MCE
Madrasah Centre of Excellence

THE WORLD FEDERATION
OF KHOJA SHIA ITHNA-ASHERI MUSLIM COMMUNITIES

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT, THE MERCIFUL

MCE Update

Salaamun Alaikum,

This is the 6th issue of the MCE mailshot which is being emailed to just over a thousand recipients. When we sent the first issue, we explained that the purpose of the mailing was to:

1. Update you on the progress made by MCE and its activities
2. Share good practices that are happening in other madrasah around the world
3. Share news of important developments in the field of madrasah education
4. Listen to you and take your feedback, suggestions and new ideas.

We feel that we have been covering the first three areas reasonably well. However, MCE has received little feedback and very few suggestions or new ideas from the readers. MCE would like to actively engage with people who are either involved with or interested in madrasah education. The monthly mailing is one of the ways in which we can do this, but it has to be a two-way process. As your input is vital, we hope to hear from you so that we work together towards continuous improvement for the benefit of the worldwide madrasah community.

If you are a madrasah principal, please ensure that every teacher in your madrasah is receiving the MCE Update.

Teaching Tips

Modeling Reading

Modeling reading strategies can help children become stronger readers. It promotes comprehension, increases fluency and develops higher order thinking skills. Being read aloud to is a strong indicator of future literacy. In addition it makes authentic Islamic literature accessible for children.

Before the story:

1. Choose a book that would hold interest of the class.
2. Show and discuss the illustration on the cover of the book.
3. Ask what the title and who the author is.
4. Have them predict "What do you think the story might be about?"

5. Read the back cover. This is a great teaching moment for discussing a "hook" that draws readers into the story and allows an opportunity for refining predictions.

During a Story…

6. Read the book aloud stopping at key points. Ask purposeful questions.
7. Scaffold on prior knowledge – i.e. help students make predictions and connections to what they already know.
8. Change your voice to fit the mood or action. Use ample expression, alternate your tone of voice to match different characters, and make adjustments to the pace in order to promote suspense.

After the story…

9. At the end of the story, have students share any thoughts or comments about the story. Perhaps how they felt about the character…
10. Summarizing the story is essential to solidify your students' comprehension of the text.

Learning Resources
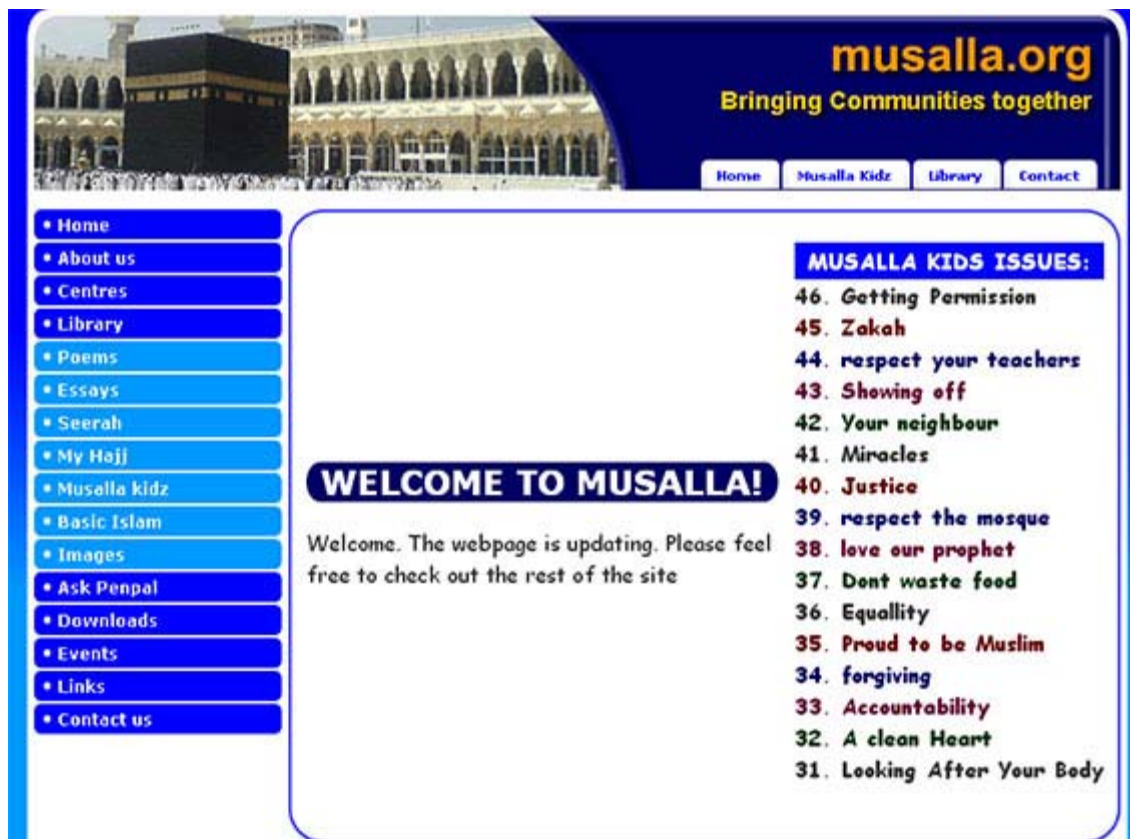
This website is laid out in a unique format. We will deliberate on this link and not on the home page. The link opens up to newsletters that have been itemized sequentially based on when they were written. Topics of the newsletters form the headline of the link. If you click on a headline, then you go to the newsletter which includes a story, poems, puzzles, colouring pages and messages from Pen pal who is the designer. This link would best suit students aged 8 and above.

A great component of this site is that children can participate in the creation of the newsletter. They can write stories, draw pictures and comment in the newsletter which allows them to be engaged as they are creating something online. All the graphics found in the newsletter can be downloaded as a .jpeg, .png or .pdf file. This would be of benefit to the teachers who may want to use a graphic organizers, puzzles or word searches to add interest to their weekly lessons.

Teachers need to read the whole newsletter to ensure that the topic being covered relates to what is being taught in the classroom. They should make a choice as to what the students are reading and reflect on what students have found on the site that may be different from what they are learning (Shia versus Sunni lens). **Teachers can use this link to teach students how to read about differing viewpoints than their own and compare and contrast in respectful language about the differences.**

Having a site like this would be great for our Madaris. It can be created by independent madaris who have students/teachers/parents who may be technologically savvy. They

would ask their student population to create drawings, stories, puzzles which can be uploaded and shared with the rest of the madrasah parents, students and staff. It would be a grassroots initiative for the senior students to initiate and sustain as part of their completion of madrasah. A teacher would need to oversee this project yearly. This will engage the youth, deliver a newsletter, bring the madrasah community together and forge bonds through technology.

Training Needs Survey

Final extracts from the report of training needs survey carried out with 100 madrasah teachers in East Africa in August 2012.

1. Here is a list of challenges that Madrasah teachers generally face. Please rank them in the order of priority in which they should be addressed.

Challenges	1 Highest Priority	2	3	4	5 Lowest Priority
Classroom Management	32%	21%	10%	18%	18%
Teaching Resources	39%	24%	18%	9%	10%
Subject knowledge	48%	20%	10%	6%	16%
Special Educational Needs	38%	21%	26%	7%	8%
Teaching Skills	44%	26%	14%	9%	7%
Parental Support	47%	24%	15%	5%	9%
Communication amongst colleagues	25%	26%	22%	9%	18%
Support & Mentoring	30%	31%	16%	8%	16%
Financial Support	6%	13%	23%	9%	49%
Facilities (classroom size, audio/video, boards)	31%	26%	18%	14%	10%
Organisational structure in Madrasah	30%	19%	25%	12%	13%

2. Please assess the following statements for yourself using a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is *strongly agree* and 5 is *strongly disagree*)

	1 Strongly agree	2	3	4	5 Strongly disagree
I have full access to Islamic teaching resources	53%	17%	17%	6%	6%

I know how to plan and deliver lessons for children with special educational needs	9%	14%	34%	14%	29%
I plan my lessons keeping in mind the different learning styles	39%	40%	11%	8%	2%
I deliver most of my lessons by reading straight from the notes provided by the madrasah	4%	7%	12%	19%	58%
I use praise and rewards with my students	44%	32%	17%	4%	3%
I incorporate group and pair work in my lessons	31%	37%	16%	10%	5%
I need to improve my classroom management techniques	9%	17%	41%	19%	14%
I need to develop on lesson planning	15%	24%	20%	25%	16%
I need to work on improving my assessment skills	10%	23%	29%	21%	17%
I need to improve my time management skills	10%	24%	27%	15%	25%
I need to develop my communications skills when delivering lessons	8%	16%	24%	26%	26%
I need to be more organised as a madrasah teacher	13%	21%	22%	22%	22%

3.

	Aqa'id	Tareekh	Fiqh	Akhlaq	Qur'an
No. of teachers who would like to improve their subject knowledge in each of these subjects (out of 100)	76	69	75	67	75

4.

No. of teachers who think that teaching should assist in the student's spiritual development (out of 100)	96

Madrasah Details

In order to have accurate data on each madrasah and to keep in touch with them, we have started to build a database of madrasah and their teachers. A request form for data collection was sent to all madrasah principals for completion. **We have received only 24 madrasah profiles to date. Madaris that have not yet returned the forms are once again reminded to do so as soon as possible.** If you have not received the form, please notify us at mce@world-federation.org

We Need Your Feedback

We look forward to hearing from you with your feedback, suggestions and opinions on this important initiative of The World Federation. You can contact the Head of MCE by emailing him at mce@world-federation.org or call him on + 44 (0)121 246 3575

"Gaining knowledge in one's youth is like imprinting something on a rock [it will always remain].""
- Imam Ali (AS)