ISLAM IN THE CURRICULUM IN JORDAN AND ENGLAND:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Synopsis
This paper is based on one aspect of comparative research in Jordan and in England into the position of Islam within the secondary school curriculum, in the former within Islamic Education and in the latter within Religious Education (RE).

The paper focuses on teaching methods and resources and the students' and teachers' attitudes towards them, set within the context of their attitudes to the subject as a whole. The study was conducted in three schools in Irbid in Jordan and three schools in Exeter in England. Three methods were used: questionnaires, semi-structured interview and classroom observation. The questionnaire sample consisted of 165 students and 14 teachers. Interviews were conducted with 18 students and 14 teachers. Observation included a total of 20 Islamic studies classes and RE lessons.

In Jordan the principal focus in the teaching-learning process was found to be on transmitting knowledge, with little use of a more child-centred approach and few teaching aids. In England teaching methods were more varied, resources more varied and more child-centred.

INTRODUCTION
Why the study was undertaken
Islamic education plays a crucial role in developing the values and morals of Islamic societies globally. The term conveys a dual meaning. On the one hand 'Islamic education' is an overall approach to education based on Islamic principles and therefore affecting all curriculum areas. On the other, it is a discrete curriculum subject throughout the Arab Muslim world, addressing the religion of Islam. This curriculum subject is known by different terms: Islamic education (al- trbi'ah al-

islam'eh), Islamic studies (al- derasat al- islam'eh) and religious education (al- trbi'ah adene'eh). To avoid confusion this paper will henceforth refer to Islamic education solely as the curriculum subject.

There has been research into Islamic education teaching methods, but no previous comparative study. Al-Salemy (1995) examined the effect of inquiry and discussion teaching methods on achievement for first year secondary students. Fared (1995) researched the effect of deductive and inductive methods on the acquisition of the concepts by first year secondary students in the Muscat Directorate. Al-Qalqili (1998) investigated co-operative learning. Bani–Esa (1999) explored the effect of individual learning on achievement in the eleventh grade. Elamat (2000) studied the effect of work sheets on students' achievement compared to traditional methods. These researchers identified modern teaching methods as more effective than traditional ones.

Islamic education is a high priority within the Jordanian curriculum, as Islam is the official religion. 95.8% of the population are Sunni Muslims. Christianity is the main minority religion. Relations between Christians and Muslims are cordial (Gubser, 1983). Christians have their own schools in which Islamic education is replaced by Christian education. Islamic education presents Islam under several branches of Islamic knowledge including study of the Holy Qur'an (mainly al -tafseer and al-telawah) and the study of the al- hadith. In the past, family, mosque and society shared the task of education into Islam. Systematic teaching is now left mainly to the school (Al-Jalad, 1997), although as will be demonstrated below, interview evidence in this study revealed some expectation on the part of students that the role of the family and mosque continue. If their role is diminishing, a proposition this research can neither confirm nor deny, classroom methodology becomes of increasing importance as the role of the school in the transmission of Islamic values increases.

In England approximately 72% of the population identify with Christianity (2001 National Census). In that sense England can be said to be a Christian country, although that proposition is rarely promoted by religious educators. But only 8% (a disputed figure) attend church regularly. Islam is the strongest religion represented in the UK after Christianity, approximately 3.5% of the population. UK RE has an established tradition of preparing children to live within a multi-faith society which recognises Islam as a major world religion, but also recognises the child as possessing the freedom to choose a stance by which to live. The recommended aims for RE in England are to 'learn about religions' and to 'learn from religion [*sic*]' (SCAA Model Syllabuses, 1994), have become commonly adopted, with some variation, in locally agreed syllabuses. This attitude to religions within curriculum is palpably different from Islamic education in Jordan. However, despite the cultural variables, there are two factors common to England and Jordan: the presence of Islam as a living religion in both countries and the presence of religion within the school curriculum. The need to establish a methodology for presenting Islam accurately and effectively in the classroom is also common to both.

Thus the possibility arose for a comparative enquiry within the broad field of the position of Islam in the curriculum in secondary schools in England and Jordan. The key point of comparison was not intended to be between concepts of Religious Education and Islamic education, nor the detail of syllabus content, but the effectiveness of different methodologies for presenting Islamic subject matter within

curriculum, as perceived by teachers and their students. What methods are employed? How are they perceived by teachers and their students? Which are effective? Which are enjoyable? Do effectiveness and enjoyment converge? 'Effective' in this context was taken to mean efficient in helping to cover the syllabus set in the time framework available and producing the effect (results) required for summative assessment at the end of the programme of study. 'Enjoyment' was taken to mean individual student pleasure or satisfaction arising from the method used, irrespective of its efficacy for external assessment etc.

If the cultural and religious contexts of each country are accepted as constants or at least, *pace* Jackson (1997), slowly evolving complexes, these are very unlikely to change in response to each other. The culture of England is unlikely to shape the culture of Jordan and *vice versa*. Islamic education in Jordan is intended to perform a role westerners would categorise as nurture or indoctrination, i.e. the inculcation of doctrine, whereas RE in England outside faith schools is emphatically non-confessional, as a result of a process dating from 1963 onwards (Copley, 1997, Thompson, 2004). Comparison of aims would therefore be of limited value. But teaching methodology might benefit from comparative study. If common ground were to be identified, it could then be asked whether there could be any English-Jordanian exchange. Could either learn from the other in addressing its problems and, if so, make improvements to its education process, within the terms for success defined by its own culture of education?

The aims of the study
The study aimed to:
1. Explore the broad similarities and differences between 'Islam in RE' and 'Islamic education' as conceived in the two countries, sufficient to contextualise a comparative study of methodology.
2. Identify and investigate the attitudes of the English teachers and their students towards teaching and learning about Islam in RE in their own experience sufficient to facilitate a comparative study of methodology.
3. Identify and investigate the attitudes of the Jordanian teachers and their students towards teaching and learning Islamic education in their own experience sufficient to facilitate a comparative study of methodology.
4. Identify classroom teaching methods and resources for teaching about Islam in RE (England) and Islamic education (Jordan) and the attitudes of teachers and students towards them.
5. As a result of 1-4 to evaluate the implications of the comparative study and suggest whether Islam within RE in England and Islamic education in Jordan can in any way benefit from each other in the sphere of methodology.

For reasons of space this paper focuses on 4 above, having already introduced 1 briefly. The UK work in this study was restricted to England because of the differing legal provision (except for Wales) for RE in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Methodology
The research design was that of a qualitative descriptive case study approach. Qualitative and quantitative instruments were used. Three main methods (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and field notes) were used for data collection. Fieldwork was conducted in three secondary schools in Jordan in Irbid and

three secondary schools in England in Exeter. One was a community school. One was a foundation school (voluntary aided, Church of England) and one was an independent school. The Jordanian schools were of a common character reflecting the more monochrome nature of secondary schools in Jordan. The fieldwork involved fourteen teachers and 165 students who completed questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with fourteen teachers and eighteen students, both male and female, in both countries. In addition, field notes were taken based on lesson observation in each contributing teacher's class in both countries. In England care was taken to observe only RE lessons in which the subject content was Islam. Data collection took place from February to May 2001. Data analysis consisted of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) analysis of questionnaires using descriptive statistics and analysis of *verbatim* interview records (the Arabic translated into English and checked by an external verifier) to identify the main themes arising and then coding them.

THE FINDINGS
The Jordanian findings

All eight Jordanian teachers had a BA degree in Islamic law. Two also had Master's degrees. One had two Master's degrees. They identified three principal teaching methods: lectures, question and answer, and exposition of a textbook passage. Much less frequent were drama, story-telling and discussion. Problem-solving methods and project work were rarely if ever used. Most of the teachers professed to be content with this situation. Their students were less content with it. All the methods used were more teacher-centred than student-centred. Student and teacher questionnaires identified the Holy Qur'an, the textbook and the blackboard as the principal teaching aids. Seven of the eight teachers 'always' use the textbook and never use internet search or CD ROM. In interview teachers raised common concerns about experimenting with methodology, focusing on lack of time, eg

We must complete the textbook from the first page to the last, so sometimes we rush some topics to meet the timetable ('Yusuf', a substituted name and so throughout cited interviewees).

Time is very important because we must finish the textbook by the end of the academic year (Hudah).

The other reason for favouring traditional didactic methodology was large class size, eg:

I do not like it [group work] because of the huge number of students in the class [40] (Ahmad).
Jordanian teachers also emphasized the importance of Arabic language teaching, eg

Students who are weak in Arabic are more likely to be weak in Islamic education (Fatimah).

Teaching Islam without the Arabic?… Oh, it will be successful in passing knowledge, but they [students] will miss too much (Yusuf).

Nevertheless they were aware that the methods they were discarding for reasons of constraints of time and class size were of potential educational value, eg:

I find that discussion is the most successful method (Maryam).

Student questionnaires and interviews confirmed their teachers' rating of the frequency of use of particular methodologies.

I like the discussion way of teaching… One teacher in theory told us she would use different methods, while in practice she just stuck with the traditional ones (Nada).

For students the most effective teaching methods were also the most enjoyable ones. Stories, discussion, inviting student questions, were rated highly whereas copying from the board and listening to lectures were the least enjoyable and least effective. Students remembered what they had seen:

I still remember a lesson in the sixth grade about prayer; the picture of the teacher practising it in front of us still sticks in my mind (Muhammad).

They make the lesson boring, because they just stick to the textbook and the board (Emran).
Students recognised that constraints were pressing them and the teachers, eg
I do not blame the teacher [for not using the internet]… because it is not available at the school (Ibrahim).
We need to have more activities… but our teachers are busy most of the time, or the funds are lacking and we have much homework to do (Nadah).
The tabulated findings from the Jordanian questionnaires appear below as Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1
Jordanian teachers' perception of their own teaching methods: the degree of effectiveness and student enjoyment

Teaching method	Effectiveness					Enjoyment				
	*VH	H	A	L	VL	VH	H	A	L	VL
Explanation	5 62.5%	3 37.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 25%	4 50%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Lecture	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	2 25%	3 37.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Teachers' work sheet	2 25%	3 37.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	1 12.5%	2 25%	5 62.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%

	VH	H	A	L	VL	VH	H	A	L	VL
Telling relevant stories	4 50%	4 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 75%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Using drama in the classroom	4 50%	4 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 75%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Role model	6 75%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 62.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Discussing the textbook ideas	4 50%	4 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 75%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Working in groups	2 25%	4 50%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	4 50%	2 25%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Individual working	1 12.5%	2 25%	3 37.5	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	2 25%	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	2 25%
Copying from the board	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	5 62.5%	0 0.0%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	2 25%	2 25%	3 37.5%
Writing notes about the subjects	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	1 12.5%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Question and answer	6 75%	2 25%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 50%	2 25%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%
Project method	1 12.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	4 50%	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	4 50%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Problem solving	2 25%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	4 50%	0 0.0%	3 37.5%	4 50%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Practical teaching	5 62.5%	2 25%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	6 75%	1 12.5%	1 12.5%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%

*VH = very high   H = high   A= average   L= low   VL= very low
  **N=8

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Table 2
Jordanian student's responses to the degree of enjoyment of teaching methods

Teaching methods	*VE	E	AE	LE	NE
Explanation the ideas and word of the textbook	30 35.3%	20 23.5%	18 21.2%	10 11.8	7 8.2%
Listening to the teacher (lecture)	7 8.2%	18 21.2%	20 23.5%	8 9.4%	32 37.6
Teachers' work sheet	12 14.1%	9 10.6%	41 48.2	13 15.3%	10 11.8%
Telling relevant stories	53 62.4%	17 20.0%	10 11.8%	2 2.4%	3 3.5%
Using drama in the classroom (acting)	30 35.3%	9 10.6%	31 36.5%	6 7.1%	9 10.6%
Using the model example of the prophet (Kudwah)	61 71.8%	9 10.6%	11 12.9%	2 2.4%	2 2.4%
Discussing our ideas in the classroom	33 38.8%	22 25.9%	19 22.4%	5 5.9%	6 7.1%
Working in groups	19 22.4%	15 17.6%	29 34.1%	16 18.8%	6 7.1%
Working in my own	13 15.3%	17 20.0%	33 38.8%	11 12.9%	11 12.9%
Copying from the board	9 10.6%	18 21.2%	23 27.1%	15 17.6%	20 23.5%
Writing notes about the subject	17 20.0%	13 15.3%	23 27.1%	16 18.8%	16 18.8%
Asking my own question	31 36.5%	30 35.3%	9 10.6%	9 10.6%	6 7.1%
Answer the teacher question and write the answer	18 21.2%	6 7.1%	30 35.3%	25 29.4%	6 7.1%
Project method	18 21.2%	23 27.1%	28 32.9%	7 8.2%	9 10.6%
Problem solving	13 15.3%	22 25.9%	32 37.6%	12 14.1%	6 7.1%
Practical teaching	38 44.7%	25 29.4%	13 15.3%	6 7.1%	2 2.4%

*VE =very enjoyable   E=enjoyable   AE=of average enjoyment   LE=of little enjoyment   NE= not enjoyable
 **N=85

Table 3
Jordanian students' responses to the degree of the effectiveness of the teaching methods.

Teaching methods	*VE	E	AE	LE	NE
Explanation the ideas and word of the textbook	34 40.0 %	30 35.3%	13 15.3%	6 7.1%	2 2.4%
Listening to the teacher (lecture)	5 5.9%	4 4.7%	30 35.3%	21 24.7%	25 29.4%
Teachers' work sheet	7 8.2	9 10.6%	51 60.0%	11 12.9%	7 8.2%
Telling relevant stories	40 47.1 %	23 27.1%	12 14.1%	5 5.9%	5 5.9%
Using drama in the classroom (acting)	23 27.1 %	13 15.3%	34 40.0%	8 9.4%	7 8.2%
Using the model example of the prophet (Kudwah)	50 58.8 %	9 10.6%	15 17.6%	5 5.9%	6 7.1%
Discussing our ideas in the classroom	27 31.8 %	27 31.8%	23 27.1%	5 5.9%	3 3.5%
Working in groups	13 15.3 %	16 18.8%	44 51.8%	7 8.2%	5 5.9%
Working in my own	9 10.6 %	15 17.6%	38 44.7%	14 16.5%	9 10.6%
Copying from the board	21 24.7 %	18 21.2%	23 27.1%	14 16.5%	9 10.6%
Writing notes about the subject	9 10.6 %	13 15.3%	53 62.4%	7 8.2%	3 3.5%
Asking my own question	34 40.0 %	23 27.1%	15 17.6%	7 8.2	6 7.1%
Answer the teacher question and write the answer	20 23.5 %	31 36.5%	23 27.1%	7 8.2%	4 4.7%
Project method	18 21.2 %	10 11.8%	42 49.4%	8 9.4%	7 8.2%
Problem solving	20	17	35	5	8

	23.5 %	20.0%	41.2%	5.9%	9.4%
Practical teaching	38 44.7 %	27 31.8%	13 15.3%	2 2.4%	5 5.9%

*VE =very effective   E=effective   AE=of average effectiveness   LE=of little effectiveness   NE= not effective
** N=85

In Jordan, teachers tend to use traditional methods, the teacher-centred approach. The most common were found to be the lecture and question-answer. There is a single text book for each stage of student learning, laid down by the Ministry of Education. It is heavily content-driven. In order to complete it in time for the annual national secondary written and oral examinations, a didactic teaching style is often seen by both teacher and student interviewees as the only option consistent with the time constraints.

The English findings
Of the six teachers in the English sample, four had degrees in Theology and/or Religious Studies, while the other two had degrees in English & Drama and 'Humanities' (in this case History and Geography). Subject knowledge of Islam was identified as a problem by four of them, who had not majored in any aspect of Islam within their degree. Whereas the Jordanian student sample were all Muslim, 50% of the English sample claimed to be Christian and in the schools surveyed, only 3 out of 80 students claimed to be Muslim. Teachers and students identified the most common teaching methods as: explanation, discussion, question and answer, work sheet and group work. These were used 'always' or 'often' in RE lessons. 79% of the students claimed that discussion featured at some point in every lesson. Projects and problem-solving approaches were also in use and were rated highly. Videos and artefacts were used. Lectures and board work were reckoned to be ineffective and unenjoyable. All the teachers commended varied methods rather than one single method. The English and Jordanian students largely agreed about what for them were the most enjoyable and effective methods for learning. For learning about Islam, English students valued video, eg

It is more interesting to see by video what they [Muslims] really do (Karen).

Field notes and interviews suggested that the English teachers were more concerned with process than product, eg

Questioning is the most common method. I am less interested in their answer. I want to motivate them to think and discuss. (Mark).

The Arabic language issue appeared in the English teacher sample, first as an issue of technical terms, then as a way of entering more deeply into the subject, eg

I cannot read some terms… With too much information the children will become confused (Anne).

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I'd love to use the Arabic language. It would help me as Latin helps me in teaching history (Mark).

Two of the six teachers complained about lack of time. They shared this feeling with Jordanian teachers, although RE in England occupies usually 5% of curriculum time, compared to 10% in Jordan. The tabulated findings from the Jordanian questionnaires appear below as Tables 4 to 6.

In England, teachers focus more on a child-centred or child-related than a teacher-centred approach. They have a wide range of commercially published textbooks and associated audio, video and CDROM materials from which to choose. But the study showed that their subject knowledge of Islam is not necessarily strong, or even adequate. Random sampling of ten UK-published RE textbooks on Islam for this age group revealed serious factual errors in 4 of them.

Table 4
English teachers' perception of their own teaching methods: the degree of effectiveness and student enjoyment

Teaching method	Effectiveness					Enjoyment				
	*VH	H	A	L	VL	VH	H	A	L	VL
Explanation	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%
Lecture	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.6%	3 50%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 50%	3 50%
Teachers' work sheet	1 16.6%	1 16.6%	4 66.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%
Telling relevant stories	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Using drama in the classroom	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Using the model example	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.6%	2 33.3%	3 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	3 50%
Discussing the textbook ideas	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	5 83.3%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Group work	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	3 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Individual	0	0	1	3	2	0	0	3	2	1

	VH	H	A	L	VL	VH	H	A	L	VL
working	0.0%	0.0%	16.6%	50%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	50%	33.3%	16.6%
Copying from the board	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	3 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 16.6%	2 33.3%	3 50%
Writing notes about the subjects	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%
Question-answer	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0	3 50%	1 16.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%
Project method	3 50%	3 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	4 66.6%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Problem solving	3 50%	3 50%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	2 33.3%	0 0.0%
Practical teaching	0 0.0%	3 50%	2 33.3%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 33.3%	3 50%	1 16.6%	0 0.0%

*VH = very high   H = high   A= average   L= low   VL= very low
** N=6

Table 5
English students' responses to the degree of effectiveness of teaching aids

Teaching methods	*VE	E	AE	LE	NE
Explanation of the ideas and words of the textbook	22 27.5%	17 21.3%	29 36.3%	9 11.3%	3 3.8%
Listening to the teacher (lecture)	17 21.3%	18 22.5%	29 36.3%	9 11.3%	7 8.8%
Teachers' work sheet	5 6.3%	17 21.3%	45 56.3%	11 13.8%	2 2.5%
Telling relevant stories	10 12.5%	13 16.3%	51 63.8%	5 6.3%	1 1.3%
Using drama in the classroom (acting)	16 20.0%	8 10.0%	47 58.8%	3 3.8%	6 7.5%
Discussing our ideas in the classroom	22 27.5%	31 38.8%	23 28.8%	3 3.8%	1 1.3%
Working in groups	12 15.0%	30 37.5%	34 42.5%	4 5.0%	0 0.0%
Working alone	13 16.3%	18 22.5%	32 40.0%	9 11.3%	8 10.0%

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Teaching methods	*VE	E	AE	LE	NE
Copying from the board	12 15.0%	20 25.0%	25 31.3%	12 15.0%	11 13.8%
Writing notes about the subject	6 7.5%	25 31.3%	31 38.8%	11 13.8%	7 8.8%
Asking my own question	9 11.3%	21 26.3%	41 51.3%	3 3.8%	6 7.5%
Answer the teacher question and write the answer	6 7.5%	23 28.8%	39 48.8%	8 10.0%	4 5.5%
Project method	21 26.2%	23 28.7%	20 25%	10 12.5%	6 7.5%
Problem solving	8 10.0%	16 20.0%	38 47.5	13 16.3%	5 6.3%
Practical teaching	20 25%	15 18.7%	30 37.5%	10 12.5%	5 6.3%

*VE =very effective   E=effective   AE=of average effectiveness   LE=of little effectiveness   NE= not effective

  **N=80

Table 6
English students' response to the degree of enjoyment of teaching aids

Teaching methods	*VE	E	AE	LE	NE
Explanation of the ideas and words of the textbook	16 20.0%	20 25.0%	32 40.0%	7 8.8%	4 5.0%
Telling relevant stories	16 20.0%	19 23.8%	22 27.5%	17 21.3%	6 7.5%
Teachers' work sheet	5 6.3%	21 26.3%	38 47.5%	15 18.8%	1 1.3%
Listening to the teacher (lecture)	8 10.0%	12 15.0%	49 61.3%	7 8.8%	4 5.0%
Using drama in the classroom (acting)	19 23.8%	6 7.5%	48 60.0%	2 2.5%	5 6.3%
Discussing our ideas in the classroom	20 25.0%	32 40.0%	23 28.8%	2 2.5%	3 3.8%
Working in groups	19 23.8%	30 37.5%	27 33.85	2 2.5%	2 2.5%
Working alone	6 7.5%	15 18.8%	33 41.3%	15 18.8%	11 13.8%
Copying from the board	11	10	19	23	17

	13.8 %	12.5%	23.8%	28.8%	21.3%
Writing notes about the subject	11 13.8 %	14 17.5%	30 37.5%	17 21.3%	8 10.0%
Asking my own questions	10 12.5 %	22 27.5%	33 41.3%	8 10.0%	7 8.8%
Answer the teacher question and write the answer	7 8.8%	11 13.8%	36 45.0%	22 27.5%	4 5.0%
Project method	19 23.8 %	7 8.8%	33 41.3%	15 18.8%	6 7.5%
Problem solving	16 20.0 %	10 12.5%	36 45.0%	8 10.0%	10 12.5%
Practical teaching	15 18.7 %	7 8.7%	19 23.7%	33 41.2	6 7.5%

*VJ =very enjoyable   J=enjoyable   AJ=of average enjoyment

   LJ=of little enjoyment   NJ= not enjoyable

**N=80

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has examined one aspect of a wider comparative study. It confirms previous studies in their findings that recent teaching methods are more efficient and enjoyable than traditional methods for Islamic education. It adds to these findings that pupil enjoyment and teaching effectiveness converge. The comparative element demonstrates that this applies to attitudes to methodology in both countries. Teacher interviews in both countries also identified the problem of lack of curriculum time (despite the 10% Jordan and 5% England difference) and low subject status in the eyes of some students, against the pressure to acquire scientific qualifications (Jordan) and in the position of RE outside the national curriculum (England).

One of the main findings from Jordan was that students were not happy with traditional teaching methods and preferred to be more involved in the teaching–learning process. Their teachers were using and excusing traditional methods whilst acknowledging that a student-centred approach is better. They defended this for different reasons such as lack of training, a lengthy textbook, and work overload. The claim was that these factors forced them to use traditional methods. Reducing the length of the single Jordanian set text would free time for more effective and enjoyable teaching methods. In England the teachers used a more student-centred approach. Their students were happy with the way they had been taught the subject, although they were less positive toward the subject itself (RE in general rather than Islam within it) than their Jordanian counterparts. The teacher's Islamic subject knowledge, which can be assumed in the Jordanian context, does not necessarily pertain in England. This has implications for English resources, which need to be highly accurate, unlike some of those in the random sample. A combination of

teaching methods according to the topic treated was also found to enhance effectiveness and enjoyment in both countries.

The most significant conclusion, however, that might be drawn from this examination of two very different societies and the way they handle Islam in the curriculum is that all religious education is shaped and conditioned by the national and wider culture climate in which it operates. Islamic education in Jordan is shaped by the vigorous Islamic culture in which it operates. English religious education is shaped by its awareness of the decline of institutional Christianity from 1945 and with it the movement for Christian education, which equated Christian education with religious education, viewing it as induction into Christianity. The presence in Britain of a number of living religions with their divergent truth claims, but equal rights as British citizens, contextualises diversity as a virtue. RE also recognises a vigorous secularist lobby, which may not represent a majority view, but brings ready publicity to the validity of non-belief. But in the details of the day to day operation of religious education in both countries, the formative factors of culture are often forgotten. The loss of culture consciousness can programme those involved in the operation of RE and Islamic education with a set of assumptions that only become apparent when a comparative study of this sort is made.

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