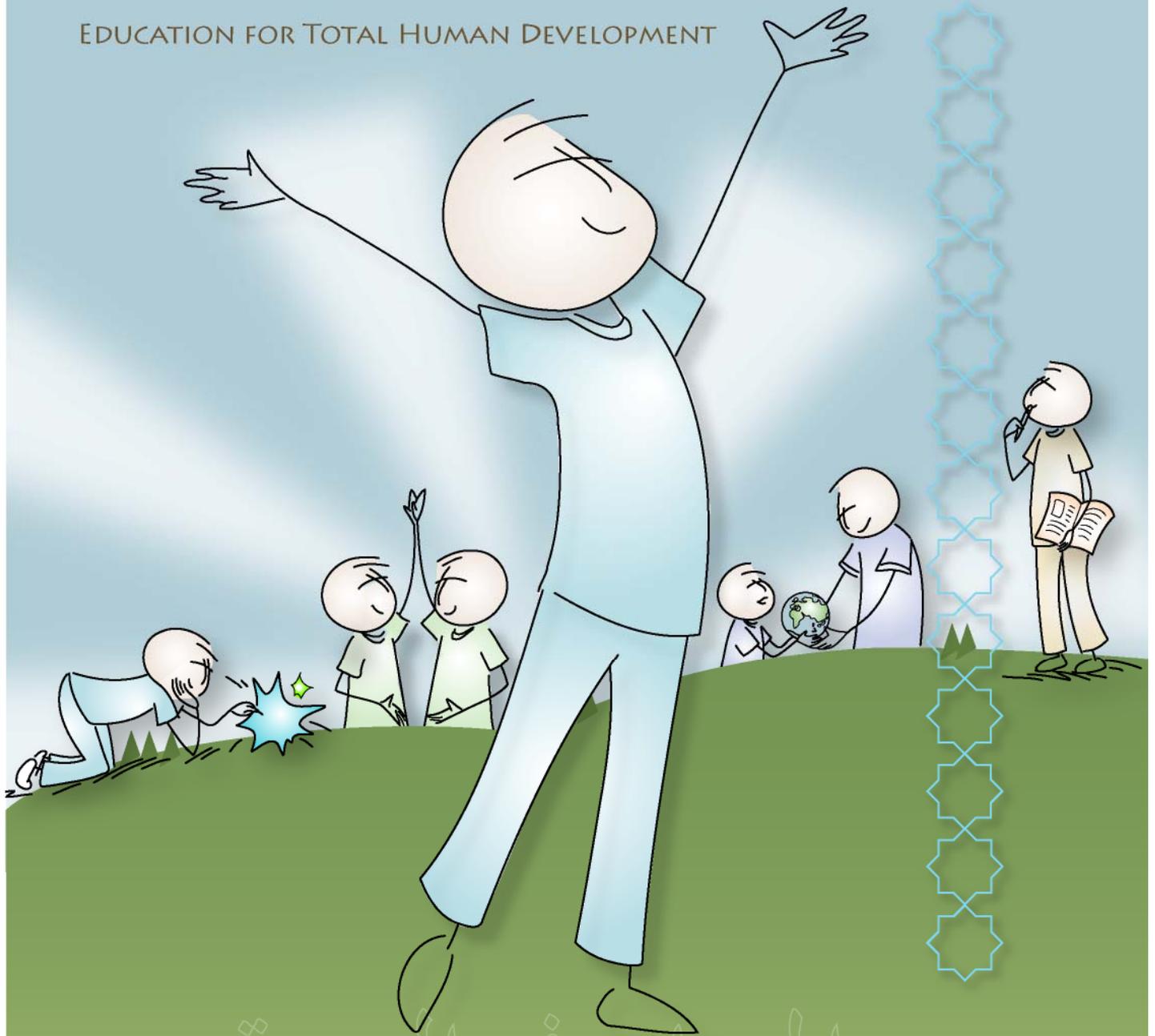


EDUCATION FOR TOTAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



النجاح في التربية

Dawud Tauhidi

THE TARBIYAH PROJECT

A Holistic Vision of Islamic Education

Tarbiyah  Institute

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Beginning in awareness and thankful recognition of the Divine (ﷻ) is surely the best of all possible beginnings. *Al-hamdu li-llah...*



This document attempts to outline a framework for the restoration and renewal of contemporary Islamic education, particularly for children growing up in the context of modern, western society and culture. Critical to achieving this goal is the need to reexamine the two central questions of education, namely, *what to teach* (i.e., content or curriculum) and *how to teach* (i.e., process or instruction). To this end, the document proposes a framework for a holistic model of Islamic education based on the principles of *tawhīd* and *tarbiyah* and on an integrated model of learning developed by the author known as the Integrated Learning ModelSM (ILM²).



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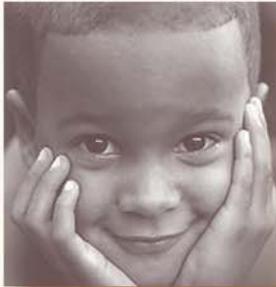
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The Tarbiyah Project

A Renewed Vision of Islamic Education



Overview

The Tarbiyah Project is a vision, a framework, a set of programs and a strategic plan for the restoration and revitalization of contemporary Islamic education—for making Islamic education whole again!



Vision. The Tarbiyah Project is first a vision—a vision of what Islamic education should be (its principles and goals, its content and its methodology) and what it must become in practice, if we hope to restore a sense of wholeness, wellbeing and holiness back into education, our children and Muslim society as a whole.



Framework. Second, the Tarbiyah Project is a framework—a framework for conceptualizing and structuring the curriculum of contemporary Islamic education, both “*what*” is taught and “*how*” it is taught. The Tarbiyah Project has a well-defined view of the content, structure, process and strategies for Islamic education based on a learning system known as the Integrated Learning ModelSM.



Program. Third, the Tarbiyah Project is a set of programs—programs that focus on teaching Islamic values and encourage creative approaches to Islamic teaching and learning. Three such programs were piloted by the member schools of the Tarbiyah Consortium.

Strategic Plan. Fourth, the Tarbiyah Project is a strategic plan—a plan for developing resources for Islamic education in North America, including a plan for curriculum development, staff development and parental training, and a program of publications in the area of Islamic education.

Introduction

THE DILEMMA

Weaving in Spiritual Learning¹

Today we live at a critical time in the spiritual history of man. Perhaps at no other time in history has the disbelief in and disregard for the Divine and the sacred been more prevalent than today. With the advent of modernity, and its related principles of secularism, materialism and consumerism, we have ushered in an era of moral decline, psychological malaise and ecological devastation. We are quickly destroying ourselves from within and from without. At the same time, a concerted effort is underway to bring Muslim society and culture into alignment with the overall modernist project and to secularize Islam in the same way that Christianity and Judaism have been secularized. For many, exporting secular education to the Muslim world is the best way to achieve this goal.

The Quran, on the other hand, enjoins Muslims, and in fact all of humanity, to hold firmly to the *rope of God*² and not be dissuaded by the glitter and clamor of modernity from living a God-centered life. For most people, however, the powerful effects of secular materialism have made their hold to the divine rope tenuous at best; and even then, only by the thinnest of threads. For the vast majority of Muslims today, there is only tradition or habit that holds them tenuously to Islam, while secular materialism

¹Note that a technical transliteration scheme is not strictly followed in this document.

² The Quran (3:103) uses the expression,

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا﴾

“Hold steadfast to the rope of God altogether...”

This is a metaphor for the “spiritual bond” or covenant that believers have with God. Note that the underlying concept of the word *religion* / *din*, both in English and in Arabic, is the idea of “tying”, “bond” or “connection”, as well as the implied concept of “relation.” There are, in fact, several important keywords in the Islamic lexicon that share this concept of “connection” / “relation” / “association,” including the words *عبد* – *عهد* – *عقد* – *عقل* – *دين* and their many derivatives.

As a side note, these words are a good example of what I will call here the “proximity principle” (*tasāqub*) of Arabic philology, that says, “Words with similar letters (phonemes) are similar in meaning.” This is a potentially useful principle in Arabic language instruction. Cf. Ibn Jinni (396 A.H.), *al-Khasā'is*, section entitled “*Tasāqub al-Alfāz li-Tasāqub al-Ma'na*.”

continues to spread unabated in its effort to extinguish the light of spirituality and Godwardness from the world.

With each passing generation, the bond of religion has become weaker and increasingly more irrelevant and marginalized in modern society. Islam, in particular, has managed to remain in the news only by negative association: through protests, violence, terrorism, etc. Aside from western political and economic entanglements in that region of the world, Muslims have mainly themselves to blame for their current predicament. If Muslims hope to survive and prosper as a community (*ummah*), they will need a generation of their best minds and hearts to begin solving the real problems that face Muslim society and humanity at large. Otherwise, they will continue to be dismissed as insignificant and irrelevant in world affairs – while failing in their responsibility before Allah (ﷻ) as Muslims. These are bitter but true words that we must acknowledge.

Education, of course, plays a critical role in this predicament. The American statesman and president, Abraham Lincoln, accurately noted that "*the philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the next.*" It is therefore no surprise that revamping the educational system in the Muslim world is being pursued as a top foreign policy objective in several Muslim countries (i.e., Iraq, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia).

There can be no doubt, however, that secular education has profoundly affected the sense of balance, wholeness and wellbeing in modern man – with its emphasis on the profane and the material, and with its neglect of the spirit and character. This fact is undeniable. The statistics of drug abuse, violence, pornography, sexual promiscuity, divorce, along with a wide range of modern psychological ailments (including depression, anxiety, alienation and loneliness) are well known and speak for themselves. The biggest victims in all of this of course are our children, as the direct product of the culture, education and family conditions under which they grow up. Whether or not the Muslim *ummah* finally lets go of the *rope of God* altogether and falls into the abyss of materialism, secularism and agnosticism like most other cultures today, will depend largely on the education of the next generation of Muslim children around the world. This generation represents one





of the last potential vestiges of Godwardness in the world. The situation is indeed serious.

This is the larger spiritual and cultural crisis facing Muslim educators and curriculum developers today – the ubiquitous spread and influence of secular materialism and its global reach. Muslim parents, educators and clergy, along with those of other faith-based communities, are in a dire struggle for the spiritual survival of their children and are faced with major challenges about how best to raise their children and prepare them for the challenges of the future. Some Muslims will insist the answer is simply in going back to the past; others will urge us to plunge headlong into the future. But people in fact need both roots and branches together in order to survive and flourish.³ It is the divine pattern of creation that all living beings embrace the complementary principles of *continuity* and *change* together in order to develop and flourish. Spirituality helps us understand how these principles are interrelated.

Only with the proper spiritual education can we stem the tide of secular materialism in Muslim society, re-strengthen our community's connection to spiritual and moral values, and save our children from a life of enslavement to the ideology of materialism and other ills of modern living. However, to achieve this, spiritual education cannot simply be an appendage to an otherwise secular and fragmented curriculum. Nor can it be merely a prescriptive or parochial litany of moral do's and don'ts. Instead, it must be woven skillfully and articulately throughout the curriculum and into the daily educational experiences of our children. To achieve this requires a comprehensive and holistic approach to learning and a unifying principle of education.

³ A basic problem with Muslims today is rooted in our misunderstanding and subsequent denial of this universal principle which is embedded in creation by God. This consists of "process" (change over time) and "perception" or perspective (change of location, difference of position). These fundamental concepts have stifled Muslims for several centuries at least. The result is the grave intellectual and cultural dilemma that we find ourselves in today vis-à-vis the world at-large.

Here should be noted also the issue of "ijtihad" (intellectual effort) vs. "taqlid" (imitation). While the "closing of the door of ijtihad," as it is usually referred to, may be a historiographical fiction more than actual historical fact, this issue has nevertheless played a critical role in the intellectual and cultural history of Islam. Putting aside its legal and technical requirements, ijtihad as "intellectual effort" and as a "habit of mind" has an indispensable place in the educational enterprise. Muslims today must get this issue right.

FACING THE CHALLENGE

The challenge of how best to educate Muslim children in the 21st century requires an honest assessment of the following questions: 1) *Where are we today?* 2) *How did we get here?* 3) *Where should we be?* 4) *How do we plan to get there?* The future of our children and community as Muslims will depend largely on how well we address these questions and in turn to what extent we are successful in passing on to our children the sacred vision of life we have as Muslims.

The Meaning of Tarbiyah

For the past ten years, the Tarbiyah Project has concerned itself with these fundamental issues of contemporary Islamic education. At the center of its work has been the question of how best to integrate the sacred meaning and message of Islam into the framework of the modern curriculum. The Tarbiyah Project has developed a holistic vision and integrated approach to education that seeks to nurture the character and inner spirit of children and empower them to self-discovery, wholeness and social consciousness. The result has been a distinctive and powerful approach to contemporary Islamic education.

For those not familiar with the term *tarbiyah*, it is one of the truly beautiful words in Arabic – deeply rich in meaning. Usually it is translated as *education*.⁴ According to the classical lexicographer al-Rāghib al-Asfahānī (d. 402 A.H. /1011 C.E.) the word *tarbiyah* means "*to cause something to develop from stage to stage until reaching its completion [full potential]*."⁵ This implies that something (the *fitrah*, or intrinsic nature) already exists within the child and that education is a process of unfolding and bringing out, more than a process of instilling and pouring in. This is similar to the current-day notion of *developmental stages*.

The word *tarbiyah* is used in the Quran in verses 22:5, 26:18 and 17:24.⁶ The word *ribā'* (increase) also comes from the

⁴ The word "education" is derived from the Latin *educare* (to rear or raise up) and *educere* (to draw out, to develop from within).

⁵ Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, *Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān*, Bayrūt : al-Dār al-Shāmiyah, 1992, p.336.

⁶ Sūrah al-Hajj (22:5): "*And you see the earth barren and lifeless. But when we send down rain upon it, it is stirred to life and grows (rabat) forth every kind of beautiful growth.*" Sūrah al-Shu'arā' (26:18): "*Did we not raise you (nurabbi-ka) among us when you were a child?*" Sūrah Isrā (17:24): "*And out*





same linguistic root and, according to Asfahānā, even the word *rabb* (Lord) is semantically related to the word *tarbiyah* – the sense being that the *Rabb* provides and nurtures (i.e., increases) us through each stage of development until reaching our full potential. What a beautiful notion of the word *Rabb*. The concepts of increase, elevation, growth, development, nurture and upbringing are all aspects of the word *tarbiyah*. Broadly speaking, it conveys the cosmological principle of expansion, emergence, unfoldment, becoming and fulfillment.⁷ For humankind, in particular, *tarbiyah* can be understood as the Islamic science of growth and development. All of these concepts provide important insights into the Islamic notion of education – insights that should be better incorporated into our modern practice of Islamic education.⁸ However, let us return to our main issue here.

Where We Are Today – The Disconnection

According to Islam, a person's life is to be founded on the principles of *belief* and *action* together. This means that a person's *beliefs* must be translated into *action* and reflected in his or her conduct each day with other people. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized that our dealings and interactions with other people (*mu'āmalah*) are, in fact, the truest reflection of our *din* (lifeway/religion). While this precept is well known, the majority of Muslims today do not actually live in accordance with it or the many other fundamental teachings of Islam. A person need only travel to the Muslim world today to see that the prevailing social

of kindness extend to them the wing of humility, and say: My Lord, Bestow Thy mercy upon them as they raised me (rabbayāni) in childhood."

⁷ Asfahānī is correct in making the connection here between the terms *rabb* and *tarbiyah*. Semantically, the words *rabb* (or *rububīyah*) and *tarbiyah* share similar root letters (rbb and rby respectively) and have the same basic meaning of "elevation" or increase. This is supported by the *proximity principle* (*tasāqub*) noted earlier. This point is corroborated by other classical dictionaries of Arabic as well. For example, Ibn Mandhūr, author of *Lisān al-'Arab*, cites the word *murabbī* (caregiver) as one of the basic meanings of the word *rabb* and notes that the verbal form of this word (*rabba*, as well as *tarabbaba* and *irtabba*) means "to raise and care for" (i.e., *tarbiyah*). In addition to these linguistic considerations, the really significant point here is that the concepts of *Rabb* (Lord) and *tarbiyah* are connected ontologically: Like a plant that turns instinctively towards the sunlight, *tarbiyah* is a process (cycle) of unfoldment and returning (*tawbah*) to God.

⁸ Note the distinction between *tarbiyah* (inner=strength) and *ta'dīb* (outer=proper position).

norm gives little regard to the notion of appointments, timeliness, orderliness, equality, due process and many of the other basic norms⁹ and etiquette of civil society, even though this clearly violates the moral and social teachings of Islam. The day-to-day norms of Muslim society today are very much disconnected from their own spiritual, ethical and philosophical heritage. What accounts for this disconnection between *values* and *practice* in Muslim society today and what role does education play in this? This is a critical question for contemporary Muslim society and education.

How We Got There – The Reasons

The problems of Muslim society today are rooted in several social, political and educational factors. First, modernity has played a major role in the erosion of values throughout the entire world, including the Muslim world. Much of what our children learn today about values, they learn from popular culture and the mass media. This is especially true now with television satellite dishes and internet access widespread throughout the Muslim world. Second, the 19th and 20th-century experiences of colonialism, materialism and secularism have left an indelible mark on the mind-set and value system of Muslims today. Third, the lack of sufficient real freedom in Muslim society has played a subtle but important role in undermining the development of strong character in much of today's Muslim youth. True moral development cannot flourish without sufficient social, intellectual and spiritual freedom. Standards of conduct are best followed when they are voluntary, rather than forced (Quran 2:256). With voluntary acceptance comes willing participation. When people participate, it becomes part of their lifestyle (*dīn*); otherwise, there is only deceit and contempt.

These are some of the key factors that account for the moral turpitude of modern-day Muslim society, particularly in the face of the globalization of secular materialism and its laissez-faire value system. The collective result of these factors is that Muslims today are disoriented spiritually, marginalized socially, divided politically and economically, and generally find

⁹ The concept of “normative practice” is of course central to Islamic social philosophy. There are several keywords for this in the Islamic lexicon. The term *‘urf* (from which we get the phrase “al-amru bil-ma’rūf”) and the term *sunnah* are two examples of its central importance.





themselves in a quandary about their role and place in modern society. This is the legacy we are passing on to our children today – and why, in turn, so many of our young people either romanticize about a return to the glorious “golden age” of Islamic civilization or effectively abandon Islam altogether in favor of modern secular materialism.

The educational system, in particular, has played a key role in the disconnection between values and practice that largely characterizes Muslim society today. This includes the system of Islamic education as well. How so? Formal education has long been viewed primarily as a process of *transmission* rather than *transformation*. The focus has long been on teaching a fixed body of *information* to be memorized, rather than a set of *experiences* to be used as a catalyst to transform one’s character.¹⁰ Of course, classical Islam placed great importance on spiritual, moral and personal development. However, the drill-and-kill method of rote memorization has been the prevailing mode of instruction in Muslim education for centuries. In the quiet pace of traditional society, the teacher was the *sage on the stage* and the didactic method of instruction was sufficiently the norm. However, in today’s fast-paced world of multimedia, internet and global telecommunications, the didactic method of teaching has proven insufficient and ineffective at holding our children’s attention and inspiring them to adopt Islam as a system of personal and social values – especially in the face of modern, secular society. As a result, most of our young people today (except for a very small percentage) see Islam as largely irrelevant to their personal lives and therefore do not adhere to it as their daily lifestyle. Put bluntly, Muslims are losing the battle for the spiritual lives of their children. In some respects, terrorism and regional violence are only perverted and desperate expressions of this failure. But what really accounts for this failure?

¹⁰ Of course, there is a long-standing debate in classical Islam over the role and supremacy of “transmission” (*ahl al-nass*) over “reason” (*ahl al-ra’y*). Often, the argument is framed in absolute rather than complementary terms. Muslim civilization has long suffered from this intellectual schism and it is a significant reason for the current malaise in Muslim civilization.

However, as noted earlier, people in fact need both “roots” and “branches” in order to flourish as a society and civilization. This is a universal principle (*sunnah*) of creation. If Muslims (past-oriented) and westerners (future-oriented) ever hope to achieve lasting balance, wholesomeness, peace and prosperity in their societies, they will each need to better acknowledge and accept that both of these concepts (*continuity* and *change*) are complementary and essential for this purpose.

The failure of education in Muslim society today is largely rooted in the way we teach children – primarily for four reasons. First, it does not focus fundamentally on character development, as it did in the time of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ). Instead, it focuses on facts and rote information. This is true for both secular and Islamic forms of education. Both fail to remember that knowledge (*ta'leem*) is simply a means or tool to the real goal of education, which is human development and transformation (*tarbiyah*). Second, much of what is taught is not directly relevant to the real lives of the students themselves – their needs, concerns, challenges and aspirations. Third, the method of instruction is centered on *teaching* rather than *learning* – a subtle but important distinction. And fourth, it does not prepare students with the real-life skills needed to function successfully in today's society. Additionally, Muslim education (and much of western education as well) often lacks a solid understanding of the psychology, pedagogy and sociology of child development, including moral and spiritual development. For these reasons, much of our efforts have remained largely ineffective, resulting in little genuine education or personal development for the individual or for society.

Common Misconceptions about Education

In addition to these factors, there are several common misconceptions about education that continue to influence the thinking of most parents and even professional educators, and contribute further to the failure of education today. These misconceptions are the result of a fragmented view of children and learning, and a mechanistic approach to education (sometimes referred to as the *factory model* of education). Because of this assembly-line approach to education, many of our children fail in the educational process – through no fault of their own. It is time that parents and educators acknowledge that each one of our children *is* unique and that one size does not fit all. This uniqueness, and the individual differences that accompany it, is exactly how God has fashioned creation. A shift in understanding is therefore needed to one that is more natural, wholesome and humane regarding children, education and the learning process. Fortunately, this change, or *paradigm shift*, is now underway for many individual teachers and for some educational systems as a whole. Muslim educators need to be among those enlightened educators who are working to bring about





meaningful change and improvement toward that which is good and best (*ahsan*) for children.

Listed below are some common misconceptions about education along with an alternative, holistic viewpoint.

Table 1: Common Misconceptions of Education

| Issue | Misconception | Alternate Conception |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Vision | Education seen as separate academic disciplines; disjointed view of knowledge, learning and students; the factory model. | Tawhid: A holistic and integrated view of knowledge, life, learning and the learner. |
| Structure | Vague and incoherent structure, or structured by separate academic disciplines; no unifying structure | Powerful Ideas: Big ideas that can inspire and transform, the building blocks of character & personality; cross-curricular, transdisciplinary. |
| Content | Traditional subjects; information-driven; not relevant to student's life; "instruction" (ta'lem); the textbook is the curriculum. | Tarbiyah: Character-based; transformation-driven; "education" (tarbiyah); real-world connections; the "book of life" is the curriculum. |
| Process | Didactic (words & lecture) ¹¹ ; teacher as "sage on the stage"; factory model; one size fits all; uninteresting and uninspiring. | Discovery Learning: Student-centered; differentiated instruction; multiple learning styles; teacher as "guide on the side"; modeling & mentoring; Integrated Learning Model (ILM). |
| Programs | Past-focused; "about Islam"; Islam as religion; learning to perform Islamic rituals. | Life Mastery: Present-focused; about "being Muslim"; Islam as lifestyle; Islam for Life Mastery (ILM). |
| Goals | Acquiring information, knowledge, skills mainly for the purpose of taking tests and for gaining employment. | Beyond Schooling: "How to learn"; lifelong and life-after learning; total human development. |
| Assessment | Pencil & paper; true or false; pass or fail; standardized testing. | Authentic Assessment: Authentic work, connected to the real life, for a real audience; multiple intelligences, modalities & formats; performance based. |

¹¹ Research suggests that students retain only 10% of what they *hear*. Although lecturing may be "cost-effective" from a financial and management standpoint, it is highly ineffective from an instructional standpoint, especially for students who are not auditory learners. See chart below: How Much Do We Learn?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 10% of what we <i>hear</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| 15% of what we <i>see</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| 20% of what we <i>see</i> and <i>hear</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| 40% of what we <i>discuss</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| 80% of what what we <i>experience</i> directly or <i>practice</i> doing | | | | | | | | | |
| 90% of what we <i>teach</i> others | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 1: How Much Do We Learn?^{12, 13}

Where We Should Be – The Vision

Muslims claim for themselves the responsibility to serve as caretakers of creation and to provide inspired leadership to the world. This is the Islamic notion of *'amānah*, or stewardship. However, in order to fulfill this responsibility, Muslims need a system of education that is capable of producing young people who can identify, analyze, understand and then work cooperatively to solve the problems that face their community and humanity at large. Of course, the world will not sit by idly waiting for Muslims to assume this responsibility. In fact, Muslims have been surpassed by others more willing and capable of taking up this challenge.

Fortunately, a sense of renewal is in the air today and enlightened Muslims are eager to find real solutions to the problems and challenges facing the Muslim community, and if necessary to re-examine traditional paradigms within Muslim society – including *how* and *what* to teach our children. To meet this challenge within education, a renewed vision of education is needed – one that is capable of producing young people with a level of understanding, commitment and social responsibility that will empower them to serve God by effectively serving society and humanity, *inshallāh*.

This vision of education of course is not a new vision of course; rather, it is a renewed vision of Islamic education. In the lifetime of the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) education was dynamic. It was practical and relevant. It was hands-on and active. Most of all, it had the power to inspire and



¹² Susan Kovalik, ITI: The Model, p. xii

¹³ In classical Islam, there is the notion of *ilm al-yaqīn* (hearing), *ayn al-yaqīn* (seeing) and *haqq al-yaqīn* (experience).



transform human lives. The Noble Prophet had the great ability to seamlessly connect learning both to growth (*tarbiyah*) and God (*rububiyah*) at the same time. He was the quintessential spiritual educator (*murabbi*). He educated, inspired and empowered all within a single teachable moment. The Prophetic model of education drew its content from the everyday experiences and day-to-day problems of the early Muslim community. In fact, the entire genre of *asbāb an-nuzūl* literature (occasions of revelation), testifies to the extreme importance early Islamic education placed on the day-to-day circumstances and concerns of students and their community. It was not like Islamic education today – stagnant and unresponsive. Why? And how can we make Islamic education meaningful again to the lives of our children and their communities?

To achieve this, a concerted effort is needed. Muslim educators and parents will have to increase their efforts and cooperation to find creative solutions that will bridge the gap between values and practice in the upcoming generation of young people. Of course, schools have a primary role to play in this enterprise, especially in developing programs that foster a holistic and integrated understanding of Islamic education and that promote the role of the family in the overall process of *tarbiyah*. It is the strong belief of this writer that *tarbiyah* (i.e., transformative education) is what is needed for our youth today and should be the focus of education in the Muslim world today. Investing in “human resources” is the best and most enduring investment any society can make – and its best defense.¹⁴ History has shown that machines and technology cannot defend against the human spirit when it is empowered by self-determination and a higher purpose. The true goal of education is to produce such people.

This vision of Islamic education makes an important distinction between *teaching “about Islam”* (information) and *learning to “be Muslim”* (transformation). The goal of Islamic education is not to fill our children’s minds with as much information about Islam as possible; its goal is to guide and assist them in *becoming Muslim*, and inspiring them to transform themselves in the process. This

¹⁴ At the heart of the educational vision advocated here is the firm belief, borne out by history, that more than any external enemy, a people’s greatest and worst enemy is none other than themselves (as corroborated by the well-known hadith about returning back from jihad).

paradigm shift from information-driven to transformation-centered education is essential if we hope to revitalize Muslim society.¹⁵

The vision of Islamic education advocated by the Tarbiyah Project is based on a *dynamic* rather than static view of Islam and Islamic education. This view is rooted in the belief that the mission of Islam is to positively affect and transform the world by first transforming ourselves, and that the purpose of Islamic education is to prepare young men and women capable of living out this mission – emotionally, morally, intellectually and collectively. To achieve this high level of education, Muslim educators, parents and other responsible adults must be serious-minded in their purpose and thoughtful in their approach. To maintain the status quo and do nothing is to condemn our children to a life of alienation from their birthright as Muslims: to understand, appreciate and practice Islam as a comprehensive way of living.

The strength of the Tarbiyah Project is in its holistic and integrated vision of education, its broad view of Islamic educational reform, and its focus on character development and human relations. The Project approaches educational improvement and reform based on two key principles. First, genuine reform will only be achievable to the extent that we transform its key stakeholders, namely, the students, staff and parents. Second, sustainable improvement will only result through a partnership that empowers the stakeholders themselves and makes them directly accountable for the learning that takes place. This is based on the Project's view of *comprehensive Islamic*

¹⁵ According to the Quran, "personal transformation" is both a prerequisite and the principal catalyst for "social change." The Quran (13:11) says:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ﴾

"Allah certainly does not change a people's condition until they change what is in themselves,"

This notwithstanding, modern-day Muslim society is now poised to embrace wholeheartedly and without question the western model of information-driven education instead of transformational education. This will have devastating effects on the spiritual core of Muslim society.

The famous American author, T.S. Eliot (The Rock), noted the serious shortcoming of modern education nearly seventy years ago when he lamented, "Where is the wisdom we have lost to knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost to information?" Today the problem has grown only worse and more serious of course. The reams of paper and data that we produce every single day only overwhelm us more; they provide little knowledge and even less wisdom for modern man and our children.

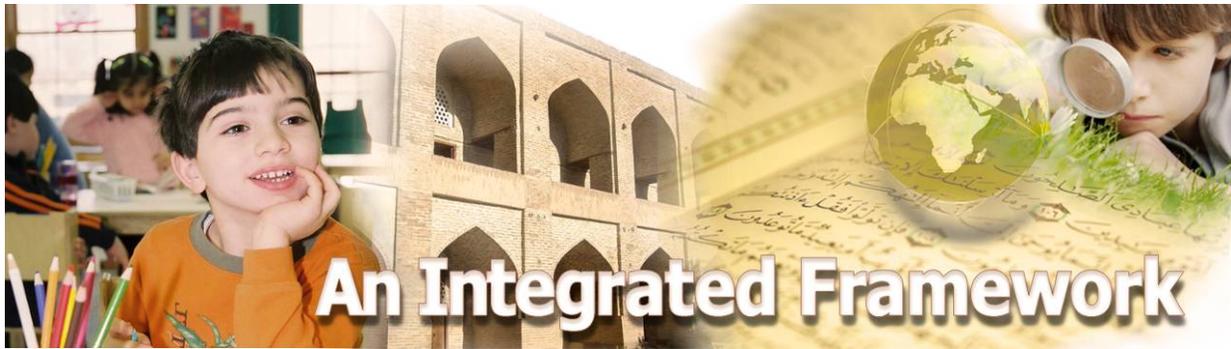




education: all knowledge, all aspects of the child, all learning styles, all ages and stages of development, all times (past, present, future), all places (home, school, mosque, community at-large), and all people (student, teacher, family, community at-large).¹⁶

The Tarbiyah Project therefore focuses on several areas of development, all of which are critical to the overall goal of *total human development*. Its main goal is human capacity building (*tarbiyah*), i.e., empowering students, teachers and parents towards greater efficacy in the educational process, both in their own personal growth and within the educational enterprise as a whole. The Project is therefore built around the following key areas of development: 1) human development in general, 2) curriculum development, 3) staff development (both professional and personal (including spiritual development), and 4) community development (including parent education and community service learning).

¹⁶ This is based on the Islamic principle of “universal learning” (seeking knowledge): all times (from the cradle to the grave), all places (even unto China), all people (an obligation upon every Muslim—male and female).



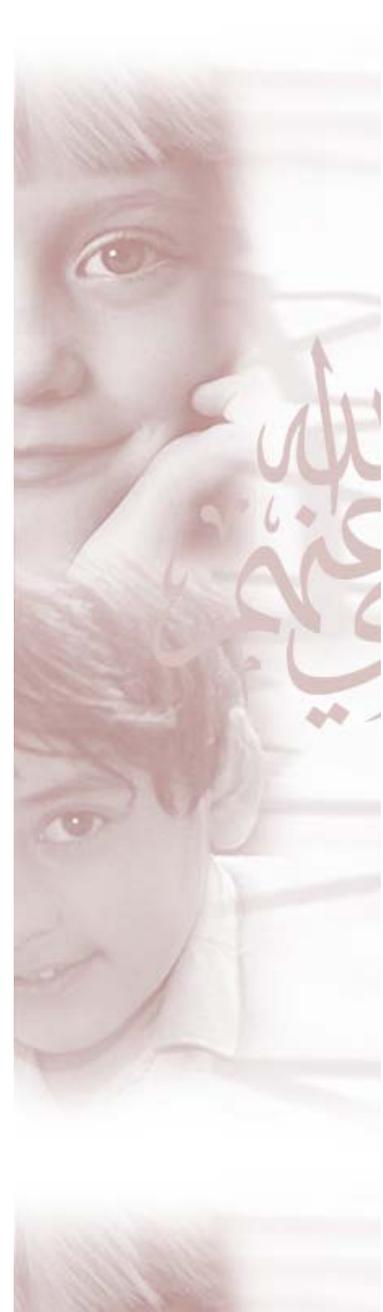
Framework

Earlier we noted that the educational system itself is a key factor in the current crisis within Muslim society. Major reform is needed in this area if Muslims hope to regain a place of respect within the world community. This reform will require rethinking and restructuring the key elements of the educational enterprise: including the conceptual framework, the content and structure of the curriculum, the instructional process, as well as the overall learning environment. However, it should be noted that this need for reform is not exclusive to Islamic education. Similar efforts at reform are underway in western circles of education as well. Calls for holistic education, integrated instruction, cooperative learning, character education, discovery learning and authentic assessment are major topics within contemporary education.

The Tarbiyah Project joins these efforts in calling for the reform of modern education, both western and Islamic, away from the factory model and towards a holistic model that is more natural, authentic and more effective for children. The Project's critique of modern education is an even-handed one of both secular, western education, on the one hand, and a narrow, parochial view of Islamic education, on the other hand. Both have failed to serve well the needs and best interest of Muslim children growing up in the 21st century.

How to Get There – The Plan

There is a critical need to restore a sense of wholeness, wholesomeness and holiness back into our vision and practice of education. *"Making education whole again"* should be the mantra of 21st-century Islamic education.

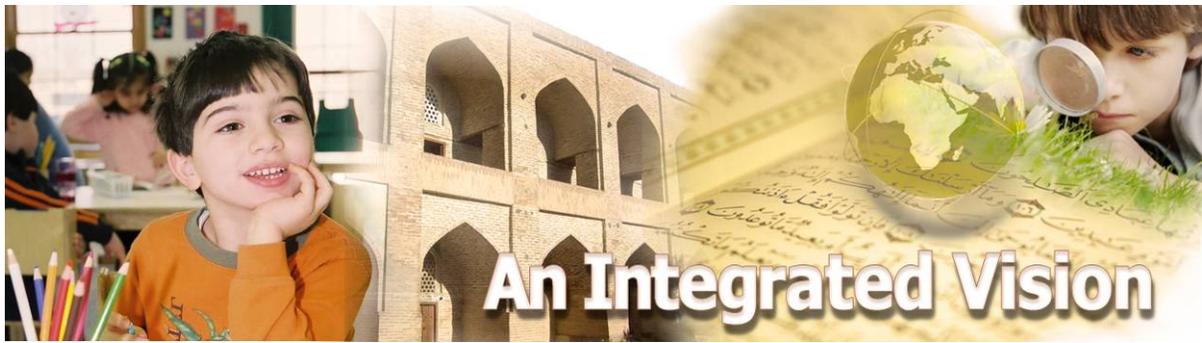




The Tarbiyah Project has worked to develop such a holistic education that addresses and incorporates key holistic aspects in its approach to education. This framework is based on four major components:

- **Vision & System:** A unified vision and integrated system of education based on the principles of *tawhīd* and *tarbiyah* (holistic education);
- **Structure: A Unified Conceptual Framework.** Restructuring the curriculum around a unified framework of knowledge and a set of universal concepts that underpin all branches of knowledge and allow for true transdisciplinary integration;
- **Content: A Unified Curriculum Framework.** Refocusing the content and goals of education around character development and personal transformation, and around what is really worth learning: the powerful ideas, universal concepts, big questions and enduring understandings that inspire true learning and transformation;
- **Process: A Unified Instructional Framework.** Re-aligning the teaching and learning experience around a process of discovery learning, which is alluded to in the Quran and is developed here as the Integrated Learning Model (ILM²).

Together, these elements provide a comprehensive framework for a genuinely *tawhīdic* (holistic, integrated, universal and spiritual) vision of Islamic education suitable for Muslim children in the 21st century. In the next section, we will consider these four components in detail.



Section 1

AN INTEGRATED VISION

Tawhīd as a System of Education (Philosophy)

The first aspect of education needing reform is the overall conceptualization and vision of education itself. Modern education, both western and Islamic, is based largely on a disjointed and incoherent view of life, education and the child. There is little sense of coherence or cohesion in the educational enterprise as a whole. As a result, even after 12-16 years of schooling, students seldom acquire a good understanding of the importance of education – its real significance, value or greater purpose (other than to get a job). In large part, this is because of the fragmented view that we adults ourselves have about life and education.

Tawhīd: The Unifying Principle

Education is an integral part of the belief system of any society. A society's most cherished beliefs and ideals are embodied in its educational vision, objectives and practices. Islam offers man a simple yet profound view of life and the world, including man's role in the world and his relation to its Creator. This view is based on the Islamic principle of *tawhīd* (oneness, wholeness, integration, coherence, unity, universality and God-consciousness). This concept of *tawhīd* is the keystone of Islam and the overarching principle of the Islamic worldview and its concomitant view of education. It serves as both a philosophical and methodological construct that brings coherence and structure to our understanding of the world and all aspects of life and society, including education. All other considerations are subordinate to it.





The Tarbiyah Project is based squarely on this central principle of *tawhīd*. It serves as the starting point and basis for its unified and holistic approach to education, which includes not only the mind, but also the body and the spirit. As Islam's ultimate and highest principle, *tawhīd* obliges Muslims to adopt a holistic, integrated and comprehensive view of education. This means that Muslim educators must never lose sight of the *big picture* and greater purpose of education and life. Key elements of a *tawhīdic* view of education include: being God-centered, holistic, integrated, unified, universal, collaborative, and systems oriented.¹⁷ Such ideas as the *whole child*, *whole language*, *whole-brain*, *whole earth*, *life-long learning*, *integrated instruction*, etc. are all fundamentally compatible with the Islamic principle of *tawhīd*.

The principle of *tawhīd* should inform and shape how Muslim educators go about educating children. This includes: 1) what to teach (*content*), 2) how to organize the content (*structure*), and 3) how to go about teaching (*process*). In short, *tawhīd* should inform both our principles and practice of education. For this reason alone, Muslim educators should be the foremost proponents of a holistic and integrated approach to education, rather than the disjointed and bifurcated approach to education that is practiced, ironically, in nearly all Islamic schools and Muslim countries. In this regard, note the different approaches to integrating the curriculum in the figure below.

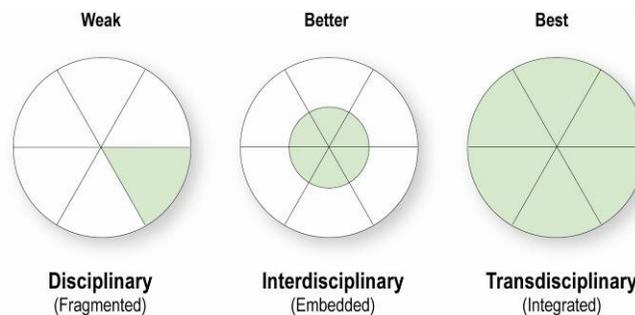


Figure 2: Different Approaches to Integrating the Curriculum

The common practice of Muslims educators merely to append so-called “Islamic Studies” onto an otherwise secular curriculum is completely antithetical to Islam’s core principle of *tawhīd* and to a holistic approach to

¹⁷ A “system” has emergent properties that do not exist in isolation and that result from the interrelationship of its parts. It is this quality of wholeness of the system that is the unique value of a systems approach.

education. What results from this type of bicentric and bifurcated system of education is the oftentimes bipolar, and even duplicitous, character of the modern Muslim psyche. Modern society, but especially Muslim society for which spirituality still resonates somewhat, must realize that this type of fragmented approach to education will not give our children a sense of wholeness and wellbeing that we desperately wish for them. Wholeness can only come from that which is itself whole, including experiences with holistic education.¹⁸ Contrary to the modern reductionist view that things are merely the sum of their parts, Muslims believe that the principle of holism or *tawhīd* is embedded at the core of everything in creation.

Implications of Tawhīd for Education

The principle of *tawhīd* therefore has important implications for an Islamic theory of education. Of course, first and foremost, *tawhīd* is a theological principle about the unitary nature of God. This is fundamental. In addition, it is a cosmological principle about the whole of creation. This implies that creation and the laws that govern it are integrated parts of a unified system, from the smallest atoms to the largest astronomical bodies, and that the One God created and unified these elements within a single, integrated system of creation, known as the *universe* (i.e., a single, recurring message, purpose or *tasbīh*, as the Quran refers to it).

Epistemologically, the principle of *tawhīd* is reflected in the belief that real knowledge reveals and reflects the integrated nature of reality as a whole. This means that at a deep conceptual level all knowledge is unified – in its source, composition, structure and purpose. Such a view is a prerequisite for an integrated model of education.

Pedagogically, the principle of *tawhīd* is reflected in the notion of curriculum integration. However, curriculum integration here means more than simply making connections between topics of the curriculum, as is typically done today. More importantly, it means synthesizing the content of the curriculum down to its deepest and most basic conceptual elements and structure.

¹⁸ It is worth noting here that the word “whole” is derived linguistically from a (German) root word that includes the three concepts of wholeness or completeness, wholesomeness or healthiness, and holiness. All three of these connotations are interrelated part of the concept of wholeness.





At this fundamental level, we will find a simple and elegant match between these conceptual elements of the curriculum and the elements at work within the larger cosmos. This provides the basis for real transdisciplinary integration and deep understanding (*hikmah*). The Tarbiyah curriculum model is based on an attempt at joining these different dimensions – metaphysical, cosmological, anthropological and pedagogical – into a single unified framework and views this as an important prerequisite for a truly Islamic theory of education.

The Tarbiyah Project, then, is based on an approach to education that is genuinely holistic and integrated: holistic in its vision, content, structure, context and process; holistic in its view of children and how children really learn; holistic in its scope of mind, body and spirit; integrative in its approach to the curriculum (both *how* and *what* is taught); and integrating knowledge with application and service. It believes that these integrative aspects significantly enhance the power, relevance and effectiveness of the learning experience. The Tarbiyah Project advocates this holistic approach to education, not because it is a current trend in certain progressive circles of modern education, but rather because of its central and critical importance as the foundational principle of the Islamic worldview and its demonstrated effectiveness in more fully engaging students in their own learning.

Below are certain holistic aspects of the Tarbiyah vision.

Table 2: Holistic Aspects of Tarbiyah Education

| Holistic Aspects | Examples |
|-------------------------|--|
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life-long and life-after learning; comprehensive; <u>know</u>, <u>desire</u>, & <u>do</u> the good; God-centered perspective (whole world in His hands). |
| View of Children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole child: mind, body, spirit; multiple intelligences and learning styles. |
| What to Teach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerful ideas and big questions; whole world (multi-cultural); whole earth (stewardship). |
| How to Organize | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transdisciplinary framework; integrated curriculum; holistic education; systems approach. |
| How to Teach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated learning model; brain-compatible; differentiated instruction; total environment, whole village; whole language. |

Metaphor of the Tree

In addition to the principle of *tawhīd*, there are a number of other principles that help form the theory base of the Tarbiyah model. Several of these principles derive from reflecting on the process of growth and development (*tarbiyah*) found in nature.



The Quran urges us to ponder the *signs of God* around us in nature in order to better understand ourselves as human beings and to better understand the patterns & laws (*sunnah*) of God in creation.¹⁹ In nature, we can see an undeniable pattern of growth and development. Flowers, birds, animals, even cosmic events, unfold and develop according to a more or less unified pattern. Understanding this pattern of growth and development is essential for those engaged in the task of educating children. God, in His creative wisdom and power, has fashioned creation in a way that it is a gradual, evolving and developmental *process*, rather than merely an *act*.²⁰ It is something that involves longevity, consistency, nurturing and commitment (*rububīyah*). This process of unfoldment applies not only to living things, but also to non-living things; it applies to history and to most processes in nature. It is the immutable law of God in creation (*sunnat Allāh fi 'l-khalq*) that cannot be changed or replaced (Q35:43), except by God Himself.

In order to be successful at their craft, educators must understand this fundamental law of growth and development, since it applies directly to children.

¹⁹ This is more difficult for modern man who has become deafened to the signs of God in nature by the clamor of modernity. Literally and figuratively, we can no longer see the forest for the trees. Despite more, we have less. As the Quran says, we have become deaf, dumb and blind (summun, bukmun, 'umyun) to the signs around us (Quran 2:171).

²⁰ The point could be made that the Quran in several places (e.g., 6:73) uses the phrase, كُنْ فَيَكُونُ "*Kun fa-yakūn*" ("Be! Then it is."), suggesting that once the divine fiat is given, an object comes into being instantaneously, rather than through a process over time. No doubt, various theological explanations could be given here. In addition, it should be noted that the conjunctive particle "*fa-*" used in this phrase, supports in fact the opposite interpretation: namely, the concepts of causation (*sababīyah*), sequence (*tartīb*) and process. This clearly would not be the case if the phrase instead used the alternate particle "*wa-*" (known as *wal al-hā*), rendering it as "*Kun ya-yakūn*" ("Be! And it is.")





Moreover, they must incorporate it into their own pedagogical philosophy and practice. Otherwise, they will be working against the natural pattern of development inherent within nature and within each child. Only by aligning their pedagogical practice with this universal principle can educators best serve the interests of the children with whom they are entrusted. Educators like Maria Montessori understood this principle well.

Trees and flowers are one such *sign* for us to reflect on, especially in regards to the process of education. The tree is the perfect metaphor for this process of “unfolding and bringing out” known as *tarbiyah*.²¹ The Quran (14:24-25) uses the *metaphor of the tree* as an example to contrast the difference in development and fruition between good and evil.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ ضَرَبَ اللَّهُ مَثَلًا كَلِمَةً طَيِّبَةً كَشَجَرَةٍ طَيِّبَةٍ أَصْلُهَا ثَابِتٌ وَفَرْعُهَا فِي السَّمَاءِ تُؤْتِي أَكْلَهَا كُلَّ حِينٍ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهَا وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ﴾

“A good word [advice, guidance, education, etc.] is like a good tree. Its roots are firm and its branches stretch up to the sky [towards God]. Its fruits are given forth every season [or “at every moment”], by the leave of its Lord. And God offers these examples to mankind in the hope that they will take heed.”

The tree and its process of growth are a wonderful point of reflection for those involved in raising children. Parents and educators should reflect deeply on this metaphor to discover the many connections and lessons it has for raising children in a way that is natural and truly nurturing and healthy for them. The Tarbiyah Project uses this metaphor of the tree as a way of explaining the nature of *tarbiyah* and the stages of growth within the Tarbiyah framework. See the companion article, *Metaphor of the Tree*, for a detailed explanation of this metaphor and its implications for education.

²¹ Using the same metaphor, Ralph Waldo Emerson gives a wonderful description of the natural tendency of the child towards the integration of knowledge (tawhid):

To the young mind every thing is individual, stands by itself. By and by, it finds how to join two things and see in them one nature; then three, then three thousand; and so, tyrannized over its own unifying instinct, it goes on tying things together, diminishing anomalies, discovering roots running underground whereby contrary and remote things cohere and flower out from one stem. — The American Scholar 1.85 16

Tarbiyah Principles

Several principles of education derive from reflecting on the metaphor of the tree, as well as from recent insights into how children actually learn best. Especially important have been insights drawn from modern advances in brain research and approaches to holistic psychology, integrated learning and systems theory. Below is a brief description of the key principles that form the theory base of the Tarbiyah framework.

Key Principles

- **Fitrah.** Each child is endowed with a God-given nature, known as the *fitrah*. Like the seed of a tree, it contains the essential *programming* needed to grow. In the right soil or environment, it will naturally unfold and develop. This is contrary to the notion of *tabula rasa* (blank slate) of John Locke and others, and suggests instead the complementary blend of both nature and nurture.
- **Uniqueness.** Each child (and each brain) is unique, based on the unique genetics, natural talents and life experiences of that child. Each child has his or her own individual personality, temperament and abilities. This is the individualized part of the child's *fitrah*, the part that makes him or her a unique creation of God. Education must acknowledge this unique aspect of each child and that children are not identical objects on an assembly line.
- **Holistic: *Tawhīd*.** Authentic education must encompass and engage the whole child – spiritually, morally, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. It must open up to the child a “big picture” view of the world as a network of interconnected and interdependent relationships and systems. Ultimately, holistic education must seek to connect the heart, mind and soul of the learner experientially to the Source of all wholeness, holiness and wellbeing.
- **Integrative: *Tawhīd*.** Education must be integrative in the broad range of topics it addresses and its treatment of these topics; integrative across time, place and cultures; integrative across the curriculum; integrating knowledge, beliefs, and values with action, application and service. These integrative aspects have the potential to truly enhance the power of the learning experience. Additionally, learning is mind-body integrated. All learning is dependent on the body's physiological state. Nutrition, hormones, bio-





rhythms, attention cycles and down time are all integrated parts of the learning process.²²

- **Developmental Stages: *Tarbiyah*.** Developmental windows for learning exist, but vary between children. Children develop in stages as a function of natural gifts, genetics and environment. As noted earlier, the word *tarbiyah* itself conveys this idea of developing from “stage to stage” until reaching one’s full potential.
- **Emotion-based: *Ayat Allāh*.** Emotion drives attention, motivation, meaning and memory. Emotional experiences *code* our learning as important.²³ The Quran draws our attention to the fact that awe, wonder and “*being there*” experience are the natural starting point of the learning process. Conversely, stress & threat inhibit normal learning and thwart its effectiveness.²⁴
- **Pattern & Meaning Seeking: *Sunnat Allāh*.** We gain meaning through patterns; meaning comes from understanding the larger pattern of things. In search of meaning, the brain seeks patterns, associations and connections between new data and prior knowledge.²⁵ This search for meaning is innate. Intelligence and understanding are the ability to make connections and construct patterns.²⁶ The Quran calls

²² Jensen, Eric, Introduction to Brain-Compatible Learning (San Diego: The Brain Store, Inc., 1998), p. 63-66.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 42.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 71.

²⁶ It is worth noting here that the Arabic word for *intelligence* (‘aql) is derived semantically from the idea of “binding, tying or connecting together” (as with a rope). For example, we say “Ya’qilu al-ba’ir” (“To tie up the camel.”). Also, a head wrap or braid is called an ‘iqāl. Even a woman of high standing (i.e., a woman who is well “put together”) is known as ‘aqīlah. These words are all derived from the same root and share the same meaning of tied / connected together. It is only by extension that the word ‘aql/ is used in Arabic to mean *intelligence*. The inference here is quite clear in Arabic: intelligence is simply the ability to find or make connections between things, to tie things together and thus form a relationship between them.

Also, the Arabic word for *learning circle* (halaqa) expresses this meaning of “linking together” (tie, connection, relation). This notion of circularity is not, however, a mere coincidental or superficial orientation. Rather, it reflects a deep philosophical understanding and acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of things within the cosmic order. Of course, this view was held by most ancient cultures throughout the world. It is said of Native Americans, for example, that they would take into consideration the effect of their actions for seven generations into the future, realizing the extreme interconnectedness of creation. (How amazing!). Contrast that with the generally “linear” view of modern, secular society, which is based largely on a culture of getting and

us to discover the recurring “patterns” in nature and human history.

- **Challenging (Enrichment): *Ibdā'***. Students must be challenged to thoughtfully examine what they are studying, to participate assertively in group discussions, to work productively in cooperative learning activities, and to come to grips with controversial issues. Such activities and experiences help foster the skills needed to produce competent citizens able to present and defend their beliefs and principles effectively. Challenging, authentic learning stimulates curiosity, creativity and higher-order thinking.
- **Higher-Order Thinking (Problem Solving): *Ijtihād***. Higher-order thinking involves the manipulation of information and ideas by synthesizing, generalizing, explaining, hypothesizing, or arriving at conclusions that produce new meaning and understanding.²⁷ Of course, the brain is continuously responding and adapting to the changing requirements of the environment; humans have survived throughout the ages by problem-solving and flexible thinking.
- **Deep Knowledge: *Hikmah***. Understanding, or wisdom, is a key goal of knowledge and education. “Deep knowledge” involves addressing the central ideas of a topic or discipline with enough thoroughness to explore connections and relationships, and to produce complex understanding.²⁸ The Quran (62:2) notes that the real goal of knowledge is deep understanding (*hikmah*, or wisdom), not information.
- **Hands-on (Active): *Amal***. Like the roots of a tree, children must get their hands dirty in order for knowledge and understanding to take root.²⁹ This is done through active learning experiences. Effective teaching and learning must emphasize hands-on and minds-on activities that call for students to interact with what they are learning and use it in their lives in some meaningful way. Teachers must be prepared to take advantage of unfolding events and teachable moments to develop examples that relate directly

taking, narcissism, even the false notion of cheating destiny (i.e., we will be gone before the long-term results of our actions can affect us).

²⁷ State of Michigan, Michigan Curriculum Framework (Lansing: Michigan Department of Education, 1996), P. 141.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Literally, the word “understanding” means to “stand among,” in order to observe something up close and comprehend it from first-hand experience. Real “understanding” then is not merely an abstraction; rather it is a real-world experience that is then generalized and converted into an abstraction (concept).





to students, and to implement other practices that facilitate active and meaningful instruction. One of the major, recurring themes of the Quran is the importance of joining theory with hands-on practice and application.

- **Real-world Connections (Relevance): *Dīn*.** Students should feel that the content they are studying is worth learning because it is directly meaningful and relevant to their personal lives (lifestyle/lifeway). Students must see the usefulness and potential application of knowledge to their everyday lives. Real-world connections involve making connections between the knowledge gained and the larger issues of the world outside the classroom.
- **Values-based: *Akhlāq*.** By focusing on values and by considering the ethical dimensions of topics, education becomes a powerful vehicle for character and moral development. Educators need to realize that every aspect of the teaching-learning experience conveys values to students and provides opportunities for them to learn about values.
- **Social Brain (Substantive Conversation, Cooperative Learning): *Hiwār, Ta'āwun*.** Language is the primary means of human communication. A great deal of learning takes place by talking and interacting with others, especially in *learning communities*. Substantive conversation involves dialogue and extended conversation with peers and experts about a particular subject or topic in order to build shared understanding. Groups, teams and cooperative learning experiences benefit our understanding of new learning and its application.³⁰ Essentially, the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) utilized similar notions as social brain, substantive conversation, and cooperative learning in formulating the learning communities of early Islam.³¹
- **Non-conscious Learning (Modeling): *Qudwah, Suhbah*.** Much of what we learn is not taught directly, but simply "picked up." Real learning is not forced, but orchestrated. This highlights the importance of association, role-modeling and mentoring. In fact, the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) received their special designation of *sahābah* because of their association with him in this type of learning community.

³⁰ State of Michigan, Michigan Curriculum Framework, p. 141.

³¹ Note for example such words as *hiwār* (and *hawwāriyūn*), *kalām*, *hadīth*, *riwāyah*, etc., all of which convey the notion of substantive conversation and dialogue.

Educational Aims

In light of the overall framework of the Tarbiyah Project, the following set of broad educational aims has been articulated. Accordingly, the aim of Islamic education is to produce a total, well-rounded person who is:

- **God-conscious:** Is aware of God and the interconnectedness of creation in all that one thinks, feels and does. (*Tawhīd – Unity & Systems*)
- **Principled:** Has a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning and a commitment to self-reflection, self-direction, and moral action, with an emphasis on integrity, honesty, compassion and justice. (*Tazkiyah – Power/Force, Duality, Causation*)
- **Knowledgeable:** Has a deep understanding of the major patterns and recurring issues of humankind and the impact of significant events and discoveries on the course of human development. (*Hikmah – Space, Relations & Structure*)
- **Well-balanced:** Understands the scope and importance of balance and wellbeing in one's personal and collective life, and actively works to establish it therein. (*Istiqāmah – Form & Substance*)
- **Cooperative:** Has an understanding of the role of good communications, cooperation, fairness, and friendship in establishing and maintaining meaningful and healthy relations between individuals and groups. (*Ihsān – Motion & Interaction*)
- **Committed:** Has a commitment to a lifestyle consistent with the principles and practices of Islam, especially as reflected in one's daily interactions with others. (*Dīn – Time & Pattern*)
- **Caring:** Has a strong sense of caring, stewardship, service and social activism, and a commitment to using one's life to make a difference in the world. (*Amānah – Function & Outcome*)





Section 2

AN INTEGRATED STRUCTURE

Tawhīd as Knowledge Construction (Epistemology)

Restoring wholeness to the structure of the curriculum is the second area of education that needs serious attention. Here, the question is how best to organize the curriculum so that it supports students in better understanding themselves and the world in which they live. A key goal of education, and yet one of its main failures, should be to provide students with a coherent framework for understanding the world and their place in it. Rather than memorizing numerous bits of information or focusing on a disparate set of topics and issues (which are seldom connected together), the curriculum must be structured to provide a strong sense of coherence to the student's view of himself and the world. It should lead students to discover the larger connections and meaning that exist in all that they are learning. The curriculum should be aligned with the natural make up of the child, rather than the superimposed structure of traditional academic or Islamic disciplines. For the curriculum designer, the choice is between an integrated curriculum and one that is compartmentalized and fragmented.

Concept-based Curriculum

With the proliferation of knowledge and information today, educators are faced with the challenge of deciding what details to teach and which to ignore. In the Muslim context, the demands of modern, secular education on the one hand and the practice of traditional Islamic learning on the other hand, place considerable pressure, both positive and negative, on the content and structure of the curriculum.

These competing and oftentimes conflicting demands on the curriculum require an underlying principle and structure upon which to build a coherent and unified curriculum. Beyond the myriad of concepts and topics, and beyond the perception of the undiscerning teacher or student, the curriculum developer is obliged to bring to light the underlying structure of knowledge as a whole. The principle of *tawhīd* provides the necessary conceptual tool for this purpose and is a prerequisite for any truly Islamic model of education. However, true integration of knowledge can only be achieved when approached at a deep conceptual level where the academic content shares a common set of *core concepts*.³² A concept-based approach to the curriculum, therefore, is our best hope of restoring a sense of wholeness and unity back into the curriculum and recovering from the damaging effects (epistemological, psychological, spiritual, social and now ecological) of the unfettered differentiation of knowledge of our modern era.

A Unified Framework

What are the components and structure of this proposed unified framework? If we carefully and deeply examine the various branches of knowledge, we find that they all share a common conceptual structure. This appears to be generally true whether the subject area is science, mathematics, language, history, art or religion. This is likely tied to the cognitive structure of human language and is reflected in the linguistic notion of “semantic primitives,” or conceptual building blocks. It appears that all branches of knowledge can be mapped onto a single, universal pattern or archetype. At its deepest level, this structure is based simply and elegantly on the concepts of *one*, *two*, *three* and *four* and their corresponding principles of *unity* (integration), *duality* (interaction), *triplicity* (relation) and *multiplicity* (formation). These elements represent the overarching structure of a universal conceptual framework.

³² Note here the etymology of the word “concept” itself. Essentially, it means to “join together” (from which we also get the biological notion of “conception,” as in pregnancy, i.e., “joining together” the male and female reproductive cells). A “concept” is a mental form or schema (idea) derived from specific instances. Words like “con-struct” and “con-nect” also share the root meaning of “joining together.” Cognition then is essentially a process of “making connections” and “constructing” meaning (significance).





Figure 3 shows the composition and structure of this unified and universal framework.³³ At the base of this structure are seven recurring concepts that are believed to lie at the center of all branches of knowledge.

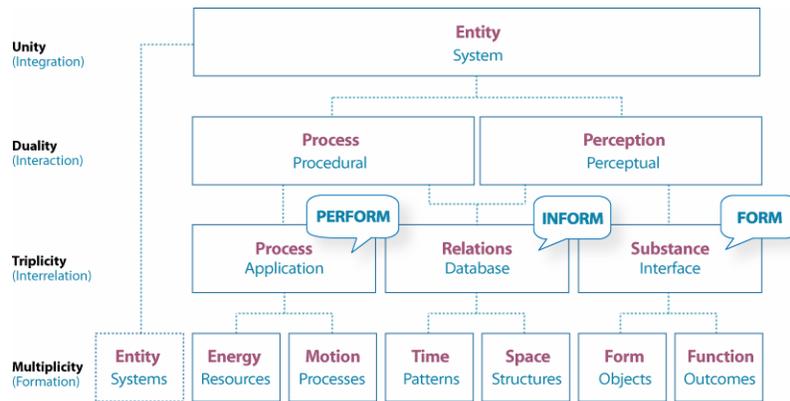


Figure 3: Universal Conceptual Framework³⁴

These are general, universal concepts that seem to apply to all branches of knowledge and that can be understood at various levels of abstraction – physical, natural, historical, social, psychological and metaphysical.³⁵ They provide the basis for studying the physical world, the human being, language, society, history and religion all within a single, unified framework. This is significant for two reasons. First, it allows for the reintegration and synthesis of all areas of knowledge, both sacred and profane. Second, it provides a strong basis for genuine transdisciplinary integration and learning. It is precisely this reintegration of knowledge and its restoration to wholeness (*tawhīd*) that represents one of the greatest needs of the modern psyche. Such a unified framework is essential to a *tawhīdic* or holistic approach to education – especially for the purpose of educating children.

³³ Note that this is a tentative formulation still needing further refinement. For now, it is a working model.

³⁴ This is a 2-dimensional representation and does not show accurately the true, interrelated nature of the relationships that hold between these concepts. See Figure 6 below.

³⁵ See Figure 6 below.

Examples of the Universal Structure

Here are a few examples of the general suitability of this framework for instructional purposes.

A Ball. A ball, or any other object for that matter, can serve as a simple, mundane example of this universal framework. A ball consists of these basic properties: it is an entity (**whole**), having an outer **form**, made up of some inner **substance**, exerting a **force** (gravity), existing within a context or environment defined by **space & time**, and serving a purpose (**function**) for which it was created and is used. This is the general structure of all material objects and likely serves as a more suitable framework around which to organize and design the general school curriculum. Also, we could easily have used as an example a tree or flower, computer, automobile, the internet, the circulatory system, solar system, monetary system, political system, school system, etc.

Islamic Religion. For our purposes here, let us take the religion of Islam as an example of this universal framework. In Figure 4 below, we again see the basic components of the model, only now expressed using standard Islamic terminology. Conceptually, however, they are the same. At the top level is the first principle of Islam: *tawhīd* (unity). Next are the complementary principles of *'ilm*³⁶ (perceptual) and *'amal* (procedural), both of which are central, recurring themes of the Quran.³⁷ At the third level are the concepts of *islam* (doing), *imam* (knowing) and *ihsan* (being), based on the well-known hadith of Gabriel. This depicts the three principal dimensions of personal development in Islam. This triadic framework is itself, in fact, a universal paradigm used by many wisdom traditions in one form or another.³⁸ Finally

³⁶ The word *'ilm* (knowledge) is derived from the word *'alāmah* (sign or imprint), which is a *perceptual* feature. It is very significant to note also that the two words *'ilm* and *'amal* are derived from the same trilateral set of letters (in different combinations) and therefore share common semantic features. This is a significant metaphysical consideration (i.e., duality resolves back to unity).

³⁷ In more than x different verses, the Quran emphasizes the interconnection between "belief" (perceptual) and "action" (procedural).

³⁸ The Arabic Language is another good example of this triadic division. The structure of the Arabic language, both syntactically and morphologically, is based squarely on the trilateral root system and on the tripartite division of language into *ism* (noun), *fi'l* (verb) and *harf* (particle). This aligns directly with the elements of the universal framework presented here. There are numerous other examples of this in the Arabic and Islamic tradition as well, such as the following: *islam, iman, Ihsan; shariah, haqiqah, tariqah; jamal, kamil, jalal; 'ilm,*





at the bottom of this structure are the following well-known Islamic concepts.³⁹ When understood deeply at the semantic level, we can see that these Islamic concepts directly match the seven universal concepts noted earlier – only phrased according to Islamic terminology. However, it is this point exactly that makes the core message of Islam universally acceptable and applicable, based on the universality of its underlying concepts. These are important considerations for anyone working to develop a universal curriculum.

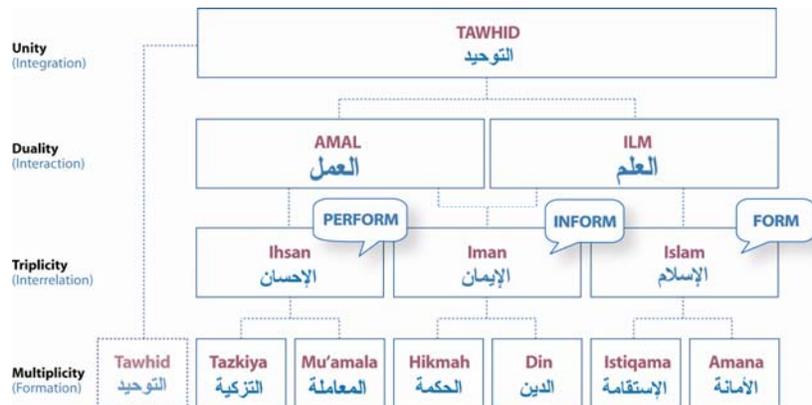


Figure 4: Tarbiyah Framework (based on Universal Framework)

ayn and haqq al-yaqin; nafs 'ammarah, lawwamah and mutma'innah; sam', basar, and fu'ad (Q.17:36); etc.

Note also, for example, that the universal concept of “motion” or “change” is deeply embedded as part of the ancient Arabic psyche and language. In fact, the word “arab” itself means “motion” or change (from which we get the notion of “vehicle” [‘arabah] in Arabic). “Arabs” were so known because of their seasonal migratory patterns back and forth across the desert. For sure they understood that “change” and “continuity” are complementary, not contradictory, elements of a universal pattern—elements that coexist in unity (*tawhīd*). They appear to have understood deeply and accepted (*aslama*) this as part of the larger cosmological reality. Again, this is reflected clearly in the Arabic language itself. For example, Arabic utilizes an inflectional word system based on the two concepts of *continuity* and *change*: *mabnī* (non-inflected=stable/continuous) and *mu‘rab* (inflected=changing). The fact that these two concepts are deeply rooted in the ancient Arab psyche and language is indisputable.

³⁹ The glosses selected here are clearly not intended to be direct translations of the terms in Arabic. Here, I am considering each term at its deep conceptual level, not the surface level. With some reflection, anyone knowledgeable of Arabic will be able to ascertain the semantic connections between the Arabic terms and the English glosses selected here. This is briefly summarized below:

- *tawhīd* from الوحدة (al-wihdah) = unity/system
- *tazkiyah* from النماء والريع (al-namā' wal-ray') = energy/source
- *mu'āmalah* from العمل (al-'amal) = action/motion
- *hikmah* from الوضع او الموضوع (al-wad') = space/place
- *dīn* from يوم الدين والأجل (yawm al-dayn wal-'ajal) = time
- *istiḳāmah* from التقويم والقامة (al-taqwīm wal-qāmah) = form
- *'amānah* from الأمن وحمل المسؤولية (al-'amn wal-mas'olīyah) = function

Islām, Imān and Ihsān

Along with the principles of *tawhīd* and *tarbiyah*, the Tarbiyah Project utilizes a broad understanding of the concepts of *islām*, *imān* and *ihsān* as key elements of its educational model. Here, these elements represent the dimensions of: 1) doing, body, kinesthetics (*islām*); 2) knowing, mind, cognition (*imān*); and 3) being, soul, affection (*ihsān*).⁴⁰ Figures 5 and 6 below are two representations of this model, showing the relationships that hold between these elements in the overall structure of this model. Give time to consider each diagram carefully.

Note the following in particular about Figure 6. First, it is a 3-dimensional model. It consists of three axes: *being (ihsān)*, *knowing (imān)*, and *doing (islām)*. Second, each of the seven elements of the model is directly connected to each of the other elements; the model is therefore fully integrated. This interconnection, and in fact interdependency, reflects the Project's view of the nature of the curriculum and instruction. And third, the concept of *tawhīd* is the central, pivotal element in the model. As a 3-dimensional model, the connections between the elements could not be accurately depicted in a 2-dimensional form, such as a list or chart.



⁴⁰ Educators will quickly recognize these as corresponding directly to the three domains of Bloom's taxonomy (cognitive, affective and kinesthetic), illustrating again that this is a universal structure applicable to different branches of knowledge. These correspond directly with the notion of *sam'* (hearing = logos or mind), *basar* (sight = corpus or body) and *fu'ād* (heart = spirit or soul) found in the following verse of the Quran (17:36):

﴿إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا﴾

Hearing, sight and the heart – about all of these,
one will be asked (i.e., is responsible).

Figure 5: Tarbiyah Framework, Model 1

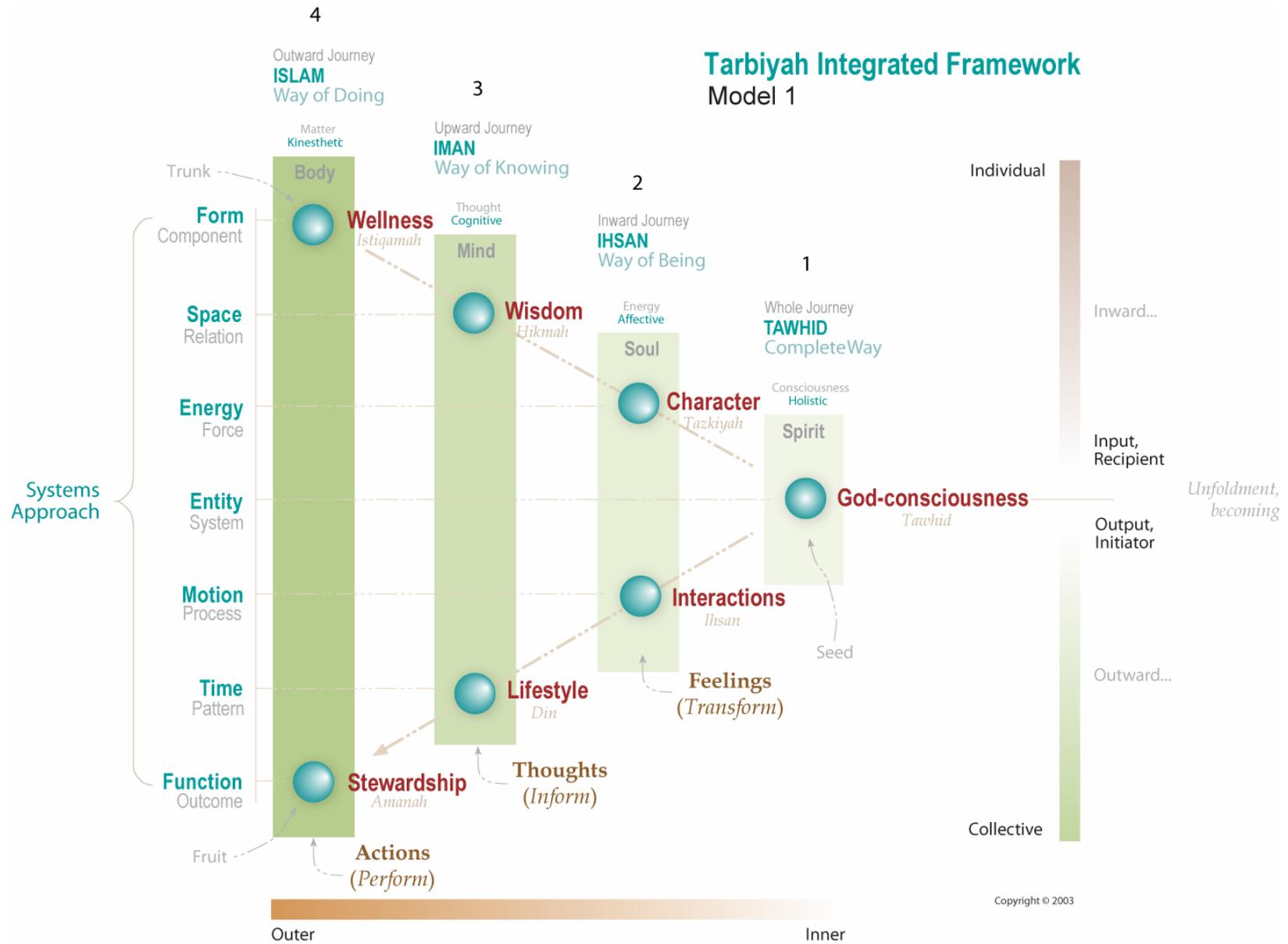
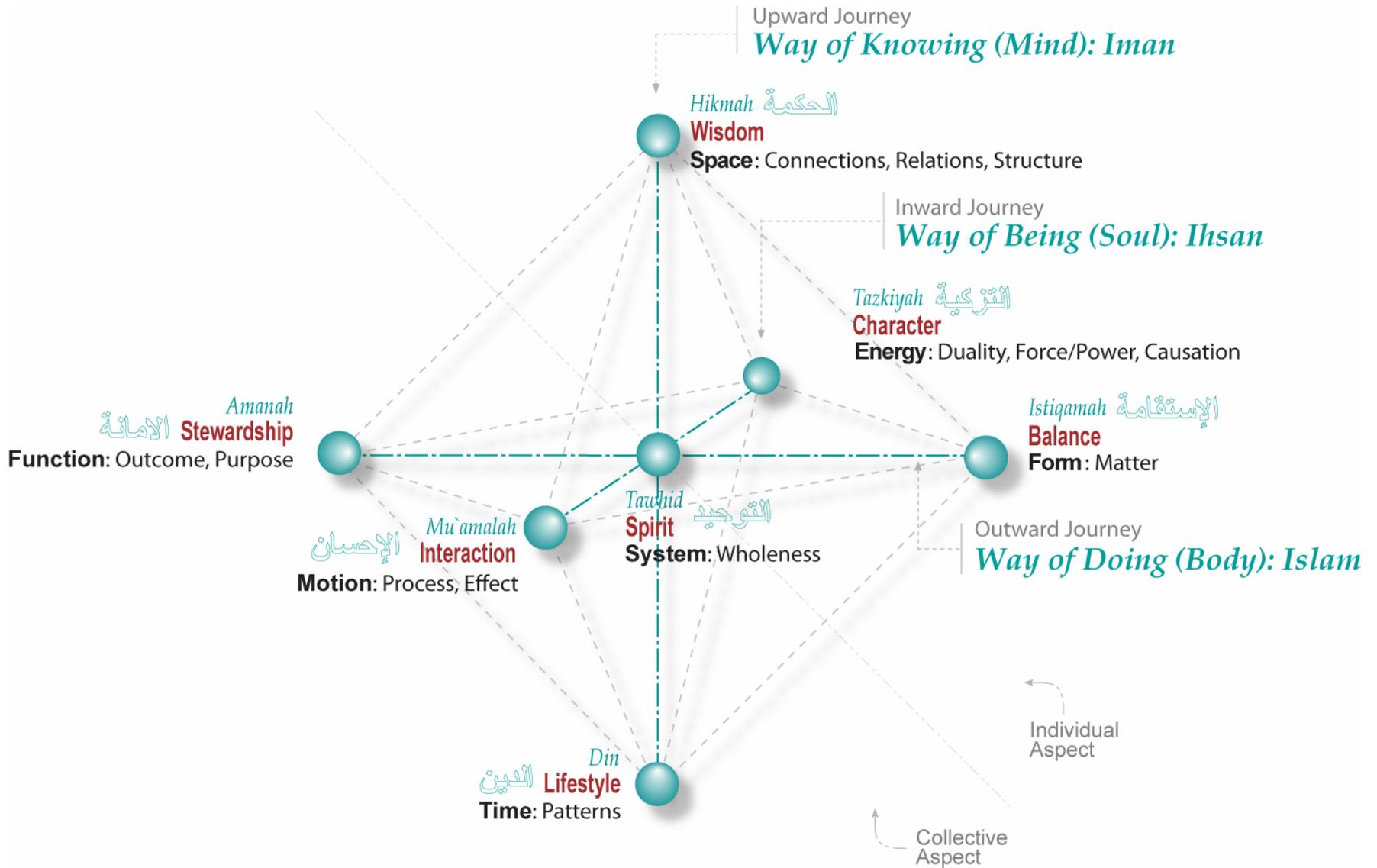


Figure 6: Tarbiyah Framework, Model 2



Tarbiyah Integrated Framework
Model 2

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Section 3

INTEGRATED CONTENT

Tawhīd as a Body of Knowledge (?)

The third area of education needing major reform and restoration is the content of the curriculum. Much of the content taught in schools today has little enduring value or perceived relevance to the lives of the students themselves. As a result, most of what is taught is quickly forgotten immediately after exams – if not before. The question here is what is worth teaching and what has enduring value? The keyword here is *values*.

Seven Integrated Strands

Within the Tarbiyah framework, the curriculum is closely tied to the seven components of the universal framework presented in the previous section. It is worth noting here that the Quran (15:87) makes reference to the “recurring seven.”⁴¹ These components represent the seven developmental areas, or strands, that constitute the holistic makeup of the child and his/her connection to the world. These strands in turn make up the *rope*, or handhold, that a student will be able to utilize in order to maintain a state of balance and wellbeing (*istiḳāmah*) throughout life. Muslims are instructed to pray and work towards this central goal of wellbeing every single day.

⁴¹ The Quran (15:87) itself makes reference to the “recurring seven.” Scholars generally have interpreted this to refer to the seven verses of *Surat al-Fāṭihah* or the seven long *surahs* at the beginning of the Quran. Perhaps a broader meaning is also possible here, including the seven recurring, universal concepts or principles that under gird the structure of the cosmos. Note exegetical reference.

Similar to the seven heavens of *outer space* (the macrocosm) referred to in the Quran (67:3), the *inner space* of man (the microcosm) is also comprised of seven areas, which we call strands. For the Muslim educator, each of these strands represents an important element or aspect of the child's sacred nature, or *fitrah*. Like to the strands of a rope, these elements are woven together, each one intertwined and reinforced by each other strand. The goal of this holistic approach is the integrated and balanced development of the whole child – ultimately seeking to achieve wholeness, wholesomeness and holiness, all within a single, integrated process of divine design. For this and other reasons, the ideal Islamic curriculum is not organized around the conventional categories of subject disciplines (such as Math, English, History or Islamic Studies) – especially for children. Even the traditional Islamic division of knowledge into “revealed” and “acquired” knowledge is not ideally suited for children, nor was it originally so intended.⁴² A *tawhīdic* view of the curriculum is necessarily transdisciplinary (transcending the disciplines) in design and delivery. Its goal is to draw the child's conscious and unconscious mind to the “big picture,” the *tawhīdic* vision of the world and life, based on the oneness of God and the unity of knowledge, man and creation.⁴³

This approach provides the mental scaffolding for integrated learning and gestalt thinking. To this writer, this is the notion of a truly integrated Islamic curriculum (and perhaps a more meaningful articulation of the notion of “islamization of knowledge”). Such an approach unifies the curriculum into a single coherent framework that cuts across all subject areas. Moreover, it serves as a unifying and integrative mental construct for the developing child's understanding of the world and his or her role in it. It is the job of the educator to weave these conceptual threads throughout the curriculum to produce an integrated and coherent mental tapestry, leading to what might be called a *tawhīdic* mentality and personality.⁴⁴ This is not an

⁴² The division of knowledge into “revealed” and “acquired” pertains to the “sources” of knowledge, while here I am referring to the content and structure of knowledge, not its sources.

⁴³ Some may misconstrue the language here to refer to or resemble the notion of “wahdat al-wujud,” or unity of existence. ...

⁴⁴ The *tawhīdic* curriculum is like a great tapestry where Godwardness is woven into each of its strands, where it is not possible to easily desecrate its core





insignificant point. Through this type of gestalt learning, you are in effect embedding the most essential concepts into the mental fabric of the child at the deepest level possible. This is not at all possible through a fragmented and disciplinary approach to the curriculum. The goal of *tarbiyah*, in fact, is to assist the student in his or her journey from the multiplicity of forms, through the duality of cause and effect, and ultimately to the unity of God and the unity of creation – nurtured and inspired along the way by the signposts to be found in nature, the self and scripture.

The seven strands of this integrated curriculum are listed in Figure 7 below. Note that this table consolidates the various aspects of knowledge, education and development into a single, unified framework.

meaning and message of wholeness and holiness, like we find in the modern-day curriculum.

The SEED: The Seven Elements of Educational⁴⁵ Development

Tawhīdic Education: A Unified Framework of Knowledge, Education & Personal Development

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Curriculum (Content) | Conceptual | System | Energy | Space | Form | Motion | Time | Function |
| | Principles | Unity | Complementarity | Connectivity | Symmetry | Interactivity | Continuity | Utility |
| | Cosmological | Unity | Causality | Order | Balance | Reciprocity | Change | Purpose |
| | Philosophical | Reality | Man | Truth | Beauty | Creation | ? | Finality |
| | Religious | Tawhīd | Tazkiyah | Hikmah | Istiqamah | Ihsan | Din | Amanah |
| Instruction (Process) | Educational | Spirituality | Character | Wisdom | Wellness | Interactions | Lifestyle | Stewardship |
| | Curricular | God-awareness | Noble Character | Useful Knowledge | Healthy Living | Human Relations | Daily Living | Public Service |
| | Instructional | Curiosity | Character | Contemplation | Connection | Collaboration | Cultivation | Caring |
| | Learning Styles | Existential | Intrapersonal | Logical | Bodily | Interpersonal | Artistic | Natural |
| | Interrogative | Wow | Who | Where | What | How | When | Why |
| Dev. Goals | Transformational | Spiritual | Moral | Intellectual | Physical | Emotional | Creative? | Social |
| | Moral | Wholeness | Goodness | Wiseness | Wellness | Kindness | Steadfastness | Justness |
| | Outcomes | God-conscious | Principled | Knowledgeable | Well-balanced | Cooperative | Committed | Responsible |

Figure 7: Unified Framework of Knowledge, Education & Development

* This needs further revision. ** Included here are visual/spatial, logical/mathematical, and verbal/linguistic. They share the attribute of abstract connections and relations (?). This suggests why this one area of intelligence has nearly been the exclusive focus of “education” to the neglect of the other areas.

⁴⁵ **Enlightened** (spiritual-moral focus), **Enriched** (comprehensive & integrated curriculum content), **Effective** (multi-dimensional & integrated learning process), **Empowering** (inspirational and transformational), **Excellence** (outcomes).



Tarbiyah: The Heart of Education

In addition to integrating the content of the curriculum, a second issue is important here: integrating our view of the child – as a whole person. For most people, the practical goal of education is to fill a student’s mind with as much information as possible (even if much of it is quickly forgotten or quickly becomes obsolete). The real purpose of education, however, is for a goal far greater than this, namely, to guide and assist students in their overall development as whole people. This is the heart of real education – total human development. Classical Islam had a wonderful term for this notion, *al-insān al-kāmil* (the fully-developed human being).



Earlier I noted the *crisis in character* that has affected modern society, both western and Muslim. Secular education has only exacerbated this problem. Only now are parents, educators and politicians realizing that character education is urgently needed as a fundamental component of the school curriculum and that without it society has no guarantee of civility or security – no matter how much technology and weaponry it has.

This is no less true for modern Muslim society as it engages the 21st century. The same question about the true aim and purpose of education exists and the same principles of personal and societal development or decline apply. The fundamental question remains: Is the primary goal of education information or transformation? Of course, this is not really an either-or question. Nevertheless, it is imperative that educators be absolutely clear about which of these two is the *goal* (education) and which is the *means* (knowledge). From the experience of modern man during the past two centuries, it is clear that education without character has produced the rape, pollution and devastation of the environment, both human and ecological.

Centuries earlier, the Noble Prophet (ﷺ) drew our attention to a fundamental principle in human and societal development, when he said:

إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله ،
وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله ، ألا وهي القلب

"In the body is a piece of flesh; if it is pure, the whole body will be pure; but if it is corrupt, the whole body will be corrupt. Indeed it is the heart."⁴⁶

Man's heart has always been, and remains, the heart of the matter – regardless of how quaint this may sound to modern sensibilities. The crisis of modernity, both east and west, is largely the result of man's refusal to come to terms with the fundamental issues of the human heart and soul. And of course this has far-reaching implications for education.

The Tarbiyah Project is based on the belief that human development and transformation, especially character development, is the central goal of education. The Project has therefore developed an educational program that focuses on character development and teaching values, that emphasizes issues of identity and self-esteem, that develops skills in communications and interpersonal relations, that provides opportunities for training in community service and leadership, and that focuses on other issues central to the development of a total, well-balanced personality, capable of fulfilling its responsibility of stewardship in society. The Tarbiyah curriculum is therefore structured to meet the overall goal of service: service to God (*'ubūdiyyah*) and service to society through responsible and effective citizenship. This has proven to be a powerful and effective way of engaging students in their own learning and development and inculcating the core principles of Islam and citizenship at the same time.

The Content Strands

There are seven strands to the Tarbiyah curriculum. Each strand revolves around a single universal concept, or *big idea*, along with a set of ancillary concepts and themes. These concepts are woven together within and between the other strands of the curriculum. The rationale for this approach was given earlier (p. 37). Structurally, each strand consists of three major *learning threads*, known as *powerful ideas*. These correspond to the three learning domains of affect (feeling, *ihsan*), cognition (knowing, *iman*) and kinesthetics (doing, *islam*). This guarantees the

⁴⁶ This refers primarily to the "human body" (the individual), but easily extends to include the "body politic" (society) as a whole.





integration of these three dimensions into each strand of the curriculum.

The structure and components of the Tarbiyah curriculum are listed below. This is followed by a brief overview of each strand of the curriculum.

Spiritual Literacy

God Consciousness: Wholeness, Holiness & Systems

- Awe & Wonder: *Discovering God's Wonder*
- Wholeness & Worldview: *God, the World & Me*
- Faith & Piety: *Building on Faith*

Moral Literacy

Noble Character: Force & Causation

- Values & Identity: *Knowing Yourself*
- Conscience & Conviction: *A Heart of Gold*
- Character & Conduct: *Actions Speak Louder*

Intellectual Literacy

Useful Knowledge: Space, Connection, Relation, Structure

- Learning & Literacy: *Learning to Learn*
- Useful Knowledge: *Love of Learning*
- Problem Solving: *Finding Solutions*

Physical Literacy

Healthy Living: Form & Proportion

- Health & Wellness: *The Sacred Vessel*
- Fitness & Exercise: *Keeping in Shape*
- Recreation & Enrichment: *Renewing Ourselves*

Interpersonal Literacy

Human Relations: Motion & Interaction

- Communications & Understanding: *Understanding & Being Understood*
- Relationships & Cooperation: *Getting Along With Others*
- Community & Belonging: *A Sense of Belonging*

Cultural Literacy

Daily Living: Time, Pattern, Change

- Culture & Confidence: *Drawing Strength From the Past*
- Lifestyle & Modern Living: *Islam a Way of Living*
- Change & Challenges: *Facing the Challenge, Facing the Future*

Social Literacy

Public Service: Function, Purpose & Outcome

- Justice & Peace: *Caring for Allah's Creation*
- Service & Stewardship: *Making a Difference*
- Exemplarship: *Leading by Example*

Strand 1: Spiritual Literacy God-consciousness (Tawhīd – التوحيد)

Spiritual literacy is the first strand of the Tarbiyah curriculum. Its main theme is oneness, unity and systems. It is the center point and pivot around which all the other strands of the curriculum begin, connect and return. This reflects the view that God is the beginning and the end of the cycle of creation and existence (Quran 37:4), and that spiritual literacy is the central aspect of the child's wholesome (holistic) growth and development. When nurtured properly, it plays a constructive and transformative role in the life of the individual and society. This is done by opening up to the child a sense of the creative power (*jalāl*), beauty and wonder (*jamāl*), and perfection (*kamāl*) of God's work in creation, and by guiding the child to discover the underlying universal pattern (*sunnah*) that is woven throughout all of it.

Spiritual literacy is rooted in the concept of oneness and interconnectivity (*tawhīd*). This is the foundational principle of Islam and its worldview. The Quran (37:4-5) makes clear this central principle of oneness:

﴿إِنَّ إِلَهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا﴾
"Your God is surely One, Lord of the heavens and earth and what is between them both."⁴⁷

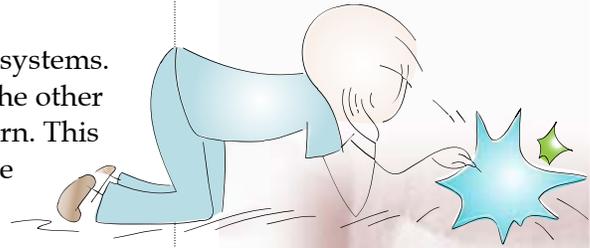
The Islamic worldview is therefore rooted in the belief that there is a single and sole creative force responsible for the cosmos and that the One God created and unified the elements of creation within a single, integrated system, known as the *uni-verse*.⁴⁸

Oneness is the main idea and central concept of this strand of the curriculum. Wholeness, wholesomeness, holiness (sacredness) and unity, along with the concept of "systems," are the key concepts of this unit.⁴⁹ Also related

⁴⁷ A possible interpretation of this verse could be: rabb (Lord=nourisher, provider and developer, i.e., tarbiyah), samawat (Heaven=spirit), ard (earth=body), maa bayna-hum (what connects them together=mind). I don't know if, perhaps, this is corroborated in any way in the *tafsir* literature.

⁴⁸ The wording here or elsewhere in the document is not to be misconstrued to suggest a pantheistic view of creation or that of *wahdat al-wujud*, as it is commonly (mis)understood.

⁴⁹ There are numerous words in English that relate to the concept of *tawhīd* (oneness). Most important of these are monotheism, oneness, wholeness,





are the concepts of integration, completeness, synergy, simplicity and identity. All of these are important conceptual building blocks in the child's construction of his view of himself, the world and his relation to it.

Unity in Diversity is the overarching theme of this unit. Realizing the underlying unity of creation, despite its multiplicity and diversity of forms and functions, is one of the key learnings of the unit. The goal here is *God-consciousness*, or being fully and continually aware of God in all that we think, feel and do. This means being aware (*'ilm*) of the sacred *imprint of God* (*'alamāt* and *ayāt*) in creation (*'ālam*). This means discerning the universal paradigm that unifies creation into a single, whole system – all the parts of which, by their very existence, are in constant praise (*tasbīh*) of the Creator (Quran 17:44 and 24:41).

Awareness of God and the sacredness of God's creation is, at its core, the heart of spiritual and religious education. Modern man has cut himself off from this sense of the sacred. The challenge for educators today is how to restore to wholeness the connection between the children of modernity and the sacred vision of life and creation that was once their heritage. Developing the student's sensibility (*taqwa*) to the presence of God, through His ever-present *signs*, and to the interconnectedness of creation is the central goal of this unit. Further, it aims to develop the student's understanding of God's unfolding plan for the world and man's role in it, nurturing in each student a personal commitment to God and to a life of spiritual piety and discipline.

integration, systems, unity, cooperation, solidarity, etc. See Figure 15 for a detailed listing of related terms.

Strand 2: Moral Literacy

Noble Character (Tazkiyah – التزكية)



Moral literacy is the second component of the Tarbiyah curriculum, which focuses on the moral aspect of the child's development. The Noble Prophet (ﷺ) said that in order for belief to have real meaning it must be translated into *action*. Ultimately, it is how we treat other people (*mu'āmalāt*) that reflects our real beliefs and values (*dīn*).

The underlying theme and central concepts of this strand of the curriculum are energy, force, power, strength, agency and causality. Related concepts are duality, polarity and complementarity. The educational goal of this component of the curriculum is *noble character*, or how to regulate our emotions. The Quran (62:2) suggests that, after God-awareness, good character is the next important building block in the process of total human development. The focus of this part of the curriculum is developing a solid understanding of what good character is and helping students to achieve it in their personal lives by adopting a moral lifestyle. This includes the areas of moral knowledge and reasoning, moral feelings or conscience, and moral actions or character. This component addresses such issues as values clarification, goal setting and decision making, and includes such concepts as moral tradition, ethics, conscience, self-control, empathy, free will, and other issues related to character development.

Strand 3: Intellectual Literacy

Useful Knowledge (Hikmah – الحكمة)⁵⁰

Intellectual literacy is the third component of the curriculum. This focuses on the intellectual aspect of the child's development. In the Islamic view, knowledge is closely related to character and, ideally, these two elements are mutually inclusive and interrelated. That is to say, knowledge aids us in understanding the requirements and benefits of noble character, and noble character

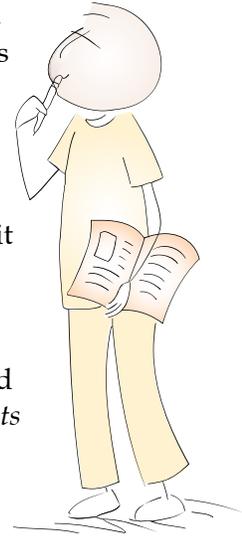
⁵⁰ Hikmah is the wise and proper application of knowledge. In classical Arabic, a doctor, for example, was called a *hakīm* (not the current anglicized term "daktūr"). This is very close to our current-day term "technology," which is the art or science of applying knowledge to practical problems.





prepares us to receive the sacred gift of knowledge (*'ilm*) and wisdom (*hikmah*).⁵¹

The main concepts of this strand are space, location, perspective, connections, relations and structure. *Useful knowledge* is the educational goal of this segment of the curriculum. Useful knowledge is all knowledge that brings us closer to God and can be used in a positive way to benefit humanity and creation. Seeking this knowledge is an obligation for each and every Muslim. This component focuses on developing in students a *love of learning* and training them in *how to learn* and other *habits of mind*. Integrated subject area knowledge (from disciplines such as Mathematics, English, etc.), as well as training in critical thinking and problem solving, are important components of this segment of the curriculum. Together, they provide students with the knowledge base and intellectual skills needed to succeed in their quest to discern the universal patterns (*sunan*, pl. of *sunnah*) in creation, as well as to succeed academically and to handle the challenges they will face later in life and society.



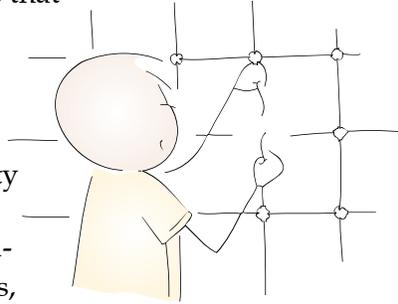
Strand 4: Physical Literacy **Healthy Living (Istiqāmah – الإستقامة)**

Physical literacy is the fourth strand of the curriculum, focusing on the physical aspect of the child's development. In the Tarbiyah framework, this is not an ancillary or secondary part of the curriculum. It is an essential and integral part, because all other aspects of human development are tied to it and are expressed through it. Spiritual, moral and intellectual development all depend on a healthy body. This reflects the integrated (and paradoxical) nature of human development.

The main theme and central concepts of this strand are form, substance and symmetry. Related concepts are symmetry and stability. The educational aim of this component of the curriculum is *healthy living*. This emphasizes that health is an important part of total human

⁵¹ Note that the following Islamic terms having to do with knowledge share the same base meaning of "connection" or "binding together": عقل (intellect), كتاب (book), حكمة (wisdom), دين (religion).

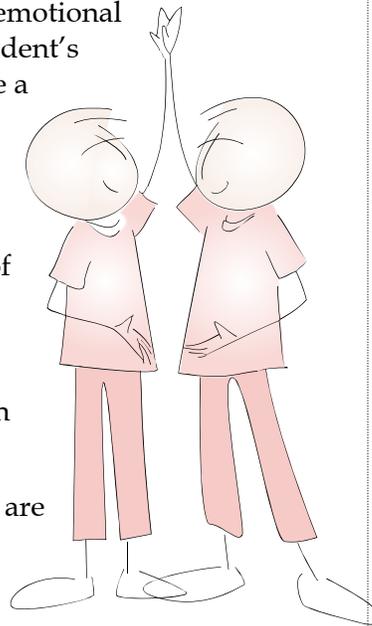
development and highlights that our body is a perfectly designed system and one of God's greatest miracles in creation. It further emphasizes the responsibility we have as individuals towards our health as a God-given trust (*'amānah*). Fitness, wellness and balance (*istiqāmah*) are the key elements of this component of the curriculum. In addition, it explores with students a holistic and Islamic view on such topics as personal hygiene, junk food, over-eating, smoking, drugs, consumerism and other key topics. Finally, recreation, rejuvenation and restoration, creativity and enjoyment are explored as important elements of a balanced lifestyle and total human development.



These last three components of the curriculum framework – soul, mind and body – focus on the various “internal” aspects of the learner as an individual. The next three components focus on the “external” manifestation of these aspects of the learner in relation to the larger society and the world.

Strand 5: Interpersonal Literacy Human Relations (Ihsān – الإحسان)

Interpersonal literacy is the fifth component of the curriculum, which focuses on the emotional and interpersonal aspect of the student's development. Human relations are a concern of all religions and philosophies. Inherent to all of them is the tenet, “treat others as you would like to be treated yourself.” This is the golden rule of human relations. It is a principle that urges us toward the highest and most equitable standards of behavior in all of our dealings with other people.



The central concepts of this strand are motion or movement, interaction, process and change. Related concepts are reciprocity, reaction



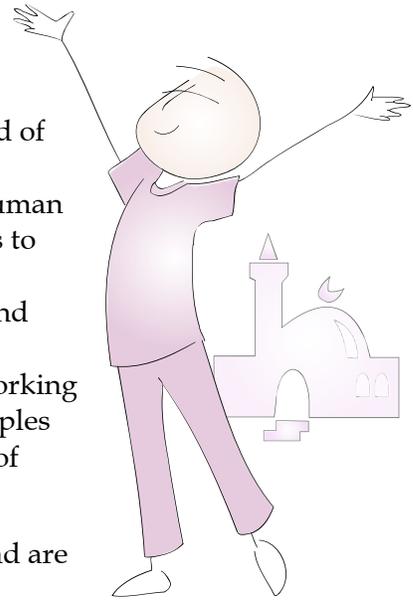


and development. The aim of this component of the curriculum is good “*human relations.*” (*husn al-mu’āmalah*). Good human relations, however, do not just happen. They are the product of spiritual awareness, moral conscience and knowledge of the skills necessary for equitable and cordial relations between people. This part of the curriculum highlights the development of communication skills and the ability to live and work cooperatively as part of a group. In addition, it focuses on issues of identity and the sense of belonging to our families, communities and humanity at-large.

Strand 6: Cultural Literacy Daily Living (Dīn – الدين)⁵²

Cultural literacy is the sixth strand of the curriculum. This focuses on lifestyle and culture as part of human development. *How we live*, that is to say, our *lifeway*, is the clearest reflection of who we really are and what we really believe in, both individually and as a society. Working to align our lives with our principles and values is an important goal of holistic education.

The central concepts of this strand are time and duration, patterns and practice, models and exemplars. Related concepts are continuity, rhythms and circularity, and identity. The focus of this part of the curriculum is *belief in action*. The educational goal is to guide and assist students in translating their values into a *way of living*. This includes helping students understand the major, recurring issues of humankind and how previous generations attempted to address them, that Islam itself is a total and complete way of living, and that Islam had and continues to have an important contribution to make in addressing the recurring problems and challenges of humankind today and tomorrow. This component includes such concepts as culture, tradition, lifestyle, integrity, change, challenges and preferred futures.

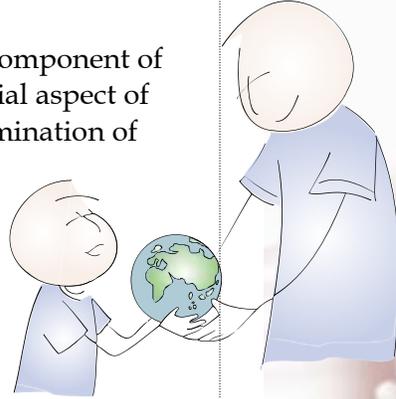


⁵² This component is also known as “Faith in Action” or “Living Faith” since a person actually “lives” each day according to what they truly believe and have faith in.

Strand 7: Social Literacy Public Service (Amānah – الأمانة)

Social literacy is the seventh and culminating component of the Tarbiyah curriculum. It focuses on the social aspect of the child's development. It represents the culmination of student learning in all areas of education because it is the application of the values they have been taught. As children and adults develop spiritually and morally, they realize that serving others *is* serving God.

The main concept of this strand is function and purpose. Among its central concepts are goals and outcomes, utility and application. Related concepts are finality, flexibility, multiplicity and diversity, and service.





Section 4

AN INTEGRATED PROCESS

Tawhūd as a Methodology of Learning (Pedagogy)

The fourth and final area of education needing serious reform pertains to the *process* of instruction. As mentioned earlier, education is really a process of unfolding and *bringing out* more than a process of *pouring in*. Education therefore should be based on an approach to learning that uses the natural environment of the child to encourage a process of exploration and discovery, and that acknowledges the complex make-up of individual differences in students as a natural part of God's diversity in creation. It was through a process of discovery learning,⁵³ essentially, that Prophet Abraham (عليه السلام) was guided to spiritual enlightenment (Quran, 6:75-79). It was discovery learning, in effect, that propelled the early Muslims, awe-inspired by the Quran, to explore the world and to develop a method of inquiry that helped lay the foundation for modern science and its inductive method. For educators, the choice here is between a pedagogy of *teaching* (where the teacher is the "*sage on the stage*") and one of *learning* (where the teacher is a "*guide on the side*").

In *Surah al-Jumuah* (62:2) and elsewhere, the Quran provides the key to the Islamic instructional paradigm, which consists of four main stages. The verse says,

⁵³ The terms "discovery learning" and "guided discovery," have become technical terms in education to convey very specific approaches to instruction. The Tarbiyah Project does not advocate any one of these specific strategies per se. Rather it adheres to the general notion of "learning by discovery," which is ascribed to in the Quran and is loosely referred to here as *discovery learning*.

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ﴾

"It is He who sent among the unlettered people a messenger from among themselves to rehearse to them the signs of God and to increase them in purification and to teach them the Book and wisdom."

From this we can see that, according to the Quran, the first stage in the instructional process is wonderment and inspiration (*ayah*, or spirit [cosmology]). Second is the stage of self-purification, preparation and motivation (*tazkiyah*, or soul [axiology]). Third is the stage of knowledge construction and acquisition (*ilm*, or mind [psychology]). Fourth is the proper application and use of knowledge, known as wisdom (*hikmah*, or hand/body [technology/know-how]).⁵⁴ The Tarbiyah Project uses this Quranic paradigm as the basis for its instructional model.

A Key Issue: Content vs. Process

Before describing the Tarbiyah instructional model in detail, it is important to address briefly a key design issue having to do with the relationship between *form* and *function*. In education, there has long been a dichotomy between *content* and *process*, *curriculum* and *instruction*, *information* and *transformation*. In the past, education has focused primarily on the former. This was understandable given the prevailing circumstances: the amount of information was relatively small and stable, and society at-large was still able to ensure the proper moral upbringing of young people. Today, the situation has changed dramatically. Information is proliferating at an exponential rate and neither society at-large nor individual families are able to ensure the proper upbringing of their children.

Because of these fundamental and rapid changes in modern society, educators are now realizing that teaching "process skills" is more essential and durable than trying to keep up with the explosion of information. Current trends in education suggest a fundamental shift away from content learning per se towards process and transformational learning. Of course, education was

⁵⁴ Notice that, in this Qur'anic model, learning begins in the real world through "being there" experiences (*ayat*) and then cycles and ends back in the world, through real-world application (*hikmah*). Note also, however, that the secular world (and learning) is made sacred by its connection and relation to the Sacred (God). This is the subtle difference between secular and sacred education.





always intended to be a matter of *process*, as the word *education* itself suggests. The Quran always viewed education more as a process of transformation than information (even if we Muslims have not always remembered this). Muslims today must realize anew that education, first and foremost, is a process of transformation, more than content and information, and that the latter is but a means and a tool towards the former.⁵⁵ This is so fundamental a principle that the Quran even derides as jackasses those who merely pile up books of information without its transformative benefit in their lives (Quran 62:5).

It is interesting to note that this dichotomy between *information* and *transformation* is reflected even in our educational nomenclature, both in English and in Arabic. In Arabic, for example, education is referred to as either *ta'lim* (content knowledge) or *tarbiyah* (transformational learning), or the combination of the two.⁵⁶ This dichotomy is especially critical and insidious because it leads easily to the bifurcation and separation of learning into theory and practice, rather than as complementary elements of an integrated whole. This is why a holistic approach to Islamic education is so greatly needed.

⁵⁵ This is corroborated by the fact that the early *Companions* were known not to memorize new verses of the Quran (information) until and unless they had put the verses already learned into practice (transformation). According to the Tabi'i Abu Abd al-Rahman Al-Sulami, several prominent Companions such as Uthman B. Affan and Abd al-Rahman B. Masood stated that when they studied the Quran, they "learned knowledge and its application together." (See *Muqaddimah fi Usul al-Tafsir* (p. 35) by Ibn Taimiyah, or *Tafsir at-Tabari* (1:80) or *Tafsir al-Qurtubi* (1:29)).

⁵⁶ *Tarbiyah* is essentially an "inductive" learning process: from experience and doing ("being there" hands-on experience) to abstract cognition and talking about it; walking the process rather than first talking about it. This is necessarily a slower process, but more effective and authentic. *Ta'leem*, on the other hand, is essentially a deductive learning process: from abstract cognition and "talking about it" to subsequent verification through application. This is quicker and less expensive, but also less effective and less authentic (meaningful). Modern education proves that this method has less "sticking power" and is less durable, since students typically forget and lose the "information" they learn nearly as soon as testing is completed.

Most schools and school systems, whether western or Muslim, employ the less effective approach, accepting whatever minimal returns they can get for their efforts. In fact, the constraints of the system (money, time, manpower, willpower, etc.) do not allow for any serious transformational learning (education) or for any real reform to occur to any large extent,

By careful design, the Tarbiyah Project model attempts to resolve this content-process dichotomy.⁵⁷ By employing the principle of *tawhīd*, we are able to weave these two elements together and integrate them into a single, unified and seamless learning system known as the Integrated Learning Model (ILM²).

ILM²: The Integrated Learning Model

The Concept

The Tarbiyah model of education is based on a fully-integrated, real-life approach to Islamic education. As part of its delivery system, it has developed a model of instruction that helps insure that the core principles of *tawhīd* and *tarbiyah* are embedded into the design and actual process of instruction. This structure is known as ILM² (pronounced ilm-squared), which stands for Integrated Learning Model and Islam for Life Mastery.

The concept of ILM² is that of *doubling the power of knowledge and taking knowledge to the next level* by using it for life mastery; that is to say, taking knowledge from *theory to practice*, from *talking about it to walking it*, and from *information to transformation*. The Islamic basis for this idea are the concepts of *tawhīd* (integration), *imān & ‘amal* (faith & action), and *dīn* (way of living or lifeway). The pedagogical basis for this idea is rooted in the belief that knowledge, understanding and real learning occur more powerfully when they are integrated with and implemented in real-life contexts directly related to the learner. This is a simple but powerful paradigm for meaningful and authentic teaching and learning. A description of the I-L-M components is given below.

⁵⁷ The Tarbiyah Project employs a thoughtful curriculum design approach based on the principle of full integration and transdisciplinarity (*tawhīd*). This design principle allows for the integration of learning at multiple levels, and perhaps represents the only practical way that Islamic education can compete with mainstream education and still retain its spiritual/religious orientation. This is based, in part, on the (Islamic) precept of “less is more” – less content, but more concentrated focus, depth, mastery and assimilation (i.e., true education and transformation). This simply requires Muslims to be integral thinkers (*tawhīd*).





The “I” Component

Integrated Islam (Content & Structure)

The first component reflects the model’s belief in integrated learning and integrated Islam. It addresses the issues of curriculum *content* and *structure*. It answers the questions: What content is worth learning and how best can it be structured to provide maximum understanding (i.e., coherence and synthesis) for the learner? The ‘I’ component includes the following elements:

- **Informational & Islamic Content:** The content includes all knowledge that is useful, since all such knowledge is viewed by Islam as good and as essentially Islamic. This includes the key concepts, understandings and skills from all content areas, viewed from a holistic, integrative and Islamic perspective. This component addresses the so-called *academic* and *Islamic* content base of the learning experience. (*Islam & Ilm*)
- **Integrated Structure:** The content is structured in a way that it lends coherence, wholeness and a “big picture” approach to learning. This structure has the features of being God-centered, holistic, integrative and unified, universal, and systems-oriented. This component deals with the *integrative* aspect and other *intellectual* aspects (habits of mind) of the learning experience. (*Tawhīd*)

The “L” Component

Learning for Life (Process & Context)

The second component reflects the model’s *learning for life* philosophy. This component of the model deals with the learning *process* (instruction) as well as the affective *environment* for learning (context). It addresses the questions: What is the best way to learn the content and what type of environment is most conducive and supportive of this? The ‘L’ component includes the following elements:

- **Learning by Discovery:** Using the ILM instructional process (see the next section) or some other form of guided discovery. The ILM instructional process is based on the underlying concept of discovering the “awe and wonder” of God’s creation. This component deals with certain *spiritual* as well as *procedural* aspects of the learning experience. (*Iman & Amal*)
- **Life (Social-emotional Setting):** Intention, attitude and character are integral components of the Tarbiyah learning model. ‘How’ and ‘why’ we learn are oftentimes more important than ‘what’ we learn. This component addresses certain *moral* aspects of the learning experience. (*Tazkiyah*)
- **Cooperative Learning:** This addresses the *affective* and *interpersonal* aspects of the learning experience. (*Ta’awun*)
- **Real Life Connections:** Real-world, relevant, meaningful instruction. Utilizing a “book of life” or experience-based approach to the curriculum, rather than a textbook approach. Putting learning in the context of the child’s

daily living, including his cultural and social context. This addresses certain cultural and social aspects of the learning experience. (*Din*)

The “M” Component

Mastery & Measurement (Application & Assessment)

The third component of the model deals with the application of learning and its assessment. It addresses the questions: How can this learning (knowledge, skills, attitudes) be put to use in real-life and how will students be able to demonstrate authentic mastery of the learning outcomes? The ‘M’ Component includes the following elements:

- **Mastery by Doing:** Hands-on, student-centered, project-based learning. This addresses certain physical aspects of the learning experience. (*Taqwim*)
- **Mastery by Living:** Key skills, behaviors and practices that are being incorporated (inculcated) into the students’ daily life. This addresses the cultural and lifestyle (transformational) aspects of the learning experience. (*Din, Mu’amalah*)
- **Mastery by Serving:** Service learning & society. This addresses the social aspect of the learning experience. (*Amānah*)
- **Measurable and Authentic Assessment:** Authentic work, connected to real life, for a real audience, This component addresses the issue of meaningful, fair and authentic assessment and evaluation of the learning experience, and utilizing the notion of individualized learning maps (ILMs).⁵⁸ This addresses certain physical (tangible and demonstrable, if not measurable) aspects of the learning experience. (*Taqyim*)

That is an explanation of the conceptual framework of the Integrated Learning Model. The seven aspects of holistic learning are all incorporated and integrated into this model. What follows next is a description of how the model is made operational as an instructional framework learning in the classroom.

⁵⁸ Individualized Learning Maps (ILMs) are an integral part of the ILM² learning system. They are especially suitable for upper elementary students and beyond. Their distinctive value within this learning system is that they directly involve the student and parents as active agents and stakeholders in mapping out the learning agenda of the student.



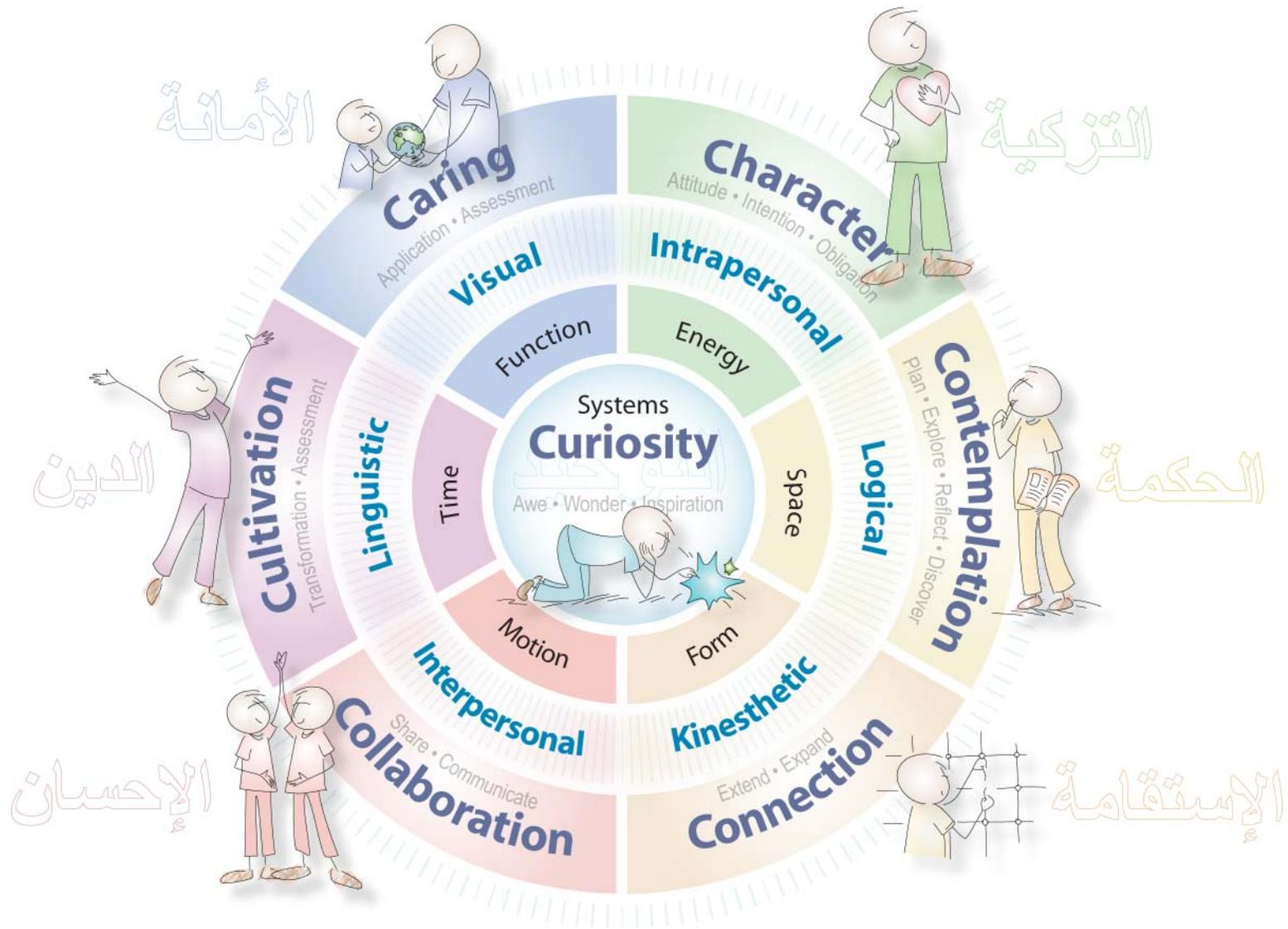


Figure 8: Integrated Learning Model, Seven C's

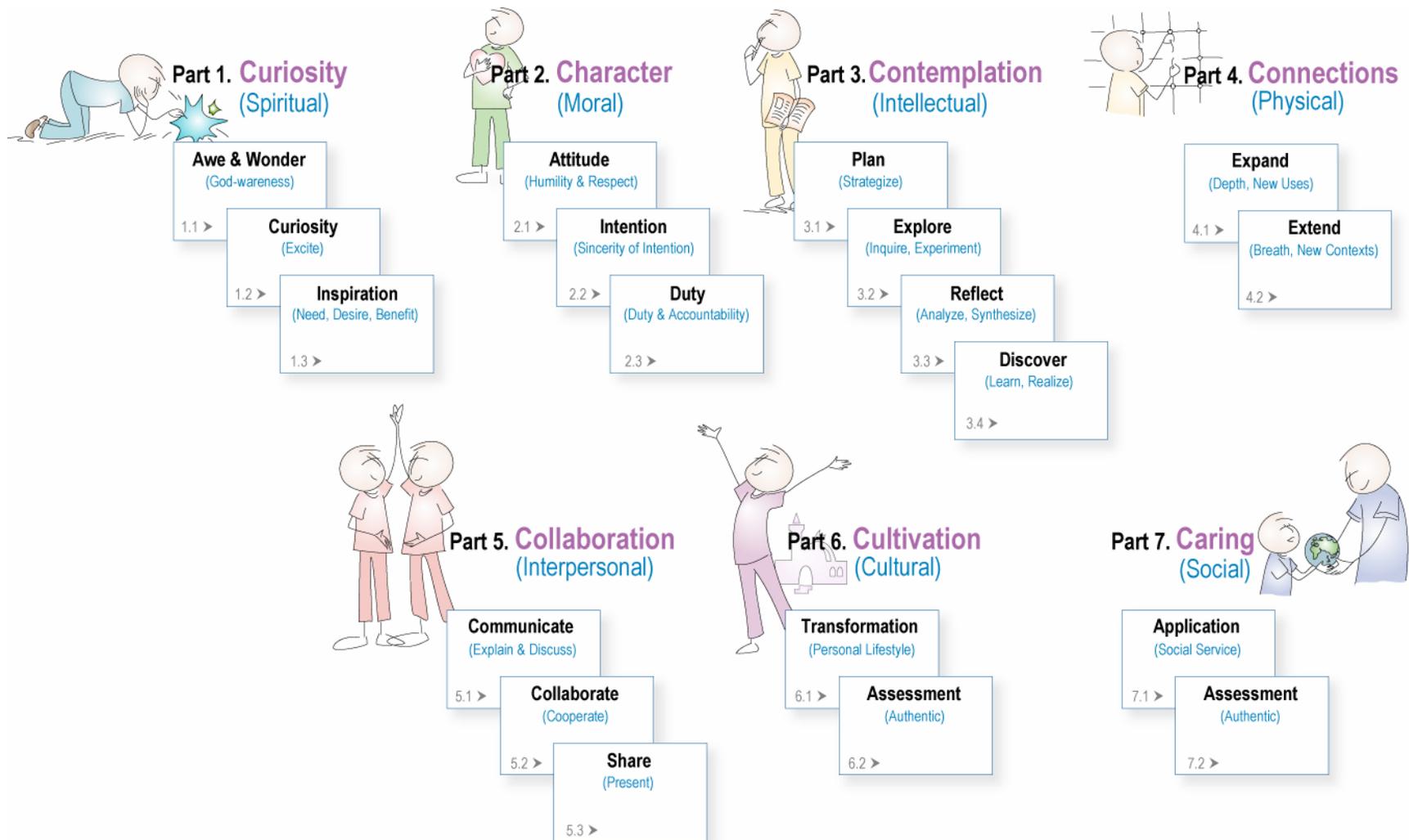


Figure 9: Integrated Learning Model, Components



The Process

The Integrated Learning Model consists of a 7-part process that parallels the seven content strands of the curriculum. This effectively integrates both the *content* and *process* of learning into a single, unified learning system and eliminates the content-process dichotomy noted earlier. This is a significant design feature of this model.

The seven components of this instructional model (referred to as the Seven C's) are listed and briefly described below:

- **Curiosity:** Awe & Wonder (Excite)
- **Character:** Purifying & Preparation (Prepare)
- **Contemplating:** Exploring & Reflecting (Explore)
- **Connecting:** Expanding & Extending (Extend)
- **Collaborating:** Collaborating & Sharing (Exchange)
- **Cultivating:** Applying Personally (Transform)
- **Caring:** Applying Socially, Participating (Apply)

Phase 1: Curiosity (Spiritual Aspect)

In the Islamic view, knowledge and learning begin with and connect us inexorably with the Creator (ﷻ).⁵⁹

According to the Quran (62:2), the starting point of learning is experiencing the awe and wonder of God's signs in creation (*ayah*). Therefore, the first part of the learning process therefore involves guiding students to experience a sense of the awe & wonder of God's creation (*awe*) through "being there" experiences. These "signs" are found in ourselves, nature, history and in scripture, and are intended to "spark the interest" (*motivate*) and to activate the heart and mind in the learning process. The experience of "awe and wonder" naturally and intuitively



⁵⁹ Islam is not fundamentally anti-modern, but is fundamentally God-centered (*tawhīd*). Modernity, however, is fundamentally anti-God. This is at the heart of the conflict between Islam and modernity. This conflict is rooted more deeply in the fundamental notions of 'freedom' and 'bondage' central to each worldview. While it is perhaps difficult for modern man to accept, for a Muslim, God will always remain the starting point and final goal (al-awwal and al-ākhir) of his/her conception of the world. Man has a subordinate but esteemed role to play in the divine scheme. Unlike modern man, the Islamic conception of man is not in conflict with God; he is honored to serve as God's vice-regent or representative. These are salient features of Islamic monotheism. Accordingly, God has not been, nor ever will be, "dethroned"—only to be replaced by modern man himself.

activates the child's God-awareness, curiosity and interest in learning (*wonder*). Next, students are assisted in developing questions from these signs (*ponder*) that will guide their exploratory learning. Finally, in this first phase, the benefit of the learning activity should be connected to the child's prior knowledge within the context of his or her life as a whole. From the Islamic perspective, this phase is essentially *spiritual* in nature and speaks to certain existential aspect of learning.

Phase 2: Character (Moral Aspect)

Following the lead of the Quran, the second phase of the ILM² learning process consists of "preparation in character" (*tazkiyah*). Since Islam sees the acquisition of knowledge as a sacred act and trust, it believes that a person must properly prepare (even qualify) before being a suitable receptacle for such sacred knowledge. Humility before God and purity of intention are the starting point of all actions in Islam, most especially learning.



The second aspect therefore involves assisting students in preparing themselves for learning. This includes: 1) developing a sense of humility before the signs of Allah (*humility*);⁶⁰ 2) acknowledging the efforts and accumulated knowledge of earlier generations and drawing inspiration and courage from those efforts (*respect & inspiration*); 3) understanding the real purpose of learning (*purpose*), 4) clarifying and aligning one's intention accordingly (*sincerity of intention*), and 5) realizing that acquiring

⁶⁰ The Quran (8:2) uses the phrase,

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا﴾

"the believers are those whose hearts are humbled at the remembrance of Allah and when His signs are presented to them, they are strengthened in faith."

It is always insightful to explore the Quranic usage of language and its implications. Here, in Surat al-Anfāl, the phrase "wajilat qulūbu-hum" / "their hearts flutter in awe" is used. Note that I do not translate the verse, "their hearts shake in fear," as is often done. This phrase refers to the effect that remembering God, and the signs of God, has on the hearts of those who really believe. The key word here is "flutter." At a deep conceptual level, the word "flutter" implies the idea of 'movement' and 'activation', which in turn implies the idea of 'force' and 'power'. At this deeper level, the meaning is that the "signs of God" (*ayat Allah*) serve to animate and activate the hearts of the believers, and trigger an affective response. From this, we can see that the Quran is providing us with an important and profound pedagogical principle regarding the central role of affect and of the spirit in the learning process. The Tarbiyah Project has simply noted this insight and employed it in the design of its educational model.





knowledge is a sacred activity that carries with it certain moral and social responsibility to action and service (*amanah*). This phase is essentially *moral* in nature and draws on the intrapersonal dimension of the learner.

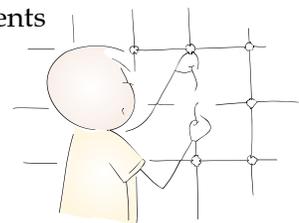
Phase 3: Contemplation (Intellectual Aspect)⁶¹

The third aspect of the learning process involves guiding students through the four steps of discovery learning. This includes: 1) planning a strategy to find answers to their questions (*plan*); 2) investigating by doing hands-on activities, using resources to gather information and record their findings (*explore*); 3) reflecting on their findings (*reflect*); 4) and summarizing the new understandings they have learned (*discovery*). This phase is essentially *intellectual* in nature and focuses on the logical (cognitive) dimension of learning.



Phase 4: Connections (Physical & Practical Aspect)

The fourth aspect involves guiding students to solidify (i.e., make concrete and real) their new understanding by testing it in new ways (*expand*) and in new contexts (*extend*). This is done by making connections to other areas and contexts and to real world situations. This phase is *practical* in nature and draws on the visual and kinesthetic styles of learning.

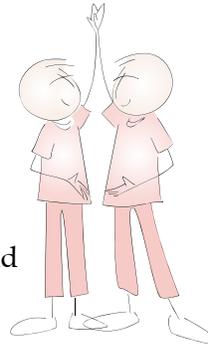


⁶¹ It is important to note here a distinction between the western and Islamic concept of man, because of its important implication for education. According to the prevailing western view, man is defined foremost in terms of his mind and intellect. In contrast, Islam, and perhaps eastern thought in general, defines man first in terms of his spirit, his heart and character. The human predicament is due not because of a lack of knowledge, although this plays an important role. It is due primarily from a lack of willpower, self-discipline and self-control—all matters of the heart and its condition. This is strikingly clear from our own modern living. According to the Prophet's earlier advice, the "heart," not the head, is the heart of the matter.

This view of man necessarily influences our view and approach to education. For this reason, you will notice that the Quranic paradigm for learning, as we have done here, begins first with the spirit and the heart, and only then addresses the issue of the intellect. Muslim educations must understand and apply this important Quranic insight in their modern-day conception of education.

Phase 5: Collaboration (Interpersonal Aspect)

The fifth aspect of the integrated learning process involves assisting students in utilizing cooperative learning strategies (*collaboration*) throughout the learning process, and assisting them in sharing what they have learned with different audiences in different ways (*sharing*), including through oral and written communication and multi-sensory, multimedia presentations (*communication*). This phase is primarily interpersonal in nature and incorporates the interpersonal and verbal-linguistic styles of learning.



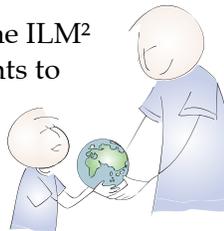
Phase 6: Cultivation (Cultural Aspect)

The sixth aspect of this model involves guiding students to examine and reflect on the significance of what they have learned for themselves personally and to identify ways of applying it in their personal lives and integrating it into their personal lifestyle (*transformation*). This phase includes ways of authentically assessing the student's personal application of their learning (*assessment*). According to their age and ability, the student should play a key role in defining and carrying out this assessment. The student's Individualized Learning Map (ILM) should serve as a baseline for this assessment. From the Islamic perspective, this phase represents the true "transfer of knowledge" that teachers seek to achieve with their students. This transfer is not merely an intellectual change, but more importantly, a psychological one, resonating at the core of who he or she is as a person. This phase is *practical* in nature and speaks to the visual-spatial dimension of learning.



Phase 7: Caring (Social Aspect)

The seventh and culminating aspect of the ILM² learning process involves guiding students to identify ways to use what they have learned by applying it for the good of others through service (*service*). This should be in the form of service-learning projects that can function as culminating and authentic assessments of the real learning (*assessment*). For Islam, this is the culmination and fruition of this self-transformation process that we call *tarbiyah*: serving God





through service to the world (*'ibādah*).⁶² This completes the cycle of God-centered, tawhīdic education – beginning and ending with the Sacred. This phase is *social* in nature and focuses on the kinesthetic (doing) dimension of learning.

Summary of Features

The Integrated Learning Model (ILM²) is designed to serve as a powerful model for meaningful and effective teaching and learning, *inshallāh*. Its strength lies in its comprehensive, integrated and transformative structure (*tawhīd* and *tarbiyah*). In summary, the model draws from various aspects of the following educational principles:

- Tawhīd: God-centered, holistic & comprehensive, integrative, universal education
- Holistic Education (the “whole child”)
- Tarbiyah: Character-centered Education
- Transformation Over Information
- Integrated Learning (Content, Structure & Process)
- Developmental Stages (Tree Metaphor)
- Multiple Intelligences & Learning Styles
- Individualized Instruction: Individualized Learning Maps (ILM)
- Brain-compatible Learning
- Student-centered Learning (Hands-on, Minds-on)
- Guided Discovery
- Role Modeling & Mentorship
- Critical Thinking & Problem-based Learning
- Concept-based Learning: Powerful Ideas, Big Questions, Enduring Understandings
- Cooperative Learning
- Real-world Connections
- Islam for Life Mastery (Applied Islam)
- Service Learning
- Standards & Key Competencies
- Authentic Assessment

⁶² This is the traditional view of the role of religion in the world: to serve God by serving the world. Again, language provides interesting insights in support of this view. In both English and Arabic the words for ‘religious service’ (*'ibādah*) and ‘servant’ (*'abd*) are each derived from the same semantic root within each language.

Tarbiyah Programs

INTEGRATED PROGRAMS

Tawhīd & Tarbiyah as a Technology

Several programs have been developed from the Tarbiyah Project Framework. These programs have been implemented in the participating schools of the Tarbiyah Consortium in previous years. These programs continue to be developed and some material is available for use by other schools. Below is a brief description of these programs.

PILLARS OF POWER

The pillars of Islam are meant to serve as a dynamo in the individual and collective life of Muslims. The *Pillars of Power* program emphasizes the basic pillars of Islam and their importance as a source of strength in the daily life of a Muslim. In addition to developing the students' factual knowledge of the pillars and how they are performed, the program focuses on developing concepts and values in students, and emphasizing students' understanding the real purpose of these pillars in the life of a Muslim. Emphasis is also placed on the application of these pillars in the individual life of the student and the collective life of the school and the community at-large.

VALUE OF THE MONTH

In the *Value of the Month* program teachers and schools organize their values education program by using a month-long value theme. Each month, the school focuses on one core value. This program provided the school with a values-based theme for each month. Teachers are requested and expected to find "teachable moments", or opportunities, to incorporate the month's theme into the curriculum, including language arts, social studies, science and Islamic Studies. Teachers and students are encouraged to find and create stories, poems, songs and artwork that tie into the month's value theme.

CHILDREN OF CHARITY

The *Children for Charity* program is a service-learning program of systematic charity work by students. The purpose of this program is to get students to think about





the needs of others and to “do something” to make the lives of others better. The focus of this program is not on collecting money, but rather on instilling in Muslim children a sense of social responsibility, a desire for helping others, and providing them with opportunities to develop the important values of giving and sharing, collective decision making (*shūrah*), prioritizing, cooperation, PR and marketing a message (*da'wah*) and other core Islamic values.

Charity is an integral part of the Islamic way of life, a learned behavior that is acquired by example and through hands-on-practice. Our curriculum includes lessons in *sadaqa* which teach children a sense of social responsibility and instill a desire to actually “do” something to help others. Students learn that every act of kindness is charity.

The primary focus is not on collecting money for some cause or organization. We emphasize providing concrete opportunities for students themselves to develop the important value of giving and sharing, as well as collective decision making (*shūrah*), prioritizing and evaluating service projects of merit, and cooperation in planning, executing and describing the projects.

JUNIOR LEADERSHIP

The goal of the *Junior Leadership* program is to identify potential leaders among the student population and to prepare them to be leaders in their community. The program concentrates on developing the students’ skills in critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, survival research, public discourse and leadership training. Topics include historical and doctrinal justification of public discourse, history of modern Muslim work, history of Muslims in America, time management, teamwork, project planning and management, and public speaking.

Appendices

Figure 10: Curriculum Strands (Centered)

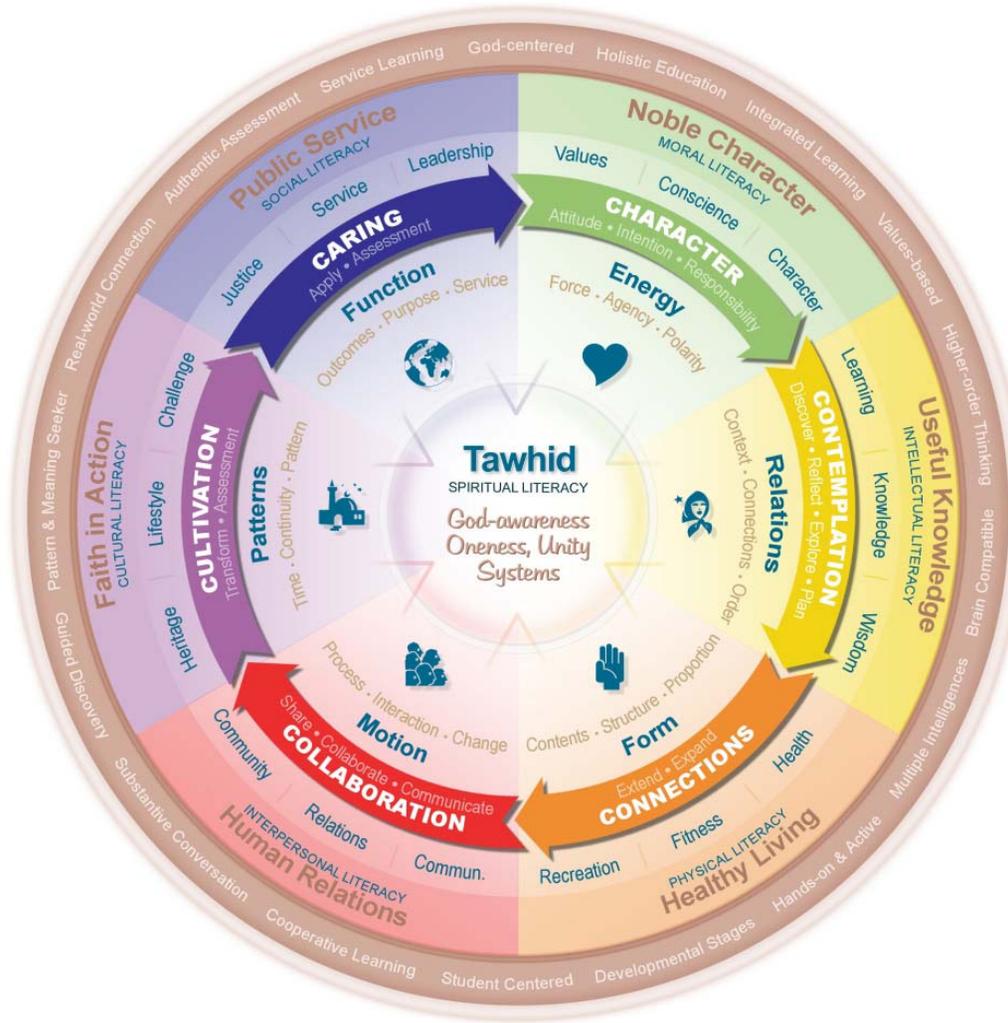
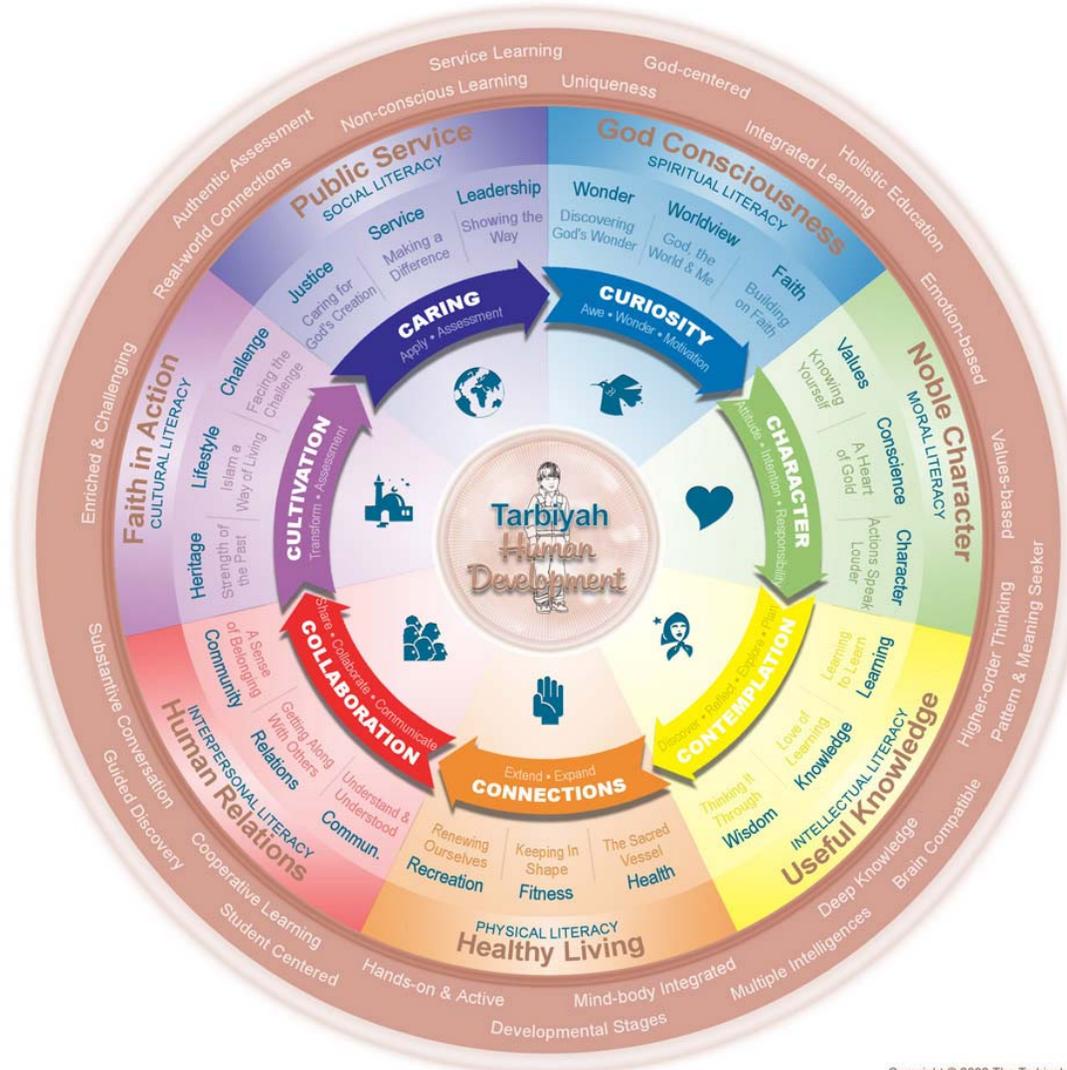


Figure 11: Curriculum Strands (Uncentered)

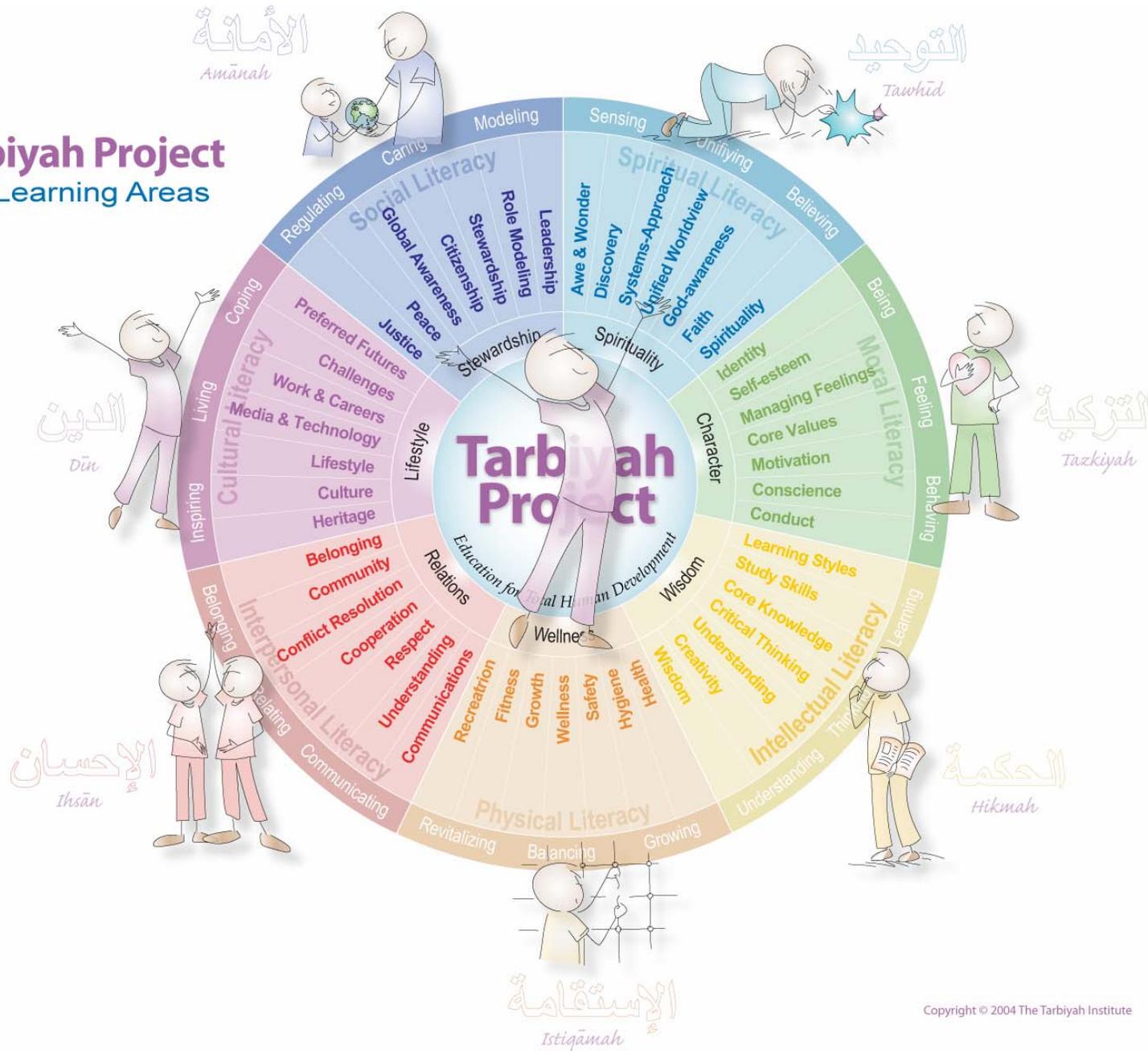


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Figure 12:
Key
Learning
Areas

Tarbiyah Project

Key Learning Areas



Universal Brainstorming Template

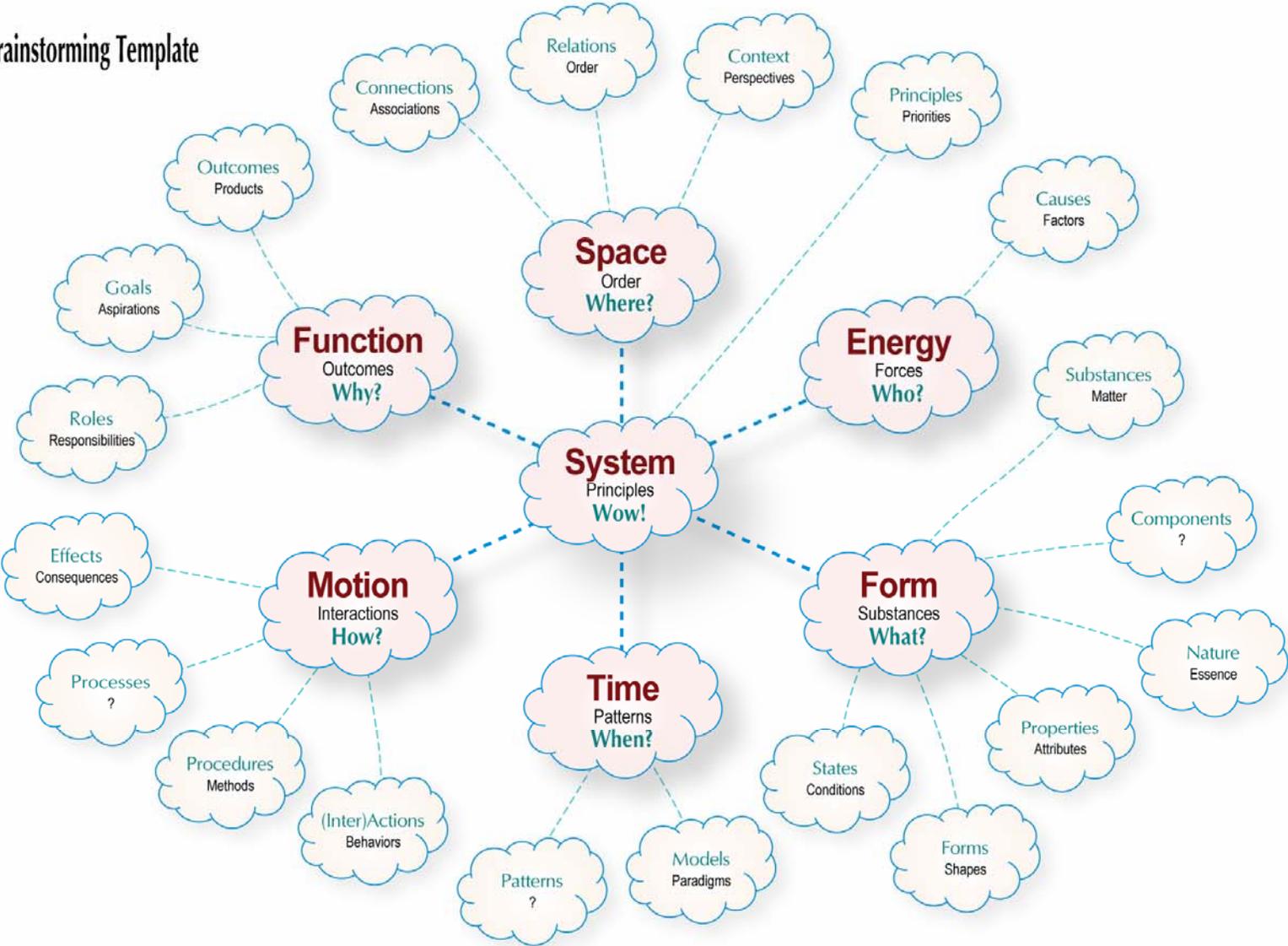


Figure 13: Universal Brainstorming Template

Figure 14: Key Outcomes and Indicators

| Tarbiyah Project | | |
|--|---|--|
| Key Outcomes & Indicators | | |
| ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS | CULMINATING OUTCOMES | KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES |
| التوحيد GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS Spiritual Literacy | God-conscious Spirit Is aware of God in all that one senses & feels, thinks and does. | Godwardness Reverence (Awe & Wonder) – آيات الله Perceptive Observer (Signs), Curious Explorer, Reverential Awe |
| | | Wholeness (Systems Perspective) – التوحيد Holistic, Unified Approach, Systems Perspective |
| | | Conviction (Belief System) – الإيمان Faithful Believer, Dutiful Servant, Spiritual Devotee |
| التزكية NOBLE CHARACTER Moral Literacy | Self-Directed Individual Has a sound grasp of the principles of moral reasoning and a commitment to moral action, with an emphasis on integrity, honesty, kindness and justice. | Goodness Self-Awareness (Identity) – القيم والهوية Virtuous (Values), Self-aware (Identity), Self-confidence, Morally Astute (Reasoning), Set Goals, Self-reflective |
| | | Compassion (Conscience) – التقوى Conscientious, Compassionate, Conviction |
| | | Uprightness (Character & Conduct) – الخلق Balanced, Self-disciplined, Moral Action (Behavior) |
| الحكمة USEFUL KNOWLEDGE Intellectual Literacy | Complex Thinker Has an understanding of the major, recurring issues of humankind and the impact of significant events and discoveries on the course of human development. | Wiseness Competence (Learning Skills) – التعلم Inquisitive (Knowledge Seeker), Studious (Study Skills), Competent (Basic Skills), Technology Literate |
| | | Knowledge (Knowledgebase) – المعارف Knowledgeable, Integrated Perspective |
| | | Problem Solving (Thinking) – التفكير Critical Thinker, Problem-solver, Decision-maker, Creative Thinker (Originality), Metacognitive |
| الإستقامة HEALTHY LIVING Physical Literacy | Well-balanced Person Understands the scope and importance of balance and well-being in one's personal and collective life, and actively works to establish it therein. | Wellness Wholesomeness & Healthiness (Health) – الصلاح Healthy, Clean, Safe & Secure |
| | | Wellness (Fitness) – الإستقامة Fitness, Balanced, Athletic (Exercise) |
| | | Vitality (Recreation) – الإحياء Rejuvenated, Re-creative, Enriched, Fulfilled |
| الإحسان HUMAN RELATIONS Interpersonal Literacy | Collaborative Partner Has an understanding of the role of good communications, cooperation, fairness, and friendship to establishing and maintaining meaningful relations between individuals and groups. | Kindness Understanding (Communications) – التفاهم Active Listener, Articulate (Clarity of Expression), Interprets and Evaluates, Understanding |
| | | Cooperation (Relationships) – التعاون Sharing, Cooperative, Harmonious, Respectful (Diversity), Empathetic |
| | | Friendliness (Belonging) – الإلتواء Belonging, Friendly, Sociable |
| الدين FAITH IN ACTION Cultural Literacy | Committed Person Has a commitment to a lifestyle consistent with the principles and practices of Islam, especially as reflected in one's daily interactions with others. | Steadfastness Inspiration (Heritage) – التراث Pattern Seeker, Enriched, Aesthetically Sensitive, Inspired |
| | | Integrity (Lifestyle) – الدين Integrity, Committed, Persistent, Active, Practical (Life Skills), High Standards (Work Habits) |
| | | Courage (Change & Challenges) – تحديات العصر Adaptive, Flexible, Coping Skills & Stress Management, Courageous (Risk-taker), Forward-looking |
| الأمانة PUBLIC SERVICE Social Literacy | Community Contributor Has a strong sense of caring, stewardship, service and social activism, and a commitment to using one's life to make a difference in the world. | Justness Justice (Stewardship) – العدل Just, Peaceful, Global Perspective, Environmental Awareness |
| | | Responsibility (Service) – الأمانة Vocational Readiness, Work Ethics, Caring, Responsible, Helpful (Service), Activist (Citizenship) |
| | | Exemplarship (Leadership) – القدوة Role model, Example, Inspiring (Da'wah), Leadership |

Key Aspects of Tawhīd and Related English Words

| 1 God-consciousness | 2 Moderation | 3 Systems Thinking | 4 Wholesomeness | 5 Cooperation | 6 Integrity | 7 Commonwealth |
|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| <i>Theological</i> | <i>Cosmological</i> | <i>Intellectual</i> | <i>Physical</i> | <i>Interpersonal</i> | <i>Cultural</i> | <i>Sociological</i> |
| Spirituality | Balance | Synthesis | Soundness | Community | Consistency | Unity |
| Wholeness | Complementarity | Integration | Totality | Communication | Conformity | Union |
| Simplicity | Harmony | Coherence | Completeness | Compassion | Continuity | Solidarity |
| Similarity | Compatibility | Comprehension | Perfection | Concord | Loyalty | Consolidation |
| Uniformity | Identity | Concentration | Embody | Agreement | Faithfulness | Collective |
| Monotheism | Individuality | Cosmos | Composition | Organization | Honor | Equality |
| Omnipotence | Conscience | | Construction | Coordination | Habit / Custom | Inclusion |
| Omnipresence | Equilibrium | | | Friendship | Continuum | Conciliation |
| Omniscience | Synergy | | | Unison | Commitment | Peace |
| Universe | Unique | | | Coalition | | Accord |
| University | Symmetry | | | Collaboration | | Public |
| | | | | Compromise | | Universality |
| | | | | Congregation | | Involvement |
| | | | | Consortium | | Company |
| | | | | Symbiosis | | Consensus |
| | | | | Counsel | | Conservation |
| | | | | Sympathy | | Unification |
| | | | | Connection | | Constitution |
| | | | | Conjugal | | Contract |
| | | | | | | Congress |
| | | | | | | Council |
| | | | | | | Covenant |
| | | | | | | Commerce |
| | | | | | | Incorporation |
| | | | | | | Consultation |
| | | | | | | Contribution |

Figure 15: Key Aspects of Tawhīd



Dawud Tauhidi, a native of Philadelphia, embraced Islam in 1972. He studied at Lehigh University and later studied Arabic at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1980, he graduated from al-Azhar University in Cairo, Egypt with a degree in Usul ad-Din. Later he taught at the Islamic Community Center School in Philadelphia.

In 1983, Mr. Tauhidi completed his master's degree in Islamic Studies at the University of Michigan and in 1985 completed his doctoral candidacy exams in the same field. During that time, he served as a teaching assistant, research assistant and nearly completed a second master's degree in Teaching Arabic as a Second Language. His research interests have included *Towards a Model of an Islamic Philosophy of Education*, *Educational Institutions in Early Islam*, *the Affective Domain in Second Language Acquisition*, *Oral Proficiency Testing of University-Level Arabic*, *Statistical Studies of the Quranic Lexicon*, *Semantic Structures and Worldview of the Quran* and other topics.

For more than two decades, Mr. Tauhidi has been involved in various aspects of Islamic education—as a teacher, researcher, administrator and curriculum developer. Since 1985, he has been actively involved in establishing Islamic schools in North America and was a founding member of the Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA). In 1985, he co-founded the Michigan Islamic Academy in Ann Arbor, MI, where he served as its founding Principal for three years. In 1988, he helped form the Michigan Education Council and co-founded Crescent Academy International, a college-preparatory, Islamic school in suburban Detroit, where he has served as Director since 1988.

Mr. Tauhidi has experience in the planning and establishment of schools, policy development, school administration, curriculum development, Teaching Arabic as a Second Language, holistic education, character education, public relations, computer programming, multimedia and graphic design, and fundraising for Islamic schools.

During the past ten years, Mr. Tauhidi has been working to develop an integrated curriculum for Islamic education, known as the *Tarbiyah Project*. This project aims to provide a more effective paradigm for teaching today's Muslim youth based on a holistic and integrated educational approach known as *Integrated Learning ModelSM* (ILM²). For more information about the project, he can be reached at the Tarbiyah Institute for Learning & Development at Tarbiyah.org or at Crescent Academy International, 40440 Palmer Road, Canton, MI 48188, Phone (734) 729-1000, Fax (734) 729-1004, Email: dtauhidi@tarbiyah.org, on the web @ www.Tarbiyah.org.