Innovative Resources for teaching Islam through a sociological lens

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Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK

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- Currently celebrating 20 years
- Leading academic institution for research and teaching about Islam and Muslims in Britain.
- Set up with close ties to Muslim Communities
- Research areas:
  - Chaplaincy
  - Leadership
  - Mental health
  - Family life.
  - Islamic Environmental Ethic
- Approach:
  - Interdisciplinary evidence based academic research
  - Sociological
  - Mixed methods
  - Focus on lived experiences of Muslims in the UK

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Development Officer, Islam UK Centre Cardiff University

- MA: Muslims in Contemporary Britain
- Worked with Prof. Gilliat-Ray on: *Islamic Gardens in the UK: dynamics of conservation culture and communities*
- Cultural awareness and integration through shared values
- Environment issues: Islamic environmental principals
- Interfaith and inter-cultural dialog

Discovering Muslims Project

- MOOC – Muslims in Britain Changes and challenges
- Aim: to embed sociological perspectives into RE/RVE teaching by drawing on cutting-edge research and academic scholarship.
- Tackle reported lack confidence when teaching about Islam and Muslim communities by RE/RVE teachers
- Highlight the the diversity within Muslim communities in Britain and challenge monolithic misconceptions about Islam.
- Focus from “Islam” to “Muslim communities”
- Experience the authentic voices of Muslims and their world views.

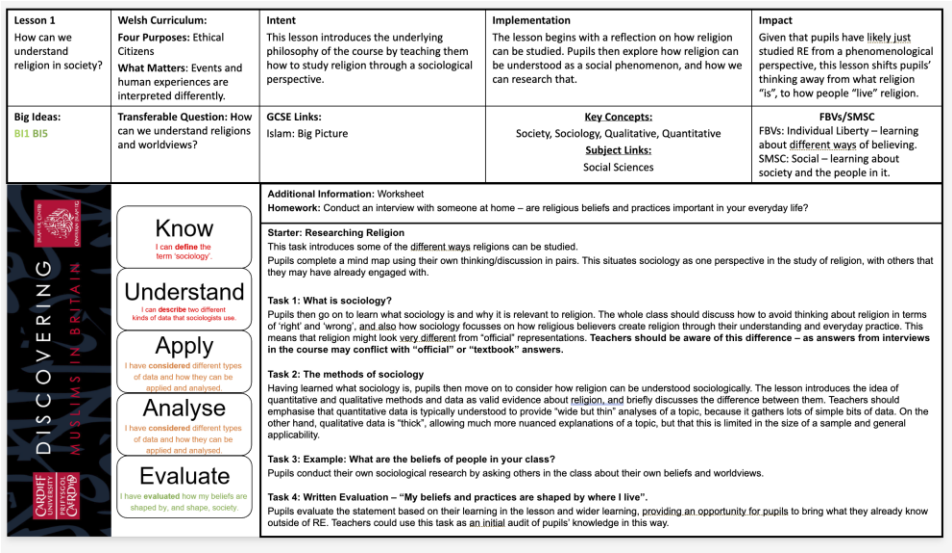
Online course

Currently being redeveloped and relaunching as an on-demand course, offering flexible professional learning.

Progression Steps3-4 Supporting Materials

A set of resources designed to support both subject specialists who wish to adapt materials and non-specialists seeking a ready-made scheme of work.

Access HERE



Lesson 1 How can we understand religion in society?	Welsh Curriculum: **Four Purposes:** Ethical Citizens **What Matters:** Events and human experiences are interpreted differently.	Intent This lesson introduces the underlying philosophy of the course by teaching them how to study religion through a sociological perspective.	Implementation The lesson begins with a reflection on how religion can be studied. Pupils then explore how religion can be understood as a social phenomenon, and how we can research that.	Impact Given that pupils have likely just studied RE from a phenomenological perspective, this lesson shifts pupils' thinking away from what religion "is", to how people "live" religion.
Big Ideas: BI1 BI5	Transferable Question: How can we understand religions and worldviews?	GCSE Links: Islam: Big Picture	Key Concepts: Society, Sociology, Qualitative, Quantitative Subject Links: Social Sciences	FBVs/SMSC FBVs: Individual Liberty – learning about different ways of believing. SMSC: Social – learning about society and the people in it.

DISCOVERING MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN

Know
I can define the term 'sociology'.

Understand
I can describe two different kinds of data that sociologists use.

Apply
I have considered different types of data and how they can be applied and analysed.

Analyse
I have considered different types of data and how they can be applied and analysed.

Evaluate
I have evaluated how my beliefs are shaped by, and shape, society.

Additional Information: Worksheet
Homework: Conduct an interview with someone at home – are religious beliefs and practices important in your everyday life?

Starter: Researching Religion
This task introduces some of the different ways religions can be studied.
Pupils complete a mind map using their own thinking/discussion in pairs. This situates sociology as one perspective in the study of religion, with others that they may have already engaged with.

Task 1: What is sociology?
Pupils then go on to learn what sociology is and why it is relevant to religion. The whole class should discuss how to avoid thinking about religion in terms of 'right' and 'wrong', and also how sociology focusses on how religious believers create religion through their understanding and everyday practice. This means that religion might look very different from "official" representations. **Teachers should be aware of this difference – as answers from interviews in the course may conflict with "official" or "textbook" answers.**

Task 2: The methods of sociology
Having learned what sociology is, pupils then move on to consider how religion can be understood sociologically. The lesson introduces the idea of quantitative and qualitative methods and data as valid evidence about religion, and briefly discusses the difference between them. Teachers should emphasise that quantitative data is typically understood to provide "wide but thin" analyses of a topic, because it gathers lots of simple bits of data. On the other hand, qualitative data is "thick", allowing much more nuanced explanations of a topic, but that this is limited in the size of a sample and general applicability.

Task 3: Example: What are the beliefs of people in your class?
Pupils conduct their own sociological research by asking others in the class about their own beliefs and worldviews.

Task 4: Written Evaluation – "My beliefs and practices are shaped by where I live".
Pupils evaluate the statement based on their learning in the lesson and wider learning, providing an opportunity for pupils to bring what they already know outside of RE. Teachers could use this task as an initial audit of pupils' knowledge in this way.

- How can we understand religion in society?
- What does Islam mean to Muslims?
- How do Muslims follow sources of wisdom and authority today?
- How do Muslims practice their faith?
- What is the history between Muslims and Britain?
- Where are Muslim communities located?
- What is a mosque?
- How do Muslims express their faith through the arts?
- How do Muslims in Britain experience Islamophobia?

Primary Supporting Materials

A set of resources designed to support primary school practitioners.

Access HERE

Four themes:

1. Religion and people
2. Religion and Community
3. What is a mosque
4. Religious celebrations

Ask a Muslim

An interactive tool that centres Muslim voices, enabling learners to engage directly with lived experiences.
Access HERE

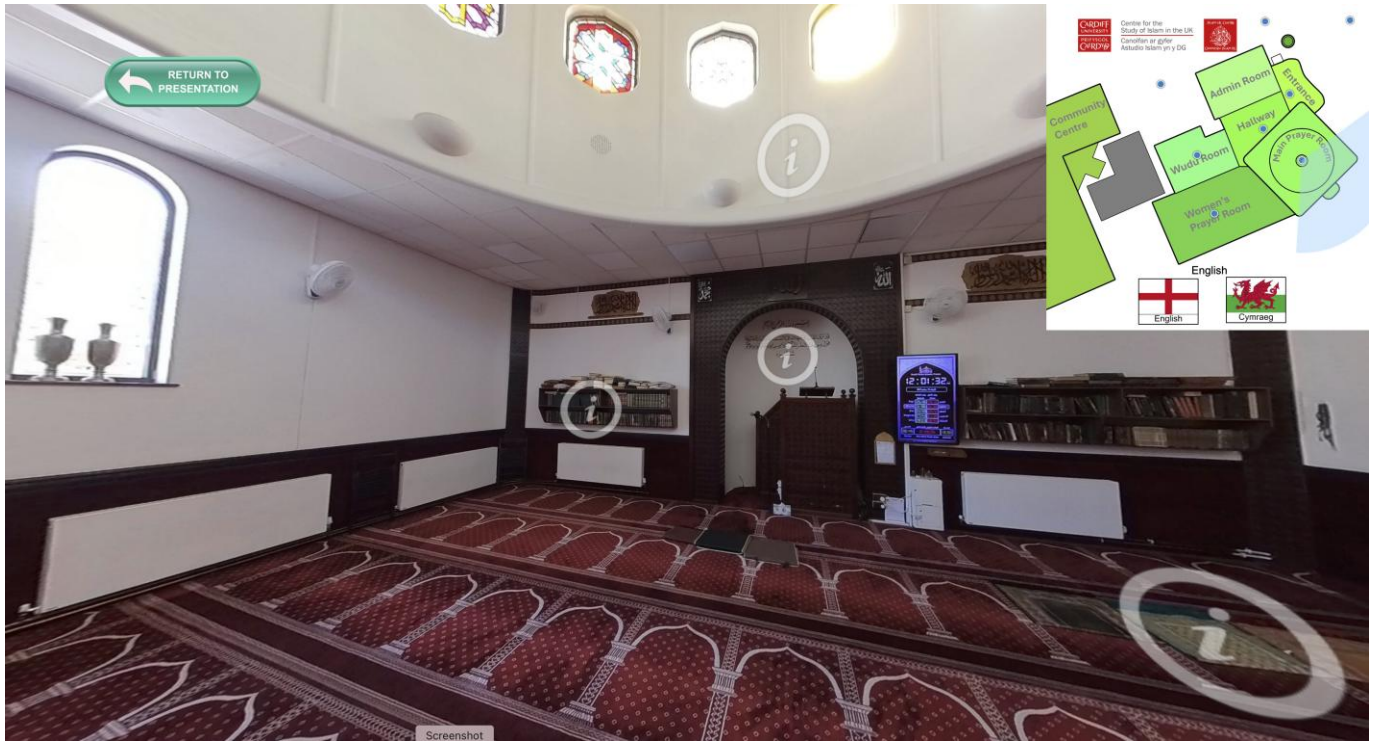
Future plans:

- Fully bilingual
- More ‘young voices’
- Supporting deployment of “What I believe” carousel.

Virtual Mosque

A 3D interactive tour that supports access where school visits may not be possible. Encourages enquiry and independent learning.

Access HERE



Future plans:

- 5 pillars element
- User feedback additional elements
- Add less conventional mosque.

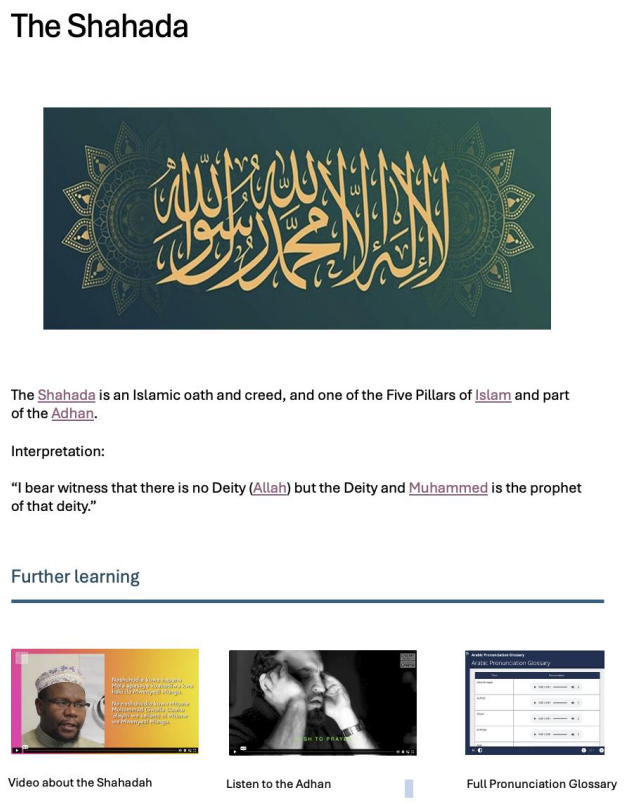
Pronunciation Guide

Supports accurate pronunciation of Arabic terms, aligned with current WJEC curriculum glossaries for GCSE and GCE. This support can also assist RVE practitioners with their confidence in pronouncing Arabic terms in the classroom.

Access HERE

Future plans:

- A level words
- Common Phrases
- User generated words



History of Islam in Wales (E-book)

Showcasing the rich and often overlooked story of Islam in Wales, broadening understanding of a diverse and multi-religious nation. Entwining the historical, sociological, religious and spiritual threads for the Curriculum for Wales, within the humanities AoLE.

Access HERE

Future plans:

As with 'Discovering Muslims' we hope to developed Supporting Materials from the findings of this project that are in line with the Current Curriculum for Wales.

Photographic Competition

Links with expressive arts

Earth Day Event in Cardiff

We are currently exploring ways of producing supporting materials that outline the Islamic Environments Ethic. A project is currently proposed that will see the “Al-Mizan” document made accessible to help RVE partitioners explore the Islamic Voice with areas of the shared Environmental Issues and Climate Crisis we all face.

THANK YOU – QUESTIONS?