

Article

Pedagogies in Becoming Muslim: Contemporary Insights from Islamic Traditions on Teaching, Learning, and Developing

Claire Alkouatli

Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education, University of British Columbia, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4, Canada; claire.alkouatli@alumni.ubc.ca

Received: 17 September 2018; Accepted: 15 November 2018; Published: 18 November 2018



Abstract: In light of calls to examine, elaborate, and improve pedagogies in teaching and learning Islam, thematic analysis was conducted on literature in English on pedagogies derived from the primary-source texts, the Qur'an and Sunnah. Three themes were constructed, each capturing a distinct pedagogic principle, to suggest an expansive framework of principled, flexible, situated, holistic, and transformative pedagogies. First, Relational Pedagogies center learning and developing in warm human relationships. Second, Pedagogies of Mutual Engagement include doing, speaking, and inquiring together in participatory processes of making meaning. Third, Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness aim to make visible purposes, reasons, and principles behind Islamic practices. These three themes were then used as sensitizing concepts in examining data gathered in a sociocultural study on Muslim educators' perspectives and practices at a mosque school in Canada. Reflections of the themes in the data—and contradictions—suggest that educators passionately but partially draw from primary-source pedagogies to inform their praxis in a pedagogic diaspora where interpretation and application vary. Further research is required to examine whether the developmental potential of these primary-source pedagogies might be optimized when they are employed together, as a balanced group, and how they might address pedagogical criticisms in teaching and learning Islam.

Keywords: Islamic pedagogy; Islamic education; sociocultural theory; critical faith-based epistemology; pedagogies; Muslim educators

1. Situating Pedagogy in Islamic Education

Projects of educating children in the religion of Islam have historically taken place across diverse ranges of human cultures, places, and time periods. If an aim of education is not only to impart information, but also to develop individual consciousness in cultural context (Vygotsky 1987), a key contemporary task of Muslim educators in Muslim-minority societies may be to catalyze creative expressions of Islamic consciousness within culturally heterogeneous communities (Sahin 2013). Islamic expressions of consciousness may be considered in light of the term *taqwa*, or God-consciousness (Esposito 2003), and as a unity of embodied senses, cognition, and emotion leading to mature self, social, and theistic awareness (Al-Attas 1980; Sahin 2013). Development of this consciousness may revolve around learners' mastery and internalization of Islamic practices and principles for renewed contribution back to their communities. *Pedagogy* may play a pivotal role in this process, as scholars have noted that communication of the faith depends on the ways in which it is taught (Al-Sadan 1999; Rufai 2010). Basically defined as methodologies of instruction (Memon and Alhashmi 2018), *pedagogy* is derived from Greek and refers to a process of leading or nurturing a child, holding meanings similar to the Arabic concept of *tarbiyah* (Sahin 2013). *Tarbiyah* has been described as holistic individual development to maturity in relational community (Halstead 2004; Waghid 2014). Connoting a process

of facilitating meaning-making rather than imposing information, [Sahin \(2018, p. 7\)](#) defined *tarbiyah* as “human flourishing” and identified it as central to the formation of a critical, reflective Muslim *paideia*, as itself imperative to a modern holistic conception of Islamic education. Yet how do Muslim educators use pedagogy? What makes pedagogy ‘Islamic’? Is ‘Islamic’ pedagogy culturally and historically situated, or can it be generalized across diasporic sites of Islamic education?

This paper inquires into modern literature on Islamic education and pedagogy, particularly descriptions of pedagogy in the primary Islamic source texts of the Qu’ran and the Sunnah, or way, of Muhammad, in English. Three pedagogic themes were constructed through thematic analysis ([Braun and Clarke 2006](#)) for consideration in contemporary sites of Islamic education: Relational Pedagogies, Pedagogies of Mutual Engagement, and Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness. In light of these themes, data from a sociocultural study conducted in 2013–2014 with Muslim educators at a weekend mosque school in Canada—the Jamma Mosque School study—was examined in terms of the relevance of primary-source pedagogies in a contemporary context.

Considering research and analysis as situated cultural practices, as a Canadian, secular-educated, convert to Islam, I analyzed the literature and data through two particular interpretative frames: [Vygotsky \(1987, 1998\)](#) on processes of teaching, learning, and developing and [Zine \(2008\)](#) critical faith-centered epistemological framework, which provided a heuristic in translating between a secular social scientific perspective and a critically Islamic one. In the next sections, I provide a brief overview of recent research on pedagogy in sites of Islamic education and the interpretative frames used in the analysis. Part 2 describes methods: thematic analysis ([Braun and Clarke 2006](#)) and sources of data. Part 3 outlines the three themes constructed from descriptions of pedagogies in literature on Islamic primary-sources, and reflections of these themes in the Jamma Mosque School. Part 4 provides a brief discussion and some concluding thoughts.

1.1. Pedagogy in Teaching and Learning Islam

Pedagogy in teaching and learning Islam is currently a lively area of inquiry within the emerging field of Islamic education internationally ([Abdalla et al. 2018](#)). Scholars have raised specific concerns regarding pedagogical quality ([Abdulla 2018](#)), responsiveness to students’ needs ([Rustham et al. 2012](#)), and epistemological links between pedagogies and larger philosophies of education ([Ajem and Memon 2011](#)). Teaching *Islamically* is a concern for many teachers, administrators, and parents; to this end, [Ajem and Memon \(2011\)](#) identified principles within pedagogies, derived from Islamic primary sources, included in this paper. While pedagogy constitutes a focal point of critiques on Islamic education ([Abdulla 2018](#); [Al-Sadan 1997](#); [Douglass and Shaikh 2004](#); [Niyozov and Memon 2011](#); [Ramadan 2004](#); [Sahin 2013](#); [Shamma 1999](#), [Waghid 2014](#); [Zine 2007](#)), it also offers potential in improving learning and development. Specifically, scholars have pointed to the effectiveness of Muhammad’s pedagogy as evidenced in his companions’ development and the educational legacies that extended from them historically ([Abu Ghuddah 2017](#); [Mogra 2010](#); [Ramadan 2007](#)).

Despite scholarly interest in pedagogy in teaching and learning Islam, conceptual investigations outweigh empirical ones, generating more questions than answers, and constituting a gap in the literature. [Ajem and Memon \(2011\)](#) questions—“What is an Islamic pedagogy? Should we speak of an Islamic pedagogy or pedagogies? Who defines an Islamic pedagogy(ies)?” ([Memon 2011](#), p. 296)—have only been partially answered in recent studies. [Abdulla \(2018\)](#) conducted a qualitative study with school coordinators, teachers, and students examining Islamic studies instruction within Islamic schools in Australia. While he found strengths—such as teachers who engaged students in exploring “real-life Islam” ([Abdulla 2018](#), p. 275)—he also found rigidity, authoritative teaching styles, and a lack of creative, relevant, and interactive pedagogies. [Hardaker and Sabki \(2015\)](#) anthropological study on pedagogy at a British madrasah for adults suggested that pedagogic approaches, including orality and memorization, involved heartfelt interactions between teachers’ and learners’ embodiments of knowledge. Embodiment was also highlighted in [Boyle \(2006\)](#) study of Qur’anic schools in Morocco, Yemen, and Nigeria, as both a means and a purpose of Qur’anic memorization, which was itself a

precursor to understanding and enlightenment, rather than a preclusion. Ware (2014) research on Qur'anic schools in West Africa suggested implicit theory of knowledge, based upon conceptions of educating the whole person and the body's role in archiving, transmitting, decoding, and actualizing religious knowledge. While these scholars used the term *embodiment* as central to pedagogies involving the Qur'an, the term *internalization* may better capture the unity of cognition, emotion, and embodiment involved in the process of developing consciousness (Vygotsky 1987), whereby Qur'anic concepts are internalized. For example, Ware (2014) offered Aisha's famous saying that Muhammad's character *was* the Qur'an—which goes beyond identifying Muhammad as a recipient of revelation or his character as reflecting Qur'anic principles. It suggests that Muhammad internalized the Qur'an, it formed his cognitive structure, and he was literally “the Qur'an walking” (Ware 2014, p. 7).

Other empirical studies on pedagogy include Sahin (2013), who explored the construction of religious identity amongst British and Kuwaiti youth, identifying both the importance of Islam to them and the rigid ways in which it was taught and learned. Based on these studies, he concluded that most current pedagogies in diverse Islamic educational settings, in both Muslim-minority and majority contexts, appear to lead to “foreclosed” faith formations (Sahin 2013, p. 144). Vicini (2013) conducted an ethnographic study in Turkey, in a Gülen community, where male high-school students prepared for exams while living in the houses of older university students, who acted as role models for younger boys in an academic and spiritual maturation process. Vicini (2013, p. 396) showed how the pedagogical method of *exemplariness* in the older students, rooted in Islamic traditions, worked through “pedagogies of affection” in structuring learning processes, inspiring emulation, and shaping development. Rustham et al. (2012) conducted a survey of 302 students at a weekend madrasa in Singapore finding that while information-intensive lecturing was the primary pedagogy, the students preferred pedagogies that included humor and watching videos. Finally, Alkouatli and Vadeboncoeur (in press) observed educators using pedagogies in varied ways in a Canadian mosque school, suggesting that pedagogy might be a flexible aspect of Islamic education.

While each of these studies referenced primary source pedagogies in passing, they varied in terms of depth of analysis and examinations of contemporary relevance. Sahin (2018) contended that current literature reveals a tendency to simply list Qur'anic verses and hadith without *engaging educationally* with their principles. Lack of such engagement in the construction of a clear interpretative framework is behind much of the confusion over what constitutes an Islamic pedagogy. Thus, Sahin (2018) emphasized the need for a distinctive educational hermeneutics in discerning the pedagogic principles, values, and practices characterizing the primary sources.

Aiming to avoid essentializing pedagogy from singular interpretations of primary sources (Memon 2011) by recognizing that there are multiple ways of understanding and practicing primary-source pedagogies, this paper aims to contribute to the gap in the literature in Islamic education by examining pedagogical themes that may be relevant to educators today, and engaging with them educationally. The empirical context upon which this paper draws—a Canadian mosque school—will be described in detail in Part 2: Methods.

1.2. Interpretive Frames

Against this backdrop of literature on pedagogy in Islamic education, two interpretive frames shaped the analysis presented here. First, a sociocultural perspective highlights learning and development as historical, social, and cultural—not only individual (Vygotsky 1987). Participation in *social practices*—as repertoires of action, roles, and expectations for participation (Vadeboncoeur 2017)—is dialectically related to the construction of individual psychological functions, including consciousness (Wertsch 1998). Within social practices, material or conceptual *cultural tools* play fundamental roles in the process of *internalization*, which can be elaborated as *mastery*, involving the ability to use cultural tools with proficiency, including for instrumental goals, and/or as *appropriation*, incorporating cultural tools as an aspect of one's identity (Wertsch 1998). The development of consciousness, as a unity of cognition and emotion, through participation in social

practices (Vygotsky 1987; Wozniak 1975) involves mediation between the individual learner and the material to be learned (Kozulin 2003). This mediation often happens within *social relationships* enabling participation in social practices and supporting engagement with cultural tools (Vadeboncoeur 2017). The power of people to facilitate, enable, and support the engagement of others in social practices illuminates the catalytic potential of human relationships in developmental processes. Pedagogies—as forms of social practices for teaching and learning that are intimately connected to sociocultural context—shape “the cognitive, affective and moral development of individuals” (Daniels 2016, p. 1). Vygotsky (1987) described: “Instruction is not limited to trailing after development or moving stride for stride along with it. It can move ahead of development, pushing it further and eliciting new formations” (Vygotsky 1987, p. 198). Thus, pedagogy may actually draw development forward.

Second, a critical faith-centered perspective (Zine 2008) highlights distinct ontological and epistemic perspectives on human beings as theologically and socially situated, which scholars have suggested have implications on human development, agency in relation to knowledge, and pedagogy (Al-Attas 1980; Memon and Alhashmi 2018; Obeid 1988; Sahin 2013; Zine 2008). In other words: “Islamic pedagogy and epistemology as practiced and theorized remained intrinsically tied with Islamic education tradition” (Diallo 2012, p. 175). While scholars have suggested that in order to understand Muslim educational expressions, one needs to understand the Qur’an as “the fountainhead of all knowledge—the source being God” (Mogra 2010, p. 320), unique sociocultural and historical circumstances shape interpretations of knowledge. Thus, there may be no singular concept of knowledge in Islam; instead, Muslims in different times and places may hold varying concepts, which interact, change, and build upon one another (Panjwani 2004). An overarching epistemic principle is: “Not all knowledge is socially constructed; knowledge can emanate from divine revelation and can have a spiritual or incorporeal origin” (Zine 2008, p. 65). An important implication of this principle is that belief in prophets, messengers, and angels are included in ways that “faith-centered people read and make sense of the world and their place in it” (Zine 2008, p. 53). This principle comes to life in descriptions of Muhammad’s pedagogy, whereby unseen beings, including angels, interacted with the community and served to illuminate the contours of the emerging Islamic religion.

An aim of describing the interpretive frames that guide this analysis is to make visible the amalgamated and syncretic nature of analysis and application of Islamic principles in new times and places. In addition, analytic approaches to deriving pedagogic principles from the Qur’an and hadith are necessarily subjective and open to interpretation (Abdullah 2018). Thus, a preliminary implication for educators may be that rather than striving to replicate Muhammad’s pedagogies from the 7th century Hijaz—which would not only be a disservice to Muhammad’s tradition but also to the challenges of our particular educational context (Memon 2007)—we need to critically identify and grapple with the principles underlying those pedagogies in order to reinterpret them relevant to contemporary classrooms.

2. Methods: Analytic Approach, Data, and Themes

Building upon extant literature, within these interpretative frames, the purpose of this paper is to inquire into pedagogies described in English in the primary Islamic source texts and to consider how contemporary Muslim educators engage with these pedagogies in a site of Islamic education. First, thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was conducted on literature on primary-source pedagogies to construct themes meaningful to the inquiry. Second, these themes were used to examine data drawn from a larger sociocultural study on Muslim educators’ perspectives and classroom practices at the Jamma Mosque weekend school. The thematic analysis was shaped by reflecting on three questions derived from Braun and Clarke (2006): first, identifying the interpretative frames through which analysis took place (noted above); second, describing sources of data and how data will be analyzed; and third, identifying what counts as a theme.

The first source of data was modern literature in English on pedagogies in the Qur’an and the Sunnah (Abu Ghuddah 2017; Ahmed 1987; Ajem and Memon 2011; Al-Sadan 1997; Ibn Ishāq and

Guillaume 1955; Mogra 2010; Nasr 2012; Ramadan 2007; Rufai 2010, pp. 199–207; Sahin 2013, 2017), which was thematically analyzed (Braun and Clarke 2006) to construct three pedagogical themes. These primary sources contain clear pedagogical dimensions (Sahin 2013): while the Qur'an is the "sacred heart of Islamic imagination" (p. 3), containing a pedagogic vision that aims to facilitate the actualization of human potential towards cognitive, emotional, and spiritual maturity, Muhammad is the embodiment of Qur'anic principles and his life "a pedagogic resource to be used by successive generations of Muslims living in different cultural and historical contexts" (Sahin 2013, p. 168).

The literature reviewed in this paper is primarily situated within the emerging and interdisciplinary field of Islamic education, not the field of Islamic studies. When references to primary sources appeared in the literature, I either worked directly with that reference, or I went to its English-language source, often using Al-Nawawi (2010) for Prophetic sayings (*hadith*), Ibn Ishāq and Guillaume (1955) for Prophetic biography (*sīrah*), and Asad (1980) for Qur'anic references. Focusing on literature in English may introduce a margin of interpretational error—meanings may be missed—and constitute a limitation. However, the purpose in this paper was not to conduct an analysis of classical texts but to examine how scholars and educators engaged with some pedagogic principles from the primary-source literature in contemporary praxis.

The second source of data, considered in light of the three pedagogic themes, was generated through participant observation and active interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium 2004) in a seven-month-long sociocultural study of Muslim educators' perspectives on human development in the Canadian Jamma Mosque School¹. Two female educators (Tala and Amira) and two male educators (Imran and Rayan, also the *imam*, or mosque leader)—who had come to Canada from Albania, Algeria, Palestine, and Yemen—taught approximately 40 children interpretations of Sunni Islam in the basement classrooms of the mosque and in the prayer halls above. Data from Jamma Mosque School study was examined in light of the three themes drawn from the literature on primary-source pedagogies. The themes served as sensitizing concepts in directing the analytic gaze toward examining how a particular pedagogical principle or practice in the Jamma Mosque School was "manifest and given meaning in a particular setting" (Patton 2002, p. 456)—or not.

In this paper, a *theme* is defined on the basis that it "captures something important about the data in relation to the research question" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 82). Recalling the inquiry guiding this paper, first, I examined distinct pedagogies in the primary-source literature, guided by the qualitative research principle that the themes should be judged based on their *substantive significance* (Patton 2002). If primary-source material is intended for people in all times and places, as many Muslim educators maintain, a pertinent task is to make that material relevant for today's learners. Thus, along with considering whether or not particular pedagogies were coherent, intentional, and reoccurring, I also considered how a pedagogy might be relevant in contemporary classrooms. There were some pedagogies described in the primary sources that may be less relevant in Canadian culture today. For example, upon occasion, Muhammad would call a person's name a few times without engaging him or her. Scholars have suggested that the purpose was to generate attention to the words that would follow (Abu Ghuddah 2017). This is a pedagogy that is largely absent in the modern literature on Islamic education, and it illustrates another point. This paper is not intended to be an exhaustive list. Qur'anic and Prophetic pedagogies are extensive and there were at least three groups of highly-relevant pedagogies—involving imagination, travel, and memorization—which were omitted in the interests of space.

A final aspect of the analysis was to identify how pedagogies might be related to larger principles. For example, while learning through *doing*, *dialogue*, and *inquiry* were three pedagogies that appeared repeatedly in the literature, considering them together—as part of a larger theme of

¹ All place and people names are pseudonyms. Approval for the study was granted from the Behavioural Research Ethics Board at the University of British Columbia, and the Jamma Mosque School itself.

mutual engagement—made visible an important underlying principle: the educational significance of *participating together* in teaching and learning Islamic principles and practices.

3. Findings: Three Pedagogical Themes

Despite limitations of language and scope, striking themes were constructed from the literature on primary-source pedagogies that had echoes in both the Jamma Mosque School data and in contemporary empirical literature on pedagogies in sites of Islamic education. In this section, I describe the three overlapping themes, each based upon an Islamic pedagogic principle. While all of the pedagogies seem aimed at supporting a learner's mastery and appropriation of Islamic principles and practices—as related to developing structures of psychological functioning (Wertsch 1998)—they do so in distinct ways. First, Relational Pedagogies function through the social nature of teaching and learning, whereby caring human relationships form educative substrates for learning and developing towards increasingly-conscious states. Second, Pedagogies of Mutual Engagement make visible teaching, learning, and developing as participatory life-long endeavors of both teachers and students. Third, Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness are methods used by more-experienced, more-conscious educators intended to highlight meaning, raise conscious awareness of learners, and operationalize the other pedagogies.

3.1. Relational Pedagogies

Descriptions of Muhammad's teaching and learning reveal pedagogy as highly relational engagement between people, built upon compassion for the uniqueness of oneself and others within sacred social bonds. A unique objective of Islamic education—learning to be a “good Muslim”—requires people to develop moral-ethical dispositions, develop forms of intersubjective relational capabilities, and learn to reason morally (Vicini 2013, p. 389). These, in turn, require pedagogical approaches that favor relationships of positive valence with and between educators and learners, and differentiated teaching and learning.

3.1.1. Relationships of Positive Valence

Qualities of love, care, mercy, and compassion, emphasized repeatedly in the Qur'an as related to faith and God consciousness (Ajem and Memon 2011), were clearly exemplified in Muhammad's pedagogy. As an architect of Islamic educational ethics, he was fully aware of his responsibilities in dealing with human hearts and minds; he cared deeply for his students, referred to as *companions*, and aimed to help them “actualize their best potential” (Günther 2006, p. 385). Muhammad would sometimes hold a person's hand or shoulder while speaking, in order to emphasize a point and ensure that he had the student's full attention (Abu Ghuddah 2017). Clear and gentle discipline was characterized “by equity, compassion, and mutual respect” (Ajem and Memon 2011, p. 36), maintaining the honor and self-respect of the student (Abu Ghuddah 2017). Muhammad's close relationships with people—including children, with whom he engaged in simpler and more playful ways—meant that each person perceived that s/he was receiving special treatment (Abu Ghuddah 2017). For example, once a woman of reportedly poor health approached Muhammad for instruction. He asked her to name a suitable meeting location, then he met her there, in a public place, where passers-by could see but could not hear them, thus maintaining the woman's privacy (Abu Ghuddah 2017).

In the Jamma Mosque School, the importance of creating a warm relational climate in the classroom was evidenced by the affection the educators exhibited towards the children, attending to each one in caring ways. Amira greeted her students when they arrived in class with hugs and individualized compliments. She balanced between building rapport with them, using jokes and banter—for example, saying *al-salām 'alaykum* to a student's plastic squeaky octopus as she passed by the girl's desk—while reminding them of the seriousness of the practices that they were learning: “Scarves, girls! All the time in the mosque!” (FN, 12/14/14). Rayan referred to a hadith as

supporting his pedagogical practice: “Whoever is not merciful to our young ones, he is not from us.” He elaborated, saying:

Once the Prophet, *alayhi al-ṣalāh wa-al-salām*, he was hugging his grandchildren, kissing them. Another man walked by and said, ‘You do that? You hug and kiss your kids?’ [Rayan laughs] And what did he [Muhammad] do—a firm and harsh reply? He said, ‘What can I do if Allāh has removed mercy from your heart?’ (AI1, 12/17/14, referring to hadith reported by Aḥmad)

Here, in describing how Muhammad was affectionate with his grandchildren, Rayan highlighted the importance of love, care, mercy, and compassion in dealing with children, and indicated that he aimed to teach in Muhammad’s way.

Care in facilitating spiritual development is reflected in [Ajem and Memon \(2011\)](#) third pedagogic principle: “The learning environment is sacred, disciplined, caring, and functional” ([Ajem and Memon 2011](#), p. 33). Discipline is clear and gentle, and “love is manifested by teachers in the compassion, concern, and forbearance they show their students” (p. 34). Scholars of human development have suggested that children may be more responsive to knowledge within warm relationships, characterized by joy and mutual interest: “An enthusiastic, charismatic adult can often engender that passionate interest in children” ([Diamond 2012](#), p. 338).

3.1.2. Differentiated Teaching and Learning

A significant aspect of teaching relationally is teaching to human diversity. Understandings of “unity in diversity” ([Asad 1980](#), p. 224) are rooted within particular Qur’anic verses such as: “Unto every one of you have We appointed a [different] law and way of life . . . ” (5: 48). [Sahin \(2013\)](#) suggested that: “Although all humanity is asked to submit to God, the ways in which humans interpret this fundamental teaching represents a culturally specific process” (p. 209). The human diversity highlighted in the Qur’an also has implications on ways in which educators and students conceive of and interact with individual, cultural, and religious others. Pedagogical implications of human diversity are illuminated in another Qur’anic verse: “O human beings! We have created you all out of a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes, so that you might come to know one another. Verily, the noblest of you in the sight of God is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him . . . ” (49:13; italics added). A first implication is that human heterogeneity—including differences in gender, race, ethnicity, religion, and language—offers educative opportunities; Muslims are strongly encouraged to learn from this heterogeneity and the accumulated wisdom of other cultures ([Sahin 2013](#)). Muhammad’s pedagogy clearly accounted for diversity in that people of varying races, ethnicities, socioeconomic positions, and genders comprised the community closest to him ([Ramadan 2007](#); [Shakir 2017](#)). A second implication is that there may be a connection between human diversity and God-consciousness (*taqwa*) as related to educational objectives and pedagogy. While the Qur’anic verses highlighting human diversity primarily feature large-scale, inter-group differences, the assertion that the nobility of a person depends upon her consciousness of God brings the principles to an individual level. Thus, the individual development of piety, God-consciousness, and virtuous action—unified in the term *taqwa* ([Esposito 2003](#))—is an educational objective and learning through human diversity is a pedagogical approach.

Superimposing Relationships of Positive Valence upon values of diversity includes recognition that each student is unique. Muhammad tailored his teachings to individual people, selecting methods best suited to each one ([Sahin 2013](#)). Muhammad would sometimes give different answers to the same questions based upon who was asking and their particular circumstances. When two different men inquired into whether it was permissible to kiss their wives while fasting during Ramadan, for example, Muhammad answered in the positive to one and in the negative to the other. This example illustrates the connection between principles and practices: where principles are definitive—remaining chaste

while fasting—and the lived practices around a given principle may change. Indeed, in order to stay true to a principle, the practice itself may have to change (Ramadan 2004).

In the Jamma Mosque School, the educators exhibited differentiated teaching primarily in altering planned activities in response to the wishes of the class as a whole. For example, Amira described gauging the group mood to determine whether to start the day with Qur'an memorization or a more physically-active learning activity. Tala once altered the day's schedule to accommodate the children's suggestion that they miss break-time to finish an Arabic grammar lesson so that they could play an Arabic reading game later (FN, 04/05/15). Rayan described an incident from Muhammad's life that, for him, illustrated differentiated teaching. One of Muhammad's companions came to the mosque wearing a gold ring:

The Prophet took it [the ring] from the companion's finger and threw it away . . . [W]e don't wear gold, for men. The other companions said, after that, 'You can still go get that [ring] and sell it and make a profit from it.' But the guy said, 'No. I'm not going to pick up what the Prophet threw away!' [laughs] (AI2, 04/03/15; referring to a hadith reported by Muslim)

Rayan offered this description whereby Muhammad matched the delivery of an Islamic principle—men do not wear gold—to a particular companion's character. Rayan explained how he strived to emulate this pedagogic discernment:

You need to know whom you are talking to. If you are going to be harsh to this guy and he's never going to come back to the *masjid* (mosque)—don't be harsh with him . . . There's another guy, he'll come back but he's acting up right now, so he's advised in a harsher manner. (AI2)

In this way, Rayan described being gentle with someone who might be frightened away by harshness and being harsh with someone who is temporarily "acting up" and might respond well to harshness. This is an example of differentiated teaching in relationship, inspired by Muhammad's way, where the teacher knows his or her students and teaches according to their specific dispositions and needs in the moment.

While examples of differentiated teaching in the empirical literature on pedagogy were scarce, Ajem and Memon (2011) asserted the conceptual importance of recognizing the many variables that make each student unique. Their sixth principle: "Instruction is in accordance with students' aptitude, pace, and learning style" (Ajem and Memon 2011, p. 49) extended from the Prophetic differentiated pedagogical approach.

In summary, this first theme, Relational Pedagogies, is based upon Muhammad's pedagogical principles of affection and compassion for the humanness of individual learners. The value of these Relational Pedagogies on cognitive, social-emotional, and spiritual development cannot be overestimated: " . . . *affect* is the alpha and the omega, the first and last link, the prologue and epilogue of all mental development" (Vygotsky 1998, p. 227; italics added). People learn and develop best in warm relationships.

3.2. Pedagogies of Mutual Engagement

One of the Qur'an's central pedagogic features is that it worked in conjunction with the unfolding life of Muhammad. Verses were introduced into a lived context, as both an illustration and an interaction, often in response to situations experienced by the early Muslim community (Sahin 2013). In less than 23 years, a large number of people came to master and appropriate, memorize and apply, the Qur'anic material that Muhammad taught. "He took them along an express path of collective education and pushed them hard to eradicate illiteracy . . . They started teaching each other and learning from each other and became literate in a short span of time" (Abu Ghuddah 2017, p. 449). While *literacy* here may be understood as an expansive, moral-ethical literacy, significant in this description is reference to *collectivity*: people taught each other in a community that was learning and developing together. This section explores the second theme—Pedagogies of Mutual

Engagement—which includes doing together by engaging in social practices, speaking together in dialogue, and inquiring together through questions and answers.

3.2.1. Doing Together

One of Muhammad's most effective pedagogies seems to have been engaging people in mediated social practices, which, in large part, constituted the material he aimed to teach. An example is a man who came to Medina to ask Muhammad about the *timings* of the five daily prayers (Abu Ghuddah 2017). Rather than simply listing the prayer times, Muhammad invited the man to spend two days with him and the community. The first day, they prayed each prayer slightly earlier than the second day: they prayed the dawn prayer at the break of dawn but the second day they prayed it when the sky was white. The first day, they prayed the night prayer as soon as the redness of sunset had disappeared from the horizon, but the second day they prayed it after one third of the night had passed. After two days, Muhammad said to the man, "The times of your prayers are in between what you saw" (Abu Ghuddah 2017, p. 1225). In praying the five daily prayers over two days with the community, the man experienced their earliest and latest margins. Three pedagogical points discerned from this example include, first, explanation in practice is more effective than instruction alone; second, engaging in practices themselves is a form of pedagogy; and, third, descriptions by people who experienced this mutual engagement are beneficial for learners later in time (Abu Ghuddah 2017; Al-Nawawi 2010).

In the Jamma Mosque School, engaging together in mediated social practices constituted a significant pedagogy—particularly in teaching and learning the ritual, congregational prayer. Rayan would take his boys up to the prayer hall before prayer time and prepare them for prayer. When it was time, Rayan would lead the congregation in prayer: the boys, some of the boys' fathers, and other members of the community. This participation constituted a pedagogy of mutual engagement that aimed to initiate the children into a complex community practice, equip them with skills needed to live a life structured by ritual prayer, and provide a glimpse of a possible future as a religious leader.

Teaching and learning by doing together included a social component. Muhammad engaged in playful activities, like joking, wrestling, and racing camels with his companions and running races with his wife, Aisha. While the educators in the Jamma Mosque School did not emphasize socializing and playing with students, the educators described in Vicini (2013) Gülen community did. Social activities held a place in teaching and learning whereby between prayer and study sessions, the older boys would chat with the younger boys over tea and biscuits, and play soccer together: "I never saw one young boy make fun of mates who played poorly nor anyone boasting of his own skills. The level of competitiveness was kept low so as not to foster rivalry and/or disputes" (Vicini 2013, p. 385). In this way, the older boys fostered relationships with the younger ones, and engaged together in activities where they could illustrate and mediate Islamic principles and practices in action. Thus, the pedagogy of *doing together* is related to other pedagogies, including relationship building and mediation.

3.2.2. Speaking Together

Dialogue is a key pedagogy in both the Qur'an and Sunnah. A classic example of dialogic teaching occurred between Muhammad and a stranger—later identified as the angel Jibril (Al-Nawawi 2010)—an incident witnessed by Muhammad's companions that clarified key Islamic principles. The stranger asked Muhammad a series of questions, to which Muhammad responded. When the stranger asked about the hour of resurrection, Muhammad replied, "The one being asked does not know more than the one asking" (Al-Nawawi 2010, p. 647). Amongst the educational highlights of this hadith is that it encourages dialogue and questions as pedagogic tools, and illuminates etiquette surrounding both (Abu Ghuddah 2017). It also illustrates that Muhammad was not adverse to admitting when he did not know (Abu Ghuddah 2017; Al-Nawawi 2010).

This example may appear to be instrumental—seeking known-information, where the educator has an answer in mind and seeks to elicit that answer from the student—rather than learner-generated

and open-ended (Wells 1999), where meaning is explored within dialogue itself. Muhammad seems to have engaged in both. Reports describe Muhammad leading dialogic circles (*halaqah*), but also engaging in casual dialogue with his companions, even reclining amongst them (Abu Ghuddah 2017). These informal dialogic sessions, which often featured people arriving to ask questions, discuss, and dispute, may also have been sites for the companions' meaning making.

In contemporary settings of Islamic education, Ahmed (2014) suggested that dialogue in *halaqah* may contribute to critical thinking; questioning, listening, and communicating skills; and social-emotional and identity development. In the Jamma Mosque School, dialogue tended to be of the instrumental variety, rather than open-ended. But an example of the pedagogy of speaking together was reflected in an unplanned incident that happened in Amira's class.

The girls were getting ready to leave the classroom for the ritual, congregational prayer when someone anonymously dropped off a large box of doughnuts for the children. The girls rushed to the box and clustered around it.

Amira: When we have a treat—an unexpected treat—what do we say?!

The children offered various answers: Thank you! *Merci beaucoup!* *Jazākum allāh khayran!* *Allḥamd li'llāh!*

Amira tried a different line of questioning: Who's giving this to us?

Sahar: Allāh?

Amira: Through who? Do we know this person? We don't know! So if we don't know who gave this to us, *what can we do?*

[Silence]

Amira: We can make *du'ā'* (supplication) for that person! And what kind of action is this, the person giving us this treat?

Cala: Charity!

Amira: Right! So let's do *du'ā'* for him or her: 'May Allāh accept their generosity and reward them and always make them able to provide.' (FN, 03/08/15)

The children were excited about this anonymous treat of doughnuts, but before they dove into the box, Amira seized the opportunity to lead the girls in dialogue on some pertinent Islamic concepts. It was a triple conceptualization. First, Amira prompted the girls to consider where the doughnuts came from—ultimately from God, but *through* the unknown person; and they subsequently identified the act as one of charity. Second, she taught the girls that offering supplication (*du'ā'*) for that person was an appropriate response, and she led the girls in *du'ā'* as a reciprocal act of charity, even though the recipient was not physically present to receive their *du'ā'*. Third, the bearer of doughnuts was not present yet they did *du'ā'* anyway, thus, Amira's participatory lesson served to illustrate that discursive social practices like *du'ā'* are performed not only for people but as points of communication with God. This example illustrates how speaking together in exploring meanings may be a basis for thinking together.

3.2.3. Inquiring Together

Engaging in inquiry using questions and answers, as powerful tools in teaching and learning, was another pedagogy reflected in the Qur'an and Muhammad's example. Muhammad was available to answer questions from both his supporters and his foes—"Whoever wishes to ask me about anything then should do so" (Abu Ghuddah 2017)—the latter may have asked in order to embarrass him. Sometimes people from the desert countryside came to ask questions, including questions that Muhammad's companions were not willing to ask. The companions described being eager to listen to these exchanges (Abu Ghuddah 2017). Thus, in answering questions, Muhammad taught many fundamentals of the religion. In addition, he illustrated creative ways of handling

questions. He would occasionally answer a person *beyond* the question if he felt the need and the understanding were there; other times he would deflect the question to redirect the questioner's attention (Abu Ghuddah 2017). Sometimes Muhammad would pose a complex or even paradoxical question, give his companions time to reflect, and then welcome their insights. Ramadan (2007) described how, occasionally, Muhammad would utter a statement that seemed contradictory but was, in fact, a deliberate and challenging pedagogy intended to develop his companions' abilities to think critically and creatively; equipping them consciously for responsibilities that lay ahead in teaching and leading the community (Ramadan 2007). As such, far from having his companions simply memorize information, Muhammad scaffolded his students in thinking deeply through issues and creatively applying principles as metacognitive processes in their own development.

Criticisms of contemporary sites of Islamic education include that dialogue and inquiry have taken a backseat to didactic, teacher-led instruction (Ramadan 2004; Waghid 2014)—which Sahin (2013) described as inadequate “teacher, text and instruction-centered Islamic education” (p. 16). Yet, some educators are realizing the educational and developmental value of dialogue and inquiry (Ahmed, 2014), including in leading to “fulfilling the religious obligation of holding convictions that are founded and substantiated” (Ajem and Memon 2011, p. 27); in understanding key concepts and reflecting upon social issues, rather than memorization of facts (Tan and Abbas 2009); and in creating space for critical discussion and disagreement (Waghid 2014).

Inquiry and the use of questions seemed to occupy a complicated position at the Jamma Mosque School. On the one hand, each of the educators maintained that students *should* inquire—“I encourage them to ask questions—ask . . . until you have the answer that your heart feels is good” (Imran, AI1, 03/06/15). Tala described “free question” sessions that she used to conduct in the days before the school had a curriculum (AI1, 02/03/15), where the children simply asked her questions, prompting discussion. On the other hand, inquiry was not a pedagogy privileged at the school during the time of the research study. At times, children asked questions relevant to their lives—“What if you have friends who are not Muslims—is that ok?” (Amira, FN, 11/2/14)—but, due to either the demands of getting through the curriculum or under-appreciation of the value of inquiry, these questions passed by, unexplored.

Three categories of questions that Muhammad discouraged—questions on superficial or hair-splitting issues, which led to neglecting more important matters; questions of which the answers might cause hardship; and questions about the unseen (Abu Ghuddah 2017)—were echoed in the Jamma Mosque School. Amira elaborated that students should not ask the ‘how’ questions: “How God is? How do the angels look? Does God have legs and hands? . . . These kinds of unseen knowledge—God didn’t give to us—these ones you have to stop them right away” (AI1, 12/16/14). Rayan described how he would deflect a question he deemed “not suitable” by saying, “Maybe you’ll understand this later” or “It’s Allāh’s wisdom” or “Allāh does what He wants’ [laughs]” (AI1). Thus, Rayan identified a way, seemingly intrinsic to Islamic material itself, for sidestepping questions that he did not deem suitable to answer. Imran emphasized:

We should tell them, ‘We don’t have this knowledge! I’m not hiding something from you. Me—I don’t know!’ Then they will feel relaxed, ‘Ok, no problem.’ But if I tell them, ‘No, don’t ask this question, this is not good!’ then [the children will say] ‘He is hiding something!’ (AI1)

In offering this humble admission to his students—that he does not know—Imran hoped to maintain sincerity and honesty so that children might remain excited about inquiring and learning.

In summary, primary-source pedagogies seem to favor active, contextual, and participatory learning within close-knit community. Sociocultural theorists have posited that dialogue and inquiry, as forms of intermental activity, may hold potential as both sources of cognitive, social, and emotional development and sites for the mastery and appropriation of specific content material (Vygotsky 1994; Wertsch 1998). Thus, engaging together in social practices, dialogue, and inquiry may act as departure points for more effective educative spirals of teaching, learning, and becoming (Wells 1999).

3.3. Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness

The third theme, Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness, aims for expanded awareness of Islam as a conceptual system (Al-Attas 1980) and may serve to operationalize the previous two by raising awareness of their underlying meanings, purposes, and principles. In cultivating the metacognition required to teach, learn, and develop oneself and one's students towards a specifically Islamic consciousness, this theme taps into a foundational epistemic conception of the learner as equipped for *self* development, whereby each person has instruments for gathering knowledge, reflecting, analyzing, memorizing, and meaning making—embodied sense organs, cognition, and emotion (Obeid 1988). In aiming for awareness as a basis for engagement in Islamic social practices, these pedagogies might be considered in terms of Vygotsky's description of *conscious awareness* as "an act of consciousness whose object is the activity of consciousness itself" (Vygotsky 1987, p. 190). In this case, the object of consciousness is intentional participation in social practices premised upon awareness of the purposes of participation: to perfect the acts of worship, to refine character, and to deepen taqwa. Pedagogies of conscious awareness include mediation and reflexivity.

3.3.1. Mediation

Mediation is defined as highlighting purposes, intentions, and significance of activities or tasks for a learner (Vadeboncoeur 2017), and providing direction, challenge, encouragement, and feedback (Kozulin 2003). Muhammad's main role in the earliest Muslim community was, arguably, to mediate Qur'anic principles and practices. In an example of basic mediation, a man once sneezed while praying in a congregation led by Muhammad. Another man in the congregation said aloud, "May God have mercy on you," whereby some people gave disapproving glances. The man continued to speak in a loud voice. When the prayer was finished, Muhammad gently instructed the man that, during prayer, the ordinary talk of people is not appropriate because prayer is reserved for the praise and glorification of God and recitation of the Qur'an (Mogra 2010, p. 322). Thus, while *participation* in ritual prayer was itself educative, this participation was enhanced by *mediation*. Mediation can serve to transform an activity into a purposeful tool for other activities. For example, mediating the purpose behind the five daily prayers—and reasons behind related etiquette—transforms them into an intentional tool for the development of one's conscious relationship with God. Muhammad's direct mediation in this moment contributed to highlighting for the man both purposes and etiquette involved in ritual prayer and, by proxy, the congregation, and later generations of Muslim practitioners. Studies on mediation have suggested that within such joint activity, learners may accomplish more together than they can alone and may more effectively appropriate specific functions (Kozulin 2003).

The manner by which Muhammad mediated is significant, too: gently, directly, and occasionally. Abu Ghuddah (2017) described Muhammad's occasional use of direct mediation as intended to avoid boredom and disinterest as part of a larger principle of bringing people ease and happiness rather than difficulty. Ajem and Memon (2011) seventh principle described: "Formal instruction is occasional, nurtures reflection, and evokes a sense of awe and wonder" (Ajem and Memon 2011, p. 55). For mediation to evoke a sense of awe and wonder, an educator might highlight the awe inherent in natural and sociocultural worlds so that learner and educator can reflect and wonder together. As the Qur'an encourages such reverent reflection, it may be considered an act of worship in its own right (Sahin 2013). Mediation, as making visible with children less visible aspects of an Islamic conceptual system, is unique interpretive work that involves studying both the world of nature and our own human selves and the signs inherent in both (Al-Attas 1980). It includes recognition that sometimes we may not know the reasons behind phenomena or that, while reasons likely exist, they may be unknowable to us.

In the Jamma Mosque School, Rayan used mediation in at least two ways: direct instruction and mediated participation, with differing responses from his students. In the classroom, the young boys spent much time sitting at their desks, listening to Rayan talk, and gradually, it appeared, becoming more and more restless. This pedagogy of direct instruction appeared akin to "an

ill-administered ‘instruction,’ simply a handing on of . . . principles, rules, obligations, and prohibitions” (Ramadan 2004, p. 127), a critique within Islamic education.

On the other hand, Rayan’s mediated participation with the boys in the ritual, congregational prayer—previously described as constituting teaching and learning by doing together—comprised a second method of mediation: highlighting the etiquette, principles, and purposes of aspects surrounding the ritual congregational prayer in action. He described this mediation:

I get down to their level and just give them a small advice: ‘It’s a good time to make du’ā—for yourself or your parents.’ ‘Did you pray your sunnah?’ . . . ‘This is a masjid now. So try to respect it and respect the other people praying.’ . . . Just to try to teach them these Islamic morals or values. (AI1)

Through this mediation, Rayan aimed to help children refine their practices, possibly adding understanding to mastery.

3.3.2. Reflexivity for Refinement

References to reflection appear throughout the Qur’an, whereby people are encouraged to reflect primarily on natural phenomena (for example, 3:190–91). Many verses in the Qur’an end with educationally-significant questions—such as, “Do not you think/reflect/reason?”—which, along with the cognitive processes of reflection, encourage a more intuitive type of reflecting (Sahin 2013). Reflection was one of the first pedagogical strategies in the process of Muhammad’s transformative education (Sahin 2013) and he was described as being “in a state of perpetual contemplation” (Ajem and Memon 2011, p. 56).

Criticality moves reflection towards reflexivity, as conscious self-awareness in relation to one’s context. From an Islamic perspective, reflexivity includes awareness of one’s position in relation to other creatures and the Creator within a conceptual system (Al-Attas 1980). Criticality in the Qur’an is expressed by encouraging people to think and question in order to grow a faithfulness that is critical and aware (Sahin 2013); also in evaluating “cultural and religious traditions that are inherited from their forefathers, tribes or nations” (p. 196, referencing Qur’an 43:22–23). This may include thinking critically about principles contained within the primary sources. Waghid (2014) described learners’ rights to question and their rights to freedom of religion, conscience, and expression as substantiated in multiple Qur’anic verses (see, for example, 50:45, 10:99, 6:108). One of the clearest is: “There shall be no coercion in matters of faith” (2:256). Implications of these verses are that they “ensure that others enjoy their rights (whether social, political and civil) which might be different to ours” (Waghid 2014, p. 331).

Critical reflexivity is turned towards oneself in self-analysis for self-purification with larger implications for society, “since society is composed of people” (Al-Attas 1980, p. 45). While this purification primarily relates to moral excellence, in a hadith Muhammad stated that God prescribed excellence in everything (Sahin 2017). Excellence crystalizes in the concept of *adab*, as refined moral character animated by God consciousness. *Adab* is described in the Islamic educational literature as a primary objective of learning and development (Al-Attas 1980; Obeid 1988) and at the center of Islamic pedagogies (Boyle 2006; Vicini 2013). While each of the Jamma Mosque School educators issued reminders and explanations to the children of correct *adab* and etiquette, rigorous criticality, including reflexivity, was not evidenced in the Jamma Mosque School.

In summary, the pedagogies in this theme illustrated how mediating purposes behind principles and practices, and critically reflecting upon them for self-refinement, may contribute to cultivating conscious awareness for individual and social development.

4. Discussion: Articulating Islamic Pedagogy

Distinct shared pedagogic qualities and practices have persisted in diverse sites of Islamic education around the world, as Islam spread from the Middle East to Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America, interacting with local educational expressions (Boyle 2006). Reflections of these qualities

and practices cohere into themes in contemporary sites of Islamic education, like the Canadian Jamma Mosque School, to suggest a pedagogic diaspora. The three themes articulated here—Relational Pedagogies, Pedagogies of Mutual Engagement, and Pedagogies of Conscious Awareness—offer clues as to what may make the pedagogies of this diaspora *Islamic*: they are principled, flexible, situated, holistic, and transformative.

First, as active aspects of the value-laden process of education, pedagogies informed by primary-source *principles* may be considered Islamic. Each of the themes identified was based upon a distinct Islamic principle—the developmental importance of warm human relationships, engaged participation, and conscious intentionality, respectively—suggesting a possibility of generalization across diasporic sites of Islamic education. Yet, unique expressions of these principles appear in the literature and in the data as culturally and historically contextual.

This leads to a second quality of Islamic pedagogies: they are *flexible* in responding to the needs and interests of individual students and teachers across diverse sociocultural and historical moments. In Muhammad's example, flexibility in *what*, *how*, and *when* something was taught honored both individuality and context in service of larger pedagogical goals. Educators make significant efforts to “keep alive long-standing pedagogical traditions with their inherent moral–ethical content” (Vicini 2013, p. 395) while, simultaneously, refining those traditions in response to cultural change. While clear traces of primary-source pedagogies were found in the Jamma Mosque School study, and others involving pedagogy, there were also contradictions and differences in the ways educators reinterpreted, employed, and made meaning of these pedagogies. This may constitute a pedagogic iteration of a more general process whereby Muslims have always had to “make use of their critical intelligence, their common sense, and their legal creativity to find new answers that remained faithful to Islamic principles but fit the new context” (Ramadan 2007, p. 199). While employing pedagogical aspects of the Qur'an and Sunnah may be a religious imperative for Muslim educators—considered *best practices* in teaching and learning Islam (Mogra 2010)—Rufai (2012) suggested that best pedagogical practices *in general* should be used, since pedagogy is not included in *aqidah*, the core Islamic articles of faith. Thus, there is flexibility in drawing from a variety of pedagogical approaches, rather than relying on the Islamic tradition alone, which Memon (2011) suggested may protect fluidity of practice and multiplicity of interpretation. Rather than fossilized in a particular place or time, every educational encounter is a unique relational moment, full of potential.

Third, Islamic pedagogies are *situated* as integral components of larger, differentially-interpreted Islamic conceptual systems from which they cannot be artificially separated and which educators mediate in relation to the development of individual learners. In other words, pedagogies cannot be understood as separate from foundational Islamic epistemologies that precede them and ontological, educational, and developmental outcomes toward which they aim. These pedagogies are situated between Islam and individuals; between educational intentions and educational objectives; between community-based epistemic discursive practices and individually-based ontological constructions in everyday practices of schooling (Zine 2008). They may be pivotal to how young Muslims come to make sense of themselves in relation to the communities in which they live. While development of a unique type of Islamic consciousness—*taqwa*—may be a primary objective of self-development (Sahin 2013), pedagogies, as forms of social practices shaping individual psychological functions, may be primary means by which this development takes place (Alkouatli and Vadeboncoeur; Daniels 2016; Vygotsky 1987).

Fourth, Islamic pedagogies are *holistic*. They aim towards integrated human development in transformation of the whole person in society: “As a teacher, Muhammad tended to the psychological, moral, social, spiritual, and faith-related aspects of his students in particular and community in general” (Mogra 2010, p. 327). Despite recent literature privileging either student-centered pedagogies (Tan and Abbas 2009) or educator-centered pedagogies (Vicini 2013) in Muslim educational contexts, the analysis presented here suggests that primary-source pedagogies favor neither the student nor the educator but *the relationship between the two*. Muhammad's pedagogies, partially through their

variety, suggest that he considered his students as neither passive recipients of information, to be filled, nor independent explorers, left to figure things out alone, which theorists have suggested can lead to the formation of immature concepts and neglect the development of important skills (Kozulin 2003). Instead, Muhammad may have mediated a complex conceptual system through warm relationships, active engagement, and mediated guidance.

Fifth, Islamic pedagogies are *transformative*. Muhammad's "dynamic teaching methods that change people" (Sabrin 2010, p. 69) seem to have had transformative effects upon his companions (Abu Ghuddah 2017; Ramadan 2007; Shakir 2017). Sahin (2013) referred to the primary sources as articulating a "critical, dialogical and *transformative* educational vision" (Sahin 2013, p. 122; italics added) and he asserted that educators must guide learners in internal self-investigations towards appropriating this vision. The transformative quality of Islamic pedagogies suggests that they may be catalysts of learning and developing, that *ways* of teaching and learning are themselves educational and may be as important as *what* is taught.

Of the varied pedagogies presented here, each one supports learners' mastery and appropriation of Islamic principles and practices in different ways. Therefore, employing these pedagogies together, as a balanced group, may be more effective than using one in isolation. The well-documented historical picture of Muhammad as an educator revealed that he employed all of these pedagogies—simultaneously and separately—as related to the varying needs of individuals and groups in different circumstances. This requires awareness of how the pedagogical themes function in relation to each other, in relation to a larger conceptual system, and in relation to a developing person. Yet the extents to which contemporary educators are aware of the dimensions of primary-source pedagogies, and whether and how they endeavor to implement them in contemporary sites, require further research. In addition, while Muslim scholars and educators may hope that a primary-source pedagogical framework might address some of the extant criticisms of Islamic education, implementation in diverse classrooms may be challenging and this, too, requires further research. Limitations of this paper include that thematic analysis was confined to literature in English on Islamic primary sources that originated in Arabic. It was not intended as a theological analysis and its original contribution may lie in its empirical focus in examining the value of primary-source pedagogies to educators today, as reflected in the literature and in data from a Canadian mosque school. This focus may comprise another limitation: the analysis took a positive thesis in examining the usefulness of these pedagogies to contemporary classrooms, rather than critiquing pedagogies that are less relevant today.

Ultimately, inquiring into primary-source pedagogies for teaching and learning Islam is an expansive and ongoing endeavor. The Qur'an and the Sunnah contain endless pedagogic nuances, reflective, perhaps, of their perceived origins: "... if all the trees on earth were pens, and the sea [were] ink ... the words of God would not be exhausted: for, verily, God is almighty, wise" (31:27). And so, in an increasingly complex cultural and technological era, further empirical inquiry into Islamic pedagogy is an imperative for Muslim scholars, educators, and learners.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Abdalla, Mohamad, Dylan Chown, and Muhammad Abdullah, eds. 2018. Introduction. In *Islamic Schooling in the West: Pathways to Renewal*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, pp. 1–10.
- Abdulla, Mohamad. 2018. Islamic studies in Islamic schools: Evidence-based renewal. In *Islamic Schooling in the West: Pathways to Renewal*. Edited by Mohamad Abdalla, Dylan Chown and Muhammad Abdullah. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 257–83.
- Abdullah, Muhammad. 2018. A pedagogical framework for teacher discourse and practice in Islamic schools. In *Islamic Schooling in the West: Pathways to Renewal*. Edited by Mohamad Abdalla, Dylan Chown and Muhammad Abdullah. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 195–226.

- Abu Ghuddah, Abd Al-Fatah. 2017. *Prophet Muhammad: The Teacher. An Insight into His Teaching Methods*. Translated by Muhammad Z. Abu Ghuddah. Swansea: Awakening Publications.
- Ahmed, Munir D. 1987. Muslim education prior to the establishment of madrasah. *Islamic Studies* 26: 321–49.
- Ahmed, Farah. 2014. Exploring halaqah as research method: A tentative approach to developing Islamic research principles within a critical ‘indigenous’ framework. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 27: 561–83. [CrossRef]
- Ajem, Ramzy, and Nadeem A. Memon. 2011. *Principles of Islamic Pedagogy, a Teacher’s Manual*. Islamic Teacher Education Program. Toronto: Canada Razi Group.
- Al-Attas, Muhammad Naguib. 1980. The concept of education in Islam (keynote address). In *First World Conference on Muslim Education*. Jeddah: King ‘Abdul ‘Aziz University Press.
- Alkouatli, Claire, and Jennifer A. Vadeboncoeur. In press. Potential reproduction and renewal in a weekend mosque school in Canada: Educators’ perspectives of learning and development. *Learning, Culture & Social Interaction*. [CrossRef]
- Al-Nawawi, Yahya. 2010. *Al-Nawawi Forty Hadiths and Commentary*. New York: Arabic Virtual Translation Center.
- Al-Sadan, Ibrahim A. 1997. An Investigative Study of the Present Professional Preparation for Teachers in Primary Schools in Saudi Arabia, with Especial Reference to Islamic and Arabic Subjects. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Hull Digital Repository, Hull, UK. Available online: <https://hydra.hull.ac.uk/resources/hull:8001> (accessed on 22 October 2015).
- Al-Sadan, Ibrahim. 1999. Preparing teachers for Islamic religious education. *Muslim Education Quarterly* 17: 25–42.
- Asad, Muhammad. 1980. *The Message of the Qur’an*. Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus.
- Boyle, Helen. 2006. Memorization and learning in Islamic schools. *Comparative Education Review* 50: 478–95. [CrossRef]
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3: 77–101. [CrossRef]
- Daniels, Harry. 2016. *Vygotsky and Pedagogy*. London and New York: Routledge. [CrossRef]
- Diallo, Ibrahim. 2012. Introduction: The interface between Islamic and Western pedagogies and epistemologies: Features and divergences. *International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning* 7: 175–79. [CrossRef]
- Diamond, Adele. 2012. Activities and programs that improve children’s executive functions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 21: 335–41. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
- Douglass, Susan L., and Munir A. Shaikh. 2004. Defining Islamic education: Differentiation and applications. *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 7: 5–18.
- Esposito, Jon. L. 2003. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Günther, Sebastian. 2006. Be masters in that you teach and continue to learn: Medieval Muslim thinkers on educational theory. *Comparative Education Review* 50: 367–88. [CrossRef]
- Halstead, Mark. 2004. An Islamic concept of education. *Comparative Education* 40: 517–29. [CrossRef]
- Hardaker, Glenn, and Aishah A. Sabki. 2015. Islamic pedagogy and embodiment: An anthropological study of a British madrasah. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 28: 873–86. [CrossRef]
- Holstein, James A., and Jaber F. Gubrium. 2004. The active interview. In *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice*. Edited by David Silverman. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 140–61.
- Ibn Ishāq, Muhammad, and Alfred Guillaume. 1955. *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Ishāq’s Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*. New York and Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Kozulin, Alex. 2003. Psychological tools and mediated learning. In *Vygotsky’s Educational Theory in Cultural Context*. Edited by Alex Kozulin, Boris Gindis, Vladimir S. Ageyev and Suzanne M. Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15–38.
- Memon, Nadeem A. 2007. The Prophetic Standard: Incorporating the Instructional Methods of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Schools. ISNA Education Forum Papers. Available online: <http://www.isna.net/2007-education-forum-papers/> (accessed on 14 November 2018).
- Memon, Nadeem A. 2011. What Islamic school teachers want: towards developing an Islamic teacher education programme. *British Journal of Religious Education* 33: 285–298. [CrossRef]
- Memon, Nadeem A., and Mariam Alhashmi. 2018. Islamic pedagogy: Potential and perspective. In *Islamic Schooling in the West: Pathways to Renewal*. Edited by Mohamad Abdalla, Dylan Chown and Muhammad Abdullah. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 169–94.

- Mogra, Imran. 2010. Teachers and teaching: A contemporary Muslim understanding. *Religious Education* 105: 317–29. [CrossRef]
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. 2012. Islamic Pedagogy: An Interview. *Islam & Science* 10: 7–24.
- Niyozov, Sarfaro, and Nadeem A. Memon. 2011. Islamic education and Islamization: Evolution of themes, continuities and new directions. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31: 5–30. [CrossRef]
- Obeid, Ragaa. A. 1988. An Islamic theory of human development. In *Oriental Theories of Human Development: Scriptural and Popular Beliefs from Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto, and Islam*. Edited by R. Murray Thomas. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 155–74.
- Panjwani, Farid. 2004. The 'Islamic' in Islamic education: Assessing the discourse. *Current Issues in Comparative Education* 7: 1–11.
- Patton, Michael Q. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Ramadan, Tariq. 2004. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. Cary: Oxford University Press. [CrossRef]
- Ramadan, Tariq. 2007. *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rufai, Saheed A. 2010. Reviving contemporary Muslim education through Islamic-based teachings and evaluation methods. *Journal of Islam in Asia* 7: 187–214.
- Rufai, Saheed A. 2012. Proposing an Islamic-based alternative to dominant Western and Islamic teacher education models: An attempt at curriculum improvement. *ASEAN Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 4: 44–60.
- Rustham, Nora, Mamat Arifin, and Adnan Abd Rashid. 2012. Teaching methodologies in a weekend madrasah: A study at Jamiyah Education Centre, Singapore. *International Journal of Arts and Commerce* 1: 148–69.
- Sabrin, Mohamm. 2010. The need for an Islamic pedagogy. Master's thesis, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, USA. Available online: <http://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:180377/datastream/PDF/view> (accessed on 13 November 2018).
- Sahin, Abdullah. 2013. *New Directions in Islamic Education: Pedagogy and Identity Formation*. Leicestershire: Kube.
- Sahin, Abdullah. 2017. Education as compassionate transformation: The ethical heart of Islamic pedagogy. In *Pedagogy of Compassion at the Heart of Higher Education*. Edited by P. Gibbs and O. Gibbs. Cham: Springer, pp. 127–37. [CrossRef]
- Sahin, Abdullah. 2018. Critical issues in Islamic education studies: Rethinking Islamic and Western liberal secular values of education. *Religions* 9: 335. [CrossRef]
- Shakir, Zaid. 2017. Introduction. In *Prophet Muhammad: The Teacher. An Insight into His Teaching Methods*. Edited by Abdul Al-Fatah Abu Ghuddah. Swansea: Awakening Publications, pp. 96–313.
- Shamma, Freda. 1999. The curriculum challenge for Islamic schools in America. In *Muslims and Islamization in North America: Problems and Prospects*. Edited by Amber Haque. Beltsville: Amana Publications, pp. 273–95.
- Tan, Charlene, and Diwi Binti Abbas. 2009. The 'teach less, learn more' initiative in Singapore: New pedagogies for Islamic religious schools? *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy* 6: 25–39.
- Vadeboncoeur, Jennifer A. 2017. Preface, Chapters 1, 2 & 6. In *Vygotsky and the Promise of Public Education*. New York: Peter Lang, pp. 169–202.
- Vicini, Fabio. 2013. Pedagogies of affection: The role of exemplariness and emulation in learning Processes: Extracurricular Islamic education in the Fethullah Gülen community in Istanbul. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 44: 381–98. [CrossRef]
- Vygotsky, Lev. S. 1987. *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 1: Problems of General Psychology*. Edited by Robert W. Rieber and Aaron S. Carton. New York: Plenum Press.
- Vygotsky, Lev. S. 1994. The problem of the environment. In *The Vygotsky Reader*. Edited by Rene van der Veer and Jaan Valsiner. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 338–54.
- Vygotsky, Lev. S. 1998. *The Collected Works of L. S. Vygotsky. Volume 5: Child Psychology*. Edited by Robert W. Rieber. New York: Plenum.
- Waghid, Yusef. 2014. Islamic education and cosmopolitanism: A philosophical interlude. *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 33: 329–42. [CrossRef]
- Ware, Rudolph T. 2014. *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Wells, Gordon. 1999. *Dialogic Inquiry: Towards a Sociocultural Practice and Theory of Education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Wertsch, James V. 1998. *Mind as Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wozniak, Robert H. 1975. A dialectical paradigm for psychological research: Implications drawn from the history of psychology in the Soviet Union. *Human Development* 18: 18–34. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zine, Jasmin. 2007. Safe havens or religious ‘ghettos’? Narratives of Islamic schooling in Canada. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 10: 71–92. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Zine, Jasmin. 2008. *Canadian Islamic Schools: Unraveling the Politics of Faith, Gender, Knowledge and Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.



© 2018 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).