

CHALLENGES IN SHAPING STUDENT CHARACTER IN THE FUTURE: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Mankind is facing a crisis and needs to find a way to overcome several moral, political and economic challenges. This article discusses the challenges faced in building the character of students to enable them to withstand the challenges of moral degradation, globalization and rapid change. This article also considers the reasons for developing moral character in students, the present challenges they face and the preparations curriculum planners need to give added value to the present curriculum. An alternative curriculum designed to shape students' moral character is suggested to enable them to face future challenges.

Key words: challenges, curriculum planning, political and economic challenges

One of the important aims of the national philosophy of education in Malaysia is to develop the potential of individuals in a wholistic manner and shape a harmonious individual with the ability to maintain balance in the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects, based on belief in and obedience to God (Ministry of Education Malaysia; 1990).The Cabinet Committee Report on the Education Policy 1979 has outlined that the objective of education in Malaysia is to nurture individuals to inculcate discipline in themselves, the family, society, educational institutions and the country. This would ensure the generation of Malaysians who have completed schooling can become citizens who can make a meaningful contribution to national harmony.

After almost three decades it is evident this objective is still relevant in solving current challenges especially in an environment of globalization fraught with tribulations.

Hussein Ahmad (2001) has commented on the worrying increase in social and moral problems in several nations especially aberrant behavior, wildness and various forms of violence including bullying, vandalism, conflicts between students, stealing, murder, and other crimes reported as increasing from time to time. In fact, a study by UNESCO on 10 countries namely Jordan, Colombia, Ethiopia, Israel, Slovakia, El- Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru dan Malaysia found that incidences of student violence in these countries have risen from year to year.

Life in this century and in the future will continue being challenged by the concept of the *global village* and *borderless world* which have and will continue having a serious impact on student life. These phenomena will make the school curriculum pressed for change such as in curriculum revision, giving value-added, launching innovations in the teaching and learning process, improving the content and implementation strategy and so on, to ensure the school curriculum remains relevant with changing needs over time. This is because the curriculum has a major impact in shaping the individual mind, influencing thinking and behavior and will serve as the individual's most important element for facing life's challenges.

Why do students need to develop resilience?

The human being has been created by Allah s.w.t. with natural tendencies for positive actions and good behavior. However at times environmental factors such as family, school environment and society expose the individual to negative behavior, thought and deeds. Abdul Raof Dalip (1993) has outlined several characteristics that are required in shaping a harmonious individual, which are self-worth, humanity, kindness, spiritual and physical resilience, self-control, dynamism, sincerity, honesty and responsibility.

Jafni Hassan (1987) has proposed several justifications for building self-reliance in students, namely:

- Nurturing a stable and calm emotional state: This will give the

individual the ability to face global challenges amidst an environment fraught with competitiveness and declining human values. Emotional stability will help prevent actions such as revenge, destructiveness, vandalism, and acts of retaliation. This will also free the individual from feelings of anxiety, fear, stress, hatred, jealousy, envy, dishonesty, being overly judgemental and other negative emotions.

- Ability to improve quality of life: This is an important characteristic to ensure the individual continues to achieve success in his undertakings. This trait will drive a person to be highly motivated, creative, innovative, with a craving for knowledge and always upgrading his skills.
- Ability to attain moral and behavioral maturity. This characteristic provides the individual with a protective barrier to face challenging off-school influences. A student needs a set of behavioral benchmarks that could guide him in facing the increasingly complex and competitive global scenario.
- An individual with the required moral maturity will be able to adapt to the "ecosystem" within his environment, will manifest values such as honesty, tolerance, cooperativeness, will strive for truth, and is in tune with social issues. These traits, when cohesively harmonized, will help create strong social interaction in the community.

Kamal Hassan (1988) had described several benefits that can be derived by an individual who possesses traits such as sincerity, compassion and piety, as follows:

- The individual will maintain positive values such as helpfulness, compassion, kindness, love for peace and fellow human beings and respect for parents.
- He will strive to avoid negative activities that are shunned by religion and society.
- He will strive to be an “occupant of the earth ” who propagates virtue and kindness and avoids evil or unkind actions.
- He will cooperate with all members of the community, transcending religion, beliefs and values.

The Reality of Global life Today: A Reflection

Current global challenges have been attributed to tremendous and widespread changes that can be seen within society. Hussien Ahmad (2001) in his summary on the global environmental phenomena states that this “wave” has penetrated throughout the whole planet, in every country big or small, the huge continent or the smallest island, even the hills and valleys, all of them are affected by the wave and currents of globalization.

A notable aspect of the challenge is the change in lifestyle especially of the young. General observation has shown signs that basic cultural and family values are on the decline. This is evident in the rise of incidences of

promiscuity, punk groups, skin head, vandalism, bullying, rape, sexual abuse, and others. The lifestyle changes have also impacted the schools, evident with the increase in incidence of absence from school, bullying, immoral activities among students, retaliation against teachers, drug abuse, vandalism, threats and even murder. School authorities and teachers are facing difficulties in addressing the situation.

A twin feature of globalization is advancement in communication and information technology. This is visible with widespread use of the Internet. The advent of the Internet has led to wide dissemination of entertainment-based information to the young and to humanity at large. According to a UNESCO report, while the Internet provides an educational gateway and access to knowledge-based information, it also comes with major inherent risks. The risks faced by children and teenagers surface in the form of lewd, and pornographic sensational information that defy moral and religious values. What is even more worrying is that children and young teenage students are currently being nurtured within a digital information environment that is growing. Pornographic materials are accessible and easily disseminated among friends via home computers, at cyber cafes, and through mobile phones. Violent acts, sexual activities, lewd acts and other negative elements have now seeped into students’ minds like a “tsunami” that arrives any time it pleases. The implication is that

students would imitate the styles and trends that they observe through these materials, thereby compromising their own moral and spiritual values.

What about the School Curriculum?: Preparation for the Student

Students, as guardians of future generations need to be equipped with the right values such as honesty, sincerity, kindness and strong religious principles. Sound moral values need to be inculcated to ensure they can face the challenges of life with kindness and sincerity, coupled with strong leadership qualities. To this end, moulding the students' personality and behavioral patterns should be given priority with emphasis on enhancing three major elements as follows:

- a) **Spiritual Faculty:** The young students should be equipped with adequate understanding of elements of Faith and doctrine of God's Oneness. This knowledge must be available from the moment they enter preschool up to tertiary level. Activities should include prayers, invocation of God's Names (*zikir*), and the recitation of the Quran in an organized and continuous manner, whether individually or in a group.
- b) **Mental Faculty:** The mental make-up of the student should be free from elements of "Contamination of the Mind as it goes against the normal human tendency to do good. We need to fill the mind with reading materials that help bring progress including success stories and other beneficial branches of

knowledge. At the same time, there should be continuous guidance and monitoring to ensure students avoid materials that are harmful including pornography, and films depicting violence and sexually explicit scenes.

- c) **Physical Faculty:** A strong and healthy physique is required for a student to face the vagaries of a learning environment. Students must be encouraged to adopt a well-balanced nutrition regime and a healthy lifestyle that would help them maintain an acceptable level of physical fitness.

Hamid Fahmy Zarkasy (1990) quotes Islamic thinker Al Ghazali who states that parents and teachers must consider both theoretical and practical aspects of character building when introducing elements of piety, devotion and faith in the hearts of children. He says children should be exposed to normal practices that help in their mental and behavioral development. He also suggests the following:

- Not to expose children to poetry and reading materials that stress on relationships and passion?
- Distance them from interacting with children who misbehave. Interacting with children who behave well will help mould the child to be more humane, warm and caring
- Guide the children to possess qualities such as courage, honesty and truthfulness
- Discourage children from boasting and bragging about their family

wealth and materialism to their peers. Children must be coached and guided by teachers on the importance of humility, mutual respect and good manners.

- Explain to the children the need to observe good habits such as according respect to everyone especially towards parents, teachers, relatives, neighbors, their peers and those older than them.

Al Ghazali has outlined three approaches in moulding and shaping an outstanding character and personality. They are the Formative Approach, the Preventive Approach and the Curative Approach.

- a) The Formative Approach: This approach involves bringing into practice normal acceptable habits and mannerisms. For example, when an individual wants to inculcate values such as patience, generosity and kindness in himself, he would need to manifest these values at home, at the school, in public, when he is alone and everywhere else.
- b) The Preventive Approach: This approach entails distancing the individual from external and internal factors that can harm and damage his morals and character. In this context, it is good to introduce “needs education”, where one coaches and trains the individual on managing his many needs. The individual is given guidance on developing his intuitive skills and will be trained in skills to address harmful environmental influences.

c) The Curative Approach: Under this approach, the “moral ailments” and destructive behavior that are ingrained in the individual need to be “treated” with the following methods:

- identifying the immoral and destructive habits
- understanding the curative methods
- understanding the individual approach in addressing each “moral ailment”
- interacting with groups that are knowledgeable, such as teachers, religious leaders, psychologists, counselors, for their input, guidance and advice. This includes parents, good friends and community leaders.

In the context of the multi-racial population in Malaysia, one of the key characteristics that should be held by students is readiness for tolerance and mutual understanding among the racial groups. This will be a sensitive issue and unnecessary situations could arise if the post-Merdeka generation is not well informed of the reality of living together among the racial groups. What is even more worrying is that this current generation is not aware of the historical implications, political reality and the “social contract” endorsed by past leaders. Therefore as a precautionary measure there is a need to fine-tune the attitude and mentality of the present generation to mould them into loyal and responsible citizens. This is in line with the National Education Philosophy.

Hussein Ahmad (1993), in this context has outlined the scope for the proposed curriculum to shape citizens who hold to the principles of tolerance and mutual trust. The three basic values are: a) to be trusting of others, b). readiness to interact with everyone, regardless of race, religion and origin and c).readiness to cooperate to achieve common objectives that would benefit all parties. Other aspects of the curriculum that need attention include ensuring the five tenets of the Rukunegara are fully understood in a more meaningful way.

First: Belief in God: When all members of the community, although professing different faiths, believe in the existence of God, several universal values can be shared within a peaceful and tolerant environment. These values comprise patience, kindness, cleanliness, good manners, tolerance, avoiding taking of lives, slander and back-biting, among others.

Second: Loyalty to King and Country: This tenet states that all citizens should possess feelings of love and loyalty to king and country. This value can be developed via activities that promote unity among the communities at school level, through text book content, and through co-curricular activities that would involve participation from all groups.

Third: The Rule of Law: The laws of the land serve as protection for the people, to ensure there is no injustice and to protect the rights of the community. Schools should be made aware of the sensitivity of certain issues such as the position of

Islam in the Constitution, the position of the Malay Sultans, and the position of the Malay Language. The school curriculum should create awareness of these issues in the learning and teaching processes so that students are aware of the realities of living within the multi-racial environment. They should view the situation with maturity to prevent racial tension and continuing restlessness with each other.

Fourth: Upholding of the Constitution The Constitution that forms the basis of nation-building needs to be fully understood by all students. Students are required to understand the reality of living within the context of a parliamentary democracy. This is to ensure they are not easily influenced by irresponsible elements.

Fifth: Good Behavior and Morality: The school curriculum should give more emphasis on shaping the behavior of the individual citizen. This is important to ensure his life is more meaningful. Noble values that were propagated since Independence need to be given greater focus among the younger generation, to ensure they turn out to be organized, kind, and well-mannered individuals, in their speech, thought and actions.

New Imperatives in the Curriculum

After fifty years of Independence and after spending some time “experimenting” with the school curriculum, there has been some measure of success. However to value add and to ensure the curriculum remains relevant amidst increasing global challenges, this article proposes

some improvement measures that include the spiritual approach as an alternative to the implementation of the current curriculum. The article suggests the emphasis on noble attributes (mahmudah) as a guide to shaping individuals who are devout and who possess strong moral values and virtues. The attributes are as follows:

- **Trustworthiness:** Emphasis should be given to this value in the wake of issues such as “corruption” and “irresponsible” attitude of the people towards public amenities and in carrying out their responsibilities. This attribute is based on the verse in the Quran that states, “O you who believe! Betray not Allah and His Messenger, nor betray knowingly your Amanat (things entrusted to you, and all the duties which Allah has ordained for you). (Quran: 8: 27). In this context, teachers need to exhibit elements of honesty and trustworthiness in the teaching and learning processes. Apart from that these elements should also be found in the curriculum support materials such as text books, CD Rom and other interactive learning resources.
- **Affection:** This attribute is a manifestation of a heart that is full of kindness, gentleness and empathy. Every individual wants to be loved and to receive affection. With feelings of affection comes the culture of mutual cooperation that transcends racial, religious, political and color

barriers. A Hadith from the Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him) that is an advice for society states, “Whoever is given the characteristic of caring, he has been given part of the good of this world and the hereafter. And whoever is prevented from showing care and loving kindness, has been prevented from receiving part of the good of this world and the next” (Hadith narrated by Ahmad).

- **Truthfulness:** In life, everyone is encouraged to be truthful. In the context of daily living, one is expected to speak the truth, as well as be truthful in thought and actions. This attribute will motivate an individual to keep his promises, not be pretentious nor a hypocrite. Allah s.w.t. has warned the people in this verse: Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths (grade) of the Fire; no helper will you find for them. (Quran: 4:145)
- **Courage:** This attribute has a direct bearing to strength of character and faith in God. An individual strong in faith will not hesitate to speak the truth, aligned with a Malay proverb “berani kerana benar” which means “courage comes with truth”. Values of courage should be ingrained in students in a serious manner so that they can counter all negativity courageously. This includes addressing unhealthy situations and complex issues that go against the norm such as promiscuity and homosexuality, among others.

- Modesty: Focus must be given to the concept of modesty among students as this attribute is closely linked to honesty. Modesty is a yardstick for the level of courtesy, moral values, politeness and strength of personality. An individual possessing sense of modesty would restrain from committing any sinful and immoral deed, out of sheer modesty towards God and the society around him. The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. has reminded us, “Verily, when Allah s.w.t. intends to destroy a human being, the first attribute taken is the feeling of modesty. When the person no longer feels shame, he or she will become full of hate. When he or she becomes hateful. Trustworthiness will be taken away. He or she will become a wrongdoer who often breaks the rules. Then, when he or she becomes a wrongdoer, feelings of love and care will be taken away and when such feelings disappear from the heart the person will become a caller of names and wisher of evil who often resorts to violence” (narrated by Ibn Majah).

Framework of the Alternative Curriculum: A Recommendation

Apart from the five attributes stated, enhancement of the curriculum would also require aspects and attributes of Godliness as a basis for shaping and moulding a student’s character and personality.

This is a manifestation of the Muslim’s prayer to God: O Lord, give us in this life happiness, and in the hereafter happiness, and save us from The Fire. (Quran: 2:201).

In this context, this writer proposes that a study on a revelation-based curriculum framework be conducted for analysis and implementation. The proposed framework will be based on the following components:

- a. curriculum philosophy
- b. curriculum objectives
- c. curriculum contents
- d. curriculum implementation
- e. evaluation

Curriculum Philosophy

The statement of philosophy is an important component in a curriculum framework. The philosophy helps planners to think in a critical and logical way. It assists curriculum planners in analyzing concepts and studies how it can help realize the needs of the proposed curriculum. In the context of this article, God’s revelation has been selected as the highest resource based on His might and power, as Creator and Possessor of the Universe. Allah states, “Alif Laam Miiim. These are the verses of al-quran full of wisdom, as a guide and a mercy for the doers of good. Those who are constant in prayer and pay the zakat and are certain of the hereafter. They receive guidance from their Lord and they are the victorious. (Quran, 31:1-5). The Implications of the Philosophy are as follows:

- Guidance towards doing good and intelligent actions needs reference to a higher and definitive source,

that cannot be questioned or refuted. God Almighty has outlined guidelines that will enable human beings to be guided on the true path. This implies that the Revelations have authority over the shaping and moulding of a well-balanced individual based on good moral values, truthfulness and universal attributes of kindness.

- Human tendencies to do good should be included in the context of moral and behavioral education at schools. Commitment towards daily prayers should be given focus, to mould students into faithful and highly disciplined individuals. An individual who is meticulous about his prayers is concerned about his relationship with God. He will put in place attributes of virtue and humility and will avoid being arrogant and boastful. Understanding the concept of brotherhood, and showing concern for the less privileged are the educational elements that can be applied to mould future generations. The social elements will shape them into individuals who are not selfish and greedy, and are always ready to contribute towards the poor, through donations and charity work.
- Each individual is responsible for his own actions. God's revelation has provided a spiritual mechanism that keeps in check the feelings, emotions, thinking and behavior of the individual, to shape him into a strong-willed and resilient

personality. Belief in the Hereafter is a form of internal check and control for the individual to be cautious and wary of God's retribution for sinful acts and God's pleasure for kind deeds. In another context, belief in the Hereafter will render the individual to be aware and careful over all his actions, and not to stray from the right path.

- Belief in the Hereafter will mould the individual into a dynamic character, and to do good deeds, expecting Allah's pleasure in return. Indirectly, people who always have the Hereafter in their thoughts will give their best in their efforts and actions and will always strive to serve others and the community to the best of their ability.

Curriculum objectives

The Luqman Chapter in the Quran, which serves as a framework for the curriculum, is the basis for student character-building. The chapter outlines the prerequisites for a well-balanced personality. As such learning and teaching activities should meet the following objectives:

- To shape students into individuals with courtesy and good moral standing
- To imbue values such as faith and devotion, benefiting society
- To mould a Muslim personality for others to emulate
- To shape a Muslim who is responsible for himself, his parents, family, society and God
- To create a generation of individuals who propagate doing good

In meeting the above objectives, this paper proposes approaches or Five Core elements or pillars in building the personality of integrity:

First Pillar : Love for Parents

Second Pillar: Love towards doing good deeds

Third Pillar : Integrity

Fourth Pillar : Courtesy

Fifth Pillar : Human/social skills

Curriculum contents

First Pillar: Love for Parents (Surah 31, Verse 14)

Components of Knowledge :

a) "And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years. So give thanks to Me and to your parents, unto Me is the final destination".(31; 14)

b). " But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and in obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do".(31; 15)

In this regard, the student is offered an explanation on the stages of life, on gestation, and how a newborn depends on the mother after birth. The mother, after delivery, is weak and lacks sleep and rest. This verse reminds the individual of the need to count his blessings and be aware of the Creator and the rigors the mother

had to undergo to bring him into the world, in feeding and caring for him. The child should count his blessings by expressing thanks to the Almighty, and the best way to repay the mother's contributions is by doing good. He should also be grateful by showering kindness, and affection to his parents and others. He should regularly offer Doa and prayers for both parents, be they alive or dead.

Second Pillar: Love towards doing Good deeds (Verse 16)

Component of Knowledge:

"O my son! The evil if it be even to the weight of a grain of mustered seed, then it be in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Undoubtedly Allah is Knower of every subtlety",(31; 16) .

In this regard, the student is given background on the greatness of Allah the Most Powerful over everything. The knowledge of Allah encompasses all and is so fine that anything done by anyone on earth does not escape His awareness and evaluation. This gives justification that all human beings need to strive continuously to give service and do good in whatever form however small. A good deed even if a minor one will be valued in the estimation of Allah the Almighty because Allah The Almighty will not let a good deed go in vain as long as a human being is on earth. The background on the greatness and the subtlety of Allah The Almighty should also be the motivator for mankind that good deeds can be done in any place, time and moment. Whether the deed is

open or hidden, Allah The Almighty is aware of it and will take it into account in the Hereafter.

Third Pillar: Integrity (Verse 17)

“O my son! Establish prayer and enjoin doing of good and forbid evil and be patient over whatever befall upon you.” (31: 17)

Explanation: This message from Allah The Most High encourages humans to concentrate on four basic aspects in a life of integrity, namely:

- to do solat as a duty of the servant of Allah.
- Be enjoining fellow humans to do good and useful acts that lead to more goodness.
- enjoin mankind in a proactive way to prevent doing any act that is useless and brings hardship, destruction and pain.
- advising human beings to always be patient and persevere whenever faced with trials and tribulations and challenges.

a) The main emphasis in life is prayer (*solat*) as the proof of loyalty and integrity towards Allah The Most High as the Creator. Those who guard their prayers are regarded as having high self discipline and can be trusted to bear other duties that are heavier and more challenging. The rationale is that if a duty given by Allah that is not evaluated by human beings is carried out with discipline, it is highly probable that other tasks evaluated and monitored by humans and systems will be carried out well.

b) The culture of enjoining good should be emphasized so that people can socialize in a conducive and pleasant environment. When people compete in doing good, they will collaborate in doing good works and show care and concern for others. The caring society, helping each other, being tolerant and eager to give help to those in need will color the life of mankind.

To advise mankind to avoid large scale destruction is a praiseworthy act on the part of the student. Wrongdoing and lewd and evil acts such as stealing, vandalism of school and public property, polluting the environment, illegal racing, drug addiction, loafing, and fornication can be avoided if each student and member of society functions by preventing these negative acts from happening.

c) Patience is an important recipe to be inculcated in every student and every individual facing the challenges of life. Cultivating patience can prevent one from taking rash actions if an unexpected challenge befalls. The challenging world of schooling where students are forced to undergo all types of tests and examinations and problems of peer relationships and family finances, and the pressure of life outside school with its propensity for hedonism, are among the elements that “challenge” the resistance to temptation. If a person loses his or

her rationality and discrimination, he will take unwarranted actions such as running away from home, loafing, killing, vandalism of school and public property, cursing and vilifying, fornicating with fellow students and so on. Perseverance is needed as an element of spirituality that can motivate a person towards success in learning and achievement in life, because patience enables one to continue without despair and be ever creative in resolving problems faced.

Fourth Pillar: Courtesy (Verse 18)

“And turn not your face while talking to any one and strut not on the earth. Undoubtedly Allah loves not any arrogant boaster”. (31; 18).

Explanation: Pride and arrogance and considering oneself great compared to others is a spiritual ailment that must be eradicated in a spiritual manner. The source of spiritual guidance, the Holy Quran reminds mankind to avoid arrogance, to avoid degrading others and to avoid demeaning others just because they are of a different social status. The pride shown by strutting about on earth should be avoided.

Pride that becomes a second nature can be lessened by spiritual training in the form of prevention. The words “and do not turn your face” are symbolic of arrogance that has been deeply ingrained in a person’s soul. Such arrogance is usually accompanied by proud actions. So students should be imbued with good behavior to prevent them from developing such character.

Fifth Pillar: Human Skills (Verse 19)

“And walk moderately and lower your voice when speaking. Undoubtedly in all voices, the most hideous voice is of an ass”. (31; 19)

To ensure that human skills are developed in the school environment, a few guidelines are offered based on revelation, that is, enjoining us to: a) be moderate; b) not to act rashly but with deliberation; c) be polite when speaking; d) avoid using rude words. The combination of four acts are important elements to create students of outstanding behavior and communication skills. The communication skills developed will benefit the student well beyond school life.

Curriculum implementation

All five foundations of character development can be implemented during the teaching and learning process in the classroom. The implementation would need:

- Teacher’s creativity
- Moral and ethical values in the teacher
- Teacher knowledge of strategy of teaching moral/ethical values
- Use of various types of appropriate media
- Extra-curricular activities
- Parental support
- Support from school administration

Among various teaching strategies to be used are: a) story telling; b) practical work; c) group work; d) use of electronic and print media or real

objects; e) visits; f) individual projects; g) simulations; h) debates and forums. Besides that, other methods and approaches can be used in effective management of the classroom. Effective classroom management enables teachers to emphasize good acts and behaviors so that they reflect the student. Among the recommended acts are: a) greeting the student; b) affecting the emotional and spiritual faculties of the student; c) acting as a role model; d) showing care and concern ; e) culture of advice; f) readiness to help; and g) wisdom.

The teacher as guide and mentor and role model of good behavior and morality must practice several good acts that can be emulated by the student. The teacher's exemplary behavior can contribute to a conducive learning environment. Among others, the teacher would need to:

- not act according to impulse and emotion when faced with problems related to wrongdoing or indiscipline in the student.
- be forbearing (*halim*) towards the student especially when dealing with them in class or outside the classroom.
- be caring towards the student. Good teachers are those who love the students as they love their own children or family members. This can be shown by the way the teacher communicates, the attention given when listening and in solving the students' problems and awareness of their condition and concerns.

- Avoid from doing violence and making threats. Teachers who approach students through harshness will only alienate them. This will erect a psychological barrier that blocks the giving of advice, good example and admonition.
- Cultivate the characteristic of patience in facing the students and in the teaching process. The teacher must use all his or her knowledge and experience to control anger in whatever situation faced.
- The teacher must be generous with smiles, give good advice, teaching, admonition, be generous with money, give thoughtful comments and help in resolving the students' problems.

Evaluation

The component of evaluation is very important in assessing the effectiveness of any new curriculum framework. Through evaluation, teachers can identify the weaknesses in implementing the curriculum and at the same time ascertain its effectiveness in changing student behavior. Evaluation can be done during any part of the process, be it in setting objectives, choosing content, or implementing strategy. Each process can be evaluated using an appropriate instrument designed for the purpose.

Even so, the main basis of evaluation criteria is that it has to show coordination between what the teacher intends by the objective and what behavior changes are seen in the

student. If there exists deviation from the performance and objective, the curriculum goal must be refined such that it is more “practical”. Several value added characteristics have to be thought out, such as implementation aspect, student’s ability, school situation, student background, teacher readiness, as well as community and parental support.

As a consolidation activity after evaluation, several steps can be taken, among them are:

- Encouraging students to read the Holy Quran to soften their hearts and at the same time fill their souls with the call of revelation. This regular discipline will be a perpetual attempt to safeguard the student from wrongdoing.
- Guide the student to evaluate themselves from a spiritual perspective. For example, to ask why mankind was created, appreciating our parents’ good deeds and sacrifices. We must make the students aware of the true purpose in life of Allah’s creation. Belief in the reward and punishment of the Hereafter should be implanted in the heart and soul of the student.
- Ensure that the student improves his or her behavior over time by keeping a record of performance and progress to be evaluated by the parents and teacher. A checklist of activities that should be done by a Muslim can be given with the set time for prayers, ziarah, study, revision, tuition, mosque

attendance, watching television/movies, recreation and so on. Scores and grades can be given for every action completed.

Conclusion

Students are an asset to the nation and community in the future. The younger generation are entrusted with the responsibility and hope to continue and strengthen the building of a more progressive civilization with high competitiveness and capability to meet challenges of fulfilling Vision 2020. Nation building should be directed towards perfecting human kind to realize the fitrah or innate propensity towards doing good and inborn impulse to live the religious life. We need to persevere even though this Vision is not easy to achieve because fierce competition will happen in realizing the objectives given that a dangerous world awaits beyond the school fence.

Even so, if each one of us accepts that building a spiritual character is a religious duty, the undertaking will be more directed because the goal is to create well-being of the ummah. As we face the currents of globalization, the task of shaping the student’s character is one not given to compromise if we love a peaceful country where each citizen plays his or her role with integrity and responsibility.

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