

An Islamic Perspective of Teaching Philosophy: A Personal Justification

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the rationale for my teaching philosophy from an Islamic perspective. The theoretical issues in this paper are the purpose of education, functions of the pen, purpose of man, integration of the curriculum, instructor's leadership in the class, instructor's Islamic knowledge and motivation. In this paper, as an educator who is Muslim, I explain my teaching objectives, mission, and vision based on teachings from Al-Quran. This paper also creates a road map and a reference point for educators who want to write their own Islamic teaching philosophy statements to help them make informed decisions when teaching their students. In my Islamic teaching philosophy, I apply the concept of the Naqli (revealed knowledge) and the Aqli (rational knowledge) approach for teaching and learning in the classroom.

Keywords: Islamic education, Class assessment, Islamic philosophy, Naqli, Aqli, Al-Quran

I. Introduction

The Islamic concept of teaching and learning is not limited to the memorization of Al-Quran and religious studies by Muslim scholars. Islamic education is often erroneously perceived as education on religious matters, whereas in fact, Islamic education (based on the Quran and Sunnah) provides a rich reservoir of knowledge in the modern sciences such as medicine, genetics, and biology. Naqli (revealed knowledge) is not all about recitation scriptures from Al-Quran; rather it emphasizes a physical and spiritual balance between everything. The conceptual issues in this paper are the purpose of education, functions of the pen, the purpose of man, integration of the curriculum, instructor's leadership in the class, instructor's Islamic knowledge and motivation.

In the view of the Islamic intellectual tradition, any solution to the crises of our times can only be found in the recovery of our true human nature. This nature, however, cannot be grasped with the tools at the disposal of the modern sciences and academic disciplines, but rather by way of a process self-discovery within the context of an overarching anthropocosmic vision. Perhaps a review of the specifically Islamic reading of the significance of human embodiment can throw some light on our contemporary predicament. Aziz (2014).

To understand the intellectual aspects of Islamic-based education, we should comprehend the essential difference between two modes of knowledge that are recognized in the Islamic world. Much of the Islamic worldview is based on universal truths as, indeed, knowledge is universal and neutral; likewise, we cannot have Hindu physics or Christian sociology.

According to traditional Islam, there are two types of knowledge, namely Naqli (revealed knowledge) and Aqli (rational knowledge).

II. What Is Naqli Source Of Education?

Naqli or revealed argument literarily means transmitted evidence. It refers to the transition of knowledge from authentic textual sources such as Al-Quran and the Sunnah of Nabi Muhammad. These two sources are authorities in themselves should controversy arise among believing Muslims for proof or disproof of something. In Islamic classroom terminology, it is called Naqli (revealed knowledge) because the educator transmits the knowledge from authentic sources (the Quran and Sunnah) to the learner.

In a student-centred Islamic classroom, Knowledge of Naqli can be acquired by students themselves, but it will not be an efficient and accurate process. Since students are not experts on the Quran and the Sunnah of Nabi Muhammad, it is highly possible for them to miss the true meaning or interpretation of the source. As such, it is highly recommended that in the Islamic classroom, knowledge should be transmitted from a learned educator to the learner.

Allah says in the Quran: (Purpose of creation)

And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone). Quran 51:56.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Mankind has a duty to fulfill as responsible human beings on Earth. Man has been given the privilege and is blessed by Allah as a *Khalifah* (vicegerent) so that he can lead others to salvation. Allah says in surah Al-Alaq, (96:1-3-4),

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ١
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ٣
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٤
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ٥

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. Has taught man that which he knew not: (96:1-3-4-5),

III. What Is *Dalil aqli* Source Of Education?

While *Dalil* in the Arabic language means evidence; and *Aqli* means logical and intellectual interpretation of something, the phrase *Dalil aqli* refers to formal or informal logic, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning. This type of knowledge is *intellectual*, or in Arabic, *aqli*.

The distinction between *Naqli* and *Aqli* is based on their modes of knowledge acquisition. In Arabic, *Aql* means logic. According to Islam, Allah has bestowed on man the power of critical thinking and reasoning so that he can make wise decisions.

REASON AS A SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Allah says in the Quran: So, We said, "Strike the slain man with part of it." Thus does Allah bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason. 2:73

فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بَعْضَهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ ٧٣
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

Do you order righteousness of the people and forget yourselves while you recite the Scripture? Then will you not reason? 2:44

أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ ٤٤
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you might use reason: 2:242

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ٢٤٢

And when you call to prayer, they take it in ridicule and amusement. That is because they are a people who do not use reason. 5:58

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوًا وَلَعِبًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا
يَعْقِلُونَ ٥٨

And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah, so will you not reason?

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ٣٢
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

Before writing my Islamic philosophy of teaching statements, I would like to discuss the concepts of Man, Education and an instrument of educating called the Pen. We must understand the role and responsibility of man in this world. Islam enjoins man to abide by the principles of belief and righteous conduct. In Islam, a follower has to embrace high moral values and to practice them at all times. This connection between values and practice lies at the very heart of the Islamic way of life. Essentially, Islamic education and curriculum are based on values and character development.

As educators, we are duty bound to be attentive to the needs of students and to help develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that they can shape their future meaningfully. Muslim instructors and even parents must understand the true meaning of how students learn. What are the processes involved in meaningful teaching and learning? What is the process of moral development in our classrooms? Meeting the needs of students is only achievable if we provide them with opportunities to love Islam so that they will practice Islamic moral values as they grow, not only physically, but also mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

IV. The Concept Of Man

By definition, man is a rational creature that has the capacity of comprehension, formulating rational meaning, delivering judgments, and making a distinction between good and bad. Man is created by Allah for a purpose. Hence, man has a duty to fulfill. He is a vicegerent of Allah on Earth, enjoining the good and forbidding the bad. As such, since Allah has granted human beings a superior place in creation, distinct from other creatures, man should safeguard his freedom and exercise his mental prowess, as well as his willpower.

Allah says in the Quran: "We did indeed offer the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof; but man undertook it". (33: 72).

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ
يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴿٧٢﴾

In the universe that Allah has created, man has to acquire knowledge besides seeking to fulfill his spiritual and material needs. Allah says in the Quran: 45:13

And has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; it is all as a favor and kindness from Him. Verily, in it are signs for a people who think deeply. (Surah 45:13).

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

So man has to reflect and not be indifferent. He must have a positive purpose and attitude so that he can make meaningful use of the bounty of Allah.

According to the Quran 51:56:

And I (Allah) created not the Jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone). Quran 51:56.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾

Allah says in the Quran: Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 30):

And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: "Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth." They said: "Will You place therein those who will make mischief therein and shed blood, - while we glorify You with praises and thanks (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners) and sanctify You." He (Allah) said: "I know that which you do not know." (2: 30)

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا
أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ
بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Let there, arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful. 3:104

وَلَتَكُنَّ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

Allah further says in the Quran: in surah Az-Zalzalah, (99: 7-8):

So,whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. And whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant), shall see it. (99: 7-8):

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ﴿٧﴾
وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ ﴿٨﴾

Allah (S.W.T.) says 17:36:

And follow not (O man i.e., say not, or do not or witness not, etc.) that of which you have no knowledge (e.g. one's saying: "I have seen," while in fact he has not seen, or "I have heard," while he has not heard). Verily! The hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned (by Allah). 17:36: As thus, man has given rational by Allah to differentiate right from the wrong. He has a responsibility to enjoin good and forbid evil.

وَلَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ
أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا ﴿٣٦﴾

As such, man has been given the wisdom by Allah to differentiate right from wrong. He has the responsibility to enjoin good and forbid evil.3:104

Let there, arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good (Islam), enjoining Al-Ma'ruf (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam orders one to do) and forbidding Al-Munkar (polytheism and disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden). And it is they who are the successful. 3:104

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الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

V. The Concept Of Education In Islam

Education helps man to act knowingly and meaningfully. One of the privileges bestowed by Allah to man is the ability to learn and acquire knowledge, the source of which is Allah. In addition, Allah assists man with the tools of acquiring knowledge. Allah says in surah Al-Alaq, (96:1-3-4), (16:78)

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)]. Has taught man that which he knew not: (96:1-3-4-5),

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ١
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ٢
الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٤
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ٥

Allah commenced the revelation of the Holy Qur'an by mentioning the importance of Knowledge: (39:9)
"Are those who know equal to those who know not?" It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah's Signs and Verses). (39:9)

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ١

He grants Hikmah to whom He pleases, and he, to whom Hikmah is granted, is indeed granted abundant good. But none remember (will receive admonition) except men of understanding. (Al-Baqarah, 2:269).

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ٣٦٩

It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Mighty Most Forgiving." (35:28).

إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ ٢٨

As such, it is evident that man is created for a purpose. Allah has equipped him with knowledge and tools to lead a meaningful and rational life.

VI. The Concept Of Qalam, Or The Pen

To help mankind succeed, Allah has bestowed on us an instrument called *Qalam* or the pen so that we can learn, teach, and propagate knowledge. The function of pen is very simple; it can write, store, disseminate and, most of all, share knowledge with others. The word *qalam* is so crucial that Allah has ordered man to use it. So the pen has a very significant and meaningful impact on our lives. Allah says in the Quran: 96:1-5,

Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen [the first person to write was Prophet Idrees (Enoch)]. Has taught man that which he knew not Allah says in the Quran: 68:1

أَقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ ١
خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ٢
أَقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ ٣

الَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ ٤
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمِ ٥

Nun. [These letters (Nun, etc.) are one of the miracles of the Quran, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. By the pen and what the (angels) write (in the Records of men).

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ ١

So Qalam is crucial tool of disseminating and recording of knowledge. So it is obligatory for man to teach others what he knows. Allah says in the Quran: 2: 31-33,

And He taught Adam all the names (of everything), then He showed them to the angels and said, "Tell Me the names of these if you are truthful." They (angels) said: "Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except what you have taught us.

Verily, it is You, the All-Knower, the All-Wise." He said: "O Adam! Inform them of their names," and when he had informed them of their names, He said: "Did I not tell you that I know the Ghaib (unseen) in the heavens and the earth, and I know what you reveal and what you have been concealing?" 2: 31-33

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ

أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ٣١

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ

الْحَكِيمُ ٣٢

قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ

لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا

كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ٣٣

So Allah bestowed knowledge on Adam and asked him to teach and educate others. (Input, process and output= knowledge. Allah has raised the status of mankind through knowledge, and so there is a difference between a person who knows and a person who does not know. Allah says in the Quran: 39:9

Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? (Al-Zumr, 39:9).

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولَٰؤُا

الْأَلْبَابِ ١

As evident from the above argument, it is the duty of man to learn and then propagate the knowledge to others by any means possible, orally or by writing. This, in my opinion, is the most beautiful Islamic philosophy of teaching. Clearly, the purpose of creation, duties of man and the tools that Allah has bestowed on mankind are collectively for the purpose of teaching and learning.

VII. Conventional knowledge

Since teaching, learning, information, education, teacher, and knowledge are key words in this discussion, I need to define them briefly based on scientific facts assimilated through human effort.

7.1 WHAT IS LEARNING?

Learning is defined as a process that brings about behavioral changes to a person. It is a skill that must be acquired by individuals as students, and later, as working adults. People learn differently based on their individual unique styles of learning (Qais, 2011). Learning is also defined as a *change* in human behavior as a result of an experience or information input. It can also be considered as an outcome or a visible process. The most crucial aspect of learning is change. Learning is also achieved through individual experimentations whereby past knowledge is integrated with present knowledge to create new knowledge. According to Dannis, (2008), learning can be viewed “*as a quantitative increase in knowledge. Learning is acquiring information or ‘knowing’.*”

Learning is storing information that can be reproduced. Learning is acquiring facts, skills, and methods that can be retained and used when necessary. Learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and to the real world. Hence it can be seen that learning is an external as well as an internal force to the learner. Learning may also happen automatically or after instruction. Every day when we are exposed to new knowledge and it becomes internalized, it becomes our possession.

7.2 WHAT IS TEACHING?

Teaching, on the other hand, denotes a process to facilitate learning. Teaching also refers to the presentation of knowledge, and demonstration of ability or skills. Effective teaching enables students to make connections of the old and the new knowledge to form new ideas. That is why competent teachers have such a crucial role in the advancement of the community.

7.3 WHAT IS EDUCATION?

Formal education is a process whereby systematic instruction is provided to learners. Generally, the primary aim of education is to impart the desired knowledge or relevant skills to students. Through the process of education, students are expected to enhance their critical thinking skills and make well-informed decisions. Nevertheless, education is provided not only formally by instructors but also when one learns through experiences in real life.

7.4 WHAT ARE DATA?

Data refer to raw materials that have been gathered for a purpose. Data have no meaning or utility until they are analysed or processed.

7.5 WHAT IS INFORMATION?

Once data are processed and analysed, they become information. Such information is meaningful and useful for the purpose the data are collected.

7.6 WHAT IS KNOWLEDGE?

We gain knowledge through experience or education. Facts, information, and skills attained by a person through experience are termed as knowledge. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, knowledge is "*the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association*".

Let us investigate the concept of teaching and learning philosophy according to Islamic perspective:

VIII. What Is The Meaning Of Philosophy?

Philosophy, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary means:

1. To reason logically, reality of something, principle, causes and investigation of the nature, ways of thinking, theoretical study of a particular field, ideas.
2. Scientific beliefs, concepts, to argue rationally, reality, doctrine of an individual.
3. A system of individual beliefs, methodology, values and viewpoints.
4. A rational study of the truth, Knowledge, conduct and branch of knowledge.
5. A road map or principles of guidance and attitude.

IX. What Is The Islamic Philosophy Of Teaching?

In Islam, acquisition of knowledge is obligatory. Islam teaches us to uphold the highest standard of morality and teaches righteous thinking and action. Muslim educators are duty bound to teach students the

purpose of creation and to inculcate the love of the Islamic religion. Whatever we do in the classroom or in any other environment must not only be purposeful but also glorify Allah.

Allah says in the Quran 3:18

Allah bears witness that (none has the right to be worshipped but He), and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He is always) maintaining His creation in Justice. (None has the right to be worshipped but He), the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ
لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

In Islam, the philosophy of knowledge or education is created by Allah and He is the source of authentic knowledge. It is compulsory to acquire knowledge and practice what has been taught. Whatever knowledge students acquire must be meaningful and purposeful, e.g. to help mankind solve problems. He must also strive to propagate knowledge for the benefit of others.

The Islamic philosophy of education stresses that both the teacher and student are equally responsible for the teaching-learning process. Essentially, the Islamic philosophy of education is neither student-centered nor teacher-centered. It is a complete code of conduct and a collective system of learning and teaching, and also based on the system of justice and brotherhood. No one in the class is allowed to take advantage of another. As evident from the above discussion, the philosophy of education which Islam presents is aimed at developing human beings spiritually, emotionally, morally, ethically, socially as well as economically. Hence, Islam gives guidance to Muslims on how to lead their lives according to the teaching of the Holy Quran and *Sunnah* and to achieve success in *Dunia* and *Akhirah*.

Hence, prior to constructing my Islamic philosophy of teaching, I posed the following questions to myself:

1. How does the human brain function?
2. How do people learn?
3. How should I teach?
4. How do I motivate the unmotivated learner?
5. What is my role as a teacher?
6. What is the role of my students?
7. What are my prime objectives as the leader in the class?
8. What are the viable concepts and styles of my teaching?
9. What learning outcomes can I anticipate?
10. How do I measure the success of my students?

X. My Vision

1. My students will learn new skills and obtain new knowledge in a comfortable classroom environment where they can express themselves without fear.
2. My students will be imbued with the love of learning. They will be trained to be active, constructive and goal-oriented learners.
3. My students will be treated as individuals and will be given due respect and also learn to respect the views of their peers. I will take note that each student is a unique learner who deserves my love, attention, and respect.
4. Other instructors will be inspired by my passion to adopt an Islamic approach to learning so that their classroom too will be an active, fun-filled, and creative environment where every student has a chance to excel in his or her own unique way.

XI. My Mission

1. To promote Islamic learning environment that is active, constructive, collaborative, goal-oriented, investigative, and meaningful.
2. To encourage student-centered learning by allowing students to construct knowledge through their own investigations.
3. To establish a strong foundation for stimulating learning as a life-long process.
4. To promote analytical and critical thinking so that learners will acquire meaningful knowledge, not merely remember facts. New information is created when my students make a personal discovery. So I will allow my students to undertake their own investigations to improve their understanding.
5. To promote active engagement and meaningful dialogue to guide learners whenever necessary.

XII. My Objectives In Writing Islamic Teaching Philosophy Statements

To me, teaching is an art. Teaching and learning are facets of a creative and artistic performance. Each teacher has his or her own idea about how to facilitate learning. I believe that teaching is an *amanah* (trust) and a responsibility on my shoulders. As a Muslim and a computer scientist, I need to keep my students updated with the latest developments in computer sciences, especially information and communication technology. My task is to enable my students to have the necessary skills and knowledge so that they can make informed decisions and take the necessary action in real life situations. Moreover, I want my students to share my enthusiasm for learning so that new skills and knowledge can be put to good use to improve the community. Thus, writing my teaching philosophy statements is my way of sharing the joy and rewards of being an educator and, hopefully, fellow teachers would feel likewise.

12.1 OBJECTIVE ONE

I want my students to understand the significance and relevance of ICT in their everyday lives. To achieve this objective, I discuss the latest advancements in computer sciences so that my students are able to apply state of the art technology in solving problems and sharing their knowledge with their friends. I also aim to encourage input and feedback from my students regarding my course contents. In this way, I can make the necessary changes so that my teaching becomes relevant and meaningful to my students.

12.2 OBJECTIVE TWO

I am here to help my students make effective search in the electronic media so that they can access information easily and without frustration. Furthermore, I show them the techniques of evaluating online information. I also challenge them to critically evaluate and investigate current issues regarding computer science developments. Essentially, I provide my students with opportunities to acquire new skills in information and communication technology, and also to apply the needed information in their everyday lives.

12.3 OBJECTIVE THREE

I will help my students to understand that ICT is interconnected with their everyday lives, economically, culturally, and politically. I train them to use ICT as a platform to prepare themselves for future careers. I conduct classes in the industrial field so that they can apply what they have acquired in the classroom and get hands-on experience.

12.4 OBJECTIVE FOUR

I believe that learning is a process in which my students must be actively engaged. They will be given the opportunity to express themselves positively, fearlessly, and cooperatively so that free exchange of ideas can take place.

12.5 OBJECTIVE FIVE

While my course contents are a tool to guide my students and make the teaching-learning process a mutually enjoyable one, my teaching techniques must also make students want to learn. I want to arouse my students' curiosity and motivate them by surprising them with new things every time I enter my class. In this way they are not bored but are motivated instead. Whenever I see their eager faces, I too am motivated as an instructor. I have practised this teaching methods successfully with my undergraduate and post graduate students. It is a mutually rewarding experience.

XIII. WHAT IS A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT?

Each teacher has his or her own set of beliefs and concepts of what teaching and learning should be. It is important that the teacher's philosophical stand be carefully deliberated on so that useful ideas can be translated into practice in the classroom. The main purpose of a teaching philosophy statement is two-fold. From the perspective of the academician, it is important that the teacher understands and selects suitable theories and guidelines for teaching; it is equally important to state clearly his own philosophy as an educator so that his actions in the classroom reflect his beliefs.

In generating my teaching philosophy statements, I keep in mind the following three important basic guidelines:

1. **Brainstorming** of ideas to reflect my beliefs, knowledge, values and attitude towards creating an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning.
2. **Creating a road map** based on my personal beliefs, values, and attitudes that are clearly illustrated by practical examples.

3. **Making a final revision** of my road map before I swing into action so that important points can be added or irrelevant points deleted. I always bear in mind that my teaching philosophy grows with my understanding of what true teaching means.

XIV. Fundamental Components Of My Teaching Philosophy Statements

A. CLEAR START-UP STRATEGY

1. I ask myself: What do I want to do for my students? How do I start and end my lessons?
2. My teaching philosophy statements should evoke positive responses from fellow teachers. I shall articulate my teaching philosophy statements with enthusiasm so that my passion will be contagious. Then fellow teachers will be inspired to share my ideas and beliefs to improve the teaching and learning process.
3. I will document my teaching philosophy statements with pride. The statements should reflect creativity, innovation, and a positive tone.

B. HONESTY AND ATTITUDE

1. Who am I? I will be honest to myself.
2. What is my identity as a teacher?
3. What am I going to do in the class?
4. I will strive to share my teaching philosophy statements with fellow teachers.

C. ORGANIZING MY THOUGHTS

1. I take my time to write my philosophy of teaching.
2. I don't rush. I write for the right audience.
3. I ask myself who my target groups are.
4. I use the word *I* in writing my statement because every individual is different. I don't generalise. The statements I make must be specific and to the point. I believe teaching is a personal experience as every teacher will use his or her own strategy or technique to help students.

D. I WRITE AS I AM A LEADER

1. I shall write my statements with confidence.
2. I shall be like a parent who constantly guides his children.
3. I shall accept constructive criticism. I shall consult my seniors and value their input.

XV. My Teaching Philosophy Statements

I always maintain the following five acts of fairness and justice:

1. I ensure that understanding is facilitated for all students as they have different styles of learning. It is my duty to assist and respect each individual in his or her endeavour to learn. So to facilitate learning, I will conduct a research on their background to assess the level of prior knowledge. I start with simple concepts before progressing to the more complex. I divide my learners in groups of 10. In each group, I add one or two better students so that the disadvantaged students can learn from them.
2. I make sure that my students understand and internalize the knowledge gained in the class, otherwise such knowledge will neither be meaningful nor of applicability in their real lives.
3. I always challenge my students to put in their best effort to produce quality work. The achievement of each individual student will be recognised and he or she will be able to stand out from the crowd. In this way, I boost their confidence and improve their survival skills to cope in the real world.
4. I advocate and facilitate critical thinking and cooperative learning in my class. I also provide opportunities to improve writing skills and oral presentation because it is vital that learners are able to communicate their ideas effectively.
5. I promote active, cooperative, and creative learning. It is my passion to help my students enjoy the learning process. I place great emphasis on giving recognition to different styles of learning that exist among students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. I respect my students' cultural and religious values.

XVI. How Do I Measure Success In My Class?

Success, in my view, means the achievement of a desirable outcome. When I assess my students' performance, I use the techniques described below and I also observe samples of their behaviour, performance, skills, and knowledge. It is an on-going process. I also pay attention to their facial expressions in the classroom. If I am satisfied and happy with the outcome, it means my philosophy of teaching is working. Success has different meanings for different people. For me, as long as I have achieved my objectives, as well as fulfilled the mission and vision stipulated in my philosophy of teaching, I have achieved success.

16.1 TECHNIQUES OF ASSESSING STUDENTS:

1. One Minute Paper and the Half- Sheet Response

A very effective method that I often use in my class to measure success is the *One Minute Paper and the Half- Sheet Response* adapted from Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross (1993). I stop my class just five minutes early and ask some quick questions about my lesson such as: "Who can tell me the most crucial thing you learned today in my class?" In this way I am able to collect speedy responses from my students, either verbally or written on a piece of paper.

2. Muddiest Point

This method of assessing students is one of the easiest ways of collecting feedback from students in real time and it is remarkably effective. I ask my students just one question and ask them to jot down their answer e.g. "What was the funniest point I made in my lecture?"

3. One Sentence Summary (Comprehension) I ask my students about a point in my lecture and ask them to summarise it in one sentence. This question helps me to evaluate their understanding of the big picture.

4. Problem solving

I always arouse my students' curiosity in class. In fact, I am a problem poser and my students are the solvers. It helps me to evaluate their critical thinking skills and problem solving techniques.

5. Opposing viewpoints

I ask my students to evaluate a particular topic or lecture so that they can critically evaluate the two sides of the issue in the lecture.

6. Student-generated Test Questions

I ask my students to identify the most important issue of the lesson and generate their own questions.

7. Process Analysis

This is to find out how students complete their assignment. Since learning is a process, I always ask my students to think about how they do their work or assignments. In this way, I can find out whether my students understand how a problem is solved and the process that is involved.

8. Group Work Evaluation

I ask my students to give opinions about their group work. They have to critically evaluate what their group has achieved. In the process, they become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They also obtain new knowledge.

9. Classroom Opinion Poll

When I assess my students, I take the opportunity to assess my own performance as well. I ask my students to give me feedback in writing (without giving their names) about my lecture content and the way it is presented so that I can evaluate myself and make the necessary changes.

XVII. Conclusion

Teaching philosophy statements are solely individualistic as they reflect personal values and artistic preferences. How they are structured also depends on the learning environment and the needs of students. Any motivated instructor who wants to write teaching philosophy statements must consider carefully what he or she actually wants to do and how to accomplish it. Each teacher must have clearly defined ideas about his or her role in the classroom in order to function effectively.

Once we have a clear idea about our objectives, we can set about writing our teaching philosophy statements, and the rest is just a matter of delivery. We should apply state of the art methodology and appropriate theories of teaching and learning to accomplish our objectives. We make use of various tools to assess the effectiveness of our objectives, mission, and vision. We should strive for the desired outcomes rather than rush to finish the syllabus. It is always useful to design our own evaluation method so that we can include feedback from our learners for self-improvement. We need to ask ourselves questions such as: What have we achieved? What are our rewards? Why are we important to society?

As educators, our noble mission is to inculcate the love of learning in our students so that learning becomes a lifelong process. When they are empowered by knowledge, they can make informed decisions about what they want to achieve in life and how to excel in their chosen path. When our students are passionate about

gaining meaningful knowledge and applying it in their lives, we have made a difference. The concept of *one size fits all* can be discarded for good.

As evident from the discussion above, I have developed my teaching philosophy statements based on my own experience, first as an undergraduate student and later as an instructor. I have come to the conclusion that our classroom environment, teaching and learning need a fundamental makeover. Furthermore, I am convinced that educators have the responsibility to reveal to their students their true inner beauty and inculcate in them a sense of pride in whatever they strive to achieve. That's why I have decided to write my teaching philosophy statements so that I can make a difference. I am grateful to be able to use findings from studies on the constructivist paradigm of teaching and learning to bring about fundamental change in the classroom.

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