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Teacher educators' approaches to teaching Foundation of Islamic Education at a university in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Submitted to the University of Sussex in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signature:…………………………………

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

KSA	The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MoHE	The Ministry of Higher Education
CU	City University
FIE	Foundation of Islamic Education
TPP	Teacher Preparation Program
GPGE	General Presidency for Girls Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ITC	Information technology and communication
GPA	Grade point average
KAUST	King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
CES	Centre of Educational Statistics
MoE	The Ministry of Education

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Glossary

Aql – logic

Aqlī – (acquired by human efforts or by humanly constructed knowledge) attained through rational, intellectual, and philosophical inquiry

Ijtihad – this concept involves using logical argument in understanding live incidents within an Islamic religious framework. It is a dynamic principle in the body of Islam, and plays an important role in the development of all kinds of knowledge by employing logic (*aql*)

Hajj – religious journey to the Muslim holy city of Makkah, performed at a specific time of the year

naqlī – revealed; given to human beings by God, as in the Quran; and transmitted, as in the prophetic tradition.

P.B.U.H. English abbreviation for 'peace be upon him', said and written after mentioning *the Prophet Mohammad*

Quran – Muslims believe the Quran to be the book of divine guidance revealed from God to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years and view the Quran as God's final revelation to humanity.

Shariya – Islamic law

Subhanhu wtaala - The most glorified, the most high. Said and written after mentioning Allah.

Sunnah **–** the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals) of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, as well as various reports about Muhammad's companions.

Umraah – religious journey to the Muslim holy city of Makkah, performed at any time

UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Doctor of Philosophy Thesis

Teacher educators' approaches to teaching Islamic education at a university in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, KSA.

Abstract

Debates about the quality of teacher education in KSA resonate with international debates, which show that teacher educators play an important role in preparing future teachers. This is because they influence the quality of teaching and learning in teacher education programs. Although there are several studies about teacher educators globally (Lattuca et al. 2014; Mansour 2009), there are very few studies relating to KSA. The main aim of this research is to examine the teaching approaches adopted by female teacher educators teaching the subject of Foundation of Islamic Education (FIE) at the College of Education, City University (CU), KSA. I draw on the ideas of social constructivists and others (Vygotsky 1978; Freire, 2001; Bloom, 1994; and Bruner, 1996) as an explanatory framework to develop a nuanced understanding of how these teacher educators approach teaching and learning. This research also draws on institutional theory to examine how the university's policies and structure influence teaching approaches. The overarching research question of this study is, 'What are the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators and how are they influenced by the institutional policy of CU?' This study is qualitative in nature, adopting the case study approach. The case in this research is teacher educators who teach the FIE course. The main data collection tools are semi-structured interviews, supported by document review and observations. The participants in this study are purposively selected female teacher educators. In addition, the perspectives of students studying the course were considered in order to enrich the data.

This study includes findings related to institutional policies. These findings focus on identifying and examining the university's policies, structure, expectations, and demands, as they relate to encouraging students' active learning and influence teacher educators' approaches to teaching and learning. Specifically, it highlights how the university's policies in relation to assessment, in-service

training, and the integration of Information Communication Technology (ICT) affect the teaching approaches that teacher educators deploy.

Additionally, the study discusses the teaching approaches adopted by the teacher educators in the FIE course. It finds that these approaches, amongst the majority of the teacher educator participants, tend to be teacher-centred. Teacher educators using this approach consider their role to be that of knowledge transmitters. It suggests that they make decisions as to what is to be learnt and how their students should learn. They view themselves, their skills, and their learning materials as the main source of knowledge in the classroom. On the other hand, some teacher educators use student-centred approaches in which they encourage their students to take control of their own learning. The study considers how these teachers encourage their students to participate in the teaching and learning process. These teacher educators regard themselves as facilitators who help their students construct their own meaning.

This study contributes to the knowledge about teaching approaches, especially in the context of higher education in KSA. It highlights the diverse nature of Islamic education and how this influences the way the FIE course is taught. This study provides suggestions for further research which can contribute, theoretically and methodologically, to teaching and learning in KSA higher education institutions. It also discusses the implications of the findings for the improvement of teaching practices; this includes revising polices and providing teacher educators with the necessary support to become confident in using student-centred approaches in their classrooms.

1: Introduction

This chapter introduces the study. It provides the background and the rationale of the study, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1. Background to the study

The importance of high quality teaching and learning for prospective future teachers means that teacher educators are now being challenged to play a crucial role in preparing these teachers. Teacher educators are expected to inculcate in prospective teachers sound teaching beliefs, good practices, and a knowledge of education, which they will then use in their teaching in classrooms.

Research has linked the success and quality of educational programmes to the quality of teacher educators (Darling-Hammond 2011; Prosser et al. 2003; Ramsden 1992). This emphasis on good quality teaching highlights the importance of the role of teacher educators (Loughran 2014). Indeed, previous research on teacher education has emphasised the fact that the success of teacher training programmes depends mainly on the teacher educators (O'Sullivan, 2010). Thus, the importance of teacher educators and their role has been studied in relation to their understanding of knowledge, learning, and learners, and their teaching approaches (Rizvi and Gorur 2011; McKeon and Harrison 2010; Loewenberg and Forzani 2011; Handal 2003).

The research argues that approaches to teaching involve more than teaching practices; these approaches are also influenced by teachers' understanding of knowledge construction, their understanding of learning, and their perceptions of the learner. Changes in their practices can be viewed as stemming from changes in their beliefs about teaching, knowledge, and learners. Research further shows that teaching can be influenced by personal factors and the professional contexts in which teachers work (Scott 2013; Bertels et al. 2014).

The extant research on teacher educators and their understanding of knowledge, learning, and learners has primarily been conducted in Western contexts (e.g. Aisling et al. 2007). Therefore, there is a limited amount of published work that focuses on teacher educators in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), and which concerns higher education, mentioning also the subject of FIE. Although Saudi higher education has recently undergone significant changes in terms of research, policy development, the recruiting and hiring of foreign faculty members, the design of new materials, and the introduction of state-of-the-art educational technology into classrooms, the subject of teacher educators has largely been overlooked by researchers (Alghamdi 2012). This study fills this gap by focusing on teacher educators' teaching approaches and examining how university policies affect them.

1.2. Aims and rationale of the study

This study explores teacher educators' approaches to teaching and the relationship between these approaches and CU policies. Specifically, the study focuses on the views and perspectives of teacher educators teaching Islamic education in a female College of Education.

My interest in conducting this research stems from my professional career as a teacher educator and my experiences teaching in the College of Education for three years.

Furthermore, education in Saudi Arabia is currently undergoing wide-ranging reforms at all levels, including higher education. This development was initiated by the government through a project called *tatweer*[1] (see Chapter 2 for more about the national policy). This initiative seeks to improve the overall quality of public and private education by achieving a number of objectives. These include the development of educational curricula that comply with modern scientific and technical developments and meet the value-based knowledge and professional needs of male and female students. Additionally, the plan calls for the adoption

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[1] *Tatweer* refers to a government-issued national strategic plan for reforming and developing education. It contains ten objectives for education and the policies are intended to facilitate the achievement of the objectives.

of new methods of teaching and learning through pre-teaching training conducted by universities and institutions specializing in preparing teachers and through the ongoing training of those currently employed as educators.

The Saudi government has introduced intensive courses and workshops as part of a project called the New Teacher Project. The aim of this project is to train newly qualified teachers to work in public schools, and it focuses on developing teachers' planning skills and pedagogy (Tatweer 2012). The rationale behind this is that teacher education colleges are not responding to the reforms in a way that provides public schools with good quality teacher graduates. As a teacher educator myself, these developments inspired me to conduct this study and explore in depth the teaching and learning at the College of Education, focusing on Islamic education. In this research, I focused on this subject in particular because it is one of the core subjects in the teacher preparation programme (TPP). Also, there are dilemmas and misconceptions about the teaching of Islamic education, especially that teaching in this subject tends to be teacher-centred. Additionally, I have had experience of teaching this subject, which made me realise the need to explore it in detail. Thus, the aim of this research is to explore the various teaching approaches adopted by female teacher educators, particularly those teaching FIE in the Faculty of Education at City University (CU)[2] in KSA.

1.3. Summary of the methodology

The focus of the study is on female teacher educators who teach the FIE course in the Faculty of Education at CU in KSA. The participants are all females because of the dominant religion in KSA, where physical gender segregation in society and in organisations is legally required. This means that males and females who are not related should not have direct contact with each other. As I am a Saudi national and a female researcher, it was unlikely that I would be allowed to interact with male teachers or students directly for the purposes of conducting this study. As a female professional working in KSA, the issues were directly related to me, and I was interested in exploring the context of women

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2 Pseudonym to protect the identities and confidentiality of the participants

professionals contributing to the literature on teaching and learning from the perspective of teacher educators. Specifically, I was interested in researching the teaching approaches of female teacher educators at the university level, which has largely been overlooked in the context of KSA.

An interpretivist research paradigm and a case study approach were adopted for the inquiry. Interviews, observations, and document reviews were employed as data collection tools. The sample used for the study comprised teacher educators and administrators. This was complemented by including the views of the students of these teacher educators.

1.4. Research questions

Based on the above, the following overarching question was formulated to guide this study:

What are the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators, and how are they influenced by the institutional policy of the City University in the KSA?

In order to answer this main question, the following sub-questions were developed, each of which is addressed separately in the findings chapters later in this thesis:

1. How does the university as an institution influence teacher educators' teaching of the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?
2. What are the teaching approaches of teacher educators teaching the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?

The main issues examined in this current study in relation to teaching and learning approaches are traditional teacher-centred pedagogy and constructive student-centred pedagogy, as they relate to Islamic education (see Chapter 3).

These approaches to teaching and learning are used as a framework to examine the teacher educators' teaching practices and methods in teaching FIE in the College of Education at CU. Also, this study examines the institutional aspects and policies that operate in CU and affect the processes of teaching and learning.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 provides the background of the study, followed by the aim and rationale of the study. It also gives an overview of the methodology and the research questions.

Chapter 2 presents the context of the study. The context is KSA, and the key issue is the fact that Islam is the dominant religion, which influences everything from culture to education in the country. The subject being studied, which is called the 'Foundation of Islamic Education' (FIE), is also centred on the Islamic faith and its practices.

Chapter 3 reviews the relevant literature. It includes a discussion of literature on institutional policies and how they influence teacher educators' teaching practices. It then considers the teaching approaches, with attention given to the main teaching approaches used in higher education in KSA. The first of these is teacher-centred, which involves teachers transmitting knowledge to their students. The second is described as a student-centred approach, which involves allowing and encouraging students to participate and to question, analyse, critique, and develop their understanding. Some aspects of structured pedagogy are also highlighted. This review of the literature further addresses the aims of learning and teaching in Islam and discusses teaching and learning in relation to Islamic education.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology. It starts with a discussion of my philosophical stance. My ontological and epistemological positions are explained in relation to the nature of my research questions and the overall

approach taken in this study. This is followed by a description of the research methodology, which is the case study. This chapter further discusses my position as a researcher. The various methods of data collection are explained in this chapter. These include the use of document reviews, observations, and semi-structured interviews. The chapter then describes the recruitment and sampling of participants. This is followed by a description of the data analysis procedures, including the process of transcribing and translating the interviews, document analysis, and observation. The chapter ends with a discussion of the issue of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study.

Drawing on the interview and observation data, the findings are discussed separately in Chapters 5 and 6 in relation to each of the research questions.

Chapter 5 examines how the policies of the university as an institution affect teacher educators' teaching practices. This chapter takes a critical look at the various policies that the university sanctions in relation to teaching. Specifically, it discusses the training provided to teacher educators, the size of the classrooms, the assessment of students, and the integration of technology.

Chapter 6 discusses the teacher educators' teaching approaches, which highlight their preference for a teacher-centred pedagogy. The teacher educators' roles and their views concerning students' roles are also discussed. In addition, the teacher educators' teaching practices and their views on assessment are examined. The teaching practices are then explored from the perspective of those who showed a preference for a teacher-centred pedagogy in their teaching.

Chapter 7 concludes the study. Here, the main findings of the study are discussed and summarised, the contribution of the study is described, and recommendations for policy makers, teacher educators (practitioners), and researchers are put forward. In addition, the chapter includes a reflection on the research journey.

2: Context of the study

This chapter provides details about the context of the study, which is KSA. Section 2.1 introduces the national context and outlines Saudi Arabia's historical and social background. Section 2.2 discusses the general education system in Saudi Arabia, and more specifically, the higher education sector. This is followed by a discussion of the teaching and the learning of Islamic studies in Saudi higher education in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 respectively. Section 2.5 discusses the specific context in which the study took place, namely, City University (CU). This section considers FIE as a subject taught in the College of Education at CU. Teacher preparation as a programme is also discussed in this section.

2.1. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

KSA, established in 1932, covers an area of 2.15 million square kilometres. It shares borders with Jordan and Iraq in the north; the Persian Gulf, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the east; and Yemen and Oman in the south (Al-hawsawi 2013). The capital city, Riyadh, is situated in the centre of the country, while the religious capitals of Makkah and Medina are located in the western part of the country, as shown in Figure 2.1. These two areas attract a huge amount of religious-based tourism throughout the year when pilgrims visit to perform Umraah and Hajj, the latter being the holiest pilgrimage.

Figure 0.1: Saudi Arabia map (sources: Encyclopaedia of Saudi Arabia)

The total population of KSA is almost 31 million, and of these, 10.1 million are registered as foreign expatriates (CDSI 2015). The indigenous people of the country are Arabs, and the official language is Arabic, although English is widely spoken in business circles and at some educational institutions (Alhawsawi 2013). The importance of education is increasing, particularly higher education, so that graduates are able to compete globally in their further studies and their careers and can trade and travel with ease (Al-roomy 2013). Saudi Arabia has the largest oil reserves in the world and is the second largest exporter of oil. Thus, its economy is heavily dependent on oil revenues to finance government spending.

As mentioned previously, KSA was established in 1932 by the Al Saud family as a monarchy; it is an Arabic and Islamic state with a centralised government. The country was established based on the Islamic religion, and Arabic is the official language. There are two political councils in Saudi Arabia. At the highest level is the Council of Ministers, headed by the King. This council is an executive government body that is in charge of the constitution of the country. The

members are nominated by the King (Saudi Arabia Council 2015; Cordesman 2002). In 2009, the council appointed the first female minister, for female education. This was the first time a Saudi female council member had come to hold this ministry position. At the second level is the Shura (consultation) Council, comprising 150 members, who are also nominated by the King. In 2013, women were allowed to become members of the Council and now constitute 20% of the representatives (Majlis Ash-Shura 2013).

The official religion of KSA is Islam, and it is illegal to publicly practise any other religion. Although no official figures are kept, about 90% of the Muslim population are believed to be Sunni, which is the official and dominant sect. The remaining 10% of Saudi's population are believed to be Shi'a. Sunni and Shi'a are both considered to be Muslims, with differences between them arising from differences in certain religious beliefs and practices of Islam. The Sunnis chose the prophet's adviser, Abu Bakr, as their first Caliph, or leader of the first Muslim state. The Shi'as followed Ali, who was married to Fatema, the prophet's daughter, and who was also a cousin to the prophet. Thus, he shared a bloodline with the prophet, as a result of which Shi'as consider themselves to be descended from the prophet (Al-Qudaihi 2009).

The Sunni Islam followed in KSA is Hanbali, which is one of the four branches of Sunni[3] schools of thought. The Hanbali school follows closely the literal understandings of the religion's texts and accepts 'analogical inference among the Sunni Muslims' (Hasan 2012). This school is recognised as having a strict approach to religion compared to, for example, the Hanafi School, but it gives more weight to the 'public interest' within an Islamic framework (ibid.) (for further clarification see section 3.4.2.). The highest religious authority in KSA consists of religious scholars and jurists; 17 members are representatives from the Sunni Hanbali school of thought, and only 1 represents the other three Sunni schools (Hanafi, Malik, Shafi'i) (IRFR 2014).

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[3] Shi'a Islam also has different schools of thought: the twelvers (Ithna Ashariyya), and the Seveners (the Ismailis) (Hasan 2012).

Although Hanbali is dominant in KSA, in 2007, the government enacted a policy that allows for more religious dialogue in the country amongst different religious communities (KAICIID 2016). This openness has made it more acceptable amongst religious scholars and the public to practice different interpretations of Islamic texts. Diversity in the interpretations comes from methods drawn from any of the four Sunni schools of thought. However, this openness has created tension and controversy between officially appointed scholars and their followers, who closely adhere to the Hanbali school, and some public religious lecturers and figures, who respond to questions about human actions or provide answers from classical Islamic literature (ibid.). Nonetheless, Hanbali thought still dominates and has the most authority within KSA.

2.2. Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

The government of Saudi Arabia has long encouraged education, and it allocates a large budget to the continuous improvement of education in the country. In 2015, the higher education sector received about 25% of the country's budget (MoE 2015).

Since 1924, when the Directorate of Education was established by the government (MoE 2013), education in KSA, primary to post-higher education, has been provided free of charge. Students enrol in primary education from the age of seven, and graduate from secondary school at the age of eighteen. The aim of the Saudi educational system is to provide religious, moral, and intellectual training to create citizens who are aware of their rights and of their obligations to society. Educational policy in KSA states that the aim of education is the

> correct understanding of Islam and the inculcation and dissemination of the Islamic creed, the imbuing of the student with Islamic values, doctrines and ideals, the imparting of various types of knowledge and skills, the social, economic and cultural development of society, and the preparation of the individual to be a useful participant in the building of society. (Al-Aqeel 2005: 135)

2.2.1. School education

Public education has been regulated at different times by the Directorate of Education (DOE) for boys' education and the General Presidency for Girls' Education (GPGE), and more recently by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for both sexes. Recently, in January 2015, the administration of public and private education was merged into one single Ministry of Education (MoE 2016a), which includes all types of education, e.g., special education as well as universities (Khazim 2015). The expansion of education has raised concerns about its quality, as noted by Muallim (2013) and Khazim (2015).

Students enrol in kindergarten at the age of 3, though this is optional. The official education starts with primary school; students enrol at the age of 6 and remain for 6 years. Students then enter secondary school at the age of 13 for 3 years, following which they attend high school, finishing at the age of 18. After 12 years of compulsory education, students can look for work or pursue higher education.

In 2007, the total number of students was 4,963,000, distributed over 33,105 schools. There were about 444,644 teachers, both female and male. In 2015, there were 1,127 government nurseries, with 59,016 students; 12,601 primary schools, with 2,275,606 students; 7,224 secondary schools with 1,105,153 students; and 4,763 high schools, with 993,025 students (MoE 2016). In 2015, private education included 3,948 schools, with 34,602 classes, attended by 641,991 students (ibid.). There are currently (in 2015) 527,030 female and male teachers distributed among more than 53,000 schools (MoE 2016) across all levels of public education, which is considerably more than there were in 2014, when there was a total of 248,294 female teachers and 205,207 male teachers. The total number of students stands at 2,279,172 male and 2,496,523 female students (ibid.).

2.2.2. Universities in Saudi Arabia

The higher education system was established in Saudi Arabia in 1957, with the opening of a male-only university called King Saud University. At its inception, it comprised 21 students and 9 members of staff.

The first female university was opened in 1974 in Riyadh as part of King Saud University (Saleh 1986). Actual female participation in higher education began in 1962, but through distance learning and with only four students. Distance learning offered women the opportunity to study in two colleges: humanities, and business and management (Alzahrani 2004). As education in the Kingdom is segregated according to gender, women used to receive instruction mainly via closed circuit television (Saleh 1986).

By 1989, Saudi Arabia had a university education system consisting of seven main universities, each of which had a number of colleges. There were 10,758 female students, out of a total student population of 49,188, and 5,841 academic teachers, of whom 1,222 were female. By 2003, the number of universities had increased rapidly; there were 21 private colleges, each specialising in a single science, e.g., the College of Medical Science and the College of Business Science. In 2014, the number of students enrolled in universities across the country was 1,205,458, and the number of academic teachers had reached 63,363 (MoE 2016).

In 2015, the government offered 306,533 places in higher education across the country, and student enrolment reached 76.79%. Despite the expansion of higher education and the availability of places, however, universities are now restricting access in order to improve quality. Even so, researchers investigating the provisions of Saudi higher education still argue that the quality needs to be improved further (Hamdan 2005; Al-hawsawi 2013).

According to the university system, degrees in the humanities and social sciences take four years to complete, and degrees in medicine, pharmacy, and engineering take six years. The academic year is divided into two main semesters; each semester consists of 15 weeks plus 2 weeks for examinations.

In addition, there is also a summer semester, but this is optional, and it is 8 weeks long, half the length of the main semesters, plus 2 weeks of examinations (HoE 2016).

2.2.3. Teacher education

This section discusses teacher education, focusing specifically on female teacher educators recognising that some elements are the same between males and females. Teacher education in KSA is provided by both universities and colleges. The colleges system started in 1973, at which time, the only entrance requirement was to have completed primary school. The course was only 3 years long, and graduates were recruited to teach in primary schools. In 1978, there were only four colleges of teacher education that offered a 2-year programme, to which only secondary school graduates were admitted. These teachers were also qualified to teach only at the primary school level.

In 1990, all teacher preparation colleges, both male and female, developed into academic colleges, with male and female teachers having to study in segregated colleges. Both male and female teachers are awarded bachelor's degrees in specific subjects with educational preparation following their successful completion of a four-year programme. Also, these colleges became more specialised in terms of preparing teachers for particular levels of education, i.e., some were for secondary and middle schools and others for primary schools. By 1990, there were 68 female colleges. The number of female students was 110,631, and there were around 3,290 female academic teachers (Alamr 1998).

The university system of teacher preparation was established in the early 1970s. It was then available in only four universities out of the seven, namely, Umm Alqura University, Saud University, Abdulaziz University, and King Alfaisal University. The system was similar to that of the colleges of education: students studied a subject and teacher preparation for four years, earning a bachelor's degree at the end. Only in 1999 was the five-year TPP introduced to the colleges of education in these universities. This also applies to female TTPs.

As part of the government's on-going development of education, all of the colleges of education were merged with universities in their region in 2006, thereby becoming an integral part of the universities. This also applied to female colleges of education, as their programmes were also integrated into the existing system of university TPPs. However, not all of the 24 universities included a college of education because some of them focused on a particular field of science, for example, King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

In 2006, after the merger, teacher preparation was extended to five years, that is, a four-year bachelor's degree plus one year of teacher training (Fallatah 2014; MoE 2016a). This system of study allowed students to fulfil the requirements of their bachelor's subjects in any college they chose. For example, a student could study biology in the college of sciences at any of the universities. For such a student to obtain access to the one-year TPP, she/he could then apply for a place through the college of education. The student was not required to fulfil any additional criteria to qualify for the TPP. This has given rise to two points: first, it means there is a wide range of learning abilities amongst students at the same college, and second, it can create challenges for teacher educators in terms of designing learning activities and teaching practices since they are obliged to teach students with such a wide range of academic ability.

In 2014, out of a total of 62,828 students who enrolled in TPPs in colleges of education, 48,324 were female. Table 2.1 below shows the number of students graduating from universities in KSA with a bachelor's degree and subsequent teacher preparation (MoE 2016b).

Table 0.1: Student graduation statistics from Saudi universities with a bachelor's degree and teacher preparation (MoE 2016b)

	Number of students graduating with teacher preparation	Number of students graduating from religious colleges	Number of teacher educators
Year	2014	2014	2014
Male	14,504	9,485	3,344
Female	48,324	11,254	3,003
Total	62,828	20,739	6,347

As the table above shows, the number of academic teachers at colleges of education had reached 6,347 by 2014. This number includes all academic teachers at the university colleges of education, not just those involved in teaching in the TPPs. This is because the teachers in these programmes do not teach exclusively in the colleges of education; there is further discussion of this in the next section.

TPPs supply public schools with qualified teachers. Teachers are generally hired locally to deliver the instructional programmes in schools. Teachers are also likely to be recruited from outside the country, especially in the private sector, which charges for education (MoE 2015a). It was found that the main recruiting criterion used by the MoE to hire teachers is the degree(s) they have been awarded; teachers' teaching abilities are not always evaluated. For example, it is possible for a teacher to have done the theory, but not to have had adequate access to relevant teaching practice, such as new teaching methods and approaches (Alabdullalkareem 2009). This is believed to negatively influence teacher quality and education in general (ibid.).

As a result of the Saudi government's concern regarding educational development, an efficiency test was introduced in 2004 as a trial for newly hired teachers. The result showed that only 27% were able to achieve a mark of at least 40%. The efficiency test is administered by a government body called the 'National Centre for Assessment in HE' (NCA-HE 2015). Any graduates are eligible to apply for this programme, but only once a year.

The efficiency test is a multiple choice test. It measures the individual's knowledge and teaching strategy and covers various aspects of the teaching profession. The test contains two parts. The first is general, with questions about education and the teaching profession, accounting for 10% of the total score, and about teaching strategies and skills, which account for 15% of the final score. The second section is specific, containing questions that cover the teacher's academic specialty, and this section accounts for 75% of the total score. There are 25 specialties included in this test, for example, Islamic education, ITC, and geography. The minimum requirement for passing this test is a score of 50%. In 2015, 386,356 teachers applied to take this test (NCA-HE 2016).

In 2009, the efficiency test was set as a condition for the recruitment of male teachers (Alabdullalkareem 2009). In 2013, it was also made a condition that female teachers had to satisfy in order to be eligible to teach in schools (Alriyadh newspaper 2013)

TPPs, as an academic reference for teachers of both genders in schools, have also been criticised for the poor quality of the teachers they produce (Alhejelan 2009). In these programmes, the teaching of Islamic education, like that of other subjects, is based on traditional approaches to learning (Muallim 2009; Almughrab 2005). These programmes have not been found to employ teaching and learning strategies, such as active learning or critical thinking, which emphasise the development of thinking skills, the use of technology, and the application of more active learning (Al-mufadah 2004; Al-najdy 2001). This influences teacher trainees and could deter them from adopting a variety of

teaching methods through which to develop their future teaching techniques (Al-sayf 2006).

2.2.4. Teaching and learning Islamic studies at Saudi universities

The Education Policy, enacted in 1965, emphasises the importance of Islam at all levels of education. Furthermore, the constitution of the country states that the Islamic religion is the backbone of education in the country (Shura Council 2015). The objectives of the policy include "*Promoting the spirit of loyalty to Islamic law* and *Demonstrating the full harmony between science and religion in Islamic law*" (Saudi Arabia - International Bureau of Education 2001:15; Saudi Arabia Higher Committee 1974).

This indicates that Islam is taught not only as a subject or as a full degree, but as an integral part of all educational courses. For example, Islam is an element of studies such as education, economics, sociology, psychology, and law (Abdullah 1996). Indeed, it is viewed as the basis or foundation of knowledge using the Quran and the Sunnah as its sources of explication, interpretation, and understanding (Council of Shura 2015). Thus, an overview of these elements is provided below.

2.2.5. The Quran

The Quran is the primary or main text of Islam, and Muslim scholars view it as the source of all primary legislative regulations to be applied in Muslim societies, in the education system, and in the formulation, preparation, and upbringing of Muslims. Islamic education is influenced by certain characteristics, as reflected in the text of the Quran (Al-hammed 2002; Alshanary 2010). Thus, the 'Quran' refers to the word and the book of Allah (God) that was revealed to the prophet of Islam, Muhammed (P.B.U.H.) and taught by him (Al-hammed 2002).

2.2.6. Sunnah

The Sunnah is the second source of the Islamic knowledge after the holy Quran. The Arabic word 'Sunnah' encompasses the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, habits, silent permissions (or disapprovals), and endorsements of the Islamic prophet Mohammad. Reports about Mohammad's companions are also included in this source (Al-hammed 2002). Muslims believe that all Islamic religious knowledge comes from the Quran and the Sunnah, and all Muslim scholars believe in the importance of the Sunnah to Islamic Law, as the Sunnah provides, amongst other things, explanations of the Quran. Thus, while the Quran states broad rules, the Sunnah provides details of these laws as well as of their practical application (Al-hammed 2002).

2.2.7. Teaching and learning

Islamic studies subjects are part of all levels of Saudi education. The subjects studied in all levels, including schools and university are Quran; Tajweed, referring to the rules governing pronunciation during recitation of the Qur'an; Tafsir, the science of explanation and interpretation of the Quran; Hadiths, which with the prophet's biography refer to the traditions of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) (Sunnah); Tawhid, which means monotheism, that is, Muslims believe that God cannot be held equal in any way to other beings or concepts (Madcor 1999); and finally, Fiqh and behaviour, which is Islamic jurisprudence and comprises the rulings of Islamic jurists that direct the lives of Muslims (Al-Hashmee 1997). However, each subject exists at different degrees of academic intensity for different ages and levels (Al-hawsawi 2013). For example in lower primary schools, only three of the subjects discussed above (Quran, Tawheed, and Fiqh) are included in their studies. In secondary schools, seven subjects are studied. Table 2.2 shows the Islamic subjects taught according to the level of education.

Table 0.2: Islamic subjects taught in KSA public schools (Alzulfi- education administration, 2016)

Educational level	Number of subjects	Islamic subjects
Lower primary schools	3	Quran recitation and memorisation, Tawheed, Fiqh.
Upper primary schools	5	Quran recitation and memorisation, Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, Tajweed.
Middle schools	6	Quran recitation and memorisation, Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, Tajweed, Tafseer.
Secondary schools	7	Quran recitation and memorisation, Tawheed, Fiqh, Hadith, Tajweed, Tafseer, Islamic inheritance law.

At the university level, the teaching of Islamic topics is more specialised. There are a number of colleges that deal with specific Islamic topics as well as with established sciences. These are the College of Islamic law, the Quran and Sunnah, the Dawa and Foundations of the Islamic Religion, the School of Economics and Islamic Finance. Each of these colleges includes different departments that deal with different Islamic topics.

Additionally, Saudi universities teach certain Islamic subjects as core requirements across all university colleges including science, arts and humanities, engineering, etc. These core subjects are Quranic recitation and memorisation, and Islamic culture. These subjects are offered at four levels, and 30 credit hours are given for each subject in each of the four semesters. These subjects are included in the students' study plans as part of the requirements of their bachelor's degrees. This means that Islam as a subject is taught at different levels of education across KSA, and that while the content may be different, a variety of subjects related to the main Islamic sources are always addressed.

2.3. National education policy of KSA

Educational reforms in Saudi Arabia have been undertaken since 2011. In that year, the government developed a national strategy for educational development called *Tatweer*. As discussed earlier, this policy emphasises creativity and encourages innovative teaching and learning as mentioned in the quotation below:

> *The education development strategies are based on different values. They emphasise that education should help enhance students' identity, focus on students' learning, as they are center of education, [they are] based on the principle of equal opportunity [and they] enable development, creativity and innovation; [also] education should be based on collaboration among different educational bodies and social players, e.g. the parents. (Tatweer 2011: 13)*

The 'Tatweer' reforms include ten objectives as follows: 1) Encourage public schools to self-manage their development according to their needs; 2) Enhance curriculum and develop teaching methods and assessment methods to promote student learning; 3) Provide equal learning opportunities and support systems for all students; 4) Emphasise education for all children starting from the kindergarten level; 5) Create an infrastructure and educational environment that meets the learning requirements of the 21st century; 6) Support students in their

personal development; 7) Enhance cooperation with families and communities in support of a learning culture; 8) Develop a system for the teaching job to be recognized as a profession in itself; 9) Enable the effective application of technology and expand its usage in a way that improves learning outcomes and learning performance; and 10) Improve accountability, leadership, incentives and educational policies to maintain the ongoing development of schools. Each of these objectives comes with a specific set of policies to be achieved (Tatweer 2011). These objectives have a direct relation to teaching and learning as discussed below. In particular, I only discuss those objectives that directally relate to my study.

The second objective of the above ten is to enhance the curriculum, the teaching and learning methods, and the assessment methods in a way that affects student learning positively. This can be achieved by 'ensuring harmony between the new curricula and the assessment of student learning' (Tatweer 2011:17).

The fifth objective is to create an educational environment that meets the learning requirements of the 21st century. This objective is to be achieved through enhancing educational institutions, including buildings and the physical infrastructure, and schools in particular, as well as by investing in and expanding the use of ICT in the learning process, along with ensuring the adequate maintenance of existing ICT equipment in educational institutions.

The eighth objective is to foster teachers' growth and recognize teaching as a profession. This is to be achieved through the following policies: reinforce the relationship between teacher training colleges and public schools,; develop criteria and applications for the teaching profession, promote the principle of reinforcement and accountability across the teaching profession, and increase the effective use and adoption of technology in a way that helps to improve teaching and learning performance in educational institutions.

The ninth objective is to enable an effective use of technology and expand the use of it in a way that improves learning outcomes and learning performance. The following policies are proposed for the achievement of this objective: develop a national educational website for the exchange of knowledge and

experience; develop digital learning material to support teaching and learning; develop educationists' ICT skills in a way that helps them integrate digital learning material into their teaching practices; and establish an online forum to provide training courses for teachers and educationists.

2.4. Teaching and learning policy at City University

Through the quality assurance unit, CU issues a guidebook on teaching and learning called *Guidance for Effective Teaching at University*. This book is for all teaching members or the academic faculty at the university, including the College of Education. The book states the importance of understanding teaching at the university level:

> Teaching at the university is a difficult task. It requires that an academic teacher has long experience in driving different ideas and directing them towards the desired goal. It also requires the adaptation of creative teaching strategies that emphasise the effective role of students in a way that helps them invest in their skills and become innovative learners and continually develop their skills. (*Guidance for Effective Teaching at University*: p. iv)

This guidebook has five chapters. These include an introduction to and the basis of effective teaching. The book also contains a chapter on the role of academic teachers as guides and facilitators of student learning. In addition, there is a chapter on assessment, which provides a description of different forms of assessment, such as examinations and the use of different types of questioning. The assessment section of this guide also discusses alternative methods of assessment, such as continuous feedback, self-assessment, student projects, and presentations.

Both the national government policy and that of CU are directed towards active learning and teaching, and both policies view students as central to the teaching and learning process. Both policies promote active teaching and learning

practices and suggest the need to support teachers to adopt new teaching approaches. Furthermore, both policies highlight the importance of infrastructure in achieving these objective, and they provide guidance on active learning. This reflects a commitment to fostering an understanding of the new approach to teaching and its related practices in CU.

2.5. City University (CU)

CU is a large public university in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. It is located in the western region of Saudi Arabia and is considered to be the oldest university in the country. The university was established as the College of Shariya (Islamic Law) in 1949 before being joined by new colleges and renamed CU by royal decree in 1981 (MoE 2016a). CU started primarily as an Islamic university offering degrees in Islamic Law and Arabic language studies. It now offers more courses in diverse subjects, such as technology management, business management, Islamic economics, marketing, engineering, technology, medicine, education, and architecture, as well as various applied, social, and engineering sciences. This university is affiliated with several colleges in the neighbouring territories and encompasses more than 25 colleges with different specialisations. This makes it a multi-disciplinary university. CU is a public university and is ranked fifth in the country. In 2015, its annual budget was around SR 3 billion/ US\$ 799818.72 (1 US\$ = SR 3.75).

The Teachers' College of education was established in 1952, at which time it was attached to and managed by the College of Shariya. In 1962, the College of Education was established as an independent college.

The number of students enrolled in the university in 2013 was 81,012, which is not high compared to similar long-established universities, such as King Faisal and King Abdul-Aziz universities, which have 186,389 and 169,133 students respectively (CES 2015). The lower student participation in the university could be due to its proximity to more competitive universities in the same region; King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, ranks third. In addition, compared to more established universities, it would be expected to have lower or more flexible

requirements. Also in the area are Jeddah University, newly established in 2014, and KAUST, a public postgraduate Science and Technology University which is known to be a research-based international university.

In 2014, student enrolment in all specialised subjects and degree courses at CU was 10,097, with more females (5,655) 55% than males 45% (4,442). In 2014, CU had 4,898 faculty members: 1,945 females and 2,953 males. The difference in the female to male ratio has been acknowledged, and it has been made a priority in the future agenda of higher education to achieve an equal ratio by 2030 (Future plan for university education in KSA, MHE 2015). The aim is to create a balance in teacher-student ratios in order to meet recommended international percentage targets (ibid.).

The strategy for recruiting academic teachers is formulated by the Ministry of Higher Education. The only obvious condition is that the candidate's achievement record must be at least 'very good' or equivalent to a British second class degree in terms of GPA. All levels of academic degree, i.e., bachelor, master, and PhD, are accepted for CU teaching jobs according to the HE recruitment policy document (see MoE 2015a). Nevertheless, individual universities have authority regarding their recruitment criteria, and so CU has raised the recruitment requirement for hiring academic teachers over the years. Thus, the College of Education requires a master's degree or above for most academic jobs; bachelor's degrees are rarely accepted. In 2012, the college required a minimum of a bachelor's degree for 16 teaching positions, whereas 11 required above a master's and 3 required a master's (Job advertisement, Riyadh newspaper 2012). However, in 2014, only 3 academic jobs out of 64 required only a master's and the rest required grades higher than a master's degree level (CU job advertisement 2014). The increase in the requirements for recruitment on the course suggests the university's commitment to raising the level of teaching and learning.

Arabic is the medium of instruction used in all of the different religious faculties and courses in KSA, and the higher education policy issued in 1999 states:

"Arabic is the language of instruction in universities. Another language can be used if necessary" (Saudi Ministry of Higher Education 1999).

Clearly, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education is encouraging Arabic to be used as the main language of instruction in public universities including CU, and this has been the case since the establishment of higher education institutions in 1926. This is why the ministry noted in the constitution of HE in 1999 that Arabic is the medium of instruction. Therefore, the use of Arabic as the language of instruction at all public universities including CU reflects the ministry's policy. Moreover, Arabic is a core subject at all government-run universities, across all faculties, for four levels, with two credit hours each. Nevertheless, English serves as the medium of instruction in most medical and science fields in KSA, and there are some private higher education institutions which rely mainly on English. Furthermore, English language is a compulsory subject and is used for instruction during the higher education preparatory year, which is a programme for students entering some faculties, especially medicine, physical sciences, and management.

CU offers degrees at the levels of Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, and Doctor of Philosophy. It has a relatively low level of international research productivity compared to other Saudi universities such as King Saud University and King Abdullah University. According to King Abdullah University and Thomson Reuters (2016)[4], among 7,000 research papers published in KSA over 5 years, only 205 came from CU and only in the fields of the physical sciences and mathematics. By comparison, King Saud University published 2,690 in medicine and 2,999 in the field of biology.

2.5.1. College of Education

In order to understand the relationship between the various departments and the TPP, the structure of the College of Education is explained below. The

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College of Education was established at CU quite early on in the history of the university, and it includes the following academic departments:

- Islamic education and comparative education
- Curriculum and teaching methods
- Psychology
- Educational administration and planning
- Kindergarten
- Art and physical education
- Family education
- Special education
- Teacher Preparation Programme

It should be noted that some of these departments, such as Family Education and Special Education, offer only a bachelor's degree. Students choose a four-year TPP in a specific field, similar to the teacher college of education system which existed before they were merged with the universities.

Additionally, a few departments offer only post-graduate degrees, e.g., Curriculum and Teaching Methods and Islamic and Comparative Education Departments, which are offered only as master's and PhD degrees. The master's degree courses are three years long. Students are required to study related subjects and research methods, and then to demonstrate their knowledge successfully through examinations. The third year consists entirely of writing a thesis (College Book, Bulletin 2013). A PhD programme lasting a minimum of three years and up to a maximum of five, including the writing years, is also offered. Teacher educators are also involved in teaching specialised subjects to bachelor's, master's, and PhD students in their departments.

Both female and male staff teach in the colleges of education, as they do in the rest of the departments at Saudi universities. In keeping with the norms regarding gender segregation, female educators can teach only female students, while male teachers can teach both male and female students.

However, male teachers must teach female students separately and via closed circuit TV (Fallatah 2014).

In the College of Education at CU, there are a total of 429 teacher educators, with 34 teacher educators in the Department of Islamic and Comparative Education, which coordinates the FIE course (which is the focus of this study) (for more information, see Section 2.3.2.1).

Table 0.3: Academic teachers in the College of Education and the Department of Islamic and Comparative Education at CU (MoE2016)

Number of teacher educators in the College of Education	Female	Male	Total			Number of teacher educators in the Department of Islamic and Comparative Education	
Saudi	205	136	314		Female	16	
Foreign	30	58	88		Male	18	
Total	235	194	429		Total	34	

The next section provides details about the structure of the TPP, explaining the relationship between this programme and the aforementioned departments in the College of Education.

2.5.2. The TPP

This programme is well established at CU, as it was the first academic faculty attached to the university. The aim of the programme, as stated in faculty documents and on the web page (see Appendix 1), is the following:

> *To prepare teachers scientifically, educationally and vocationally to conduct the general education process, in the middle and secondary grades... To prepare teachers... Improve their teaching skills… and increase their vocational experience at different levels… to instil values which help to translate Islamic education into positive behaviour. This behaviour will be produced from the monotheism of Allah, Islam and the tradition of the Prophet Muhammed.*

(College Book, Bulletin 2013: 16)

As mentioned earlier, students can enrol in the programme by first successfully completing all of the courses and requirements for their bachelor's degree in any of the colleges and university campuses. The College of Education does not require any specific grades or an interview for admission, but the student has to sign up in advance. When students have successfully passed all of the courses in their bachelor's degree, they will then be transferred to the TPP, which is located on a different university campus. Students are accepted from all of the bachelor degree departments except for Quranic recitation and the social services department. However, students from these departments have the opportunity to become registered for the TPP via a programme for which fees are charged. The university's argument for not accepting students from these departments is that their graduates have more employment opportunities outside the teaching sector.

2.5.2.1. The structure of the Teacher Preparation Programme (TPP)

This section discusses the structure of TPPs over two periods. The first covers the period before the merger of all colleges into the universities (about 1980s-1999), and the second section is concerned with the time after the merger in 2006.

Before the merger

Prior to the merging of the teacher colleges with the universities, there were two systems of teacher preparation. One of these was through the colleges of education, which took four years. Students used to earn a Bachelor of Art or a Bachelor of Science degree with compulsory teaching preparation.

The second way was in the university system, where since 1999, teacher preparation has taken five years, with the first four years spent earning a bachelor's degree, followed by one year of optional teacher preparation.

After the merger

The TPP now offers a one-year preparation course for all graduates from different specialisations in the university. The teacher preparation course lasts two semesters and includes twenty hours of study per week. Various subjects comprise this programme; all of them are compulsory.

There is an exclusive teacher preparation system for students studying in departments included in the College of Education, and this yields a bachelor's degree. These departments include special education and early years. They still offer the same four-year Bachelor degree followed by compulsory teaching preparation. Students study all of the subjects offered in the one-year TPP beginning in their first year. Figure 2.2 below lists these different subjects of the programme.

The focus of this study

Education in Saudi		FIE	Arabia Introduction to Education
Teaching Methods 1&2	Design of School Activities	FIE	Curriculum Principles and Organisation
Practicum	Civic Education	Multimedia and Teaching Aids	Guidance and Consultation
Introduction to Educational Management	Test and Assessment	Educational Sociology	Introduction to Psychology

Figure 0.2: Structure of the TPP

As mentioned above, the MoE recently merged all teacher preparation colleges with the main university in the region. This means that undergraduate TPPs that used to last four years must now be completed in only one year. The government's aim in making this change is to improve the status of TPPs so that they might gain some respect in the world of higher education (Hightower et al. 2011). However, both models (i.e. the five-year bachelor degrees as well as the four-year programme provided by some departments in the colleges of education) still exist in the educational system of Saudi universities.

The subjects named in Figure 2.2 are offered by the various departments of the College of Education at CU. Not every department in the college participates in providing subjects for the teaching preparation programme, although their bachelor's degree courses include all of the subjects which are degree requirements of the TPP. There is no department in the College of Education that is responsible for providing all thirteen subjects of the TPP; for example, one department might offer more than one subject, whereas some offer only one subject. As shown in figure 2.3, the Department of Curriculum and

Teaching Methods plays a large part in the provision of courses for the TPP. The figure shows the relationships between the departments and the TPP.
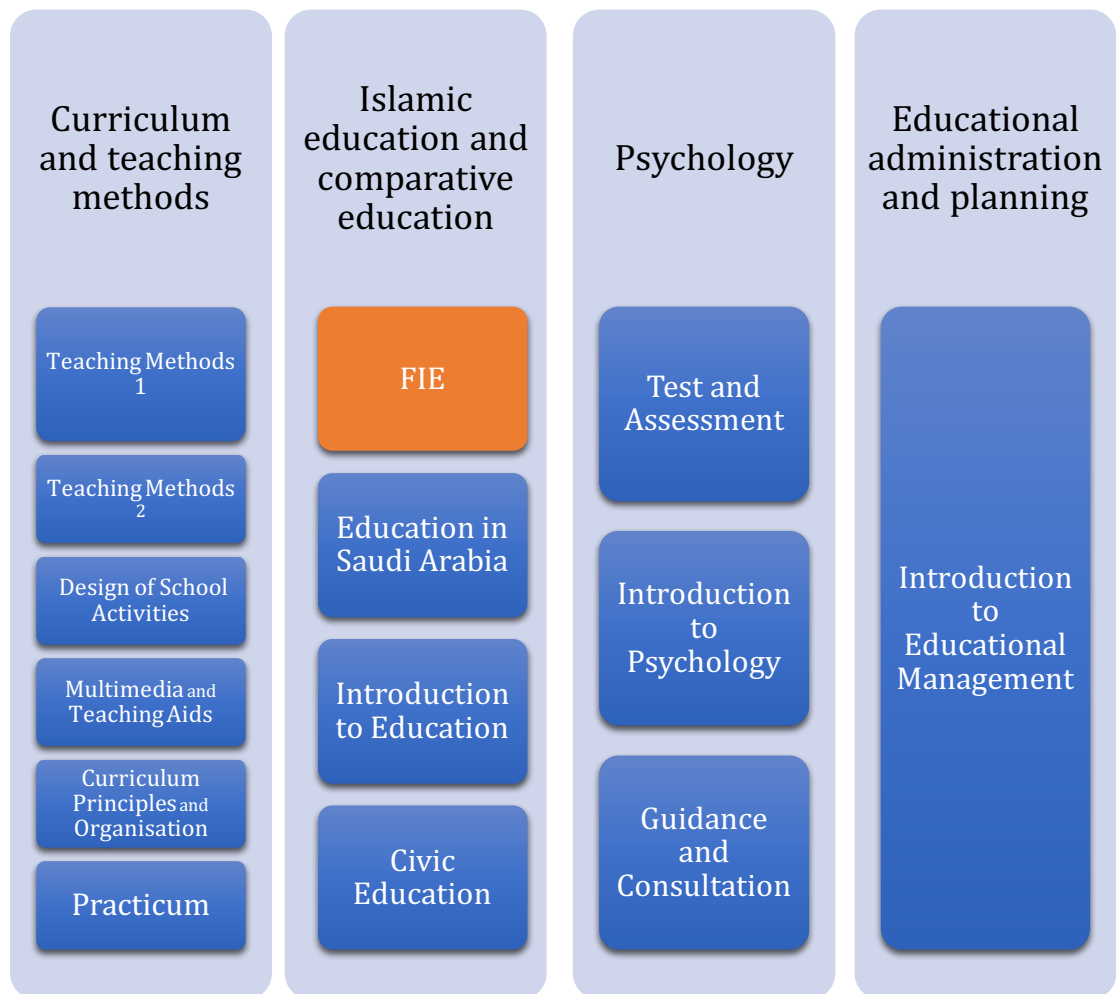
Figure 0.3: Departmental participation in the TPP in the College of Education

The table shows that four departments in the college are responsible for more than one subject in the TPP. This means that some teacher educators in these departments can teach more than one subject if they are approved to do so by their departments.

The assessment system in the TPP is based mainly on written exams. The university allocates credits for student assessment; specifically, 60% is for the final exam, 20% is allocated for the mid-term exams, and the final 20% is for course work done during the semester. The assessment of course work is determined by the teacher educators themselves and various faculty members. For example, some teacher educators allocate marks for student presentations

and participation, e.g., 10% for group work and 5% for a presentation, which might include the design of PowerPoint slides. Marks may also be given for homework (10%) and workshops (5%). The way marks are distributed for the course component of the programme is determined by the teacher educators, who implement the marks scheme as they see fit. Examinations are based purely on the information contained in the textbooks; therefore, teacher educators must necessarily cover the material from this main source.

2.5.3. Foundation of Islamic Education (FIE)

FIE, the focus of the current study, is a core subject in the College of Education at CU. Thus, it is taught across departments as a requirement of all bachelor's degrees as well as of the TPP. The subject is taught over one semester, amounting to 30 credit hours, and the topics covered are the attributes of Islamic education compared with other types of education, the basic principles of Islamic education (e.g., faith, worship, and intellectual aspects), the means and methods of Islamic education, the objectives of Islamic education, analysis of educational issues in terms of Islamic education, and the application of Islamic education (see Appendix 2).

FIE as a subject includes various aspects of the disciplines of Islamic science. Thus, generally speaking, Islamic education includes elements of Islamic sciences or disciplines, namely, Tawheed (the oneness of God/faith), Hadith (narration of the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed and their interpretation), Tafseer (the interpretation of Quranic verses), Fiqh (jurisprudence), and Islamic ethics. All Islamic disciplines draw on the same primary sources, i.e., the Quran and the Sunnah. These disciplines/subjects only differ in focus; e.g., Tafseer focuses on the interpretation of Quranic verses (Salim 2010).

2.5.4. The learning environment in the FIE classes and the University's College of Education in general

This section describes the learning environment of the TPP at CU. This discussion will also be referred to later when discussing the implications of this research (see Chapters 5 and 7).

Students enrolled in the TPP do not share classrooms with other students studying in the college although they share some of the subjects, such as FIE. The university regulates the number of students in each FIE class, which is supposed to be between 25 and 45. However, in reality, the class size often exceeds this number, with up to 55 students in one lecture hall. Students in FIE tend to be grouped in the class together based on their subjects' specialist background. For example, students from the Sharia or biology department are placed together as one group. The groups remain the same in all of the 13 subjects of the TPP. For example, if there is a biology group (1), which studies 'Education Policy in Saudi Arabia', this group remains biology group (1) in FIE and in the remaining 11 subjects. The university assumes that this grouping method has practical benefits for the students, as they are required by the university curriculum to do some group work, and this way, they all know each other. Most classrooms[5] have mobile chairs with a small table attached. This type of chair makes it more likely that students will be organised in rows, although this research found that some teachers insist on their students sitting in groups, owing to their own teaching preferences.

There is a whiteboard, but most teachers do not use it. Some teachers are more comfortable using small portable projectors and giving PowerPoint presentations. Any portable projectors or laptops including the cables belong to the teacher educators themselves, or in some classes, if students are giving presentations, this equipment is borrowed from other teachers from across the college. During the fieldwork, while sitting in the teacher educators' offices, I observed that different students would come in to ask for cables or even

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[5] The information is based on the observation data obtained for this research: regarding the physical setting of the classes, some classrooms are large, while some are medium-sized. This is assessed by considering whether the students are comfortable and have sufficient room. In some classes, students do move, but only if they have group presentations.

portable projectors. One teacher commented that some teachers make it the students' responsibility to supply the equipment if they choose to do a PowerPoint presentation as part of their course work.

2.6. Summary

This chapter began with a brief introduction to Saudi Arabia, followed by a discussion of the education system in KSA, with a special focus on the status of teaching Islam within this system. It also discussed the higher education system, focussing on one particular institution, CU, and highlighted the College of Education and its special relationship with the TPP. As the study focuses on FIE, a description of the subject content and how it is taught was provided.

The next chapter discusses the relevant literature that was used to establish and develop the research framework for this study.

3: Literature Review

3.1. Introduction

The role of teacher educators is considered crucial in teacher education programmes. Berliner (2000) argued that efficient teacher educators with good teacher training skills usually produce good quality prospective teachers and improve the practices of in-service teachers. In examining the efficiency of teacher-preparation programmes, Kunter et al. (2013) found that the success of these programmes derives mainly from the quality of the teacher educators, and how they train prospective teachers in the various approaches to teaching. Regarding the literature on teaching approaches, as this chapter shows, this topic is very complex, and it is affected by a variety of factors (Handal 2003; Loewenberg and Forzani 2009; Rizvi and Lingard 2012; Cochran-Smith et al. 2015).

Institutional influences are also recognised as a factor that contributes to the complexity of teaching approaches. This is because the teachers' approaches to teaching are influenced by the institution where the teaching takes place (Fanghanel 2007) (see Section 3.2.). This is why studies about institutional influences are reviewed in this chapter.

Teachers' beliefs are recognised as being important for understanding teaching approaches because teachers' beliefs are reflected in how they conceptualise their roles in the classroom, their choice of classroom activities, and the instructional strategies they use (Norton et al. 2005). This is why teacher educators are different in the way they approach their teaching practices (see Section 3.3.1 for further discussion).

An important function of teacher educators is to problematize most aspects of pedagogy, to question the way in which knowledge is disseminated, and to analyse the nature of their interactions with students Kunter et al. (2013). When teacher educators have a particular understanding of the teaching approaches they use, this understanding helps the prospective teachers they are training to

understand the knowledge and pedagogy and to understand not only the learners, but also their roles in teaching these learners (Cheng et al. 2012; Kunter et al. 2013). Teaching pedagogy is associated with the different philosophical foundations (e.g., behaviourist and constructivist) of the different teaching approaches teachers adopt. Therefore, Sections 3.3.2-3.3.5 focus on teaching approaches in relation to teacher-centred, student-centred, and structured pedagogy.

To understand the teaching approaches used to teach the FIE subject, this research attempts to conceptualise teaching and learning from an Islamic perspective, highlighting the aims of Islamic education and discussing the main sources of knowledge. The roles of teachers and students in Islamic education are explored, and this research highlights the position of teachers and learning in Islamic literature. This is followed by a discussion of the responsibility of Muslim teachers when teaching Muslim students. Also, the research explains the pedagogical methods historically associated with Islamic education. Thus, to offer a broad picture of the teaching approaches used in Islamic education, the discussion reviews current teaching practices found in Madrasas (the Arabic word for schools), where Islamic education is taught alongside secular subjects (see Section 3.4).

The chapter concludes with a presentation of the conceptual framework that guides the answering of the main research question and the sub-questions (see Section 3.3.6), followed by a short summary.

3.2   Institutional influences

This section draws on institutional theory (Meyer and Rowan 2006; Rowan and Miskel 1999; Scott 2013) to provide a picture of the issues related to educational institutions and how they influence teaching and learning. This section starts with an overview of the institutional structures that are examined by the theory, including schemas, rules, norms, and routines. These institutional structures are shown to be a legitimate guide for the operative practices and processes, including teaching and learning.

3.2.1 Definitions of institutional theory

There is little agreement among researchers on what institutional theory actually means (Scott 2001). Consequently, the concept of institutional theory has been defined differently by different scholars. For example, Scott (2001:48) defines institutions as:

> *…social structures that have attained a high degree of resilience. [They] are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life… Institutions by definition connote stability but are subject to change processes, both incremental and discontinuous.*

Powell (1991: 8), however, offers a more operational definition of institutions, based on neo-institutional theory:

> *The new institutionalism in organization theory and sociology comprises a rejection of rational-actor models, an interest in institutions as independent variables, a turn toward cognitive and cultural explanations, and an interest in properties of supra-individual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives.*

From these definitions, it is noted, as stated by Powell (1991), that institutions are social structures that affect individual behaviour, cognitive processes, and rules and norms. Both definitions highlight the influence and the usage of institutional theory. The traditional early view of institutional theory reflects a tendency for institutional studies to look at relationships from a top-down perspective, in which decisions made at the top have to be obeyed by the individuals at the bottom. Decisions and rules are made by those at the top, that is, the authorities in the organisation who expect lower ranking individuals to comply (Yaziji and Doh 2013). Scott (2001) maintains that for an organisation to continue to operate, it must adapt to the rules, belief systems, and culture of their environment.

In contrast, more recent definitions of institutions are based on the fact that institutional legal structures are man-made and connect the institutions to the

wider social structures (Meyer and Rowan 2006; Olssen and Peters 2005). The current study follows the traditional definition, in which the institution is seen as a social context whose regulations have an effect on individuals' actions, and where, in order for political systems to be normalised in the particular context, the institution has to conform with certain rules and with the local culture. In this study, the concept of institutional analysis is used to examine the various policies established by the College of Education at CU in relation to teaching and learning, and specifically in relation to teaching FIE.

Institutional theory, as described by Powell (1991) and Scott (2001), does not include a gender perspective. However, some researchers have established a relationship between institutions and gender (David 2015). These researchers (Morley 2013; David 2015) argue that the practices and policies of an organisation, including universities, reflect the persistence of gender inequality in the wider society.

In relation to the context of education in general, and higher education in particular, institutional theories are used to understand social practices in educational institutions and how they affect teaching practices and learning processes (Gibbs and Dunbat-Goddet 2007; Yorke and Longden 2008). These social practices are visible in the written policies and unwritten practices that shape different aspects of institutional management/government, including teaching and learning. The influence of institutional policy can be seen in strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures, and academic audits (Olssen and Peters 2005). Additionally, it can be seen in processes (for example, knowledge production and the structure of a programme); in outputs (for example, the diversity of the student population and measures of the difficulties they encounter in their colleges) (Deil-Amen and DeLucca 2010; Goldrick-Rab 2006); in digitalisation and higher education (Allen et al. 2011; Tezci 2011); and in the programme structures (for example, institutional environments and organisational processes and structures) (Meyer et al. 2007).

Ikhazim (2003), Ashwin (2009), Clarke (2007) and McDonough (1997) believe that the policies and practices adopted by a higher educational institution

inevitably influence the institution's teaching and learning programmes. For example, Ashwin (2009) discusses the significant impact of the policies of the university, and how such policies contribute to shaping the content and the structure of the particular educational programmes it offers, for example, in-service training programmes (Leibowitz et al. 2015), and English as a second language programmes (Ahmed 2012).

3.2.2 Aspects of institutional theory that are analysed in the literature

Following the review of the definition of institutional theory, the following section outlines the research in this area, drawing on the empirical literature focusing on teaching and learning, teacher training courses, student to teacher ratios, size of the class, the integration of ICT, and gender.

3.2.2.1 University policy and teaching and learning

Alhawsawi's (2013) qualitative study examines the influence of a medical university's policy on the teaching and learning experience of students in relation to the English language. The results of his study suggest that a university's policies influence the practice of teaching. He argues that the association of this university with the military health affairs community forced it to adopt English as the medium of communication, which in turn, influenced the type of English teachers the university recruited. The recruitment policy adopted by the university, specifically recruiting well-trained teachers from the West, then affected the teaching approaches. Most of these teachers used student-centred pedagogical practices, thereby helping to achieve the university's general mission.

3.2.2.2 University policy and professional teacher educators development programmes

Leibowitz et al.'s (2015) study discusses the university policies that influence the quality of professional development courses in the context of South Africa. The study, which examined eight universities, refers to the role of administration in terms of the support available for academic teachers, not only in terms of management responsibilities, but also in terms of their teaching and learning.

One finding of this study is that administrative processes affect professional development and the quality of teaching across these institutions, which agrees with the findings of this research.

A study by Alghamdi (2011) examines university policies that were preventing teachers from deriving benefit from their involvement in the teachers' professional development programme run by a Saudi university. Alghamdi (2011) confirms the findings of Polly et al. (2010) that issues related to administration and the need for leadership are factors that can help or prevent teachers or staff from becoming involved in development courses. In his study, Alghamdi (2011) found that teacher training courses had been criticised for being more concerned with providing teachers with theories of teaching than with training them and giving them opportunities to practise using the theories.

Blanton and Stylianou's (2009) study of professional teacher development among mathematics teachers in the US examines faculty professional development at a middle-sized state university. Some of the findings of this study suggest that seminars play an important role, which are shown to help the group reflect on new knowledge in relation to their current practices.

3.2.2.3 University policy and class size

There are two issues associated with class size. One is the number of students, and the second is the physical size of the lecture hall. Regarding the former, the findings of studies by Ahmed (2012) and by Muchiri and Kiriungi's (2015) indicate that class size at a university can be an important institutional influence on the way teachers engage students in learning. Other researchers have also highlighted the influence of class size on teachers' practices and student achievement (Cuseo 2007; Konstantopoulos and Sun 2010; Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015). Barrett and Toma (2013) argue that small classrooms allow teachers to have frequent and higher quality interactions with students. Similarly, Kokkelenberg et al. (2008) view class size as an important variable in higher education, emphasising the need to take it into consideration when developing teaching strategies. They argue that class size matters increasingly

when courses are geared toward promoting critical thinking and advanced problem solving. It is their view that teachers should have opportunities to interact directly with individual students. Similarly, Blatchford et al. (2011) claim that it seems likely that bigger classes would reduce the amount of time that can be spent on teaching and on dealing with individual students. In a much earlier study, McKeachie (1986: 181) argued as follows:

[Class] size and [teaching] method are almost inextricably intertwined. Thus, the research on class size and that on lecture vs. discussion overlap. Large classes are most likely to use lecture methods and less likely to use discussion than small classes.

Many studies have identified small class size as being important for effective teaching, as well as for classroom interactions (Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015; Rind and Kadiwal 2016). In a survey of 30 public secondary schools in Tharaka Nithi County in Kenya, Muchiri and Kiriungi (2015) examine institutional factors influencing the effective teaching of agriculture. Among the many results reported by the study is a positive correlation between class size and teaching effectiveness. Studies in higher education similarly find that class size affects the teaching methods adopted by teacher educators in the classroom (Alhawsawi 2013; Ahmed 2012). The argument is that teachers of large classes are more likely to adopt lecturing than discussion as a teaching technique.

Discussion and various other teaching methods tend to be associated with small class sizes (Cuseo 2007; Konstantopoulos and Sun 2010; Barrett and Toma 2013; Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015). In addition, class size influences the teacher's role (i.e., facilitator or knowledge transmitter) in the classroom. When formulating institutional policy, they found that consideration of aspects such as the size of lecture halls and the student to teacher ratio is important in having effective teaching practices and in encouraging active learning.

3.2.2.4 University policy and the integration of ICT

Tondeur et al. (2008) and Drent and Meelissen (2008) investigate the relationship between the integration of ICT and the policy of the institution. They

argue that institution's policies often do not pay attention to implementation issues of ICT training for teachers (Drent and Meelissen 2008). In their study of Dutch teacher educators, Drent and Meelissen (2008) reveal that one of the main factors preventing many teacher educators from using technology in their teaching is their level of competency in using ICT. In a similar vein, Tezci's (2011) study illustrates the importance of educational institutions providing support to teacher educators concerning the role of technology and how it could be used.

Albirini's (2006) study in Syria suggests that the use of online resources influences teaching approaches. His study indicates that online resources might entail accessing learning materials that may challenge the cultural norms of the Arab Syrian society, so teachers feel obliged to exert control by monitoring and restricting the materials that are presented to students. This study suggests that although using the internet for teaching may allow teachers to provide students with access to learning materials, concern for the students' culture leads teachers to restrict the materials that students can access.

In the context of teacher development, Ageel's (2011) study suggests that the use of online resources is a reality that is encouraged by the policy of Saudi higher education. However, Ageel (2011) maintains that the internet presents uncensored materials that may negatively influence the Islamic faith of Saudi students and challenge their culture. Thus, he finds that teacher educators exercise extreme caution when using online resources (Ageel 2011). These studies about teaching with ICT illustrate ways in which technology influences teaching in general, and higher education in particular.

3.2.2.5 University policy and gender

Studies on management highlight the fact that women are almost always underrepresented in management and leadership positions. A study conducted by Morley (2013:120) reports that only 13% of institutions in the HE sector were headed by women throughout the 27 countries in the European Union (EU), and only 9% of universities that awarded PhD degrees were headed by women.

Morley (2013) further argued that women's absence from leading positions in higher education means "missed opportunities for women to influence and contribute to the universities of the future" (ibid.: 121).

Morley's (2010) earlier study also examines gender and higher education in Ghana and Tanzania. The results of the study show while both countries have gender policies in place, females have consistently low access to HE. Morley (2010) concludes that while the policy has succeeded in broadening access among women, in practice, it does not seem to be supporting women's access to particular fields, like science. Nor does it support the access of women from low socio-economic status backgrounds to higher education.

The above discussion reveals that there is an ongoing debate regarding the influence of institutional policies, such as the provision of in-service training programmes and the integration of ICT in higher education in teaching and learning. Ashwin (2009) points out that an institution's policies and practices can have a significant effect on the structure of its academic programmes as well as on teaching practices and the learning process.

Institutional analysis helps researchers to highlight the institutional policies, which affect the way teacher educators practice their teaching and interact with students in the classroom. In the context of this study, institutional theory is used to consider the different policies and practices of CU in relation to the teaching of FIE and learning, as well as how these policies and practices influence the teachers' experience of teaching Islamic education, as discussed in Chapter 6.

The next section discusses teaching approaches in relation to teachers' beliefs and in relation to teacher-centred and student-centred approaches and structured pedagogy.

3.3. Teaching approaches

An examination of the literature on teaching approaches shows numerous conceptualisations about what it is and how it is influenced by a variety of factors (Handal 2003; Loewenberg and Forzani 2009; Rizvi and Lingard 2012; Cochran-Smith et al. 2015).

One factor affecting teaching approaches is teachers' own beliefs about teaching (see Prosser et al. 1994; Norton et al. 2005). Another factor is linked to teaching approaches themselves, both teacher- and student-centred, and the different philosophies, i.e., behaviourist and constructivist, which drive the teaching and learning of each approach. As noted in the discussion below, structured pedagogy is an integral part of the student-centred approach.

3.3.1 Teaching approaches and teachers' beliefs

The beliefs teachers hold about teaching and learning are extremely important. Fenstermacher (1994) views beliefs as subjective knowledge. This means that if the holder believes in taking certain action in a particular situation, they need adequate evidence in this regard (ibid.: 23). Northcote (2009) argues that beliefs are associated with the nature of knowledge and learning. Bruner (in Northcote 2009) emphasises the importance of understanding teacher's beliefs and suggests that beliefs reflect how teachers conceptualise their roles in the classroom, their choice of classroom activities, and the instructional strategies they use. If a teacher believes that knowledge is fixed and immutable, they will consequently adopt more direct teaching practices. On the other hand, teachers who believe that knowledge is constructed will tend to employ teaching practices that enable students to be co-creators of knowledge. Examples of such practices are dialogue and group work (Schommer-Aikins 2004; Northcote 2009).

Northcote's (2009) study concerns the beliefs of a group of higher education instructors teaching in a teacher education context and those of their students. The study classifies beliefs in relation to teaching and learning under the following categories:

1. teachers and learners

2. the processes of teaching and learning

3. the content taught and learnt

4. the purposes of teaching and learning.

The most significant finding is that teachers and students alike espoused beliefs about the social aspects of teaching and learning rather than the cognitive and intellectual aspects. The study suggests that teachers should address beliefs about social aspects in practising teaching as well as in planning lessons and in assessment.

Other research into higher education similarly discusses teachers' beliefs about teaching (Postareff et al. 2007; Mansour 2009). For example, Trigwell and Prosser (1996) show that teachers' beliefs about teaching can be divided into two main categories: teaching as knowledge transmission and teaching as facilitating or aiding the acquisition of knowledge.

Prosser et al.'s (1994) study among university science teachers explores their approaches to teaching in first-year science courses. They investigated the teachers' teaching approaches and strategies as well as the teachers' beliefs about and intentions in teaching. They found that teachers who believe in student-centred learning changed their understanding about their role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of learning to match their perception of the student's role as being one of the active participants in learning. In contrast, they found that teachers associated with teacher-centred strategies believe that knowledge has to be transmitted to students, and therefore, these teachers view their roles as transmitters of information to students so that they pass on the exact content of the syllabus.

As is evident from the above discussion, researchers have identified a link between teachers' beliefs and their approaches to teaching. If teachers believe that the purpose of teaching is to transmit knowledge, they adopt teaching

practices such as lecturing and demonstration. In contrast, if they believe that the purpose of teaching is to help students learn, they adopt teaching practices that support students in constructing their own knowledge, such as discussions (Samuelowicz and Bain 2001; Lattuca et al. 2014; Alhawsawi 2011).

The inconsistency that often appears between a teacher's beliefs about teaching and their actual practices could be explained by the fact that teachers describe their practices with their beliefs about teaching in mind, but they do not describe their teaching in relation to the other factors that may be involved (e.g., contextual factors such as resources), which might cause them to change their practices from the way they believe teaching should be done. Norton et al. (2005) conducted a questionnaire study on teaching beliefs and intentions among more than 600 lecturers at 4 universities in the UK. They found that the inconsistency that often appears between teachers' beliefs about teaching and their actual practice could be explained by the fact that they are often obliged to find a compromise between their beliefs and the institutional regulations within which they work.

Ashwin and McLean (2005), Fanghanel (2007), Lattuca et al. (2014), and Zembylas (2005) all argue that teachers do not always practise what they believe in when they teach because of the context. Trigwell and Prosser (1999: 159) highlight the influence of context on teachers' beliefs and their approaches to teaching thus:

> *[University teachers] enter teaching and learning contexts with a range of prior experiences of teaching and learning and ways of conceiving teaching and learning. The context itself evokes certain kinds of prior experiences, which then situate the university teachers in those contexts. The experienced contexts are the teaching and learning situation the teachers find themselves in.*

The above section reviewed the findings of previous studies on the impact of a teacher's beliefs and their understanding of knowledge on their teaching approaches. The next sections discuss the teaching approaches adopted by teachers; this informs the second research question by focusing on teacher educators' role and assessment.

3.3.2   The teacher-centred approach

The teacher–centred approach is guided by behaviourist philosophies of teaching and learning, and emphasises the necessity of learners being able to reproduce learnt behaviour and taught content exactly. Thus, this approach refers to the process by which a teacher transmits the specific curriculum content to the learners (Postareff et al. 2007). However, within that approach, there are two forms: minimum engagement and no engagement. In other words, some teachers who adopt the teacher-centred approach might attempt to engage their students in the process of knowledge transmission by helping the students to develop skills that allow them to question and to develop the knowledge that the teachers disseminate. Other teachers who adopt this approach teach directly from the textbook without introducing any extra materials or allowing students to question the knowledge they receive. In such a teaching approach, the teachers are the gatekeepers of the knowledge, and they have the power to allow learners access to the knowledge as they see fit (Alhawsawi 2013). In their review of studies about teaching approaches, Ramsden et al. (2007) argue that one of the characteristics that define the teacher-centred approach is that teachers always assume that they know what is important for their students and thus transmit only the information they think should be learnt. Such teachers do not take into account students' existing conceptions, and instead, they teach in a way that ignores their concerns. Generally, learners subjected to this teaching approach are expected to retain precisely the accumulated knowledge and behaviour taught by the teacher (Gow and Kember 1994; Mascolo 2009; Schweisfurth 2013).

The Role of Teachers

The teachers' role in the teacher-centred approach focuses on what a teacher does in the teaching and learning process. In this approach, the teacher is viewed as responsible for transferring and imparting structured knowledge to the students (Struyven et al. 2010; Ramsden et al. 2007).

Prosser et al. (1994) explore the conceptions of what constitutes teaching among higher education lecturers. They demonstrate that those teachers who

adopted the teacher-centred approach did not concern themselves with establishing links in the knowledge for their students, but were concerned solely with transmitting the syllabus to the students. Additionally, some of these teachers, Prosser et al. (1994) suggest, saw their role as being that of a knowledge organiser, i.e., they tended to organise information according to their own logic without much consideration for the way students might relate to it. Within the teacher-centred understanding of teaching and learning, the teacher's role is considered to be central. Thus, such teachers work hard to ensure that they have a rich knowledge of their subjects so they can fulfil their role of being a source of knowledge and the ultimate authority regarding the subject knowledge (Richardson 2005; Zhu 2010; Westbrook et al. 2013).

The role of the teacher in this approach reflects an authoritative perspective. This perspective views the teacher as a gatekeeper of the knowledge, who controls its dissemination as well as all aspects of the classroom activities. Walker (2009) and Ertesvåg (2011) argue that an authoritative role for teachers makes them focus on creating routines in classroom situations as well as on monitoring students' behaviour, performance, knowledge, and activities. Teaching practices associated with teacher-centred approaches tend to revolve around lecturing (Virtanen and Lindblom-Ylänne 2010) and other activities with a minimal level of student participation and with only unreflective discussion.

Assessment

In a teacher-centred approach, assessment is viewed as a way of measuring content knowledge and trained behaviour. Troudi et al. (2009) maintain that in teacher-centred approaches, assessment consists of awarding marks and that grades are over-emphasised in learning. Researchers refer to this as summative assessment, i.e., an assessment for judgement or accreditation (Falchikov 2013). Teachers usually do this through selected response items, for example, setting one-dimensional and timed multiple choice tests, and through questions that require short answers, such as yes/no answers or a one- or two-sentence response, or filling in the blank space (Falchikov 2013; Troudi et al. 2009).

Allal (2013) and Black and William (1998) recognise that assessment in this approach aligns with behaviourism. Behaviourism is based on the positivist views of knowledge as external to the individual. Thus, assessment for behaviourists and positivists alike focuses on reproducing behaviours, performances, and facts. Although such assessments are used to gather information about students' knowledge, they tend not to measure higher order learning skills, as they demand only low level recall cognitive abilities (Kulieke et al. 1990; Amer 2006).

3.3.3   The student-centred approach

The student-centred approach is guided by constructivist philosophies of teaching and learning. In this approach, learners construct their own understanding and meaning according to the taught content. Also, within this approach, teachers guide the students' process of knowledge construction in relation to the curriculum or to their own knowledge (Postareff et al. 2007).

Vygotsky's (1978) idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is used as the explanatory framework for this section. According to Vygotsky, there is a difference between learning and development, and that learning not only leads to development, but also 'creates […] the zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky 1978: 90). Vygotsky's social constructivist view of development encompasses the idea that learning is the outcome of collaborative problem-solving, and that it is best facilitated through the use of whole and authentic activities. Vygotsky defines the ZPD as 'the distance between the actual problem-solving level, as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development, as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky 1978: 86).

Brunner (1986 in Little 2007), another constructivist, refers to 'adult guidance' as 'scaffolding', thereby signifying the role of teachers and teacher educators as assisting learners. Scaffolding is the process by which a teacher or a more competent peer helps a student in their ZPD as much as is necessary, and

tapers off this aid when it becomes unnecessary (Warford 2011; Khaliliaqdam 2014). Scaffolding may also be considered to be the way teacher educators guide their students' learning via focused questions and positive interactions (Fani and Ghaemi 2011). While in this approach, the teachers might define the learning content according to its suitability for students, the teachers constantly question this content and encourage their students to construct and reflect on their understanding. In this approach, the interaction between the students, the content, and the teacher is seen as the key to successful learning. Teachers tend to organise Information and concepts to help students generate more understanding.

In their studies of student-centred approaches, Ramsden et al. (2007) show that an important aspect of this approach is developing students' ideas and conceptions, and fulfilling their needs. Alhawsawi (2013) states that in this teaching approach, access to knowledge is subjective, that is, everyone has the power to construct valid knowledge, with teachers or teacher educators playing a facilitative role. This teaching approach emphasises discovery learning, problem-based learning, individual projects, active learning, and cooperative learning, by using group work, discussions, and open questions, through which students can produce different learning outcomes (Konings et al. 2007; Mascolo 2009; Schweisfurth 2011).

Having outlined the basic elements of the student-centred approach, in the following section, the research turns to the role of teachers and students within this approach.

The role of teacher educators

As the aim of student-centred education is to maximise students' learning, teacher educators tend to play the role of facilitators rather than of teachers (Kuhn 2007). The teacher educators' role is that of an instructional guide (ibid.). The teacher's role within the learner-centred approach is to focus on the students' learning process and help them to arrive at their own understanding of the content (Struyven et al. 2010). The facilitator role of teacher educators

enables students to ask questions, formulate ideas, and develop their own meaning from the classroom learning (Kirschner et al. 2006; Schweinfurt 2011; Alhawsawi 2013). This view of the teacher's role in the student-centred approach echoes Ramsden et al.'s (2007) argument that the teachers' task is to create social interactions in the classroom in which students are encouraged to present and interact by offering different perspectives on the lesson.

The constructivist theory of education places emphasis on the learners rather than on the teachers or the content (Butcher and Di 2012). Thus, it requires teachers to have different skills from those of a traditional teacher (Brownstein 2001). Gibbs and Coffey (2004:88) identify four scales for teachers' skills in higher education: teacher's enthusiasm about teaching, teacher's clarity in explanations and organization of knowledge, teacher's skill in facilitating group interactions, and teacher's genuine interest in individual students. The teacher's abilities in these areas have different implications according to various theories. Some researchers include teachers' innovative skills, which are related to competence in educational applications, ICT, and electronic devices (Schneckenberg 2009). Some researchers, such as Allan et al. (2009), however, examine teachers' skills in relation to effective teaching in higher education. They offer similar ideas to Gibbs and Coffey (2004), but in relation to teaching. These are organised under the following categories: provision of a supportive learning environment, scaffolding, learning, and clarity.
Researchers such as Kuhn (2007), Schweisfurth (2011), and Alhawsawi (2013) do not see the ultimate responsibility for learning to be that of the students alone. They believe that the teacher must play the role of assessor and facilitator of learning activities in the classroom. Their research emphasises the fact that teachers must encourage students and commence a learning dialogue by which access to knowledge is shared by both parties.

The student-centred approach to teaching is recognised as an alternative to traditional teaching practices and learning activities. Adopting this approach is said to contribute significantly to increasing students' achievement and also helps to improve the critical thinking skills they require for learning (Sablonniere et al. 2009; Westbrook et al 2013). It is used as a pedagogical approach in

many different countries and educational contexts, as discussed in the section on case studies about diverse teaching approaches (3.2.5.).

Assessment

In the student-centred approach, assessment is seen as an ongoing and continuous process that aims to supplement the learning of each individual rather than judging them on what they do not know through a final examination only (Coffey et al. 2011; Mascolo 2009). Researchers such as Bennett (2011) refer to this type of assessment as "formative assessment", which can involve tests, but which assesses the process of learning (Popham 2008). The focus is more on obtaining qualitative insight into students' understanding than on test scores. Sadler (1998:77) explains formative assessment as "assessment that is specifically intended to provide feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning". Coffey et al. (2011) identify two principles of formative assessment, the first of which concerns the quality of the questions teachers pose. A large number of researchers (Bennett 2011) argue for and support the use of open-ended questions, as this type of questioning is believed to help move dialogue away from the question-response-evaluation format to a free-flowing exchange of ideas (Bennett 2011). The second principle concerns the quality of the feedback teachers give students about their progress. Baird et al. (2015) observe that feedback in this approach is the opposite of evaluative; it is non-judgemental, specific to the points of students' interests, timely, and related to learning goals. If feedback follows students' specific interests, then it provides opportunities for the student to think through their work and answer and improve their products as well as deepen their understanding.

Assessment practices associated with student-centred approaches take different forms, such as open-ended questions, student group work or projects, class discussions, diaries, and portfolios (Allal (2013). However, Black and William (1998), amongst others, argue that there are no teaching and learning activities and tasks that are exclusively related to a particular type of assessment. The important element, they argue, is that the activities reflect the theories of teaching and learning. For example, if the focus of the activities is on

engaging students to construct meaning with one another or with teachers, and teachers support learning by providing feedback to students, then assessment can be recognised as being student centred.

Baird et al. (2015: 27) argue that there are links between teaching and learning theory (beliefs) and assessment theories and practices. They state that '[t]he notion of feedback and scaffolding of the way ahead are key features of the [formative assessment] approach. So, assessment practitioners might agree at a level of practice, whilst disagreeing at a theoretical level and vice versa'. Therefore, the link that has been made by researchers (e.g., Allal 2013) between formative assessments and student-centred teaching practices is that both are underpinned by the educational philosophy of the constructivists.

The discussion above has highlighted certain aspects of teacher-centred and student-centred learning. These aspects are the role of teachers, teaching practices, and assessment. This review of the literature provided me with an understanding of the aspects of teaching and learning that are associated with each approach. It helps me to identify the various aspects of teacher educators' teaching practices in the context of a college of education in the KSA.

Some researchers suggest using aspects of both teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, which they refer to as 'structured pedagogy'. This is discussed in the following section.

3.3.4   Structured pedagogy

Structured pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that includes characteristics of both teacher-centred and student-centred approaches. The structured approach is also referred to in the literature by different terms, including 'direct instruction' or 'explicit instruction' teaching (Rosenshine 2008), and 'Socratic pedagogy' (Boghossian 2006). Archer and Hughes (2011:1) describe it as an

unambiguous and direct approach to teaching that includes both instructional design and delivery procedures. It is branded by a series of supports or scaffolds, whereby students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice with feedback until independent mastery has been achieved.

Aguiar et al (2010) argue that teachers teaching using this pedagogical understanding emphasise the development of students' critical thinking skills. Scriven and Paul (2008) explain this in detail as follows:

Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.

(cited in Mulnix 2010: 465)

In this pedagogical approach, teachers focus on the clear purpose of the lesson; they are expected to follow structured steps and engage students to think critically about the curriculum, but at the same time examine their ideas and other issues in relation to the knowledge provided by the lesson (ibid.). Aguiar et al (2010) see this type of teaching as an interactive, ongoing process, in which teachers constantly question the students' existing knowledge, and help them to develop and construct their own ideas and knowledge.

The practice of repeatedly questioning in a way that challenges a person to develop their critical thinking skills and engage in analytic discussion is known as 'Socratic questioning'. Paul and Elder (2006) argue that "this form of questioning can be used to explore ideas, to get to the root of things, to uncover assumptions, and to analyze complex concepts. This type of questioning usually focuses on fundamental concepts, principles, theories, issues or problems". Paul and Elder (2006: 2-9) further classify Socratic questioning into six groups of questions as follows: 'Questions for clarification, Questions that

probe assumptions, Questions that probe reasons and evidence, Questions about Viewpoints and Perspectives, Questions that probe implications and consequences, and Questions about the question.'

Socratic questioning can therefore be seen to be at the heart of critical thinking (Brunschwig and Lloyd 2003; Dreifuerst 2105) and structured pedagogy. This form of questioning can also be found in student-centred approaches. Similar to student-centred, structured pedagogy is governed by questioning and feedback. However, in the latter, a sufficient amount of independent practice is seen as important (Gauthier and Dembélé 2004). Gersten et al. summarise some of the basic teaching practices of this pedagogy as follows:

- An explicit step-by-step strategy.
- Development of mastery at each step in the process.
- Teachers are given specific correction procedures to use when students make errors.
- Gradual fading of teacher direction as students move toward independent work.
- Use of adequate and systematic practice through a range of examples of the task.
- Cumulative review of newly learned concepts. (cited in Rosenshine 2008:4)

One of the features missing from the above taxonomy is the learners' prior knowledge and experience. This aspect is a shared element with learner-centred pedagogy. In structured pedagogy, however, the teacher tends to check learners' prior knowledge by asking questions more precisely prior to instruction (Gauthier and Dembélé 2004:26).

The Role of Teachers

Advocates of structured pedagogy (Kirschner et al. 2006; Kuhn 2007) believe that teaching is based on a systematic question-and-answer process that is directed by teachers, which means the learner's involvement is vital. Unlike the teacher-centred approach, the teacher's role is not to deliver the truth; rather, it is mainly to create systematic supportive structures using dialectical processes, and of course, engaging the learners in this process. Although teachers can be seen as being at the centre of the classroom, their role is more that of providing

guidance and support to learners during initial practice. Unlike in the teacher-centred approach, there is no rote-type replication or recitation of information or facts.

Structured pedagogy shares aspects and elements with the student-centred approach, in which, for example, learner engagement in constructing knowledge is emphasised. As in student-centred pedagogy, teachers are expected to guide students in a systematic way to develop their understanding. However, the level of teacher involvement in the guiding process is higher in structured pedagogy, where the teachers' role is clearly defined. They set small tasks for students and guide them step by step, not only to achieve these small tasks, but to learn ways in which they can develop their understanding of the concepts. It provides learners with a framework for learning and, at the same time, allows learners a sense of autonomy and self-regulation within the guidelines provided by the teacher (Aguiar et al 2010; Scott et al 2011).

Assessment

In structured pedagogy, assessment occurs through a similar instructional approach, with defined steps in order for teachers to provide feedback and correction at each stage of the learning processes (Gauthier and Dembélé 2004; Scott et al 2011). Baird et al. (2015) refer to this as formative assessment, describing it as a 'planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students' status is used by teachers to adjust their ongoing instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics' (2015: 36).

For the sake of this study, structured pedagogy, including Socratic questioning, is treated as an aspect of the student-centred approach. This is because this type of Socratic questioning encourages students to engage in knowledge construction. Table 3.1 below presents the main aspects of both the teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, with structured pedagogy being treated as an integral part of the student-centred approach. The table can be used to determine whether the individual teachers who took part in this study

were using teacher-centred or student-centred approaches in their teaching practice.

Table 0.1: Teaching approaches

Approach	Teacher-centred	Student-centred
Aim/Understanding of teaching	Imparting knowledge	Mutual process of knowledge development as a student engages in dialogue with peers and teacher. Purposive engagement in knowledge and skills development as a student critically engages in dialogue with peers and teacher over a body of knowledge
View of learners	Passive and unreflective responders who receive knowledge from the teacher and the textbook	Active agents and learners with prior knowledge
Outcome	Reproducing expected behaviour, memorising facts	Independent learner/ critical thinker
Assessment	Measurement tool of the amount of knowledge and behaviour that students are able to recall during and at the end of the learning period	Ongoing evaluation of learning skills/ practical application of the learning skills

The two approaches to teaching, namely, the teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, including structured pedagogy as an integral part of the student-centred approach, are used as a framework to which I relate my findings. The findings in turn are related to the main aspects of the two approaches, and the analysis focuses on the teachers' roles, actual methods of teaching, and assessment (see Chapter 6).

The sections above discussed teacher-centred and student-centred approaches and structured pedagogy, highlighting aspects such as the teacher's role, teaching practices, and assessment. The next section provides an overview of case studies that address these approaches.

3.3.5 Case studies of diverse teaching approaches

For this section, certain case studies relevant to the current study were selected to exemplify some aspects of various teaching approaches. They were chosen because they represent qualitative studies of diverse teaching approaches. In the review of the literature, studies of this kind were mainly found in the African context, with only few a covering the Middle East and Gulf states. This is because there are very few qualitative studies, as I discuss later, of diverse teaching approaches in this region.

Megahed et al. (2010) examine the adaptation of the student-centred approach in schools in Egypt. The focus of this research is on the activities of the five-year Education Reform Programme designed to promote active-learning pedagogies. They explore the extent to which the teachers' classroom behaviour moved toward the use of active-learning pedagogies, as well as the factors that facilitated or impeded this pedagogical change. The data suggest that Egyptian teachers view their roles in terms of facilitating cooperative learning, implementing instruction that targets the development of students' social and collaborative skills, actively ensuring the equal participation of all students in learning activities, adopting diverse instructional strategies to promote active student participation in learning, and encouraging students to have a voice in the learning environment. The findings show that the teaching practices adopted by the teachers included elements of the student-centred approach, such as discussions, and using techniques such as group work, role plays, brainstorming, and problem solving. However, the researchers suggest that, in practice, teachers are less focused on activities that encourage critical thinking.

In Uganda, a study conducted by Altinyelken (2010) examines teachers' views and practices regarding student-centred pedagogy through a new thematic curriculum in Ugandan primary schools. Aspects of the student-centred approach included active interactions in classrooms, cooperative learning, group work, and a rich and varied literate environment. This study was conducted in 8 schools, with 35 teachers participating, and classroom observations were the main tool of data collection. The findings of this study show that there was a largely positive attitude towards the student-centred approach amongst teachers. However, although some teachers practised numerous aspects of the student-centred approach, the results of the observation show that structural problems, such as overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of learning materials, hindered the teachers from fully implementing the new pedagogy. The conclusion of the study is that the use of the student-centred approach in Ugandan classrooms is restricted by challenges relating to the conditions necessary for implementation. The study argues that Uganda and other sub-Saharan countries should not consider the student-centred approach as a one-size-fits-all approach, because the teaching approach and related aspects need to be based on indigenous knowledge systems, which have so far been marginalized, and also need to accommodate alternative pedagogies.

Hardman et al.'s (2012) study in the context of Tanzania explores the training needs of teacher educators who train teachers during the pre- and in-service stages. In this context, the guidelines for the development of in-service training and continuing professional development had been based on the outcome of reform initiatives that were attempting to move schools towards a learner-centred form of pedagogy. This reform was occurring in teacher education policies, structures, plans, and activities. The research involved a study of classroom interactional and discourse patterns and a review of pre-service education and training.

The findings from all of the schools indicated that teachers across all subjects were using teacher-directed activities. Teachers took up over half (55%) of the lesson time, and reserved only 14% of the time for 'student-centred' activities

(i.e., pair or group work, pupil demonstration). The findings suggest that teachers tended to use closed types of questions. In addition, the findings from the investigation conducted at the teachers' college reveal that teacher educators were using only the teacher-centred and rote-learning approach. These findings suggest that more teachers emphasised the lecture format of teaching, wherein the teacher talks most of the time, and indicate that more attention needs to be paid to local cultural and educational circumstances in order to avoid the division of pedagogy into a simple choice between a 'teacher-centred' or a 'student-centred' approach.

The studies conducted in Uganda and Tanzania show that some aspects of the student-centred approach are being practised by teachers alongside some aspects of the teacher-centred approach. Both groups of researchers suggest that adopting a mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred approaches would be beneficial for the learners.

To sum up, although adopting a student-centred approach in some contexts leads to successful outcomes, in other contexts, it seems to involve challenges. In addition, the practice of implementing student-centred frameworks in certain contexts appears to be limited to only a few aspects, such as engaging students in group work, and the use of learning materials. However, activities that support the development of thinking skills are not adequately represented in teachers' practices. The next section discusses Islamic education and the teaching and learning of Islam.

3.4.   Conceptualising teaching from an Islamic perspective

Since this study is conducted in a Muslim country and examines teaching practices used to teach FIE, it is appropriate here to review some of the literature that conceptualises the teaching of Islam. The discussion in this section highlights the aim of education in Islam, the position of religious scholars, and the responsibilities of Muslim teachers and students. In addition, the development of teaching methods since the time of the Prophet Mohammad is examined. This review will help to create a framework for the subsequent

analysis of the teacher educators' teaching approaches in the findings presented in Chapter 6.

3.4.1. The aim of education in Islam

In Islam, the purpose of education is generally accepted as being to come to know Allah (God), the Lord and the Creator (Talas 2014). This process of coming to know Allah involves various steps and responsibilities, which include servitude to Allah, the nurturing of an Islamic character, the building of an Islamic community, and achieving religious and worldly benefits (ibid.). Researchers such as Albesher (2006) have suggested that Islamic education is not only about the acquisition of knowledge per se, but is also about the growth of a Muslim from the perspective of faith and worship ('Deen'), and of an individual's intellect and responsibility in relation to the self, the family, society, and humanity. Sabki and Hardarker (2013) argue that the main purpose of Islamic education is spiritual development. In order for Muslims to know Allah, they are encouraged to constantly develop their intellectual capacity, which allows them to question and understand the world around them.

Muallim (2009) and Fallatah (2014) use Quranic quotations to show how the Muslim holy book (the Quran) encourages intellectual scrutiny of the knowledge provided within it. Sheikh Muhammed al-Abbasy, a prominent Muslim scholar, in an interview with Aslom Ullah (2014), emphasises the fact that education in Islam includes not only learning about religion, but also learning about every type of knowledge, as long as it does not conflict with the foundations of Islam. Furthermore, he argues that Islamic education should not be practised exclusively in the Masjid (Mosque) or be used for passing examinations. Islamic education should also be concerned with everyday actions and interactions.

This brief review of education in Islam helps to set the scene for how education is viewed from an Islamic perspective. There is, however, one important issue that should be addressed here in detail, since it has relevance for the current study, which is that Islam encourages thinking as long as it does not contradict the faith ('Tawheed'). Although Islam encourages its followers to question and

seek knowledge to help them to understand Allah, a framework for this questioning is provided. For example, one could question how something comes into existence, or how something operates, and thoroughly investigate it to find the answer that leads to the existence of a greater creator. However, answers with evidence about the existence and nature of the great creator (Allah/God) are directly provided in the Quran. Thus, on the one hand, Muslims are required to accept this religious evidence without question. On the other hand, Muslims are encouraged to question endlessly everything within the framework of the Islamic religion. There is thus a tension that exists between the acceptance of revealed, sacred knowledge and the questioning search for knowledge based on reasoning, which affects the way in which teachers of Islam teach. Thus, although there is a sacred type of Islamic religious knowledge, there is also an acknowledged space allowed for questioning.

3.4.2. The main sources of Islamic knowledge

It is important to highlight the main sources of the discipline of Islamic education. Generally speaking, Muslim scholars divide knowledge into 'naqel', which is revealed knowledge, and 'aqel', which refers to knowledge that is obtained by rational and intellectual processes and then used to understand human experiences, the world and all that it involves (Al-nabhan 2005; Al-Akk 1989). Thus, in the Islamic literature, the sources of both religious and general knowledge are the Quran and the Sunnah, and what is known as *'Ijtihad'* (trial and error), a concept that involves using logical argument to understand incidents from the everyday lives of people and incidents within the Islamic religious framework, as stated in the Quran and Sunnah. Iqbal (in Altwaijri 2007) points out that *'Ijtihad'* is a dynamic principle in the body of Islam. It plays an important role in the development of all kinds of knowledge by employing logic ('aqel') that is based on a religious foundation.

The different perceptions of the concept of *Ijtihad* among the four Sunni schools of thought (Hanbali, Hanafi, Malik, and Shafi'i; see Section 2.1) influenced the development of each school's particular method of approaching and understanding the texts of the Quran and Sunnah, and real-life incidents, which

they were asked about, within the Islamic framework. Hanbali, as mentioned in Section 2.1., sought the manifested meanings of the religious texts. The Hanafi school follows broader methods, which include the 'public interest' ('*masalih al-mursalah*'), and adopts two scholarly methods of consensus. The Malik school takes a middle approach and accords the same amount of importance to the 'public interest' as the Hanafi and Hanbali schools. However, the former prefers arguments that have been accepted by a large number of scholars. The last school is Shafi'i, which strikes a balance between reason and the authority of the Quran and Sunnah. They all set practical tests for the interpretations made of the texts (Hasan 2012).

The methods established by the four Islamic schools, using the concept of '*Ijtihad*', have formed the basis for the development of Islamic education, which continues to develop different ways of understanding and interpreting the Quran and Sunnah.[6] This diversity of interpretations, according to the four scholarly schools, helps Muslims to use religion as a way to interact in their everyday lives and in the various contexts in which it appears (Hanif 1999; Hasan 2012).

While all of the schools of thought differ in their implementation of the principles of Islam and the detailed aspects of some practice, they all adhere to the same basic principles, such as the five billers of Islam. Therefore, all of the different interpretations of Islamic principles and practices are accepted equally, and none is claimed to be superior to the others (Rahnema 2005; Hasan 2012).

From the above explanation of the basis of Islamic education and knowledge, it is clear that teachers may have many different beliefs about their subject, and about how to convey knowledge about Islam to their students. For example, if teachers of Islamic education teach Islamic faith or the text of the Quran, then they are likely to focus on simply presenting the knowledge to their students, and the students are likely to be expected to memorise this knowledge in order to be able to reproduce and apply it when necessary. Teachers adopting this approach to teaching use explicitly teacher-led methods. Teachers in this

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[6] The four Islamic schools of thought could be said to agree on their understanding of certain issues. This is based on the evidence they draw on from the Quran and the Sunnah.

approach assess their students on the amount of information they have acquired during the learning process.

On the other hand, when teachers are dealing with a topic that allows some space for students to discuss experiences and practices, e.g., '*Fiqh*' (Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic ethics), then they are likely to use the student-centred approach. They are likely to help students understand their life experiences through an Islamic religious framework. They see students as people experiencing different life incidents, which can be shared, and upon which lessons can be built. Thus, these teachers are likely to design their teaching in the form of ongoing conversations and discussions, and by arguing about ideas. For these teachers, assessment is used for students' application of critical thinking.

3.4.3. The position of scholars and teachers in learning in Islamic literature

Islam accords respect to teachers and scholars in Muslim society. Many religious texts from the Quran and the Sunnah provide a very respectable position for scholars and teachers in society. Since the main purpose of education in Islam is to know Allah/the Lord, those who help people to learn are seen as sharing the mission of the Prophet, which can be a very honourable thing. In one of the major books of the Sunnah, Iben Hibbaan[7] (1338-1276 CE) described scholars and teachers as his heirs, and stated that they should be respected for the knowledge '*elim*' they have (Sahih Iben Hibban 1/289). In Islam, the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) is respected by his followers because he taught the people the knowledge and wisdom of Allah, as stated in the following verses from the Quran:

> *Our Lord! Send amongst them a Messenger of their own, who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in scripture and wisdom, and sanctify them: For Thou art the Exalted in Might, the Wise.*
> (Chapter 2 Albaqarah, 129)

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[7] This is the trusted book that documents the Sunnah of the tradition of the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)

It is He Who has sent amongst the Unlettered a messenger from among themselves, to rehearse to them His Signs, to sanctify them, and to instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom, although they had been, before, in manifest error.

(Chapter 62 Al-Jumu'a, 2)

Since scholars and teachers are the heirs of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), similar respect is also due to them in Islam, and Muslim learners are encouraged to show them great respect. This is supported by Tabaraani[8] (1468-1562 CE), who narrated that the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) said:

Seek knowledge and train to be dignified and calm while seeking knowledge, and humble yourselves with those whom you learn from.

(Narrated in Tabaraani)

In this tradition, the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) advises his followers to seek knowledge and to be polite and respectful to those who are teaching others.

It is important to understand what is meant by a scholar/teacher in the Islamic tradition. From the previous discussion, it could be concluded that the terms 'scholar' and 'teacher' refer to those who fulfil the main condition of education in Islam, i.e., learning about Allah/God. Scholars and teachers in the early centuries of Islam were educators in different disciplines, but they all had one thing in common: they were all highly competent in their religious education and often in the Arabic language (see, e.g., al-Thahabi[9], 1274-1347 CE). Thus, all teachers and scholars, including those who are teaching subjects that could be seen as 'non-religious', are due the respect that is discussed and emphasised in the Islamic literature.

In this context, what 'respect' means in Islam needs to be understood, as it helps in clarifying the relationship between teachers and learners, and thus in conceptualising teaching approaches from an Islamic perspective. The issue of 'respect' in relation to Islamic scholars is problematic. The term 'respect' in the

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[8] One of the trusted books that document the Sunnah
[9] His book is one of the larger and more prominent references in a Muslim scholar's bibliography.

Islamic literature means different things. For example, it could refer to the general everyday code of behaviour during lessons. For the purposes of this research, I will focus on what it means and how it is practised in terms of pedagogical approaches through a reading of Islamic literature (e.g., Zarnuji[10], d. 1194 CE).

A survey of the Arabic and Islamic literature on the relationship between learners and teachers gives a sense of the prestigious position that teachers enjoy. Students are taught to be extremely polite to their teachers, both in their presence and in their absence. For instance, in their advice to students, Ibin Jama'ah[11] (1241-1332 CE) and Zarnuji (d. 1194 CE) both identified certain types of behaviour for students that are considered part of showing respect to teachers. These include the following:

> *Students have to use a title such as 'Shaikh' (scholar) or 'Usta'az' (teacher) when addressing their teachers. They also need to take permission from the teacher before coming to speak. But this does not mean they are prevented from asking questions and introducing an argument. Instead, students are encouraged to argue but in an extremely humble manner. And if they introduce an argument of some other scholars that conflicts with [that of] their teacher, they much use polite sentences, such as, What would you say about…); then they can mention the conflicting argument.*

<p align="right">(cited in Zarnuji (d. 1194:101)</p>

These types of behaviour are seen to indicate the respect that students should show for their teachers. Emphasising the importance of respect when students ask their teachers questions, Ibin Alqayyim[12] (1292-1349 CE) described polite ways of discussing matters with scholars. In addition, the earlier Muslim educationists, such as Ibn Sahnon (d. 817) and Ibin Jama'ah (1241-1332 CE), highlighted the rules that show how learners should show respect to their teachers even when they are invited to participate in 'Mutaraha' (scientific

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[10] This was the first and main Muslim scholar who wrote about the relationship between teacher and students, and his books are still recognised in the academic field.

[11] This was one of the first and main Muslim scholars who wrote about teachers and educating students.

[12] A prominent Muslim scholar who wrote an entire chapter in his book about 'good questioning'.

debate), as this helps students to reflect intellectually on what they have been learning and on the knowledge they have been seeking (Alzeen 2014).

Mawardi[13] (d. 1058) offered a different way of understanding the respect due to scholars. Although he agreed with the previously mentioned views about showing respect to teachers, he also believed that taking someone's knowledge for granted is not a sign of respect. In fact, he went so far as to warn learners not to accept any Shaikh's teachings without questioning and without thinking about or understanding their logic. He saw the 'blind imitation of a Shaikh' as a new phenomenon of his time, and gave the example of a student who, during 'Mutaraha', referred to his Shaikh, saying, 'This is the right statement because my Shaikh says so', rather than engaging in logical explanation and argument.

Although teachers appear to possess respect and have a high status accorded to them, it is evident that, historically, teacher-students interactions are encouraged. The high status position accorded to them could lead students to mistakenly see teachers as sources of absolute truth, which may limit interactions and questioning between teachers and students.

3.4.4. Responsibility of the Muslim teacher

The high status accorded to teachers in Islam means that teachers have a great responsibility and duty towards their learners. In Chapter 3 of the Holy Quran, it is related that Allah explained to the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) how a teacher should relate to his learners:

> *As part of the mercy of God, you deal with them gently; if you are severe and hard-hearted, they will break away from you.*
>
> (Chapter 3 Ali-Imran, 159)

This verse from the Holy Quran is taken as a guide from the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) for all Muslim educators who follow his customs or

Sunnahs. They are all instructed by Allah to deal gently with their students. Any harshness on the part of teachers would result in learners shying away from learning and end in a breakdown of communication with learners. The above verse encourages Muslim educators to treat students with love and care, not with fear and punishment, as is found in some Islamic schools (Al-anees 2008). Al-anees (2008) explains that a teacher is a guardian who looks after his people and treats them with love and care. Thus, teachers must guide their learners through their learning and select suitable topics for them. In addition, Mawardi (d.1648) stated that teachers should give students information that interests them, and not burden their learners with unnecessary details just because the teachers think they are important. He further suggests that Muslim teachers should follow the example of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) in his teachings by providing examples, Quranic quotations, and guidance and discussion when teaching. Ibin abdu albar (d. 1070) stated that it is part of the Muslim teachers' role to encourage *'Mutaraha'* (scientific, academic debate). Indeed, Talas (2014) argues that *'Mutaraha'* was part of the early Islamic schooling system, and was used by Muslim teachers as a means for evaluating the learning of their students.

The relationship between scholars and students has been reviewed in the light of Islamic literature to help illuminate teaching approaches in Islamic education and to understand the role of Muslim teachers. The literature suggests that even though teachers, particularly those who teach Islamic education, are highly respected in Islam, religious scholars/teachers have only partial authority over knowledge. There is a view that knowledge production should be shared, and learners should be allowed to question the knowledge using a particular framework. Teachers are encouraged to be creative and to give students space to construct their own understanding. It is true that teachers have a particular role in managing knowledge in the lesson, but they should also be open to helping students with their interests. In a pedagogical sense, Islamic education seems to have been traditionally taught in a more dynamic environment than that of the present day, and in a way in which the rights of learners were respected. Al-anees (2008) argues that many of these early practices of Muslim teachers, which are reflected in verse 159 of Chapter Three of the Holy Quran

and which aim to create a dynamic learning environment, are not practised as much anymore. Ironically, in Islamic education the teachers' role has shifted significantly to a more authoritarian mode (Ibid).

3.4.5. Teaching methods used by the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.)

In this section, some of the teaching methods the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) used to spread his message are presented, using examples from the literature. The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) appreciated positive behaviour and encouraged it by rewarding it. For example, a story narrated by Ibn Abbas (a companion of the Prophet) goes as follows:

> *One day, I prepared some water in a pot so that the Prophet could perform ablution. When the Prophet saw the pot, he asked who had prepared it. Once he learned that it was me who had prepared it, he prayed for me, "O Allah! Increase his understanding in religion".*
>
> (Bukhari, Invitation, 19).

The Prophet also used examples to illustrate the points he made so that people would be able to construct their understanding from different parts of any given example. The following extract shows this:

> *"What would you say if there were a river in front of a man's house and he bathed in it five times a day, would he remain dirty?" Those who were there replied, "No, no dirt would remain on that man". On this the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said, "This is how it is with the five daily prayers. Allah (SWT) cleanses sins by means of them".*
>
> (Bukhari, Mawaqit, 6; Tirmidhi, Adab, 80)

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) also used visual methods, such as drawings and figures, to encourage his followers to think. The following example shows how the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) explained the different characteristics of the ways in which Allah and Satan work by drawing shapes on the ground while sitting with Jabir (one of his companions). Jabir told the story as follows:

When I was sitting together with the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), he drew a line in front of him and said, "This is it; this is the path of Allah (SWT)". Then he drew two lines to the right of this line and two lines to the left of the same line and said, "And these are the paths of Satan". Then he put his hand over the line in the middle and recited the following verse: "This is my straight path, so follow it, and do not follow other paths, lest they scatter you from His Path. This He has enjoined upon you, that you keep from disobedience to Him in reverence to Him and in piety to deserve His protection."

(Chapter 6 An'am, 153)

Another method was his use of repetition when introducing an important statement or new information. One of the Prophet's companions, Anas, confirmed this: "When the Messenger of Allah said a sentence, he used to repeat it up to three times''. Fallatah (2014) argues that these repetitions by the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) were done to make his companions think more rationally about an issue, as repeating it embeds it in the mind and allows the person time to think about it. The idea was that some things are more important than others, and students need to be given more attention in order to generate curiosity as well as deeper learning. There are some long narrations in which the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) invites his followers to ask questions. One of these examples relates how the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

"Ask me" (about matters pertaining to religion), but they (the Companions of the Holy Prophet) were too much overawed out of profound respect for him to ask him (anything).

(Sahih Muslim, 2001, Book 4)

This suggests that the companions expected to receive everything passively, but the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) wanted them to have different views of their relationship as teacher and learners and for them to initiate questions. He understood that they had needs and interests which needed to be raised and debated. Scholars have noted some questions and incidents that generated disagreement and debate among the Prophet's companions. For example, there was a conversation between the Prophet and a young man. The companions saw the question posed by the young man as being an unethical question to ask the Holy Prophet, and they were about to take him away, but the Prophet allowed him to stay (see Al-Bukhari, 2000 Book 1).

The Prophet (P.B.U.H.) enabled his companions to practise their knowledge in real incidents so that they could learn and support each other. If his followers were not experienced enough and so made mistakes, the Prophet would later correct them. This is illustrated by the following extract:

> *A man came to the Prophet saying, 'I had a dream last night' (and he wanted an interpretation of his dream), then he described it... …a companion to the Prophet was sitting there, and he asked the Prophet, "Please leave it to me to explain the interpretation." When he had done so, he asked: "Please, Prophet, was what I said right or wrong?" The Prophet replied: "You said some things correctly and in some cases you were wrong". Then the companion asked the Prophet to explain more about this.*
>
> (narrated by Al-Bukhari, Book 12; Muslim, Book 15; Tirmidhi, Book 3)

The Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.) often referred to others the problems or questions that people brought to him, and asked his companions to use their knowledge to answer them. In some cases, his companions/followers did not feel confident to answer, feeling that they lacked sufficient knowledge and understanding compared to the Prophet Mohammad. However, the Prophet encouraged them to answer by supporting them. The Prophet also said that they would be rewarded if they did their best to help people. An example of this is found in a narration by Imam Ahmed (780-855 CE) and al-Darqutny (995-918 CE) in which a companion said:

> *Litigants came to the prophet arguing about some things. The Prophet said to me, "Get up and make a judgment to resolve the issue between them". I replied, "You have priority and experience over me." The prophet replied, "Even so, do it; if you make sense [of it] you will have ten [good] deeds, and if not, you will still get one [good] deed".*

The Prophet used such consultations and discussions as a way of seeking solutions to problems he and his followers encountered. He consulted his companions and their wives. Ibn Katheer (1302- 1373 CE) argued that 'this is a sign of respect for their knowledge, and it made them more active in what they were learning'.

Despite a general assumption that teaching Islam is all about rote learning, having discussed the teaching pedagogy that emerged from the history of Islam above, it is evident from this review that there is more to Islamic education than that. The rote learning aspects are seen in the way the Prophet used direct statements of new information and repeated them to his learners, and by his use of drawings and figures for the purpose of explaining particular concepts. These are examples of enforced knowledge transmission in the teacher-centred approaches. However, teaching approaches in Islamic education also have elements of a student-centred approach, as is seen in the way the Prophet encouraged his learners to question freely, in the way he established a friendly environment, in the way he encouraged his learners to practise, in the way he tested their knowledge in real contexts, and in the way he shared the authority over knowledge with his students, he demonstrated techniques that are typical of student-centred teaching. This is also evident in '*Mutaraha*', where students construct their knowledge. Therefore, historically, teaching approaches to Islamic education also contain elements of structured pedagogy.

The above discussion shows that the teaching of Islamic education involves a mixture of approaches to teaching. It seems that it has elements of the teacher-centred and student-centred approaches to learning, rather than being only teacher-centred, as some researchers have argued (Gunther 2006; Park and Niyozov 2008; Wadad 2006). The approaches to the teaching of Islam in the past seem to fit into the two classifications of teaching approaches, namely, student-centred and teacher-centred. This historical practice of teaching Islamic sciences helped me to reflect on the findings (see Chapter 6) and helped explain the teaching practices employed by the teacher educators in this study.

The next section discusses the teaching approaches currently adopted by teachers of Islamic education, as described in the relevant literature.

3.4.6. Teaching approaches to Islamic education in the contemporary classroom

When discussing approaches to teaching Islamic education, it is important to clarify misunderstandings about this topic. Many people think that Islamic

education is a single subject, whereas in fact, 'Islam' is a broad subject that refers to either Islamic education[14] or Islamic culture[15]. It also refers to subjects such as the recitation of the Quran and the Islamic faith, which are more concerned with acquiring revealed knowledge, as well as other subjects, such as, for example, jurisprudence and Islamic ethics, which involve acquiring knowledge by argument within the framework of Islam. In terms of teaching approaches, some studies see Quranic recitation as being at one end of a continuum, with all other Islamic subjects being at the other end (Mustafa and Alkylany 2006). This is because the focus in Quranic recitation is the performance that has been passed down to Muslims by the recitation of the Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H.), and this has to be followed. This performance is known as '*Tajweed*', which is a set of rules governing the proper pronunciation and recital of the Quran. For example, there are rules governing when a consonant should be silent or not and the length of a vowel sound (Al-Taweel 1999). Teaching the Quran is concerned with the application of these rules when reading the Quranic text.

In order to situate the discussion on teaching approaches in Islamic education within the literature, this section reviews studies that deal with teaching Islamic education and the related subjects of Islamic studies, e.g., '*Tawheed'* (the oneness of God) and '*Hadith'* (the traditions of the Prophet Mohammad). This is because, as mentioned earlier (see Section 2.4.2 regarding the content of the Foundation of Islamic Education course), the FIE course that is the subject of the current study contains aspects of various Islamic subjects, although the depth of the knowledge taught and the structure of the syllabus varies according to the level of education (e.g., primary and secondary schools or university).

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[14] Meaning, the necessary knowledge and information about Islam in order to worship God and live life in accordance with Islamic laws (see Section 3.4.1).

[15] Meaning the practices which have developed around the religion of Islam, including Quranic practices, such as prayer (salat), and non-Quranic practices, such as the divisions of the world in Islam. There are variations in the application of Islamic beliefs in different cultures and traditions: e.g., Arab, Egyptian, Indonesian, etc. Thus, 'culture' refers to social norms or affairs that are not prohibited by any clear and decisive text of the Quran or Sunnah, and that do not conflict with Islamic law. There are some aspects of social affairs that are clearly regulated by Islamic law, as shown in the texts, e.g., the division of inheritance, relationships between men and women, laws regarding the consumption of alcohol, etc. (IET 2009). The subject of Islamic culture, therefore, includes Muslims' actions, relationships and social affairs that are encouraged by Islam. In the context of my study, Islamic culture refers to Sunni Muslim Arab culture.

Almufada (2006) carried out an experimental study among male junior high schools in Saudi Arabia to study the effect of student group/ collaborative teaching practices on developing student skills in the subject of '*Fiqh'*. The pre-test and post-test assessment examined four cognitive skills, namely, remembering, understanding, application, and analysis. The findings of the study suggest that collaborative teaching practices have a negative influence on experimental groups, as these groups scored lower than the control group.

Mustafa and Alkylany (2006) undertook an experimental study that aimed to evaluate the effect of certain teaching approaches on students' achievement and critical thinking. The study examined the use of aspects of student-centred approaches, mainly dialogue and self-directed learning, and of commonly practised teacher-centred approaches in the teaching of Islamic education. The research was conducted among female grade seven students in Jordan. The study reveals that the student group taught through the use of dialogical approaches[16] to teaching had higher achievement than the groups taught by self-directed learning or by the existing traditional teaching approaches.

Studies were also conducted by Alazamy (2007) in Kuwait and by Alkhalidy (2007) in Jordan. Both studies use experimental and quantitative methods to examine the effect on students' achievement of using one aspect of the student-centred approach, namely, the dialogical teaching strategy. In adopting dialogical teaching, both researchers focus on the students' development of the relevant skills, especially predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarising, through free conversation. The studies in both contexts were conducted among high school students studying the subject of Islamic education in Kuwait, and Islamic culture in Jordan. Both studies report higher achievement for the groups taught using aspects of student-centred pedagogy compared to those taught by the prevalent traditional teaching approaches.

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[16] Interactive conversations between teacher and students, and students with each other, which help students to construct understanding

Alaqad (2010) studies the effects of teaching the '*Aqieda*' (Islamic faith) with student-centred elements, such as 'demonstration, direct teaching, thinking aloud, students construct summaries from their understanding', and by using a dialogical teaching strategy. The aim of his experimental quantitative study, conducted among Jordanian high school students, was to examine the extent to which students are able to develop judgment skills and decision-making skills in learning concepts of Islamic '*Aqieda*'. The findings of the study suggest that the use of these strategies had a positive effect on the students' judgment and decision-making skills in relation to the concepts of the subject.

Alalawi's (2013) study explores the teaching of '*Hadith*' amongst secondary school students in Arabic schools in Malaysia, including male and female students. The aim of her study was to test the influence of using elements of the student-centred approach (specifically, collaborative group learning) on students' attainment, and on the development of Islamic ethical values amongst the students. She defines group learning as being guided by the teacher, and defines student attainment in terms of critical skills (e.g., remembering, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The results of her study indicate the effect on the guided group's learning in terms of the students' creativity in adopting Islamic values in their lives.

To conclude, in contemporary classrooms, teaching practices in Islamic education are dominated by the teacher-centred approach. Experiments with some aspects of student-centred teaching approaches have produced favourable results in students' learning. The tendency by researchers in this region to adopt an experimental quantitative paradigm could be that most of them, especially in Saudi Arabia, were trained in quantitative research methods and believe them to be more reliable and objective than qualitative approaches. Evidence for this was provided by a teacher educator who refused to participate in this study and attempted to convince me to reject the qualitative method, as she believed it was not objective (see section 4.4).

The studies discussed above were selected to give a broader understanding of the research that has been and is being carried out into teaching Islamic education. It should be noted that the studies that were conducted in Arab

countries tended to be experimental studies which tested the use of particular student-centred teaching methods in Islamic education classes. This means that there is an ongoing investigation of whether, in actual practice, teaching is either student-centred or teacher-centred, and the extent to which it is either one or the other. These studies appear to confirm the claim that Islamic subject classes are dominated by teacher-centred approaches and rote learning.

Although many studies about teaching approaches in Islamic education have been carried out in the context of Saudi Arabia and other countries, as noted above (e.g., Alakalpy 2008), most of these studies have been conducted amongst public (state) school teachers and not in higher education institutions or teacher training colleges (Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007; Alalawi 2013). Thus, very little research has been conducted into teaching approaches among teacher educators teaching Islamic education in higher education institutions. Additionally, none of these studies has attempted to account for the contextual factors that could have influenced the teachers' teaching approaches. While earlier studies examine teaching approaches used in teaching Islamic education more generically; use quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires; and rely on using pre- and post-tests, the focus of this research study is on teacher educators' teaching practices in a university setting to provide qualitative insight into teaching approaches. Additionally, this study examines the contextual aspects that may affect the teaching approaches currently being adopted by teacher educators teaching Islamic education (e.g. the curriculum, classroom size, and so forth).

3.5. Conceptual framework

Reviewing the literature helped me to design a conceptual framework for this study. The framework as, discussed below, is designed to explain the teaching practices of teacher educators teaching Islamic education at a university in KSA. This conceptual framework includes the contextual aspects of an institution that influence the teaching within that institution. These are the provision of in-service training, the use of ICT, class size, and assessment

practices. This helps to capture how university policy affects teaching and learning and influences the teaching practices adopted by the teacher educators.

My framework involves two teaching approaches, as discussed in the previous section. The framework also highlights the influence of teachers' beliefs about teaching and knowledge of their teaching approaches - whether they believe that knowledge is fixed, and therefore view teaching as simply transmitting knowledge, or whether they view knowledge as constructed, and thus help students construct their own understanding. It also reveals whether or not the teachers practise their teaching according to their beliefs.

The framework highlights the teaching approaches with reference to teacher-centred education, student-centred education, and structured pedagogy. The key dimensions that distinguish each of these approaches are the teacher's role, teaching practices, and assessment practices. Focusing on these key dimensions helped me to identify the various aspects of the teaching practices adopted by the teacher educators and to offer a clear understanding of their teaching. Finally, the framework illustrates how Islamic educationists view learning and teaching as well as teaching methods in the early history of Islam; this is summarised below. This enabled me to justify the various teaching approaches practised among teacher educators in FIE classes, as discussed in Chapter 6.
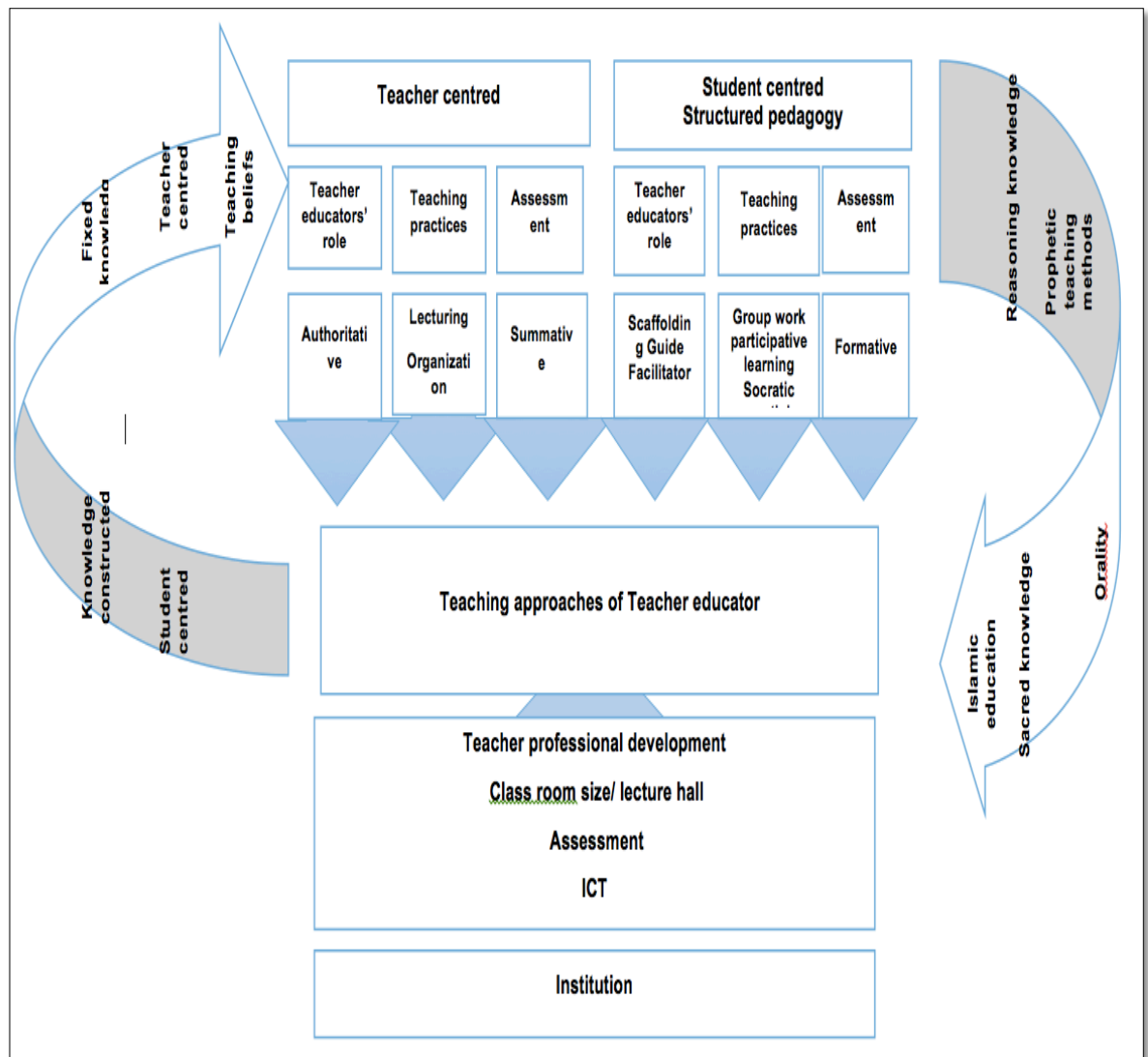
Figure 0.1: Conceptual framework of teacher educator teaching practices in FIE classes in CU in KSA

Figure 3.1 depicts the conceptual framework. It shows that the teaching approaches used by the teacher educators are at the heart of this study. It also indicates how they are positioned regarding factors related to their teaching. The bottom row of the framework presents the university factors which influence the teaching approaches of teacher educators, e.g., teacher professional development courses, classroom size, and size of the lecture hall. Also, the nature of Islamic education is shown as a factor influencing teacher educators' teaching approaches. This is presented in relation to knowledge of Islam as being sacred and knowledge being linked to reasoning knowledge. Furthermore, the figure presents teacher educators' teaching beliefs highlighted as two separate elements. The first is knowledge as a fixed entity, and the second as knowledge that is constructed. These factors then influence teacher

educators' teaching approaches. From the framework above, the overarching question that guides this study is as follows:

"What are the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators, and how are they influenced by CU's institutional policy?"

In order to answer this main question, the following sub-questions were formulated, each of which is addressed separately in Chapters 5 and 6:

1. How does the university as an institution influence teacher educators' teaching of the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?
2. What are the teaching approaches of teacher educators teaching the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?

The literature on institutions and institutional influences as well as educational interventions and reforms helped me to formulate this question, while the literature on teaching approaches and teacher beliefs helped me to formulate the second research sub-question.

3.6.   Summary

The review of the literature in this chapter began with a discussion of the literature about the policies and procedures of educational institutions and how they can affect the teaching approaches used by teacher educators. Secondly, the chapter discussed teachers' beliefs as they affect teaching approaches. Additionally, the chapter presented the various teaching approaches from different perspectives, namely, teacher-centred, student-centred, and structured pedagogy. Also, some examples of case studies that address diverse teaching approaches were explored.

The chapter then discussed Islamic education, including issues such as its aims and the main source of Islamic education. In addition, the discussion covered the position and responsibility of Muslim teachers. Also, the teaching methods practiced by the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) were examined, as they have been found to influence how teachers in KSA teach. Finally, the chapter

examined some examples of studies that explore the teaching of Islamic education.

The following chapter outlines the methodology adopted to answer and address the research questions.

4: Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used in conducting this study. It begins by describing the philosophical stance that informed this study through highlighting the epistemological and ontological approaches in Section 4.1. The following section (Section 4.2) outlines the research design, providing a rationale for the selection of case study as the research approach. Positionality and reflexivity are then addressed in Section 4.3. This is followed by a detailed description of the sample of the study in Section 4.5 Section 4.6 provides a discussion of the techniques used for data collection, including piloting the research. After that, the process of data collection is explained in section 4.7 Methods of data analysis and measures of trustworthiness are discussed in sections 4.8 and 4.9 respectively. Finally, Sections 4.10 and 4.11 discuss the ethical considerations and the limitations of the study respectively.

4.1. Philosophical stance

In conducting any social science research, researchers need to define their epistemological position (i.e., their theories, assumptions, and beliefs about the nature of reality, as well as the relationship between the inquirer and the known), and their ontological position (i.e., the different theories and assumptions they espouse about the nature of existence and what is 'out there') (Dunne et al. 2005). The debate about these positions informs the ways researchers conduct their research and the way they adopt certain methodological orientations (Stanley and Wise 2002; Cohen et al. 2011; Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Morgan 2007). Thus, researchers adopt different paradigms when they select their research methodology, depending on the way they understand the nature of knowledge in their context. Two examples of these paradigms are the positive and the interpretive paradigms.

The positivist sees knowledge as something external and independent of the individual. The ontological position of this paradigm is that knowledge includes physical objects and social phenomena, and these objects/phenomena and

their meanings are independent of the individual. The way the researcher expresses this knowledge in relation to their epistemological stance is value-free (Bryman 2012). In this paradigm, knowledge can be measured and assessed only through the scientific approach of experiment and observation, and the world can be experienced and described objectively (Punch 2005). Positivists are more likely to conduct quantitative research, which is an approach to research that assumes the existence of an objective reality.

Unlike positivists, interpretivists claim that knowledge is produced through social interaction (epistemology). The ontological position of interpretivism is that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors, who construct their own knowledge, which is also in a constant state of revision. Thus, multiple and amendable versions of knowledge exist (Cohen et al. 2011). This knowledge is expressed in relation to the researcher's epistemological stance, in which knowledge is seen as subjective, that is, dependent on human minds, values, and perceptions, and related to a specific context. From this epistemological standpoint, there is no correct way to obtain knowledge and no special process that always leads to intellectual progress (Willis 2007).

Interpretivists believe that participants' behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes can only be effectively understood from their own points of view. Thus, the job of the researcher is to interpret the perspectives of the research participants. The researcher's interpretation should be informed by the existing literature, theories, and concepts (Bryman 2012).

My overall approach and ontological standpoint in this research is interpretivism. Based on this ontological stance, I view reality as multiple and relative to the context in which humans give meaning to reality as they perceive it, and I consider how this reality appears from their interactions (Black 2006). From this perspective, I sought to derive knowledge about the teacher educators' teaching pedagogy and approaches from the way they themselves constructed their knowledge, and this knowledge could be understood only within their specific context. Interpretivism promotes the following idea:

All human actions are meaningful and have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. In order to make sense of the social world, the researcher needs to understand the meanings that form and are formed by interactive social behaviour.

(Usher 1996 in Usher and Savino 2007: 18)

This interpretivist stance reflects my epistemological view as a researcher about the nature of knowledge and, consequently, about the way it can be acquired (Potter 1996). The context is important because it affects the way people shape and respond to the reality around them (Bryman 2012). Thus, it was important to gain access to the teacher educators and their teaching context to be able to construct an understanding of their reality (e.g., teaching practices) from their perspectives. The following figure 4.1 represents the ontological and the epistemological approaches of this my research.
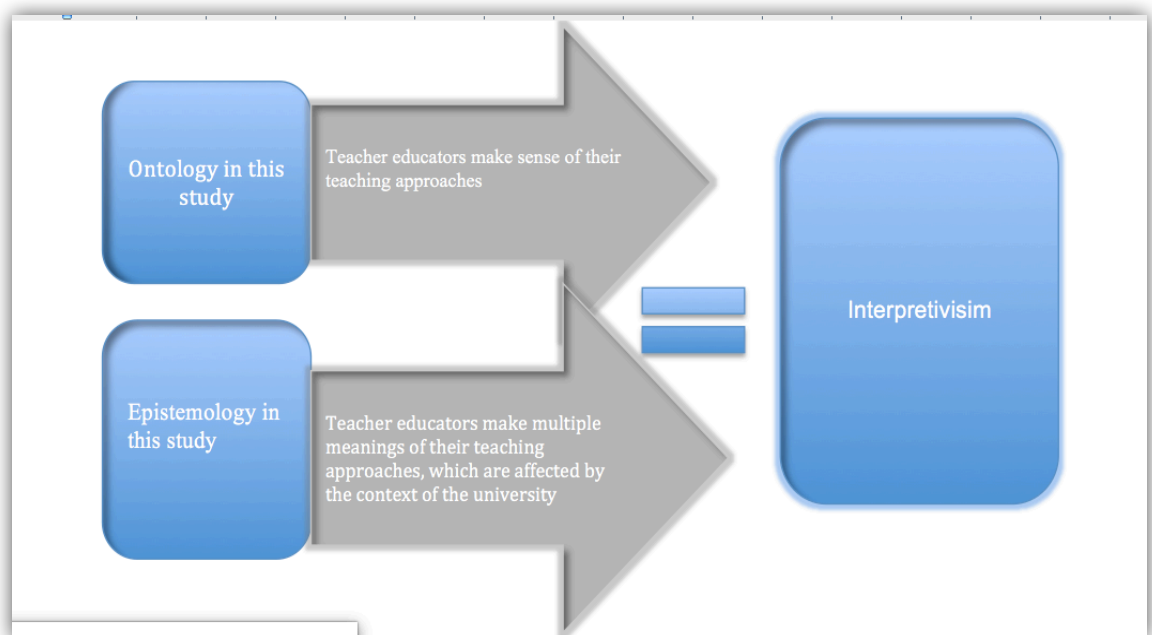
Figure 0.1: My ontology and epistemology

Adopting this interpretivist view helped me to explore and to contextualise the teacher educators' understanding of their teaching approaches in relation to the FIE subject and the role of the university. It also helped me to understand their teaching practices in their social context (through classroom observations), and

to explore the way the teacher educators constructed meaning concerning their teaching and learning.

Adopting the interpretivist viewpoint not only allowed to me see the reality from the perspective of the people who experienced it, but it also helped me to understand their realities in relation to the theory and literature in the field of teaching and learning in higher education. This reflects Bryman's (2012) idea of the 'double hermeneutic of interpretation'. He stated that the first level of interpretation is how people describe reality, while the second level is the researcher's assessment of people's views of reality and how he or she relates these realities to the existing literature.

4.2. Research design

This study was conducted using a qualitative methodological approach. First, the qualitative approach helped me to explore the teaching approaches used by Saudi teacher educators working in the TPP in the College of Education at CU. To the best of my knowledge, this subject has not yet been studied in relation to institutional influence. Strauss and Corbin (1997) claim that a qualitative research approach can be a better way to understand phenomena about which little is known. Adopting such an approach in this study made it possible to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the teacher educators' teaching practices. Several different data collection tools were applied that are compatible with a qualitative methodologically approach: document analysis, interviews (with teacher educators, heads of department, and students), and observations (of teacher educators' classes).

The documents that were analysed were used to strengthen the structure of the interview questions and guide the development of the questions regarding teacher educators' teaching approaches. In addition, information gleaned from the documents was used in examining CU policies. Thus, it helped me to gain a better understanding of how policies influence teacher educators' teaching approaches.

The interviews served as the main tool for data collection. As discuss later there are two interviews with lecturers, one with students, and one with the administrators. They were used to obtain information about the different issues covered by the research questions. The topics were related to institutional practices regarding teaching and learning (FIE curriculum and in-service) as well as teacher educators' approaches to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the interview questions utilised some of the data obtained from the documents in order to elicit more nuanced perspectives on teaching approaches. This was achieved, for example, by using and referring to a number of specific teaching activities indicated in the policy document at CU.

Classroom observations were used in this research study to observe teacher educators' teaching practices. They were also used to develop the second interview guide by assisting in the construction of questions that reflected teacher educators' specific practices as they appeared during the observation of the interviewees' classes. I also conducted general observations to examine the institution infrastructure that relate to learning facilities. The classroom and general observations helped to illuminate the context of the classroom, the extent to which it reflected the written policies, and how the policies were manifested by the teacher educators' actual practices as well as in the structure/ context of CU.

4.2.1. Case study as a research strategy

According to Yin (2009), case study research can help in understanding complex issues and objects, and is therefore used to investigate unexplored issues or to strengthen existing research (Cohen et al. 2011). Patton (2002) suggests that a unit of analysis can be an individual, a programme, an organisation, or a community or corporation; it involves contextual analysis of limited numbers of events or conditions and their relationships. Therefore, Yin (2009: 1) states that case studies are the preferred strategy

> *when how or why questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context... the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events.*

Case studies offer a systematic way of examining the issues, collecting data, analysing information, and presenting the results. This provides a deep understanding of 'how' and 'why' the issues in question occur. Sturman (1994:61) suggests that

> *while the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, [...] the distinguishing feature of the case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits. As a consequence of this belief, case study researchers hold that to understand a case, to explain why things happen as they do, and to generalise or predict from a single example requires an in-depth investigation of the interdependencies of parts and of the patterns that emerge.*

The significance of case studies in education research comes from the emphasis on the uniqueness of each case, because the researcher can engage with the object and obtain more feedback and clarification regarding the specific case. These can be obtained even if the researcher is distant from the context (Flyvbjerg 2006).

In this study, the unit of analysis (the case) is the teacher educators, specifically, their approaches to teaching the FIE subject, within the institutional context, analysed from the teacher educators' perspectives. However, students and other sources of information were also included to provide additional information about their teacher educators and their teaching practices.

Researchers classify the case study approach into different types. Stake (2003) emphasises that the number and type of case studies depends on the purpose of the inquiry. The different types are instrumental, intrinsic, and collective case studies. An instrumental case study is used to provide initial insights into an

issue, an intrinsic case study is undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of the case, and a collective case study involves the study of a number of cases in order to inquire into a particular phenomenon.

This study used an intrinsic case study design, which included ten teacher educators (see Table 4.1.), and in which the focus was upon teacher educators' voices in order to gain an in-depth understanding of their approaches to teaching the FIE subject. Yin (2009:5) also identifies three forms of case study: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. He states that the exploratory case study is "aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent (not necessarily case) study" (Yin 2009:5), while the explanatory case study "presents data bearing on cause-effect relationships — explaining which causes produced which effects". He defines a descriptive case study as a study that "presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context" (ibid.).

The current study does not consider any cause-effect relationships among variables, nor does it assess any hypotheses. Instead, the aim of this study was to understand and describe teacher educators' teaching approaches from their perspectives and within their own context. The descriptive case study approach was thus adopted for the research, since this approach offers the flexibility of using various sources of data to expand evidence from different sources. It also complemented my use of an intrinsic case study to provide insight into the teacher educators' teaching approaches. Significantly, the chosen approach for this case study research made it possible to obtain a holistic view of the teacher educators' teaching approaches, and to explain the nature of the relationship between policy in the context and the teacher educators' teaching practices. Moreover, the current design offers important insights into the teacher educators' teaching approaches and suggests possibilities for future research.

4.3. Sampling

Sampling means that data are collected from a small part of the whole population, and then used to inform the larger picture (Bryman 2010). In social research, a sample can be defined as a set of people (respondents) selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey or an in-depth investigation.

Yin (2009) argues that the type of sampling that should be used is determined by the type of the research and that different sampling techniques are used for different purposes. In this study, purposive sampling was used, because I was looking for particular characteristics from a target population. Tongco (2007:147) defines purposive sampling as a "technique, also called judgment sampling, [which] is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses". Most sampling methods are purposive in nature because researchers usually approach sampling with a specific plan in mind (Flyvbjerg 2006). The aim of qualitative research is not necessarily the generalisation of findings or results (Cohen et al. 2011).

As the research questions of this study focus on developing a nuanced understanding of how teacher educators at a given university in KSA approached teaching and learning, I deployed a purposive sampling technique. This study mainly drew on female teacher educators in the Department of Islamic and Comparative Education in the College of Education at CU. The total population of female teacher educators who taught FIE numbered 20, out of a total population of 34 teacher educators in the department. The two heads of department were also selected. In addition, the study's sample included a number of students. Thus, the total number of participants selected for this study was 42, including 10 teacher educators, 2 heads of department and 32 students.

The sample number of teacher educators purposively chosen for this study was ten. The purposive sampling strategy allowed a variety of teacher educators to be selected, representing different ages, educational qualifications, levels of teaching experience, and academic positions. They were all Saudis, apart from one Egyptian, as shown in Table 4.1. I recruited these female teacher educators with consideration of their age, educational background (whether they had studied locally or overseas), teaching experience, and rank, and whether they held or had held any leadership position before (for example, that of a supervisor or curriculum developer).

I approached the teacher educators by attending the weekly staff meeting, based on the criteria I developed for sampling. At the staff meeting, I introduced myself and explained my research to them. After my introduction, I invited them to participate in this study, bearing in mind my sampling criteria. Those who agreed to volunteer for this research were selected after they had given their consent (see Section 4.10 for a discussion of ethical considerations). This meant that the purposive sampling used in the study was characterised by some aspects of randomisation, as teacher educators with varied teaching experience were selected on a voluntary basis. Each teacher educator was interviewed on 2 separate occasions, making a total of 20 interviews (see Section 4.6.3 for a discussion of interviews).

The following table presents information about the teacher educator sample. The table shows that the ten selected teacher educators represented a wide range of ages, teaching experience, qualifications, and position.

Table 0.1: The FIE teacher Educators sample

No.	Pseudonym of teacher educator	Age	Qualification	Nationality	Teaching experience (years)	Position
1	Hayat	+50	PhD	Saudi	22	Associate professor
2	Amal	+50	PhD	Egyptian	21	Associate professor
3	Safya	-40	PhD	Saudi	17	Associate professor
4	Huda	+50	PhD	Saudi	28	Assistant professor
5	Asma	+50	PhD	Saudi	26	Assistant professor
6	Amas	+40	PhD	Saudi	26	Assistant professor
7	Hannan	+50	PhD	Saudi	10	Assistant professor
8	Khadija	+50	MA	Saudi	+30	Lecturer
9	Afaf	+30	MA	Saudi	6	Lecturer
10	Abrar	-30	BA	Saudi	3	Assistant lecturer

In order to explore and understand the university's policies and how they were affecting these teacher educators' approaches to teaching and learning, I purposively selected two heads of department: the head of the Islamic and Comparative Education department and the head of the Curriculum and Teaching Methods department (see Table 4.2.), as these two departments deal with subjects required by the TPP (see 2.4.2).

The following table presents the sample of heads of department who were interviewed to support the discussion of institutional aspects.

Table 0.2: Managerial sample

No.	Heads of department
1	Islamic and Comparative Education
2	Curriculum and Teaching Methods

Even though students were not the main focus of the study, their voices were taken into consideration, as they could provide insight into the teacher educators' teaching approaches. The total number of students who showed an interest in participating in the research was 32 (only 20 students in the end showed up for the one-to-one interviews) (see Table 4.3.). The student sample was selected using purposive sampling with some aspects of randomisation, as the students were recruited on a voluntary basis. No specific criteria were set for individual students to be involved, such as, for example, race, family background, or economic background. Participation was open to any student in the ten teacher educators' FIE classes. In addition, all participants were asked to provide their contact details and to agree on a time and date for the interview.

The table below shows the student sample for the research. The sample was randomly selected from each class I observed of the teacher educators who participated in this study. The table shows the final number of students after the withdrawals.

Table 0.3: Student sample

Pseudonym of teacher educators	No. of students from the sample/ per teacher educators
Hayat	2
Amal	2
Safya	3
Huda	1
Asma	1
Amas	3
Hannan	3
Khadija	2
Afaf	2
Abrar	3

The following section outlines the different strategies adopted for the data analysis.

4.4. Data Collection Techniques

As described above, for this research, data were collected through document review, observation, and interviews. The following sections discuss these tools in more detail, with focus on how they made possible the collection of the data required to answer my research questions.

4.4.1. Documentary data

The diversity of documentary sources generally available to researchers enables them to develop more comprehensive accounts based on specific themes (Yin 2009; McCulloch 2012). Bowen (2009) defines documentary review as a systematic examination of documents (including, e.g., curricula and institutional policies) to identify learning aims, needs, and challenges, and to describe institutional activities. Reviewing documents is likely to reveal authentic and meaningful data about the phenomena under investigation (Bryman 2012). Furthermore, McCulloch (2004: 129) remarks that "although documentary research is often thought of as one single type of source, it actually offers a number of different perspectives from which to view a given problem or topic".

Atkinson and Coffey (2004) state that most modern types of social formation are entrenched in bureaucracy and are dependent on paperwork. Thus, studying such paperwork not only aids in understanding how these organizations function on a day-to-day basis, but also helps in understanding how organisations present, publicise, or justify themselves and their roles: "Documents are 'social facts', in that they are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways" (Atkinson and Coffey 2004: 58). Scott (1990) classifies documents into two types, namely, personal and official, and they can take different forms, such as portfolios, memos, agendas, meeting notes, reports, prospectuses, and newspaper articles. Therefore, Atkinson and Coffey (2004) note that documents are a good place to search for answers, as they provide a useful check on information gathered in interviews.

The main documents studied were the university's Bulletin (College book) (2013); a book issued by CU in 2012 titled 'Affective teaching at the university level'; the new curriculum of the FIE course (Department of Islamic and Comparative Education) (DICE); teachers' timetables; outlines of teacher training courses; teacher educators' profiles (CVs) posted online; and university regulations for academic staff. Some of these documents were open to the public online (e.g., the new curriculum of the FIE course), as a result of which, it was not difficult to access them. Other documents were obtained from the

College of Education exclusively, for example, the Bulletin (College book, 2013). These documents contained the main policy texts of the university and describe in detail how the university is organised and administered. Reviewing documentary data helped to explain the educational policies and practices of Saudi higher education, particularly those relevant to teaching and learning practices, for instance, what is taught, how it is taught, for how long, and in what sort of institutional context. This helped to position the university within the wider structure of Saudi higher education and thus to explain the rationale behind the various university policies and practices.

In view of the research interest in institutional influences on teaching and learning, it was important to collect documents that outlined the relevant CU policies. Various documents relating to CU and the College of Education, including university publications (e.g., university mission and vision statements) were analysed. Examining these documents enabled me to understand the relationship between the official policy of the university and actual university practices of teaching and learning. In this way, I could reflect on the institutional policies that were causing tension among the teacher educators in their actual practice of teaching the FIE subject. Analysing these documents allowed me to address the research question specifically in relation to the university's policies and how they were affecting the teacher educators' approaches to teaching and learning.

Internal official documents about the FIE curriculum and the teacher educators' training courses were also collected and analysed. The finding contributed to answering the question regarding the teacher educators' teaching approaches (see Chapter 6). Reviewing these documents enabled me to better understand the teacher educators' teaching approaches within the curriculum of the College of Education, as well as the differences between official policy concerning teaching and learning and the actual teaching approaches adopted by the teacher educators. The documentary review highlighted differences between the teaching practices recommended in the FIE curriculum and the actual practices of some teacher educators. The review also illuminated some of the challenges that teacher educators' teaching the FIE subject faced.

The review of the documents supported the development of the other data collection tools. It not only offered a better understanding of the teacher educators' teaching approaches and the institutional context, but was also particularly useful for the interview guide used with the teacher educators (e.g., using the term 'academic member' instead of 'teacher educator', and referring to some of the teaching and learning activities specified in the FIE document).

4.4.2. Observations

As a research method, observation allows data to be collected that cannot be collected through questionnaires or interviews (Bryman 2012). It involves observing behaviours, events, and physical characteristics in the context of the study environment (Bryman 2012; Creswell 2012). Furthermore, it includes both verbal and visual data (Cohen et al. 2011). This is important because people may behave differently from how they say they do (Robson, in Cohen et al. 2011). If researchers want to analyse not only what is said but also the way in which it is said, then observation can be a helpful tool. In addition, observation plays a vital role in situations where a researcher may unconsciously miss something during interviews, when participants feel uncomfortable discussing particular issues, or when a researcher wants to confirm particular responses (Cohen et al. 2011).

According to Cohen et al (2011), there are two types of structured observation: highly structured observation and semi-structured observation. In the former, the researcher uses a checklist of pre-defined rules, factors, and procedures, e.g., the expected incidence, presence, or frequency of evidence that will be observed in the situation. The latter also has predetermined rules, but allows other issues to emerge from the observation. Also, structured observation may be only semi-structured around key factors and issues considered to be relevant to the topic of the research.

The actual practice of observation is divided into participant observation and non-participant observation (Emerson et al. 2001; Lofland et al. 2006). In participant observation, the researcher joins in and interacts with the groups he

or she observes, participates in their activities, takes notes, and later reflects on his/her observations. In non-participant observation, the researcher only observes the activities and records her/his observations without participating in them. Taylor-Powell and Steele (1996) propose two types of observation: overt and covert. In overt observation, the participants are aware that they are being observed when the observation takes place. However, this could result in them not acting naturally. Covert observation is observing people without their knowledge or without telling them that they are being observed.

In this research, I used semi-structured observation (see Appendix 3). This helped me to understand the context of the classroom and the teaching approaches used by the teacher educators; for example, it was apparent whether they preferred lecturing or cooperative learning. In addition, it helped me to focus on the teacher educators' interactions with their students. For example, I observed whether they allowed students to pose questions, the types of question being asked, strategies such as pausing after asking questions and giving examples, and the type of feedback and assessment. I also observed the degree to which students were encouraged to participate in the learning process. Employing semi-structured observation kept me focused on gathering information about the behaviour, situations, and events that served my research purpose.

I used non-participant and overt observation for the study. This enabled me to observe the participants when they were comfortable in the natural setting of their practice. I thus carried out the observations without interfering. The participants – teacher educators teaching the FIE subject - were aware that they were going to be observed and so arranged a time for my visit. During the fieldwork, I conducted ten classroom visits to observe each of the teacher educator participants. Before each observation, I reminded the teacher educators of their right to opt out of the study and of their right to privacy and confidentiality. The students were also made to understand that they had the right to stop me from observing them, even though they were not participants in the study.

I observed classroom practices during different periods, taking note of teaching practices, and teacher-student and student-student interactions within the classroom. The average number of students in a class was about 50. In most of the classrooms, I was free to choose any position during the observation, although one of the teacher educators asked me to sit in the front row. This went against my preference, which was always to sit at the back. In most classrooms, teacher educators stand at the front of the class and face the students, who sit in rows. In two of the classes, the students were seated as a group, but the teachers still stood at the front. Thus, sitting at the back allowed me to observe teacher-student interactions more clearly.

Each observation lasted for 50 minutes. I avoided behaving in any way that might make the teachers feel that I was there to evaluate or assess them, as that was not part of the study. I established a rapport with both the teachers and the students, so that I might not affect the teaching and learning setting; this encouraged the teachers to be themselves. In addition, I conducted one-to-one interviews with the teachers whom I had observed, so they could clarify their reasons for adopting particular practices in their teaching. I recorded the observation data in my personal diary. At the close of each day of observation, I wrote down my reflections in my research diary and planned for the next observation. Sometimes, my reflections on the notes in my research diary helped me to identify gaps in the data. I usually filled those gaps during the interviews. At other times, these reflections led me investigate the university's policy texts further in order to understand why things were happening in the way they were. My research diary thus became a useful self-reflection tool for thinking through the data and for finding gaps that may need to be filled to develop a better understanding of what was happening within the university as the research context.

During my time in the College of Education, I conducted general observations throughout the College, and in particular, observations about the teacher educators' general setting (e.g., their offices) around the university. Also, I examined the availability of teaching and learning resources and facilities, such as computers, internet connection, and printing facilities. All teacher educators

were made aware of my presence and the purpose of the study, that is, to collect data about teacher educators' teaching approaches. General observations helped me gain an understanding of how institutional practices were influencing the teaching approaches adopted by the teacher educators.

4.4.3. Interviews

The interview is a widely employed qualitative research method (Bryman 2012) that can offer deep insights into how the participants view the world (Schostak 2006). Qualitative interview types include unstructured, structured, and semi-structured (Bryman 2012). Unstructured interviews closely resemble everyday conversations (Burgess 1983), in which the researcher at best uses a brief set of prompts covering a certain range of topics. This type of interview was not used in this study, because the researcher has little control over the interview process. The totally unstructured nature of these interviews may lead to the discussion moving away from the main themes of the research, which, due to time and financial constraints, can be inconvenient.

Structured interviews are used when researchers are aware of what they do not know, so they ask questions designed specifically to obtain the required knowledge (Cohen et al. 2011). In this type of interview, the researcher has tight control over the interview process and asks closed-ended questions. Thus, the interview conversations do not go beyond the interview schedule. Since my aim in conducting the interviews was to obtain information from the teachers that I was not familiar with, this type of interview was not deemed suitable for this research (Bryman 2012).

In contrast, semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with a guide to the broad topics that he or she needs to cover (Bell 2010), and ensure that the maximum amount of relevant information can be obtained within a limited time. This type of interview was therefore deemed to be the most suitable for this study. Moreover, having some structure to the interviews helps to keep the conversation on track and to steer it in a direction appropriate for the research objectives (Bryman 2012). Semi-structured interviews also help the researcher

to collect relevant information that is in line with the research aims, to avoid misconceptions and obvious ambiguities, and to address the main research question and the sub-questions. Bryman (2012) and Kvale (2006) emphasise the fact that the use of semi-structured interviews is appropriate when the researcher's investigation has a clear focus, as well as when there is the expectation of emergent issues that will need to be addressed. The semi-structured format of the interview allows respondents the freedom to respond in a way that may give rise to unanticipated topics and questions. Semi-structured interviews are therefore a valuable method for understanding how research participants view their world, an aspect which was vital for this study.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in this research in order to explore the social phenomena in this particular context (Bryman 2012; Warren 2010). Using open-ended questions facilitated the gathering of a substantial amount of information about the teacher educators' concepts of learning with regard to FIE, which forms part of the TPP.

Kvale (1996) emphasises the importance of the researcher establishing a suitable atmosphere that will help the participants feel comfortable enough to talk freely. I constructed that atmosphere through active listening and by attempting to use the same type of vocabulary they were using, as well as through body language (Cohen et al. 2011). In addition, I encouraged the participants, speaking Arabic, to use their own words (see section 4.8.4 for details about translation), as the purpose of the interview is to understand people's experiences and the meanings they attach to them (Cohen et al. 2011). For the sake of this research, I developed four interview schedules: two for the teacher educators, one for the heads of department, and one for the students.

With semi-structured interviews, a guide is prepared with fairly broad research questions. In this research, these questions were categorised according to the research questions (see Chapter 3.). It was expected that the answers would address the research questions. However, unlike an unstructured interview, the guide in semi-structured interviews serves only to keep the interview on track.

Also, unlike a structured interview, participants have full freedom to answer in any way they like. It was therefore expected that some questions would be modified (e.g., the question 'Please tell me about your learning philosophy' was changed to 'As teacher X, what is your understanding of the concept of learning?'

Two interviews were arranged with each teacher educator, and a different group of questions (schedules 1 and 2) (see Appendix 4) was used for each interview. These interviews were conducted over two sessions. The first interview lasted for 30-40 minutes. The focus was on the personal backgrounds of the teachers, and on the effects of institutional practices on teaching and learning. For example, I asked them about the FIE curriculum and in-service teacher training courses (see Appendix 4).

The second interview lasted about an hour. The focus was on obtaining information about the teachers' practices, learning activities, and the effect of institutional practices on how they taught. The questions in this schedule were divided as follows: questions regarding the teacher educators' understanding of teaching, questions about the teacher educators' role and their perceptions of learners, questions about teaching strategies, and finally, methods of assessment.

The participants chose the time and place for the interviews. All of the interviews with the teacher educators were conducted at the university, in a large room or where their offices were located. Teachers with appointed duties were seen in their private offices: for example, the interviews with teacher Amas, who was the Deputy Head of the Department of the Science of Islamic Finance and Economics, were carried out in her office.

Only one interview was conducted with each head of department. There was thus only one interview schedule for the heads of department. Each interview lasted 20-25 minutes, and was conducted in their offices. The interview guide covered issues such as the head of department's role in relation to teaching and learning in the department, e.g., communicating the teaching and learning

policy to teacher educators, and how they encourage teacher educators to develop their teaching practices (see Appendix 5).

With students, separate interviews were conducted with each student. Each student interview lasted a maximum of 40 minutes on average and was conducted in the university building in a place agreed upon between each student and myself: e.g., in a corridor close to their classroom, in the cafeteria, in the teacher educators' room, and so on. The interview guide was based on specific topics related to their reasons for enrolling in the TPP, and their perceptions of their teacher educators in terms of their teaching practices, assessment practices, and learning activities. In order to explore these aspects, sub-questions and prompts were designed to encourage them to raise additional issues (see Appendix 6).

I asked all teacher educators, heads of department, and students for permission to audio tape-record the interview sessions. At the beginning of each interview, I asked the respondents to sign a consent form (see Appendix 7) and then switched on the recorder. I started each interview by introducing myself and explaining my research aims and objectives. I also assured the respondents of the confidentiality and anonymity of the data and that their responses would not be used for any purpose apart from the current study. I also explained the technique that I would follow in the interview.

Conducting the interviews presented some challenges. One such challenge was securing permission to record the interviews. However, only one teacher educator refused to be recorded; I had to record her interview by writing notes. Some of the others were very concerned about whether their voices would be listened to by any male person. Once I had assured them that it would be only myself who would listen to and transcribe the interviews, they were happy to be recorded. Many of them held the belief that Islamic cultural tradition views women's voices as *awrah*[17], which should therefore not be heard in public. The

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17 Usually refers to the parts of the body that are not meant to be viewed publicly. For a restricted example, the intimate parts are certainly *awrah*. This is true for men and women. There is also *awrah* between the same sex and another for the opposite sex. In terms of

truth about women's voices being *awrah,* however, is restricted, as they are only meant not to speak in a soft or alluring voice in public. Perhaps, as these teacher educators were going to speak informally and in a friendly tone, they wanted to avoid having their voices made public.

As mentioned above, some of the interviews with students were conducted in the teacher educators' room, as I was given permission to use this facility during the period of my research. However, I found that the students were not comfortable talking about their teachers' teaching techniques in the teachers' room, and that they would stop talking or would lower their voices when any teacher educator passed by. Therefore, it was necessary to re-start the interviews on numerous occasions, which negatively affected the flow of the conversation. In addition, these distractions also occurred when the interviews with students were conducted in the corridors. The quality of the recording was also affected, leading to some difficulties during the transcription process. To avoid this happening in the teacher educators' room, I arranged for more than one student to be interviewed together. This reduced the students' discomfort.

4.4.4. Piloting the Research Instruments

Many researchers benefit from piloting the research instrument before conducting the actual research (Bell 2010; Cohen et al. 2011). This is to ensure that the instrument functions well in terms of yielding useful data (ibid). Ball (2010) argues that a pilot exercise alerts the researcher to any questions which participants in the trial sample struggle to answer. A pilot study thus helps to improve the quality of the information obtained (Flyvbjerg 2006).

In this study, the interview guide for the teacher educators was piloted. I conducted interviews with two Saudi students who were studying at universities in the UK and who had teaching experience in a college of education in Saudi Arabia. The interviews were carried out face to face. I provided them with both

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women's voices, there is a long existent cultural misunderstanding that sees women voices as *awrah*. But the true Islamic point of view is that a woman's voice is not *awrah* but instead that she should speak modestly (Al'uthaymeen 2016).

versions of the questions, Arabic and English, and asked them to comment on the clarity of the questions and the translations, as well as to suggest any improvements. After piloting the research instrument, I modified some technical terms, theoretical concepts, and expressions taken from the literature. For example, the question 'How do you help students to construct their knowledge?' was changed to 'How do you develop students' ideas?' Some of the questions were also rephrased and reordered to enhance the flow of conversation (e.g., the question 'How do you encourage student learning in your class?' was changed to 'What learning activities do you use in your class?'). I also worked on some problems arising from the translation (as the interviews were conducted in Arabic). The word 'learning', for example, means 'studying and revising' or 'general knowledge acquisition' in Arabic. I was thus careful when I translated and used this word within the translated text.

4.5.   The process of data collection

The process of data collection started with applying for permission from the CU administration to conduct the research. As mentioned earlier, the university has a system of gender segregation, and it is normal for the main administrative offices to be located in the male part of the university. Since there were papers to be signed, even though they applied only to the female section of the university, they had to be dealt with in the male section. Therefore, although, as a female researcher, I had to conduct my research in the female area of the university, I had to apply for permission to do so from a department located in the male administration. However, it was not considered acceptable for me to enter the male administration buildings and begin the process of seeking permission. Instead, I had to ask a male family member to conduct the communication between myself as the researcher and the male administration. Permission for the research was granted on 3 November 2013, two months after the application was submitted.

I started my visits to the university as soon as I had obtained permission. I first spoke to the female Deputy Head of the College of Education. I took this step to legitimise myself as a researcher among the female staff and make her aware

of my presence. I chose to present myself to two departments: Islamic and Comparative Education, and Curriculum and Teaching Methods, since these departments related directly to my research interest.

During the first week of November 2013, documentary data were collected. These documents contained comprehensive information about all subjects offered by the departments, the names of the teachers teaching each subject, and the number of students allowed to study each subject. These data were collected from the female Department of Islamic and Comparative Education. I also collected some of the teacher educators' CVs that had been posted on the university website. These documentary data helped me to identify the target population from the total population of teacher educators. I also collected FIE curriculum documents from the university website.

Following this, over the next weeks of November, I started to introduce my research and myself to the teacher educators in the large room where their offices were located. The introduction was made to groups during their breakfast time and to individuals when they appeared in the room. I was welcome to sit in the room; thus, I had the chance to meet most of them there. In addition, I gave an open invitation to anyone who fit the purpose of my study and wished to volunteer to participate (Karnieli-Miller et al. 2009). They were all teacher educators teaching the FIE subject at different academic levels.

Once the teacher educators were recruited, I began with my data collection including the interviews during the third week of November 2013, based on the availability of the teacher educators. Interviews with students were also carried out. Interviews with teacher educators and students were carried out in the same week to minimise time constraints. As midterm examinations were due, the research had to be put on hold for six weeks. My interviews and observations process is captured in Table 4.4 below

Table 0.4: The process of data collection

Month/ Week	Pseudonym Of teacher educator	Interview 1st	Observation	Interview 2nd	Students interviews
Nov 2nd -3rd	Asma	20.11.2013	21.11.2013	28.11.2013	Along the field work time
	Safya	21.11.2013	22.11.2013	23.11.2013	
Midterm examinations					
Jan 2nd - 3rd	Hannan	11.01.2014	12.01.2014	14.01.2014	
	Huda	12.01.2014	14.01.2014	07.02.2014	
	Amas	15.01.2014	04.02.2014	05.02.2014	
Feb 1st, 2nd - Mar 1st	2 Head of departments	09.02.2014 12.02.2014			
	Abrar	14.02.2014	16.02.2014	03.03.2014	
	Khadija	25.02.2014	02.03.2014	06.03.2014	
	Hayat	26.02.2014	27.02.2014	02.03.2014	
Midterm break					
Mar 4th - Apr 1st	Amal	27.03.2014	28.03.2014	04.04.2014	
	Afaf	28.3.2014	29.03.2014	04.04.2014	

4.6.   Data analysis

Data analysis is the process of making sense of the data by combining, summarising, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read (Merriam 1998). This section explains how the obtained data were analysed using the various tools, and then highlights some of the challenges and difficulties faced during the analysis.

Data analysis was done by combining the outcomes of the three data collection tools. Data gleaned from the documents were used to formulate some of the

questions for the first and second interviews session. Also, some data from the general and classroom observations were used in the formulation of the main interview questions.

The data analysis undertaken in this study follows an iterative data analysis process. This iterative process was guided by data collected from documents, observations, and interviews. The research questions guided the analysis, as they identified the main issues that were germane to the study.

Figure 4.2. below outline the process of data collection and analysis from each research technique.

Figure 0.2: Combining data collection tools
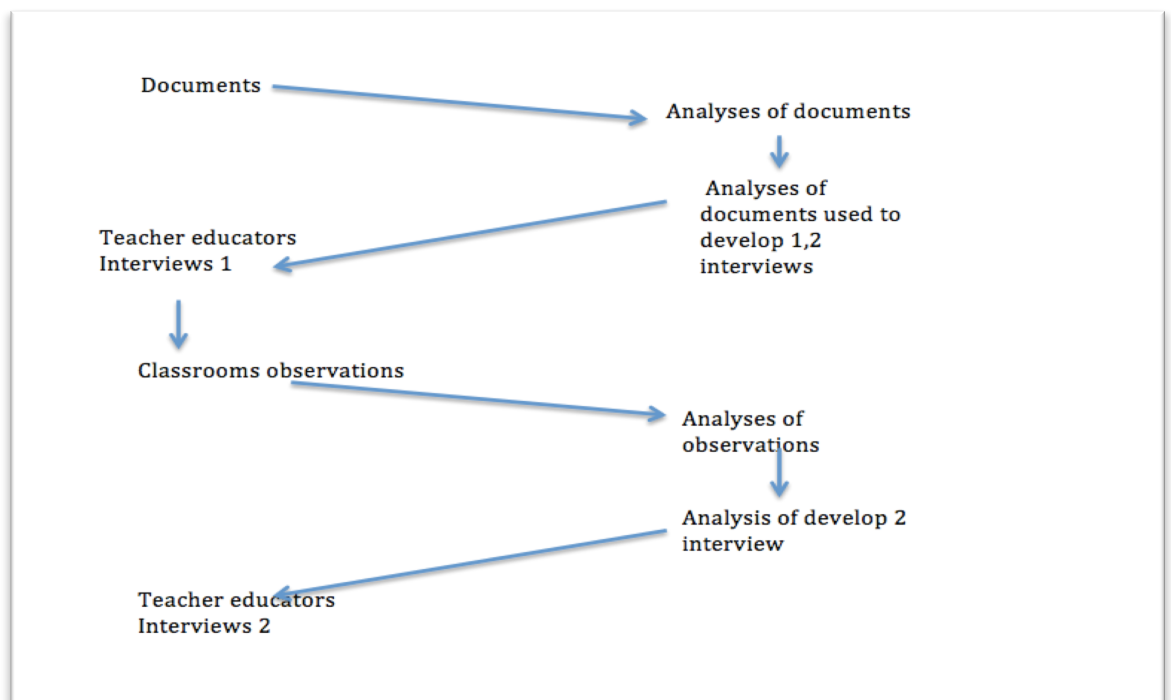
The data analysis and its relation to the data collection tools (documents, observations, and interviews) are explained in Table 4.5 below. It explains each data collection tool and the ways the data obtained from each tool were analysed. In addition, the interviews, document reviews, observations, and the framework explained in Chapter 3 (the literature review and conceptual

framework) and Chapter 4 (the methodology chapter) also identified salient aspects of the study.

Table 0.5: Analytical tabulate

RQ	Analysis framework for the interviews	Analysis framework for the general observations	Analysis framework for the documents	Analysis framework for the literature
1	Review existing policies to extract information about in-service teacher training and classroom size in relation to teaching and learning. Analyse CU policies concerning in-service teacher training and classroom size in relation to teaching and learning.	General observation to obtain information about the state of infrastructure in relationship to ICT policy in order to determine the relationship to student-centred learning, which the policy advocates.	Analyse the existing policies in relation to teaching and learning and the ways these policies are meant to be implemented. Examine the CU publications, e.g., university mission and vision statement, university guild book of effective teaching in higher education.	Highlight the different policies in different HE contexts, the policies implemented, and the challenges involved in the implementation process. Identify the importance of understanding teaching and learning in relation to HE policies. Identify general practices by CU in relation to teaching and learning, such as in-service teacher training, classroom size, and assessment.

| 2 | Analyse teacher educators' teaching practices and learning activities from the findings of the first interviews.

Examine the findings of the classroom observations and second interviews.

Review the findings of the document analysis. | Classroom observations to seek evidence of teacher educators' teaching practices and to reflect on the findings of the second interviews'. | Analyse CU policies regarding teaching and learning within the framework extracted from reviewing different topics in the literature.

Examine the book published by the CU called '*Guidance for Effective Teaching at University*, course curriculum. | Review the literature in order to build the conceptual framework, which helped in formulating the interview questions and deciding which issues need attention, e.g., teacher centred, student centred, structured pedagogies, Islamic education. |

4.6.1. Interviews

All interviews were conducted in Arabic, as the participants were native Arabic speakers. Each interview was transcribed in its entirety. First, I transcribed those with the teacher educators, then those with the heads of department, and finally, those with the students. Since the participants were Arabic speakers, the transcriptions of the interviews with the ten teacher educators, the two heads of department, and some of the student interviews were translated into English. I selected only some of the student interviews for translation because they included rich data that helped clarify some aspects of the teacher educators' teaching practices. I transcribed and translated the interviews myself as part of the process of analysis, as doing so entailed deep immersion in the data. More information about the process of translation is provided below, in Section 4.8.4.

In the next stage, I progressed to analysing the data. I started by coding all individual interviews. I had codes such as assessment, student learning, and teaching practices. The coding was done in consideration of the research questions. However, I kept myself open to any new relevant codes and ideas. Next, I gathered all of the codes from the individual interviews into a single

category. For example, I created a category called assessment, teacher beliefs, in which I compiled the data from all of the interviews. With the help of a computer programme, these categories were organised, in a Word document and in different tables. This was time consuming but also beneficial in terms of familiarising myself with the data. It helped me to think through my data and delve into the data deeply. Thereafter, I had the organised data printed in order to continue processing them.

After identifying the significant categories, the data were processed for interpretation and meaning extraction (Bryman 2011). To do this, I used the right margin to write comments and possible interpretations of the data that occurred to me at the time. Throughout the interpretation process, I also kept myself open to any new ideas. I used a mapping system to display my data (Miles and Huberman, in Schneider 2000), which enabled me to make comparisons and explain, as precisely as possible, the data that had been identified. Using a mapping system enabled me to represent the data pictorially. In this stage, I was still looking for emerging ideas.

Then, after the meaning process, I sought to identify significant patterns and themes among the categories of coded sentences. For example, under assessment, I began to identify themes such as teacher-centred assessment and student-centred assessment. Thus, during this process, I was moving codes around under various themes to create a pattern in a technique referred to as 'bridging' (Lincoln and Guba, in Schneider 2000). The themes and patterns were developed in relation to the research questions (Patton 2002). Specifically, the themes, discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6, were as follows:

- teacher-centred teacher educators' roles
- teacher-centred students' roles
- teacher-centred teacher educators' practice of teaching
- teacher-centred assessment
- student-centred teacher educators' roles

Although I am a native Arabic speaker, my research skills and knowledge have been acquired in the medium of English. For this reason, I chose to use the translated English data to search for themes related to the teachers' understanding of their teaching and practices.

4.6.2. Document Analysis

The data obtained from the documentary analysis are used as supporting evidence in various parts of this thesis. In Chapter 2 (which deals with the context of the study), university publications are used to analyse the teaching and learning philosophy of CU, while in Chapters 5 and 6 (in which the research findings are discussed), documentary evidence is used to reflect on both institutional policies and the teaching approaches used by the teacher educators which differed from those specified in the university regulations (Lee and Fielding 2004).

The documents were analysed using content analysis. Thus, the documents were first read, then re-read, and then patterns were identified, which were then organised into themes (Bryman, 2012). The themes were identified in order to obtain a conceptual understanding of the type of teaching practices and learning activities encouraged by university policy. The document content analysis also contributed to identifying institutional policies that affected the way the teacher educators taught the FIE subject.

The data obtained from the documents were organised into the following themes:

- institutional influences on teaching and learning

- teacher educators' teaching approaches: teacher-centred and student-centred

The data obtained from the analysis of the documents were triangulated with the data obtained from the interviews and the observations and directly linked to the two sub-research questions of the main research question.

4.6.3. Observation

The observation data were used to support the data obtained from the interviews. They also helped to provide a basis for the questions asked in the second interviews. The observations were significant in that they helped me to obtain details on the teacher educators' teaching practices and approaches to teaching their subject. They informed me of the kind of teaching practices used by the teacher educators and allowed me to assess the participants' general behaviour with regard to teaching FIE and learning activities. The observations also helped to understand the institutional aspects of the context that influence the teacher educators' teaching practices. The data from the observations complemented and supported the themes that emerged from the interview data, as shown on many occasions in the findings chapters.

4.6.4. Translation

As mentioned earlier, all of the interview transcripts of teacher educators and the heads of department and some of students were translated from Arabic into English. This was particularly challenging. Temple (1997) argues that one of the major difficulties encountered when conducting research in one language and presenting it in another is the question of conceptual equivalence, or the comparability of meaning. He claims that even though the meaning of a word can be rendered in different languages, a word could carry an emotional meaning in one language that it lacks in the other. Temple (1997) calls this ''lexical comparability''. I believe that my position as an insider meant that I was able to address this challenge. In order to achieve comparability of meaning, I used my natural understanding of Arabic and my academic knowledge of English, as well as my relevant knowledge of the study context and culture.

The other challenge that arose from the translation stemmed from my low competency in the English language. Birbili (2000), Regmi et al. (2010), and Temple and Edwards (2008) have all argued that translating qualitative data across languages is a challenge that requires competency in both languages.

As a researcher, I was to some extent able to translate the data from Arabic into English when working with the interview extracts. However, as I have already acknowledged, I had to address certain difficulties. For example, in order to check my translation work, I had to send one full Arabic transcript to a professional translator, after which I revised some of the meanings. In addition, I had the translations checked by some Arab friends who specialised in the English language and who were PhD students in the UK. I also consulted several fellow doctoral students around the department regarding the translations. Using friends was very helpful in enhancing my understanding of the data, because it involved reassessing the meaning throughout the translation process. Brislin et al. (1973: 46) also suggest that "consultation" with other people during the translation process can be an important technique for eliminating translation-related problems:

Consultation with other people involves discussions about the use and meaning of words identified as problematic with people who are bilingual or having a number of people sitting around a table jointly making decisions about the best terms to use (Brislin et al. 1973: 46).

4.7. Researcher's position

In social research, the positionality of the researcher is considered an important factor that influences the inquiry process. This includes the formation of the research questions and the process of collecting and interpreting data (Srivastava 2006; Bryman 2012; Guthrie 1990). Positionality has been widely discussed in terms of the researcher being either an insider or an outsider (Srivastava 2006; Bryman 2012). Srivastava (2006) defines an insider as a member of a specified group or specified social status, whereas the outsider is a non-member of the group. Positionality or the *insider-ness* or *outsider-ness* are conceptualised here as a way the researcher positions themselves in relation to the context and covers key issues, such as language, gender, and culture (Ganga and Scott 2006; Creswell 2012).

As a researcher, I was considered both an insider and an outsider. I was viewed as an outsider because as a student-researcher studying in the United Kingdom, I had interaction with other academic cultures, leading to questions about some aspects of the teacher educators' norms in their teaching practices, as well as the norms of their institution (Dwyer and Buckle 2009). My position as outsider was as a researcher from the UK, which meant that I asked teachers critical questions about their teaching practices, which they might have perceived as questions that an insider would not ask. However, sometimes these questions were querying the teacher educators' assumptions, as they encouraged the teacher educators to think about issues that they had never thought about before. It also helped me gain a different and wider perspective (Naaeke et al. 2009).

The insider position came from my being a Saudi national and a female teacher educator, as explained earlier (see Chapter 1.) I had taught Islamic and Quranic studies at a college of education for two years; thus, my nationality and profession made me an insider. This position of insider was advantageous to my research in many ways, as it gave me a unique perspective and a pre-existing understanding of cultural norms and values as well as of the general practices in such a context. Furthermore, during the fieldwork, it facilitated my interaction with the teacher educators and my access to their classrooms.

My position as an insider also enhanced my rapport with both the teacher educators and the students (Bridges 2009). As a result, they were open to sharing their views in great detail. It was easier for me as an insider to obtain permission to observe lessons and to approach different teacher educators. However, although being an insider allows for enhanced interactions with participant groups, there is a risk of approaching normality without questioning or realising the problems associated with it. I overcame this problem by asking the teacher educators for additional clarification and articulation in instances when they said things like 'as you know', 'you already know', or 'I do what everyone else does'. Thus, I paid extra attention and asked the participants more probing questions in order to elicit more accurate responses.

4.8.   Reflexivity

Critical self-reflection or reflexivity is essential in ensuring the accuracy of research findings. The researcher is faced with numerous dilemmas relevant to the subject of study. In this current research, self-critical analysis and reflection were paramount for ensuring that the findings of the study were true reflections of what is practised on the ground and what the people wanted to present (Roller 2012; Macbeth 2001). This is mainly because the relationship between the researcher and the research participants is the heart of social research (Roller 2012). Thus, being reflexive ensures that findings are accurate, that no personal biases interfere, and that the findings are not influenced by power relationships in the context of the study (Roller 2012; Valentine 1999).

It was important for me as a new researcher to be aware of the anxieties created by dealing with different groups of participants. Russel and Kelly (2002) argue that, through reflection, a researcher can gain awareness of what s/he is able to perceive, and moreover, what may prevent him/her from perceiving certain things. Thus, I understand that reflexivity helped me to consider carefully my approach to my participants and to be aware of the impact of these issues on the process of enquiry. Therefore, I reflected on the power dynamics in the context that occurred, mainly due to cultural issues.

Culturally, there is a power relationship between teacher and student in the context of my research. When I was interviewing the students, they frequently saw me as a teacher. It was important to balance the relationship and to avoid the effect of this. One way of doing so was that I allowed the students to choose the places where they wanted to meet. Thus, I would meet them, for instance, in the company of their friends, or in any other situation they suggested. In addition, I assured them that they had the right to withdraw, that I did not have any power to keep them involved in the research, and that they could refuse to talk to me. Also, I attempted to create a friendly atmosphere so that they would feel relaxed, and I assured them that the data they provided would be kept strictly confidential.

In addition, the power relationship was clear between one of the teacher educators and myself, as she viewed me as a PhD student who culturally needed not only guidance for her research, but also to be told exactly what to do. She doubted my research methods and went so far as to suggest to me in the presence of the head of her department and other professors that I needed to change my research methods, and she offered her help in supervising me. I was aware that I was being seen and treated as a vulnerable individual who had less knowledge as a student than had the teachers, in the same way that other students are viewed in that context. Nevertheless, I was also aware that I should not become involved in any conflict. In this case, I explained, very politely, as is expected when dealing with university teachers in that context, that my research methods were grounded and had not been widely used in the context in which I was studying. As she viewed me as merely a powerless student, I thought it was necessary to redress the balance of power, and mentioned that I was receiving guidance from experienced supervisors. Nevertheless, this was still not enough, as she continued trying to convince her head of department to appoint a group of supervisors to assist me, and repeated that she would be happy to be one of them. Fortunately, this conversation was stopped by the lead professor, who intervened to point out that they were not permitted to interfere with researchers, much less those who are studying abroad. As a result, this teacher educator refused to be one of the participants.

The power relationship between the rest of the teacher educators and myself was characterised by their viewing me as an outsider who was interested in assessing their teaching practices. In particular, the observations of the teaching methods they used in their classrooms that were included in my study were unusual in their context. This is, as mentioned previously (see 3.4.6), because the quantitative research paradigm is the most commonly used by researchers in KSA. As my field notes showed, most researchers in the country prefer quantitative paradigms, and consequently, observation is not common. I realised that this was interfering with the trust they needed to have in me which would make them open up and tell their stories, and I was well aware that the findings of my research would be based on the stories the teacher educators

shared with me about their teaching practices. Thus, while I was conducting the interviews, and when I was sitting with them in their offices, I would talk about the purpose of my research, and give them as much information about it as I could. I allowed them to ask me questions about it, as I thought that the more they knew about my research, the more information they would share with me about their own views and practices (Karnieli-Miller et al. 2009). Thus, I made sure they understood that their views were highly valued. Also, when they expressed doubts about whether some of their practices were appropriate or not, I encouraged them to reflect on them, but I did not make any judgements about any of their practices.

4.9. Trustworthiness

In quantitative research, validity and reliability are measured differently from the way they are measured in qualitative research. In quantitative research, *reliability* is the extent to which findings can be replicated, given the same circumstances, while *validity* is related to the accuracy of the research findings, which is concerned with generalising the findings to other contexts (Bassey 1999; Janesick 2003). In quantitative research, validity can be evaluated using statistical measures, and validation occurs within the research paradigm.

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is evaluated by measuring its trustworthiness and the authenticity of the research (Lietz and Zayas 2010; Flyvbjerg 2006; Shenton 2004). Trustworthiness has to be established through the reflexivity of the researcher, and by adopting an appropriate methodology, instrument representation, and approach to data collection (Flyvbjerg 2006; Fossey et al. 2002). In addition, researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1990) and Yin (2009) have suggested that trustworthiness in qualitative research can be addressed in terms of the following criteria: credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility involves ensuring that the researcher has measured the concepts and phenomena that were actually intended to be measured, in order to establish whether the findings of the study are an accurate reflection of reality.

This can be achieved in various ways during the research process, for example, by recording in-depth descriptions of the examined phenomenon, using strategies that help to ensure the reliability and clear understanding of the participants who contribute the data, employing triangulation of data sources, and through peer scrutiny of the research project (Shenton 2004; Stake 2003; Lietz and Zayas 2010).

In this research, credibility was ensured by recording in-depth descriptions of the concepts and phenomena being studied (two approaches to teaching). In-depth descriptions were obtained by developing an early familiarity with the culture of the participating organisation, and the availability of data sources was ensured before the first data collection took place (Lietz and Zayas 2010). Therefore, during data collection, prolonged engagement with the data sources had to be ensured. I made sure I spent sufficient time with the participants to become fully immersed in their issues, to build up their trust, and to avoid misleading them. This was achieved by spending an extended period of time in the field, during which I talked to and observed the participants within and beyond the classroom, and engaged them in in-depth discussions regarding the research focus. This also helped me to understand some of the issues referred to by the participants and gave me an understanding of the institution and the way it was organised.

Credibility was also achieved in this research by using what Cohen et al. (2011) referred to as "member checks". Shenton (2004) urges researchers to take the opportunity to check information and responses, and in this study, this was done after the initial transcription. I showed the participants the transcription only if there was a misunderstanding on my side. Some participants then explained their meaning clearly. They did not change their responses, but gave them more clarity. Lincoln and Guba (1986) and Shenton (2004) emphasise the importance of checking with participants to make sure that the written words, especially quotations and findings, match what they actually wanted to say and hoped that they had said. Additionally, my academic supervisors and colleagues offered critical perspectives and challenges at all stages of my research. This is what Lincoln and Guba (1986) call "peer debriefing".

Accessing peers' critical perspectives in this way is an effective way of ensuring that the research processes and findings are continually being questioned. This generates confidence that precise views are being represented in the thesis.

Dependability refers to concern about whether the researcher has conducted a thorough inquiry. It is achieved by using overlapping methods of data collection, such as interviews and observations (Bryman 2012). Data collected using different tools and from different sources can be used to complement each other to ensure rigour and good practice. Cohen et al. (2011) support this practice and advocate the use of more than one tool for data collection. This helps the researcher to explore the full richness and complexity of human activities by studying them from different perspectives.

Confirmability entails ensuring that the quality of the data is high and its source can be verified. It helps to ensure that the data reflect a true picture of the experiences and opinions of the participants rather than the imagination or poor research techniques of the researcher (Guba and Lincoln 1986). In addition, confirmability could be achieved through the researchers' reflexivity. This means that researchers acknowledge their own predispositions in the study (Huberman and Miles 1994). Dependability and confirmability can be achieved through the triangulation of data, which is discussed below.

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts. The fact that the findings of case studies are not usually transferable is viewed as a critical flaw of the case study approach, as each case is unique. However, researchers like Denscombe (2010), Flyvbjerg (2006), Shenton (2004) and Lincoln and Guba (1990) argue that transferability is applicable to the case study, as it is possible to study similar concepts in either the same, similar, or different contexts within a broader group. This makes detailed description and analysis in case studies important, as this will enable readers or practitioners in different contexts to relate to similarities (and/or differences) within the study in different ways (ibid.).

Transferability is achieved in this research by providing details regarding the context and the data collection methods. This will give other researchers comprehensive information about the various stages of my research. In addition, as can be seen clearly from the description of the data collection procedures, a great deal of care was taken to ensure that both the procedures and the method of data analysis were done rigorously and yielded accurate data. Some tools, such as the interviews, were piloted to determine their suitability for the purposes of the research.

Methodological Triangulation

Triangulation can be achieved through one of three procedures, namely, data triangulation, theoretical triangulation, or methodological triangulation (Stake (2003; Denzin 1970). In this current research, I achieved methodological triangulation through the use of multiple sources and tools to collect data. Cohen et al. (2011:112) suggest that using multiple data sources helps to clarify the complexity of human behaviour and to understand it from different viewpoints, something which was essential to this research. As stated earlier, with regard to the tools employed, alongside interviews, observations of classes and reviews of policy documents offered multiple perspectives on the teacher educators' teaching approaches. This made it possible to triangulate the data during analysis.

According to Guba, Brewer and Hunter (as cited in Shenton 2004: 65), the "use of different methods in research compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits". In order to construct a view of the teacher educators' reality, I collected data from a variety of sources and used several different tools. As stated earlier, these tools were documents, observations, and interviews. The data obtained from these sources made triangulation possible in different phases of the research. The university documents, such as the College Book, curriculum documents, and teacher educators' professional development documents' were sought and analysed. In addition, interviews were conducted with ten teacher educators who represented a wide range of backgrounds but

who all taught the FIE subject in the College of Education, as well as with the heads of two relevant departments.

I observed the teacher educators' teaching practices and the learning activities they used. In addition, I conducted general observations within the university to assess the way the policy of the university was affecting teaching and learning in the FIE classes.

The triangulation of data from this study involved two processes. For the first research question, the data from documents were triangulated with the data obtained from the interviews first and second with teacher educators. In addition, the data obtained from documents were triangulated with the data obtained from observing the classes, the learning facilities provided, and the physical environment of the classroom in general. The data obtained from documents and the second interviews were triangulated with the data from interviews with the heads of department. This triangulation helped me to understand the impact of policy on practice.

For the second research question, the data obtained from the documents and from general observations were triangulated with the data from the first interviews. The second-interview data specifically helped to clarify the data obtained from observing teacher educators in their classes. Additionally, the data obtained from the second interviews with teacher educators were triangulated with the data obtained from the student interviews. The data from the student interviews allowed a greater understanding of the data obtained from the second interviews with teacher educators.

These different tools of data collection, as well as the diverse sources of data, contributed to providing a rich understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. These three techniques were adopted in order to give maximum credibility to the final research report.

4.10. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues arise at various stages in social research. They cannot be ignored, as they relate directly to the integrity of a study (Roberts 2005). Discussions about the ethics of social research have led to considerations of the role of values within the research process. Bryman presents these in the form of questions:

> *How should we treat the people on whom we conduct research? And are there activities in which we should or should not engage in our relations with them?*

> (Bryman 2008: 113)

This includes concerns about the voluntary nature of participation, informed consent, risk of harm, and confidentiality and anonymity. Ethics in qualitative research is concerned with how people are treated and how to manage the data gathered from participants (Bryman 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2011). According to Cohen et al. (2011), ethical considerations are about being careful that the study will not cause harm to anyone; they are not only about awareness of the subject matter. The ethicality of this study was ensured first by securing ethical permission from the University of Sussex (see Appendix 8). In addition, ethical permission was also sought and obtained from the Saudi university where the research was carried out (Appendix 9). Christians, cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2011), recognizes a "code of ethics" consisting of three general guidelines that emphasise the ethical discussion of social science research. These are as follows.

(1) Principle of no harm

This concerns whether the research causes, or puts participants at risk of, any *harm*. Harm can include financial harm, psychological harm, harm to participants' development, a loss of self-esteem, stress, or inducing research participants to perform reprehensible acts (Bryman 2012; Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Sambrook 2009). The issues relating to harm were addressed in this study by maintaining the confidentiality of the participants and their records; the

participants' identities and responses were kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality. Moreover, the teachers' opinions regarding any university policy were not disclosed to or made available for scrutiny by the administrators or any of the other participants. This was to avoid causing any harm to the teachers' academic careers or causing them any discomfort in their working environment. The students' opinions were not disclosed to the teacher educators either. Harm was avoided by following the ethical guidelines contained in the University of Sussex Code of Practice for Research (University of Sussex 2012a) (see Appendix 8), which was in place when the fieldwork for this study was conducted.

(2) The confidentiality of participants' responses

Researchers should protect participants' identities and keep all personal information anonymous when presenting the findings. Thus, the names, addresses, official documents of the institution, and identities of the staff should not be made public or used for purposes other than the research. The initial data had the real identities of participants locked away in a personal laptop and password-protected so no one had access to that data. Once data had been processed and ready for analysis, the participants' names were anonymized. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality in this study, the participants' identities and responses were kept anonymous. For this reason, the university was given a pseudonym and its real name has not been referred to in the analysis nor have any of the university documents been included in the research as evidence. When conducting the interviews and tape recordings, participants were also given pseudonyms, by which they are referred to in the discussion.

(3) Accurate use of information

It is essential that the researcher should not misuse the information obtained from the participants or from the management of an institution. In other words, the data should be handled respectfully. In this study, the data were analysed carefully to identify patterns, and sensitively, to avoid any bias that could arise from my values as a researcher. The effect of bias was controlled by presenting the initial data to my academic supervisor and to colleagues in the Department

of Education. This also helped to ensure accuracy, as it involved giving explanations and taking responsibility for the way the data were being analysed.

   (4) Informed consent

I issued consent forms to participants before engaging them in interviews to make sure that their participation was voluntary and that the research would not bind them to any conditions. Among researchers, informed consent is defined as "the procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that are likely to influence their decision" (Diener and Crandall, cited in Cohen et al. 2011: 51). For this research, consent was obtained from the Saudi university management.

Another consent form was designed for individual participants. The participants (the teacher educators, administrators, and students) were given an information sheet about the research and the consent form in advance. Before the interviews took place, the signed consent forms were collected. Additionally, all participants were reminded of the conditions including their right to withdraw from the research at any time. The students were informed of the purpose of the study before I observed the teacher educators in their classrooms, and were given an information sheet before any interviews took place. Some students, however, requested further explanations. All the students signed the consent form before they were interviewed. It was made clear to them that this ensured that any data they supplied would be protected. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

The students' consent was obtained twice. The first time was in the class, before I observed their teachers, when I made it clear that my intention was to observe the teacher's teaching. If the students were interested in participating in an interview, they were given a piece of paper with my name and number on it, and they were asked to provide their contact details. At the end of the classes, the papers with the students' names were collected. The second time the students' consent was sought, as mentioned earlier, was just before the interviews took place, when they were asked to sign a consent form. The other consent issue had to do with obtaining consent from females. As this study

dealt with female participants in an extremely conservative context, I was aware from the beginning of the research of the need to agree to any conditions that might be set by the female participants. I thought that such conditions might include no audio-recording of their responses, as culturally, for some, the recorded voice is perceived in the same way as a pictorial image. Additionally, some of the married female participants might have needed to obtain authorisation from their husbands. Thus, before every interview, I reminded the participants of my intention, even though written consent had already been obtained first. Surprisingly, all students agreed to be recorded, and only two teacher educators refused. Those who agreed always asked first who was going to listen to the recording, and whether my supervisor, or any male member of staff, would need to listen to it. They were repeatedly informed that the recording would be listened to only by me as the researcher, and that no one else, in particular, no male, would have access to it.

4.10. Limitations

The first limitation of this research is associated with the use of the case study as a research strategy. The case study is viewed as an in-depth investigation of single or multiple cases, which enables the researcher to glean a holistic view of the phenomenon under study. It is widely believed that case study findings cannot be generalised beyond the small population of the case study (Yin 2009), since the study only examines phenomena in a specific context. It is therefore not possible to generalise the findings of such a study (Merriam, 1998). However, Flyvbjerg (2006), Shenton (2004) and Stake (2003) argue that, since each individual case study is unique, each one is an example and so can form a component of a wider consensus. Thus, the idea that generalisability based on statistical analysis is essential does not apply to case study research (Stake 1995).

The second limitation is related to the use of the snapshot case study approach. As discussed earlier, this approach focuses on collecting data from the participants at particular points in time. This means that this study is a cross-sectional and not a longitudinal study. The data obtained from this type of study

give an account of the social reality at the specific time(s) when the snapshot or cross-section was taken. There is therefore always the danger that the researcher may fail to understand the research context fully, and, in my case, that I might not be able to learn much about how the teaching practices of each teacher educator had been developed and had progressed over the duration of their teaching experiences in the TPP. However, I attempted to overcome this problem by using multiple sources of data collection. Moreover, spending a reasonable period of time in the field with the participants (i.e., six months) meant I could seek repeated information and confirmation on key issues from various participants in order to ensure that I reported them accurately. Thus, by linking this to the analysis of the institutional factors, this study has overcome some elements of this limitation.

The third limitation is that because of time restrictions, not enough observation of the teacher educators' classes was conducted; each teacher educator was observed only once during the course of fieldwork, so it was not possible to capture patterns of individual teacher's teaching practices over time. The single observation allowed evidence to be captured only at one particular teaching instance. An attempt to reduce the effects of this limitation was done by comparing the data from findings from teachers' interviews with those obtained from the observations to expand upon the perspective gained.

The fourth limitation is that the research focused solely on teaching practices in the FIE subject, and did not include the teachers' teaching practices in other subjects. Thus, teacher educators' teaching practices in the FIE subject could not be compared with their teaching of other subjects. As a result, the teacher educators' approaches to teaching are examined only for one subject, although they could be different in other subjects. However, as mentioned above, the detailed data obtained from the interviews and additional probing questions were used to generate a broader picture of their teaching practices, and future research can add to the findings generated in this research.

The fifth limitation of the current study is that although both female and male teacher educators were involved in teaching FIE in the TPP, the gender

segregation policy of the university meant that I was not allowed to interview or observe male teacher educators. Many Saudi researchers have experienced a similar problem. As an insider of this culture, I understood the cultural sensitivities, and did not attempt to obtain permission to involve male teacher educators. However, this means the views in this study are only those of female teacher educators, which may or may not be the same as those of their male counterparts.

4.11. Summary

This chapter presented the methodology that was used in this study. It discussed the interpretivist approach that was adopted in this study and outlined the design of this study, namely, case study, which involved carrying out an in-depth cross-sectional case study of a small sample of teacher educators who taught FIE and of administrators of the TPP.

The chapter described my role as both an insider and an outsider and discussed the issue of reflexivity, highlighting the power dynamics. This helped in establishing the integrity of the research.

The chapter presented the sample strategy, including the number of interviews and observations, and the documents used to obtain data. It also described the tools and techniques used for data collection to carry out this particular research project. Table 4.6. below shows the sub-research questions and data collection tools that were used to generate the data needed to answer the main research question.

The process of data collection was described in detailed. Also, the chapter discussed my approach to data analysis. As the interviews were conducted in Arabic, important issues related to translation were covered. The chapter concluded by highlighting the ethical considerations of this research and the limitations and, the impact they might have had on the final results and conclusions.

Overall, the methodology was carefully designed and chosen to be the one

most likely to yield a rich and comprehensive picture of teacher educators' teaching approaches in the TPP at CU. The findings are presented in the following two chapters.

Table 0.6: Data sets used to address the research sub-questions

Research sub-questions	Data sets used to address the research sub-question (s)	Description of respondents	No. of respondents
1. What teaching approaches underpin the teaching of the foundation of Islamic Education subject in the College of Education?	Interviews	Teacher educators of FIE	10
	Observations	Teacher educators of FIE	10
	Document reviews	Curriculum documents of FIE Training course documents	2
Research sub-questions	**Data sets used to address the research sub-question (s)**	**Description of respondents**	**No. of respondents**
2. How does the university as an institution influence teacher educators' teaching of the FIE subject in the College of	Interviews	Teacher educators of FIE	10
		Heads of department	2
	Observations	*Field notes	
		*Classroom observations	10

Education?	Document reviews	* Book of the College of Education *Teacher educator timetables *Training course documents *National policy of KSA *CU publication ' Effective teaching in higher education'	5

5: Institutional Influences on Teaching and Learning

This chapter presents the findings concerning the effect of institutional policies on the teaching practices adopted by teacher educators in teaching the FIE course at CU. In order to identify and examine the institution's policies for this purpose, this chapter analyses the responses of the teacher educators and other participants on this topic in relation to the study's framework for institutional policy analysis, which was presented in Chapter 3. As outlined in the literature review (Section 3.2), analysing an educational institution's policies is helpful in understanding the issues that influence teaching and learning from the perspective of policy. Using data from the interviews, document reviews, and observations, the aim of this chapter is to answer the first research sub-question, which is, 'How does the university as an institution influence teacher educators' teaching of the FIE subject?'

The chapter starts by discussing the policies related to teaching and learning at CU, and how they function. The specific policies that are analysed include the provision of in-service training for teacher educators (5.1), the size of classrooms and the teacher-student ratio (5.2), the assessment of students' learning (5.3), and the integration of technology (5.4). The conclusion of the chapter discusses the complexity of the policies enacted by CU in the College of Education. It also highlights the extent to which the institution's policies influence the teaching approaches and practices adopted by the teacher educators. In so doing, it sets the context for the discussion of teaching approaches in Chapter 6.

5.1. Provision of in-service training

In-service training is provided to teacher educators who teach the FIE subject in the TPP. The head of the Department of Islamic and Comparative Education (DICE) noted that:

> *The training unit used to send letters to the department with courses they offer. Teacher educators who were interested used to register their names with the department secretary. Now, with the internet, teacher educators are informed about these courses through their university email accounts.*
>
> (Interview with Head of DICE, 12.02.2014)

A document about the training courses reveals that various professional development training courses are available (see training courses 2014, Appendix 11). These courses can be divided into three broad types. The first of these is courses intended to improve leadership and management skills. These include courses such as 'Quality Standards in the Educational Process' and 'Women's Effective Leadership in Higher Education'. The second type is those courses intended to help teacher educators enhance their teaching practices and to bring them up to date with current practices and knowledge in teaching and learning. These include courses such as 'Cooperative Learning', 'Formative Assessment', 'Identification and Measurement of Learning Outcomes' and 'Modern Applications of Education Techniques'. The third type is courses that aim to develop teacher educators' research skills through course such as Managing Research Groups and Action Research (see training courses documents 2014, Appendix 11). The integration of technology is also encouraged through the training that the university provides.

While each type of training is significant, the second type as described above is the most relevant to the discussion in this chapter, as it is directly related to teaching. The provision of in-service training by the university exemplifies the attention that the university gives to developing the teaching skills and practices of the teacher educators. Also, the courses can be seen as opportunities for the university to promote the teaching practices that it wants teacher educators to adopt.

Courses offered by CU take different forms, such as workshops, seminars, and lectures, as the mode of delivery. The data obtained from the documents on the university's in-service training programmes do not clearly state these modalities. However, reading through the online profiles of the teacher educators, some of

whom have attended a number of these training courses, makes the modes apparent.

Some of the teacher educators I interviewed expressed appreciation for these training courses. They understood the value of the professional development courses to their career development and advancement. Abrar, one of the teacher educators, commented on the extent to which they found some of the courses offered by the university to be helpful in their teaching practices. The following extract gives her descriptions of the benefits of these courses:

> *Development courses are very important to my advancement, not only as a lecturer, but also for our management responsibilities. These development courses are also very important for enhancing my academic knowledge and my awareness of contemporary teaching strategies and the new approaches to teaching that are being encouraged by the university.*
>
> (Interview with Abrar, 14.02.2014)

Although some of the teacher educators showed an appreciation for these training courses, most of them were critical. They expressed dissatisfaction with these courses and with the modes of delivery of some of them. In her comments about the content and the delivery mode of the professional development training courses, Abrar made a comparison between the courses she had attended inside and outside of the university:

> *I attend development courses both inside and outside the university. The ones in the university are more about lecturing on theoretical knowledge. Three weeks ago, I attended a course about 'active learning'; it was quite difficult and presented about a hundred theories, but how can I use them in practical teaching? I guess it is my job. Honestly, I did not expect that from the course. Its title reflected something more alive - at least, that was what I thought. As a result, the next day, many participants did not turn up again. The professional development courses that I have attended privately, outside the university, are completely different, and I benefit a lot from them. They have helped me a lot in changing my way of teaching […] there are a lot of challenging practical activities, lots of interaction, of course, in addition to the theories.*
>
> (Interview with Abrar, 14.02.2014)

Two main points can be drawn from this quotation. First, the teacher educator Abrar was not satisfied with the content of these courses, as she thought that they were not practical enough and the content was too theory-heavy. The majority of the teacher educators agreed, expressing the view that most of the training courses did not pay enough attention to the practical side of the presented strategy. The teacher educators believed that a more practical approach, along with interactive discussions about the topics, would enable them to become involved in related activities, and would give them greater motivation to consider adopting the newly presented techniques in their teaching.

The above extract from Abrar's interview confirms the fact that educators have traditionally taught in isolation, without much-needed peer interaction and support (Brancato 2003). The teacher educators would prefer training courses about teaching strategies, which involve issues related to active learning' and 'cooperative learning, with a practical/ interactive approach to allow them to reflect on their teaching practices. Instead, most of these courses are delivered through one-way lecturing, with a few short question and answer sessions at the end. Penuel et al. (2007) and Cwikla (in Blanton and Stylianou 2009) observe that the pedagogical strategies adopted in development courses influences the success of these courses. They (Blanton and Stylianou 2009) emphasise the importance of using a "practice" approach and seminars for professional development courses. This is because they help to "motivate discussions around the focus content of the particular seminar and also to highlight alternative approaches and ideas that we wanted to include in the discussions" (ibid.: 81).

The second related point is that the teacher educators criticise the delivery mode of these course. Abrar felt that the way the courses are delivered does not help them to put the information into practice afterwards. She suggested that the mode in which many of these courses are delivered had deterred her and her colleagues from attending and had reduced the intended benefit. Training teachers through practical or experiential workshops and seminars that include systematic, continuous reflections on teaching practices and

experiences is recognised as being an element of effective professional development programmes. Desimone (2009) believes that experiential workshops raise teachers' awareness of what the experience and practice mean in actual teaching practices. Moreover, Blanton and Stylianou (2009) demonstrate that adopting seminars for professional development courses helped participants to challenge a recurring misconception in mathematics. This quotation supports Aqeel's (2011) findings in relation to ICT implementation in KSA that development courses are still largely delivered through traditional modes and that interactive workshops are mainly absent.

Another aspect of the provision of professional development training courses that challenges teacher educators is time. Teacher educator Huda complained about the unsuitability of these courses to their teaching schedules and work responsibilities, in that their timetables often conflicted with the timings of the training sessions. Therefore, most of the time, teacher educators found it difficult to attend the courses. This is best reflected in the extract below:

> *The timing of these training courses is very awkward. These courses come around mid-term, when we get busier not only with teaching; we have other responsibilities. As you are well aware, our teaching schedule is not set by our choice.*
>
> (Interview with Huda, 12.01.2014)

It is not surprising that the teacher educators expressed concerns about time, because in academic work, time is a prominent issue (see Ylijoki and Mäntylä 2003; Acker and Armenti 2004; Clegg 2009). The many administrative duties the teacher educators are expected to carry out, in addition to teaching, may limit their willingness and ability to take part in professional development activities (Day et al. 2007).

The teacher educator participants were also unhappy about the lack of frequency of these courses. Most of the courses are offered once a semester, and teacher educators have to try to fit their teaching schedules around the time of the courses. This is because the training does not happen very frequently.

This is reflected in a complaint by Huda, a teacher educator, in the extract below:

> *When we miss some of these courses, they don't get repeated. We have actually asked the university to repeat some of them, and we have been ignored. The university is supposed to consider our needs.*
>
> (Interview with Huda, 12.01.2014)

The above extracts show the discrepancy between the timing of the professional training courses and the availability of the teacher educators, which prevents many of them from attending these courses. As they are unable to attend, many teacher educators continue to teach the way they have for a long time. This undermines the ostensible purpose of these courses, which is for the university to communicate its message about the teaching philosophies it wants to encourage in order to expand the use of the teaching practices it is aiming for.

The last aspect of the professional development training courses that the teacher educators mentioned is that the content of them is not related to the reality of teaching at CU. The teacher educator participants criticised some of the courses for not being very relevant and not reflecting the infrastructure of the university. This is suggested in the following extract:

> *There are some courses, you don't know what they are for. I took a course on interactive whiteboards- have you ever seen them in any classroom? I said to my colleagues, 'Don't bother taking it; it is just a waste of time, and we have enough responsibilities'… I only went for the certificate.*
>
> (Interview with Hannan, 11.01.2014)

The above comment suggests that some of the courses were not attractive to teacher educators because they are not meaningful to their teaching work. Elton (2009) and Engin and Atkinson (2015) argue that in order for such courses to be successful, they must be meaningful and relevant, which in the case of this study, they are not.

5.2. Teacher-student ratio and lecture halls size

Class size is one of the ways in which institutions affect teaching practices. Based on the size of its classes, the type of teaching that an educational institution is trying to encourage can be inferred (Ahmed 2012; Alhawsawi 2013; Barrett and Toma 2013; Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015).

Ahmed (2012) and Alhawsawi (2013) argue that in classes with a large number of students, teachers tend to use a teaching approach that places less emphasis on student interaction and more emphasis on simply imparting knowledge. They further argue that the focus of teaching in situations where there is a high student-teacher ratio is to disseminate information to the students through a one-way teaching mode directed by the teacher. The student-teacher ratio has been identified by many researchers as being an institutional factor which influences teaching approaches in higher education (Rind and Kadiwal 2016; Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015).

The findings of the current study confirm that the student-teacher ratio is an institutional decision that has an impact on the teaching of the FIE subject. Data obtained from university documents reveal that the student-teacher ratio is about 45 students per teacher educator at CU. The university assumes this number to be reasonable for a single teacher educator to implement the type of teaching and learning CU advocates (see Chapter 6 for further discussion). This is despite the fact that researchers in the field of teaching and learning have long expressed concern about high student-teacher ratios (Rind and Kadiwal 2016; Muchiri and Kiriungi 2015). Nonetheless, the observations of most classes showed that the number of students registered for FIE is different in reality. Most of the time, the actual student-teacher ratio is much higher than that prescribed in the university document, reaching a peak of 55 students in some classes.

Another related issue is that the lecture halls designated for the lessons are not large enough to accommodate these numbers. Many teacher educators repeatedly expressed their concern about the physical size of the classrooms

and how it restricted their practice of teaching. Amas best described this issue thus:

> *I have tried to conduct my teaching by making students sit in groups- Did you see how the poor students are squeezed in? When students come in late, they can't get past… I tell my students to make a path at one side of the class so late students can move along easily.*
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

The extract above clearly shows that Amas was not able to do much, even though she wanted to. She was confined to small lecture halls that had limited room for students. Although she attempted to apply a particular approach to student teaching, namely, group work, it was difficult. Likewise, Ahmed (2012) argues that large class size is one of the most significant factors affecting teachers' teaching strategies and the way teachers perceive their role in the class, as it reduces teacher/student. Hayat also explained her struggle with the lack of physical space, compounded by the high student-teacher ratio, and how this challenge leads her to revert to lecturing.

> *I would love to set students to work in groups [but] it did not work. Classes are so crowded, I couldn't reach the students and see how they were doing. I needed to supervise them. I just stopped, and went back to lecturing and [being a] teacher for the students' class discussions.*
> (Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

In the physical space provided, teacher educators should be able to design different learning activities and engage their students in discussion activities. But unfortunately, even those teacher educators who prefer a constructivist view of teaching (see Chapter 6) were obliged to rely on lecturing and a whole-class teaching style, and not involve the students in group discussions. This resonates with Kurdziolek's (2011) argument that the physical characteristics of classroom spaces can influence the behaviour of both students and teachers.

The data from classroom observations revealed that the teacher educators would stand or sit at the front of the hall because there was not enough room for them to be able to move around. Most of the discussions consisted of the

teacher educators asking questions, to which the students responded (whole-class discussion). Most of the teacher educators and students whom I observed in these conditions looked as if they could not wait for the lesson to finish, so that they could get out of the claustrophobic space.

Although university policy determines the number of students in each hall, the reality is that the number nearly always exceeds that. Cramming large numbers of students into small lecture halls seemed to prevent the teachers from being able to facilitate active learning and appeared to discourage the teacher educators from using the teaching practices recommended by the FIE curriculum document. McKeachie et al. (1990) and Dee and West (2011) make the important point that class size is a primary environmental variable that a college faculty must contend with when developing effective teaching strategies. They distinguish between courses that are better taught by means of lecturing and those that are more suited to the type of teaching that promotes critical thinking and advanced problem solving. They go on to argue that the latter type is best taught in a smaller classroom environment.

5.3.   Assessment

Assessment is seen as another institutional element that influences teaching. The types of assessment employed by educational institutions reflect their values and the types of learning they favour (Alhawsawi 2013).

In the context of this study, the term 'assessment' refers mainly to examinations and activities that are used to assess students' learning. The data from the document shows that the university officially sets two examinations: mid-term and final. The final and mid-term examinations are given 60 marks and 20 marks, respectively, out of 100. The remaining 20 marks are allocated to classroom activities or course work for group and individual projects. The way in which the assessment is carried out in the FIE subject suggests a strong focus on examination-oriented teaching. Most of the learning is evaluated through examinations. Moreover, examination results account for the highest percentage of the marks (80 percent). Although classroom activities and

ongoing assessments are included as part of the final grade, insufficient attention is given to assessments that encourage student-centred teaching. This suggests that the assessment is primarily used as a means of measuring students' learning. This notion of assessment was criticised by those teacher educators who adopted student-centred approaches to their teaching, as suggested in the following extract from Safya's interview:

> *We all have to use mid- and end-of-term examinations for assessments, which do not allow room for feedback; this is the system here. These exams are mostly for grading the student and not for learning, discussion, or reflection... these exams send the wrong message to the students about how learning should be done.*
>
> (Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

The above quotation reflects how assessment was viewed by teacher educators like Safya, who believed in a student-centred approach (see Chapter 6). These teacher educators tended to believe that examinations, as the main means of assessment, did not reflect the type of teaching they did, nor the essence of learning. Since some of the teacher educators adopted student-centred teaching in their classes, in accordance with what is encouraged in many of the institutional documents (e.g., the FIE curriculum 2014, Table 2, Appendix 2), these teacher educators expected assessment to reflect this notion and students to be given the opportunity to learn through assessment. This created tension between the form of assessment represented by examinations and the style of teaching that favours a student-centred approach.

In dealing with the tension arising between the university's form of assessment and their teaching, some teacher educators, like Amas, found that they yielded to an examination teaching culture. Amas expressed this as follows:

> *In this subject, students' assessments rely mainly on any reference or textbook I choose. What is there for the students to learn? They know it all!! We go beyond the textbooks in the discussions, but at the end of the day, I give the students the book. I say to them, 'Here is the book. You can go and memorise it for the exam'. [Then} they can get 60%, as the university wants.*
>
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

The above extract starts with Amas confirming what Safya suggested in the earlier extract, where she stated that the programme encourages teachers to set examination questions on what has been taught in the textbook, and not on what has been discussed or learned in the lessons. Thus, questions that take learning beyond the boundaries of the textbooks are not encouraged. Some teachers may find it frustrating not being able to ask their students questions that encourage their critical thinking skills, as suggested in the extracts from the interviews with Amas and Safya. Unfortunately, such teacher educators found themselves having to confine their examination questions to points that the students could memorise from the textbooks. Thus, these teachers felt that their autonomy as teacher educators was being constrained by the university administration. Teacher educators who, like Safya and Amas, believed in student-centred teaching, thus found it difficult to teach in a way that would encourage learning, especially when they knew that their teaching method was not supported by the main mode of assessment. Having an assessment system that did not support their teaching methods made these teacher educators feel that their efforts were not valued and would not be rewarded.

The analysis of the programme documents revealed how the 20 marks for continuous assessment are awarded. As explained in the documents, the 20 marks are to be distributed evenly among classroom activities and course work for group and individual projects (i.e., concept map- 5 marks, group project- 5 marks, homework- 5 marks, workshop- 5 marks, and student attendance- 5 marks). This distribution of the marks in the continuous assessment suggests that the programme has the potential to encourage student-centred teaching. Marks are allocated in such a way as to reward activities that foster group learning. Most of the teacher educators who adopted student-centred teaching took advantage of the way in which these marks are distributed in order to encourage their students to become engaged with learning, as suggested in the following extracts:

> *During the semester, I always take advantage of the 20 marks in order to design assessment activities that assess how the students discuss their views and justify their responses. I train the students to analyse, judge*

and give reasons when working in class and for homework. I allocate about 10 marks for this; it is worth it.

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

I give ten marks of the continuous assessment to activities that involve reflection and critical thinking, such as writing summary paragraphs of each chapter of their textbook, where the students are advised to state their opinions about the chapter and what has been discussed in the class when we learned about a particular chapter.

(Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

The above extracts suggest that these teacher educators appreciated this type of assessment. Despite the small percentage of marks given to this mode of assessment in comparison to the marks awarded for the mid-term and final examinations, teacher educators like Amas and Hayat seemed to utilise it as a good opportunity to promote active learning. According to the university document, this seems to be the only method of assessment available to teacher educators who adopt student-centred approaches. However, the fact that the university allocates only a few marks to activities that encourage critical thinking, compared with the high percentage of marks awarded for examinations, does not encourage some teacher educators to encourage their students to practise these skills.

According to the university policy document, the scheme of mark distribution for the assessment outlined above is just a guideline. Thus, most teacher educators used it differently. For example, some of them allocated a high percentage of marks for activities such as attendance, which are not necessarily directly related to teaching and learning in the class. Thus, students in some classes were being awarded 10 marks out of 20 for simply attending lessons, as suggested by Asma in the following extract:

I am not fussy about the way I award the 20 marks; as long as the students bring in their homework or design the presentations for our lessons and show regular attendance, they deserve to get 20 marks.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

This shows that most teacher educators do not exert much effort, as Asma suggested, in designing modes of assessment that reinforce student centred learning. Furthermore, during my observations, I noticed that although many of the teacher educators claimed that they used the 20 marks allocated to continuous assessment for quizzes and presentations, in reality, this did not happen. In fact, they gave full marks to every student who attended the classes. This practice means that many teacher educators do not use assessment to encourage active learning as proposed by the university.

The analysis above suggests that the university's mode of assessment discourages student centred learning by encouraging teacher-centred practices. As such, some of the university's policies, such as assessment, contradict other policies.

5.4.   Technological integration

The integration of technology can make teaching and learning more active and engage students more in their learning (Lawless and Pellegrino 2007). Research shows that the integration of technology is a key factor in fostering innovation, participation, and creativity in teaching and learning (Kozma 2003; Bingimlas 2009). In various contexts, the use of technology in teaching and learning has commonly been introduced alongside the reform and development of education (Kozma 2003). The Saudi Ministry of Higher Education has introduced various initiatives designed to integrate and gain benefits from technology in its higher education institutions. Most Saudi universities seek to support teaching and learning in various ways through the integration of technology resources. The integration of technology is seen as an aspect of institutional influence, in the sense that the implementation of technology in these universities has a significant effect on teaching and learning.

Computers and different types of software have been used to enhance the curriculum and improve teaching in the university, as shown by Asma's statement below:

> *Nowadays, owing to the effort to improve higher education, ICT has penetrated everywhere; it has become important in this programme. Teacher educators are required by the university to include it in their teaching, [and] the students also demand it.*
>
> (Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

This extract shows that technology is a reality that teacher educators teaching FIE cannot avoid. The university emphasises the use of different types of ICT technology through the new curriculum (FIE curriculum 2014, sections F and H, Appendix 2) and through teacher training courses (training courses, 2014, Appendix 11) in order to help teacher educators enhance their teaching and respond to student demands. This emphasis is clearly inferred from the analysis of the course documents; teacher educators are encouraged to use internet resources in order to collect and analyse information. The use of computer software is also encouraged in the course document, which places an emphasis on developing presentations, concept maps, and communication using tools such as PowerPoint and email (see curriculum outline 2014, Appendix 2). In line with the educational institutions of many other countries which are making an effort to reform their educational systems, CU similarly encourages the use of ICT, which has become an integral component of the new curriculum (Drent and Meelissen 2008; Tezci 2011).

The next section discusses ICT in relation to student-centred education policy. It also presents the ICT in relation to the CU infrastructure.

ICT and the teacher educators' approaches

Some of the teacher educators have been able to take advantage of technology to enhance their teaching. For example, Hayat used ICT to improve communication with her students. Using a particular online software programme (telegram), Hayat was able to communicate with her students instantly through an online discussion group that she had created.

> *I use this university software to facilitate communication with my students. I have the whole student group with me all the time, I can*

receive the students' homework and send them the homework questions
and some learning materials. We can also have discussions.
(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

Her students were able to initiate discussions with her, or with any other members of the group, as well as being able to share documents. By the use of technology in her teaching, Hayat had transformed her role as a teacher. Instead of Hayat initiating and controlling the discussion and communication, her students had been also given the opportunity for increased and better participation by using this communication. Thus, the integration of such technology facilitates active, student-centred teaching approaches (see Chapter 6; Drent and Meelissen 2008).

In addition to utilising ICT for group discussions, Asma used it to expand learning beyond the prescribed textbooks. Video clips, obtained from online sources, were presented in her lessons to stimulate discussion among her students. In her words:

Technology is used to reinforce the presented information. I might use
part of a video documentary to support the content of my lessons. This
has been very helpful.
(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

This comment illustrates how some of the teacher educators were bringing online resources into their teaching. The use of online resources shifts the nature of knowledge building from being based solely on the textbook and normal lesson delivery, to include audio-visual materials. This suggests that a few of the teacher educators were seeking to empower their students to access materials from which they could learn without the teacher having to be present. Yet the adoption of such technology, by using it to present additional materials to the class, does not necessarily mean that an active, student-centred approach to teaching is being taken. Chen (2010) excludes any teachers' use of computer technology that is "predominantly for informative (Internet), expressive (word processing), and evaluative purposes'' (ibid.: 33) from what he refers to as ''innovative use that supports student-centred learning". Drent and Meelissen

(2008) limit the description of student-centred activity in relation to ICT to activities that maximise student engagement in development their learning skills (see Chapter 6).

Hayat, one of the teacher educators, utilised ICT to create reference materials for her lessons, as suggested in the following extract:

> *I refer [students] to information, writers, books which they can look up online… I do appreciate going to the library and searching, but some information that is needed for my course can be found online and that saves the students time and effort.*
>
> (Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

This extract illustrates the fact that the teacher educators believed that having online material available makes knowledge and information easily accessible to their students. In order to improve her students' utilisation of ICT, Hayat went a step further by training her students to use software to develop learning materials.

> *I help the students with some technical issues, so they are able to present their slides confidently.*
>
> (Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

The above extract shows that some of the teacher educators were trying to integrate technology into their lessons, believing that by helping students to develop their technical skills, they can improve the quality of the material the students present in the lessons. The enhancement of the students' ability to use ICT helped to boost their confidence, as Hayat indicated.

The provision of ICT technology in the classroom influences the way in which lessons are being taught. It also influences the nature of teaching activities that take place in the classroom. The following extract from Asma's interview illustrates the shift that the integration of technology is causing in teaching practices.

It is good for students to learn to design PowerPoint slides for the lesson. It makes the students become confident and active by thinking about what they want to present and how it should be presented. Standing up and reading the slides that they have made to the class and discussing them helps engage the students more and makes them very active.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

This extract suggests that the teacher educators were moving away from being the centre of teaching and learning and that some of the teaching and learning activities were being transferred to the students. The students engaged in thinking critically about ways in which they could construct their understanding of certain topics and how they would like to present those topics. Furthermore, this allowed the teacher educators to create learning opportunities for their students, as suggested in the following quotation by Huda:

I ask the students to work in groups to take a chapter of the textbook and summarise and organise it in PowerPoint slides, and then I use it to teach the class.

(Interview with Huda, 12.01.2014)

This illustrates the ways in which the teacher educators shared the preparation of teaching materials with their students.

Similarly, Amas noted:

When a group of students present their work in the form of PowerPoint slides, I encourage them to engage with their peers to discuss the video presented in the slides, to work together and learn from each other or learn to listen to each other's opinions.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

The discussion thus suggests how university policy can transform approaches to teaching. However, it is evident that although a few of the teacher educators used ICT to further the student-centred approach to teaching encouraged by the university curriculum, others did not pay much attention to the stipulations of the university.

The variations among the teacher educators in the current study regarding the integration of ICT into their teaching clearly show that some of them were responding well to the promotion of student-centred teaching by CU, while others were not responding so well. These variations raise questions about how CU's policy regarding ICT is realised in practice.

Although many teacher educators expressed enthusiasm for integrating ICT technology into their teaching, others voiced concerns. These reservations stemmed from the assumption that some online material could challenge the religion and conservative culture of Saudi society, which Asma and Abrar suggested in the following extracts:

> *I always tell my students to be careful when they use internet resources. I direct them to authentic, confidential websites for religious issues like 'Path of Islam'.*
>
> (Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

> *Sometimes, the group whose turn it is to prepare the lesson are interested in adding some information from the internet. I don't mind, but I ask them to include only modern educational information, but they can't include Shariya information or anything related to the faith.*
>
> (Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

Although teacher educators like Asma were happy to integrate ICT into their teaching, they felt the need to practise cultural responsibility by monitoring what their students presented. As teacher educators of Islamic education, they felt it to be their duty to make sure that nothing in the material presented could be considered offensive to the Saudi religious faith and to their cultural values. They thus sought to ensure that the information the students select would not challenge the Quran or the respect Muslims have for the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) and the Sunnah. They also made sure that it would not challenge the local Islamic culture of the KSA, regarding, for example, such issues as friendships between members of the opposite sex and women driving. The protective attitude that these teacher educators exhibited towards the Islamic

culture might not be held by teachers in India or Egypt, for example, because Islamic culture differs in different contexts (IET 2009).

The integration of ICT led teacher educators who believed in student-centred learning to feel conflicted between the liberation that such technology could offer to their teaching and their social responsibilities as Islamic educator teachers. On the one hand, those teacher educators who used a teacher-centred approach were enthusiastic about enabling their students to access the vast amount of knowledge available online. On the other hand, they felt the need to impose control, so that their students did not have access to material that would challenge their Islamic faith or the cultural norms of the conservative Saudi society. This finding supports those of Saudi researchers such as Ageel (2011) and Syrian researchers such as Albirini (2006), who both demonstrate that teachers' concerns about cultural issues prevent them from using or allowing their students to access or bring certain types of internet material into the classroom.

ICT in the context of City University

The integration of technology is emphasised throughout the policies of the university. The discussion so far has illustrated the extent to which it influences teaching. However, many teacher educators seemed to feel that most of this emphasis was at policy level. The university has introduced the policy, but no ICT devices have been provided, and very little training has been offered to the teacher educators to help them improve their own technological skills so that they can teach their students how to use the technology. Asma stated that:

> *We attended a series of courses provided by the quality assurance committee, training, and development unit. There is no one course that supports us in designing and planning actual lessons using technology. I had training in using basic software such as Word, PowerPoint... using university pages, for example emailing.*
>
> (Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

She continued:

I attended a course on virtual classrooms. I don't think this was applicable to the current situation at [CU], or to our ICT ability. To be honest, I don't know if I can apply even this modest level of technology use. I only know the basics, and I am doing my best. This can sometimes be frustrating.

I don't think it made me feel totally confident about how I would make changes to my own teaching and to designing my lessons, but I am still trying at least.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

This extract shows that, although the university may have the best intentions regarding integrating technology into teaching and learning, the policy is not realised in practice. The teacher educators felt unsupported. For example, Asma was enthusiastic about the new technology but needed help to development her ICT literacy. Saudi researchers such as Aqeel (2011) also identified the lack of effective training in pedagogical skills as the main barrier to the integration of ICT. Other researchers have also highlighted this as a barrier (Albirini 2006).

The lack of discussion and dialogue among teacher educators appears to be another challenge hindering the integration of technology into teaching and which causes diverse perceptions of how this integration can and should be achieved. In my observations of the teacher educators who were teaching FIE, I noticed that there was little or no time allocated for meetings at which they could raise issues about teaching pedagogy, including ICT. In fact, I observed many departmental meetings in teachers' offices during my fieldwork, and there were no discussions about ways in which ICT could be implemented. ICT was discussed as a general policy encouraged by the university, but no detailed conversations were held regarding its application. This helps to explain the variations observed in the teacher educators' usage of the technology, as each individual used it in the way she saw fit, without necessarily having a clear understanding of the role that technology is meant to play in relation to policy and the curriculum. This resonates with Drent and Meelissen (2008), who underline the importance of the institution creating space for teachers to share

their understanding of the role of technology in their classes and how it could be used in their teaching.

A further challenge to integrating technology into the teaching of FIE relates to the availability of the required equipment. In my observation of classrooms and the teacher educators' offices, I found that not all of the offices were provided with personal computers (PCs), and the lecture halls had no computers at all. In fact, most of the teacher educators took their own devices to the lecture halls, as most of the lecture halls were not equipped with technological equipment or the necessary technology infrastructure. For example, they did not have computers, data projectors, a stable wireless internet connection, wires, or cables. The exceptions were a few specialised classrooms that had been designed for multimedia courses offered by the Department of Curriculum and Teaching Methods. Although a reasonable number of the teacher educators were enthusiastic about integrating technology into their teaching, as advocated by the university's policy, issues related to infrastructure, such as the lack of technical equipment, may prevent the effective integration of ICT in the teaching of FIE. This observation was supported by the interview data. During my interview with Amal, a teacher educator, she stated that:

> *The students used to be able to borrow projectors and cables from the multimedia office. Currently, the university has stopped this facility. This is becoming a problem for the students who need to present their work using PowerPoint slides and for us to ask students to do that. Therefore, I have reverted to asking students to use poster presentations which they can prepare manually. This can be time-consuming… we need to progress our lessons in the way we think is best for learning.*
>
> (Interview with Amal, 04.04.2014)

This comment shows how the lack of technology resources and infrastructure negatively affects teaching. When the technical support is unavailable, teacher educators are unable to perform their teaching effectively and find themselves reverting to passive teaching strategies.

Abrar, another teacher educator, also expressed dissatisfaction with the university's provision of ICT equipment. In her comments on the availability of an internet network, she said:

> *The university wireless network is very poor, and most of the time does not work. We upload the media we need for our lesson in advance, but then the students cannot access it… Most of the time it is difficult to access any materials using the university internet; it takes forever.*
>
> (Interview with Abrar, 14.02.2014)

This extract shows how the dearth of reliable technology influences teaching and access to online resources. It prevents the teacher educators from utilising the technology in their teaching and places a greater burden on them to use their own internet connections to download teaching and learning materials in advance, something that not every teacher educator can afford to do. Tondeur et al. (2008) and Tezci (2011) confirm that the lack of ICT resources influences the way in which teachers integrate the technology into their teaching activities.

Data obtained from the FIE curriculum document revealed that there is no clear pedagogical method set out that teachers should use to facilitate learning using technology (e.g., the FIE curriculum 2014, section B and D, Appendix 2), nor are there any clearly defined criteria for integrating technology into the curriculum. Indeed, the documentary analysis of the programme furnished little information about how ITC should be used in teaching. This suggests that the main challenge facing teacher educators is linked to the policy itself, in that the policy is not sufficiently clear regarding the role of technology and the process of integration.

The integration of technology is one of the institutional factors that affects teaching practices in the FIE subject. The university policy encourages the use of technology in teaching and learning, and thus, some teacher educators attempt to implement it in their lessons. However, despite the efforts made by the teacher educators to use technology to enhance their teaching, there was a noticeable variation in the way this technology is being used. This could be explained in several different ways: a lack of a clear understanding of the role

that technology is meant to play in their teaching; a lack of discussion and sharing of views among teachers; a lack of university support, and a lack of ICT infrastructure at CU.

The research shows that the teacher educators had made efforts to enhance their teaching and student learning with technology. Still, they identified the lack of technological resources and the poor quality of the internet connection as constant difficulties that hinder the use of technology in higher education and, therefore, the effective implementation of university policy.

5.5. Summary

The findings discussed in this chapter reveal the influence which the institution has on the teaching approaches of the teacher educators of FIE. This research argues that there are four aspects of institutional influence revealed by the current case study.

The first aspect is the university's provision of in-service training. The university gives attention to developing the teaching skills and practices of the teacher educators, and it is assumed by the institution that the courses promote the type of teaching practices the university would like to see adopted. However, these courses do not result in the desired changes due to several problems. First, the teaching strategy of these courses is restricted to lecturing without any challenging interactive activities. This practice restricts the practical use of the presented strategy, minimises the benefit of these courses, and deters the teacher educators from attending. Second, the data show that the courses do not fit in well with the teacher educators' timetables. Third, the university infrastructure fails to provide some of the equipment which the courses promote, such as interactive whiteboards, and therefore, the teacher educators have only a theoretical knowledge of the issues presented. Thus, although some of the teacher educators expressed a desire for the training provided by the university, the benefits that teachers can derive from it in terms of developing their active teaching practices, are limited.

The second area of institutional influence on teaching practices is the large number of students per class, which exceeds the number recommended by university policy. This problem is compounded by the relatively small size of the lecture halls. As a result, teacher educators are forced to adopt teaching approaches with little emphasis on interactions with and between individual students, and that prevent active teaching strategies. Thus, the reality of class size and the size of lecture rooms contradicts university policy and its commitment to promoting active teaching.

The third institutional influence on the teaching practices of the teacher educators is the university's system of assessment. The university allocates 80 marks for the mid- and end-of-term examinations. Giving the marks awarded in examinations such a heavy weight makes them the focus of the assessment and results in teacher educators placing great emphasis on the examination grades. Moreover, while it is evident that some of the teacher educators adopt a constructive approach to learning, the assessment system does not support student centred approaches. While some teacher educators use the remaining 20% of the final grade to promote constructive learning, most award it on the basis of a teacher centred approach, such as for presentations and attendance. The university's heavy emphasis on assessment by examination thus limits its attempt to encourage student centred approaches.

Fourthly, the implementation of technology policy affects teacher educators' teaching. Teacher educators enhance their teaching and maximise the students' interactions through the use of technology. The data show that some teacher educators benefit from being able to improve communication with their students beyond the classroom. However, access to online material is restricted by the cultural sensitivities of teacher educators and students in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, there is no space made available for teacher educators to discuss teaching pedagogy, including the implementation of ICT in the teaching of FIE. Teacher educators view the training they receive from the university as inadequate, as it does not help them to integrate ICT effectively into their classes. Furthermore, the teacher educators reported that the limited availability of ICT resources (i.e., internet connection, computers, screens, projectors, and

cables) in their classes and offices makes it difficult for them to use the technology in their teaching practices. In these ways, the commitment to technology for enhancing learning is not fully realised in practice.

The university seeks to encourage teacher educators to use more interactive teaching and learning activities to help students engage more in the learning. However, in the practical implementation of some policies, the university hinders the teacher educators from adopting the desired approaches.

In the following chapter, the findings related to the second sub-research questions concerning the teacher educators' approaches to teaching FIE is presented and discussed.

6: Teaching approaches to Islamic education

6.1. Introduction

Drawing on data from interviews with teacher educators, reviews of documents, and fieldwork observations, this chapter presents the findings on the teaching approaches used by FIE teachers in the College of Education's female TPP. These findings help to answer the second research sub-question, which concerns the approaches that underpin the teaching of the FIE subject for future teachers. This question is, 'What are the teaching approaches of teacher educators teaching the FIE subject?'

In order to identify and examine the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators for this purpose, this chapter analyses the responses of the participant teacher educators on this topic in relation to the study's framework for teaching approaches, as presented in Chapter 3.

The first section of this chapter (6.2) discusses teaching practices that reflect a preference for a teacher-centred pedagogy. This includes the teacher educators' role and their teaching practices. In addition, the teacher educators' views on and practices of assessment are highlighted. The second section (6.3) discusses similar issues of teacher educators' teaching practices, but this time from the perspective of those teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred pedagogy in their teaching. The last section of the chapter (6.4) concludes the analysis by describing the complexity of the approaches underpinning the teaching of FIE. It summarises the main issues discussed in the chapter.

As illustrated through the literature review in Chapter 3, in general, the approaches taken to teaching Islamic education vary in their leanings (Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007; Alaqad 2010; Park and Niyozov 2008; Tan 2014). This chapter discusses teaching approaches adopted by the teacher educators, the majority of whom showed a preference for a teacher-centred approach, which was informed by behaviourist views of

teaching and learning. The data show that six out of ten teacher educators adopted teacher centred approaches to teaching and learning. Some others (four) favoured the adoption of a student-centred approach, which is driven mainly by constructivist views, as is discussed in the following sections. However, the approaches could be viewed as falling along a spectrum, with an entirely teacher-centred approach at one end and purely student-centred approaches at the other end. The choice of one or the other is mostly informed by the teacher educators' views on teaching and learning (Norton et al. 2005; Mansour 2009), which can be influenced by institutional factors as well as by the nature of the subject itself (Fanghanel 2007; Ashwan 2013).

6.2.   The teacher-centred approach

The document about the FIE curriculum (the FIE curriculum 2014 Appendix 2) suggests that there is a heavy orientation towards student-centred teaching and learning. For example, in numerous instances, it discusses issues such as active learning, direct learning, critical thinking questioning, discussion and dialogue, group learning, doing research, and student presentations. Nevertheless, most of the teacher educators exhibited a strong inclination towards teacher-centred teaching practices. This assertion is supported by the interview data and classroom observations, which revealed that most of the teacher educators enacted a teacher-centred approach through their teaching practices, their roles, and how they perceived their students and assessed their learning (Prosser et al. 1994; Norton et al. 2005; Fanghanel 2007; Mansour 2009; Bruner 1996).

6.2.1. Teacher Educators' Roles

Regarding the role of the teacher educators, data from the interviews suggest that the teacher educators who exhibited teacher-centred practices when teaching FIE viewed their role as knowledge transmitters who decide what should be learnt and how it should be learnt (see also Schoeler 2006). These teacher educators seemed to control most aspects of learning for their students and adhered firmly to a defined, structured content and a set syllabus, mainly

through the use of textbooks. This approach is captured in the quotation below from one of the teacher educators, Asma, who stated:

> *The teacher is obligated to give students information, and this is our job as teachers. The teacher has experience in this subject which the students do not have. The student benefits when she gets the information from her teacher and not from the internet or other unreliable sources.*

She added:

> *I draw the lesson as a tree diagram, for example, I draw branches in the right place. I organize the information, and I can be creative, because I know my subject well. I require my students to copy it down the way I organize it for them, because knowledge has to be organized for students to understand, and it should be presented in a way that would help to form the human person as it relates to Islamic education.*

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

Huda commented that:

> *For me, I am guided by Islamic pedagogical ways of transmitting organised information to students in my handling of Islamic education... I ensure that my students get the strong link between knowledge and the supremacy of the giver of life. This is very crucial in the Islamic education of any child. You are one of us [referring to the researcher] and you already know a lot about this.*

(Interview with Huda, 07.02.2014)

She continued:

> *Just that, in recent times, Western teaching styles seem to be gaining currency here. Well, we still can't stop drawing on written words to help students to memorise and 'oralise'. May Allah [God] empower us to teach effectively and for a better spiritual understanding of themselves. [Me: Amen].*

(Interview with Huda, 07.02.2014)

These comments offer insight into the characterization of Islamic pedagogical concepts as the interplay between memorization, orality, and the use of the written word to support the learning process (see Gunther 2006, 2007; Park and Niyozov 2008; Wadad 2006). Huda's comment, '*I ensure that my students get the strong link between knowledge and the supremacy of the giver of life'*, resonates with Sabki and Hardaker's (2013) consideration of Islamic pedagogy from a madrasa perspective, which requires empathy with the Islamic premise of the inseparable nature of knowledge and the sacred. The '*madrasa'* is regarded as Islam's institution of higher learning, which focuses on the religious sciences and their ancillary subjects (Makdisi 1981, cited in Park and Niyozov, 2008). Gunther (2006) argues that in Islamic education, teachers adopt strategies or play their roles in a manner that also ensures the students' spiritual and moral development.

These comments indicate that some of the teacher educators applied creative ways of presenting lessons, even though it is teacher-centred. For instance, Asma's use of diagrams to convey knowledge pictorially to her students might be considered an innovative way of presenting the subject matter. However, within such creativity, the teacher educators quoted above still seemed to believe to be their duty to transfer information to their students (Park and Niyozov 2008). This was because they believed that they knew their subject well and that the students were not able to actively contribute to the teaching and learning process (Norton et al. 2005). This attitude is exemplified by Asma's statement to the effect that they used their experience to identify what they believed to be 'suitable information' and organised it in a way that probably made sense to them as teachers. This could be achieved without much consideration for what would make sense to their students (Niyozov and Memon 2011).

The possible reason that many of the teacher educators perceived their role in this way, as suggested in the interview excerpts above, is that they viewed themselves, their own skills, and their learning materials as the only source of knowledge in the classroom. In the case of Asma, she seemed to believe that students will not learn unless the teacher controls the process of knowledge

construction, what is to be transmitted to the students, and the learning process in general (Wadad 2006). These beliefs suggest a preference for teacher-centred teaching.

Furthermore, they resonate with Freire's (1996) idea of banking-style education. In line with teacher centred approaches, Freire (1996) describes this kind of instruction as "fundamentally narrative in character", with the teacher as the subject- that is, the active participant- and the students as passive objects. He explains:

> *Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits.*

> *(Freire, 1996: 58)*

Asma's comments indicate that her beliefs about teaching were mostly about the teacher and the type of teaching activities and knowledge she wanted to 'deposit' in her students, and were not so much about the students and the way they learn (Bruner 1996; Trigwell and Prosser 1996; Lattuca et al. 2014). Hence, she said, '*I require my students to copy it down the way I organise it for them.*' The attitude conveyed by this statement indicates that she regarded her students as containers which she, as an educator, must fill with knowledge. Another teacher educator, Hannan, stated that in Islamic education, knowledge ownership on the part of students is not easily discussed because of the sacred nature of what they are taught.

The teacher educators who preferred teacher-centred approaches believed that they were the only one in the classroom able to construct knowledge. This is further emphasised in another statement from Asma:

What knowledge do you expect students to have!!! Compared to the past generation, they are knowledge-less. I have to provide them with exact learning materials from inside or outside their textbook to learn.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

Similarly, Amal's view indicated a strong preference for teacher-centred approaches to imparting and accumulating knowledge:

Mostly I use lecturing when I teach my lessons. I carefully explain concepts from the textbook. I pose some questions in between to check understanding.

(Interview with Amal, 04.04.2014)

6.2.2. Teacher Educators' Teaching Practices

The teaching practices adopted and described by the teacher educators reflect their understanding of education. The lessons of these teacher educators were dominated by lecturing. Amal described her teaching method in the following quote:

Mostly I use lecturing when I teach my lessons. I carefully explain concepts from the textbook. I pose some questions in between to check understanding.

(Interview with Amal, 04.04.2014)

She went on to give more details of her methods:

In any courses, we [teachers] have to make it precisely applicable to student life, so I make a clear link to student life through examples, so they know exactly how to use the knowledge after the lesson.

(Interview with Amal, 04.04.2014)

The above quotations highlight some of the practices enacted by those teacher educators who espoused teacher-centred views of their profession. These include focusing on specific content and a close reference to the textbook or to the teacher's knowledge. Reproduction of the transferred content with a strong emphasis on accuracy is also a practice emphasised by the teacher educators who adopted the teacher-centred approach, as other researchers have noted (Doig Groves 2011).

Similarly, teacher educator Khadija commented,

> *Sometimes it may look like we are imposing knowledge on these students or we are insinuating that we are the repository of knowledge, but that might not be the case. This is because Islamic education is also faith-based. It is not like any other secular knowledge. May Allah be praised. You know we can't add or subtract from Allah's words. Our main work as teacher educators is to transmit this body of knowledge to our students as it is.*

(Interview with, Khadija 06.03.2014)

Khadija's comment indicates that she viewed education as a specific body of Islamic knowledge that is transmitted from the teacher to the student. In such teacher-centric learning, students are passive absorbers of information, and the purpose of learning is to simply memorise Islamic facts (Nola and Irzik 2005). To these teacher educators, teaching is regarded as a process of imparting structured knowledge (Norton et al. 2005) particularly in relation to Islamic studies.

While student engagement was practised by teacher educators such as Amal, who adopted a teacher-centred approach, it was limited to question and answer sessions with the aim of reproducing the disseminated information. It appears that Amal used questioning to control students during the delivery of the lesson, and to direct students' attention to the content she considered important. In this approach, when teacher educators engage students, they mostly aim to ensure that incorrect information is replaced with the right answer based on what has

been taught (Rosenshine 1986, Chin 2006). This can be observed from the following quotation from Huda:

I raise many questions during my delivery of the lesson in order to maintain order in the lesson and keep the students focused and also to check their understanding of important parts of the curriculum content.

She further stated:

If they answer my questions correctly, that means they are focused and able to understand what I have been explaining.

(Interview with Huda, 07.02.2014)

Similar to Amal, Huda indicated that she understood the concept of student engagement, but that it was limited to keeping students focused on the content so that they could reproduce it when asked to do so. This type of engagement seems to be very much valued by teachers who adopt teacher-centred approaches. The reason such student engagement is utilised is to allow the teacher to raise questions and elicit specific answers from students, which they believe facilitates students' understanding. The teacher educator then corrects the students if they make mistakes in order to make sure that the students understand the content precisely, as suggested in the excerpt below.

I ask my students, 'What does Islam do to preserve the 'five necessities for humans?' They answer, 'xxx'. I then ask them which one [of the five necessities for humans] has priority? They may say, 'XX'. I ask them, 'Why?' They say, 'xxx', or I correct the answer. Then, I ask them to give evidence from the Quran, the Sunnah. So I ask about this information in relevant lessons, so next time they would know it better. In all of these, my intention is to effectively transmit knowledge to the students, which I believe will facilitate learning in a very beneficial way.
(Interview with Huda, 07.02.2014)

The attitude of the teacher educators who preferred a teacher-centred approach is exemplified by Huda's comment that '*[i]n all of these, my intention is to*

effectively transmit knowledge to the students, which I believe will facilitate learning in a very beneficial way.' She suggested that student engagement depends mainly on the teacher educator's knowledge.

It is possible that Huda's approach to teaching could stem from the nature of the subject she teaches. It seems that in the above quotation, Huda was referring to revealed knowledge that is specific and should be learnt by heart. Thus, she corrected the students and did not leave much room for them to construct any other form of knowledge about 'the five necessities for humans'. She supported her position further with quotations from the Quran and the Sunnah, which are holy texts for Muslims and the main sources of Muslim knowledge. As noted previously, Huda's teaching strategy resonates with the findings of Sabki and Hardaker (2013: 344) as well as with those of Boyle (2006), who argues that the memorization of facts (especially quotations from the Quran and Sunnah) in Islamic pedagogy is viewed as a demonstration of reasoning.

Asking students close-ended questions is one of the typical practices of teachers who prefer teacher-centred approaches. They tend to ask questions that do not leave much room for students' critical reflection and participation. This could be a result of the controlled content that the teachers intend to disseminate to the students. In the observations of some of the participants' classes, such as Huda and Amal, questions were posed that suggested specific answers. For example, in one lesson, Huda said to the students:

> *Give me an example from the Sunnah [the traditions of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him] showing the concept [of learning by observation].*
>
> (Observed in Huda's class, 14.01.2014)

Instead of the students discussing the example, they recited the exact text from the Sunnah. They did this because they had been trained to do so and because the teacher wanted them to be able to recall the exact text from the Sunnah or verse from the Holy Quran. Similarly, Amal exemplified how she approached tasks in the following quotation:

Provide evidence from the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, about being nice to neighbours as a social value.

(Observed in Amal's class, 28.03.2014)

These excerpts related to questioning and student tasks suggest that these teacher educators did not encourage students to comment on the recited texts, but instead wanted them to recall the exact texts from memory. This could be due to the nature of the subject itself, which partially requires recalling exact texts and explanations as evidence of learning. Researchers who have examined the teaching of Islamic disciplines and Islamic education have found that teachers tend to facilitate student interaction in these subjects mainly by developing lower-order cognitive learning skills (Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007; Park and Niyozov 2008; Alaqad 2010; Alqahtany 2011; Sabki and Hardaker 2013). An alternative explanation for encouraging rote-learning is the view of certain teacher educators that they are teaching what is correct as defined from their knowledge of the subject matter, namely, the Quran and the Sunnah. These teacher educators believe that teaching understanding of the holy texts can only be done through memorisation and repetition (Alaqad 2010; Alqahtany 2011; Sabki and Hardaker 2013). This resonates with Chin's (2006:1316) argument that this is effective if teachers are able to ensure that "students appreciate the knowledge that is normative within a particular culture". Therefore, these teacher educators do not seem to see much point in allowing their 'correctness' to be challenged or questioned. Rather, they believe that students must be provided with the correct knowledge, values, and ethics of Islam, as suggested by Asma:

It is very important that I give it [information] to them with reference to the Quran and the Sunnah… the correct information that is rooted in what Allah subhanhu wtaala and his prophet, peace be upon him, say.

(Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

Similarly, Huda gave an example to illustrate how correct information should be passed on to students during her explanation of who the Allah is from an Islamic perspective. She felt that it was her duty to give her students the 'correct' meaning that she had extracted directly from the Quran. The following quotation captures this view:

> *Learning in this subject involves many things. It is [about] a good understanding of the meanings of what Allah really says to us. For example, when I say to students, 'Who is your true raiser/Father?' they may say their close father. So I explain to them why their real raiser is Allah subhanhu wtaala (God). I give them explanations from Quranic quotes stating this information.*
>
> (Interview with Huda, 07.02.2014)

In this comment, Huda reveals the way in which many of the teacher educators viewed their teaching practices as a means of conveying what they believed to be 'correct' information without allowing much room for their students to attempt to reach such knowledge by themselves. The teacher educators seemed to link their students' ability to practise aspects of Islam with their ability to memorise verses from the Quran and the Sunnah, as Khadija explained:

> *Of course, we have to make the students memorize some of the Qur'anic verses and the Hadith of the Prophet [the Sunnah]; otherwise, how can they go about their daily prayers and other Islamic practices?*
>
> (Interview with, Khadija 06.03.2014)

This comment reflects how the majority of the teacher educators believed that the ultimate aim of teaching is to get the students to practise what they have been taught. It also shows that, for them, teaching starts with encouraging rote memorization. This approach resonates with Bruner (1996), who argues that teachers define their work/ teaching practices based on the beliefs they have about teaching and learning. Thus, these participants, through their teaching practices, revealed that their rationale for adopting a teacher-centred approach that emphasises memorization was to enable their students to transfer the knowledge they have learned in the classroom to their daily practices.

The teacher educators who took this approach to teaching also adopted some active learning activities in their teaching. The excerpt from the interview with Asma below suggests that the teacher educators who adopted a teacher-centred approach used a number of teaching and learning activities in their classrooms, which they believed would help to engage their students. However, as noted before this is limited. This is because most of the activities are teacher-driven, and the task of knowledge construction is left exclusively to the teachers. As Asma noted**:**

> *I ask students, in groups, to prepare the lesson for the day from the textbook using PowerPoint slides… I don't allow a student to present, she just reads it, and I do the explanation. The student can't explain it thoroughly to the class, can't help them to understand, and I am a teacher. I concentrate my explanation on the important points that I think the students need to learn.*
>
> (Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

Although preparing PowerPoint presentations might seem like a student-centred activity, Asma made it clear that the students remain in the position of passive learners., being only allowed to read aloud from the PowerPoint slides that they have prepared, and not allowed to explain or reflect on them, as, in her view, it is the teacher's job to explain, reflect, and comment on the PowerPoint slides prepared by the students. As she explained in relation to homework:

> *In the next class, I ask students to present their answers on the homework. If there is an answer that is wrong, I provide the correct one, and I make the students copy it into their workbook.*
>
> (Interview with Asma, 28.11.2013)

The data suggest that the teacher-centred approach is predominant in teaching FIE to future teachers. The data analysis indicates that this approach pays little attention to the process of students making meaning. Rather, the teacher-educators construct knowledge the way they see fit. It is mainly the teacher educators' responsibility to determine what and how the students learn and to provide the students with what they think is correct information. Acquiescence,

accuracy, and understanding of the content are constantly checked by the teachers' close-ended questions. In this approach, students do not appear to have the courage to think beyond their teachers' instruction and guidance. This teaching approach, with regard to FIE, also requires the students to practise the 'correct information' they have been taught in their daily lives (Sabki and Hardaker 2013; Wadad 2006).

6.2.3. Assessment in teacher-centred approaches

As alluded to in Section 6.2.1, the teacher educators' pedagogical strategy was underpinned by an Islamic view that sacred knowledge contributes to the strengthening of faith through a careful study of what is believed to be the revealed word of God. Therefore, the world of people and their faith are inter-related as religion has an impact upon life (Al-Attas 1999). These explanations and understandings underpinned the manner in which the teacher educators who exhibited a teacher-centred style assessed their students. Assessment refers to the ways teacher educators gather data about their teaching and measure their students' learning (Hanna and Dettmer 2004). Khadija's comment illustrates the view of these teacher educators thus:

> *As I told you already, Islamic education reveals both the word of God and the world of people in general. You may say the secular world… One fact is that you can't decouple these two. I mean, they are not mutually exclusive. This is exactly why I insist on assessing my students in a way that ensures that they are fully able to tell me all that I have been able to communicate to them as knowledge. Let me add that this is characterized by their ability to memorize and recall all of that, their ability to orally recall what they have been taught. We are highly interested in the recollection of Islamic facts and concepts used, amongst others.*

> (Interview with Khadija, 06.03.2014)

She added:

> *I hope you are aware that we usually assess them using the multiple choice test method? [Me: Oh okay. So how do you assess them if you want to know whether they have achieved any skill or they have*

internalized some desirable values?] Oh, please ask my other colleagues; we use multiple choice and it works. But please don't get me wrong; I am aware that multiple choice tests are suitable for assessing knowledge and understanding, insha Allah (by God's grace).

(Interview with Khadija, 06.03.2014)

Bloom's (1994) taxonomy has three level of questioning, which are divided into lower to higher order. The quotation above suggests that the type of assessment preferred by these teacher educators is all lower-order cognitive, which seems to be in line with teacher-centred pedagogy.

Within this teaching approach, the teacher educators use assessments only to evaluate their students' ability to reproduce information, and the focus is on the exam. They expect their students to learn the content accurately, with significance placed on the application of the knowledge in the students' everyday lives (Krathwohl 2002). However, only one aspect of the taught materials can be tested through the students' production of controlled and accurate knowledge. There is no way for the teacher educators to verify whether they have enabled their students to practise the taught knowledge in their daily lives. One reason for this could be that part of the course content is spiritual (Park and Niyozov 2008) and therefore not easily measured. For example, it would be nearly impossible for the teachers to evaluate the extent to which their students trust Allah, fear Allah, and practise their faith. Consequently, teacher educators limit their assessment to facts that express the spiritual meanings. Therefore, examinations are used in this approach to test the amount of religious information that a student is able to absorb and regurgitate accurately.

The observation of Asma's class (observed on 21.11.2013) revealed her tendency to check homework and make students write out the correct answers in preparation for the examinations. For her, learning is about acquiring subject knowledge. Thus, content knowledge is the focus of assessment, and little attention is paid to what skills students can use to produce the knowledge. Such

assessment through examinations is rarely able to ascertain changes in students' knowledge. Khadija expressed this clearly in the interview:

> *Of course I assess them on what is in their book and what I taught in the class. Students must be able to provide the correct answer if they understand my explanations in the class.*
>
> (Interview with Khadija, 06.03.2014)

The suggestion here is that 'understanding' refers to rote memorization of the material she had given them. In addition, my observations of the nature of the feedback do not indicate that the methods of assessment used by Khadija and other teacher educators were intended to develop active learning. Mostly, the students were given their test papers, which were marked with a tick or a cross to indicate a right or wrong answer to multiple choice questions or gap-fills. There were not many comments from the teacher on their test papers. Arguably, assessments used by teacher educators who adopt a teacher-centred approach to their teaching are intended to evaluate the students' information retention and recall ability (Bloom 1994). This may mean there is a relationship between having a teacher-centred approach and preferred methods of assessment, which is affected by the teacher educator's view of student learning. This is in line with Baird et al. (2015), who argue is that there is a relationship between teaching and assessment theory, and how these are put into practice.

6.3. Student-centred approaches

This section discusses the teaching practices of a few of the teacher educators that can be categorized under student-centred pedagogy. In this section, the teacher educators' roles, teaching practices, and assessment techniques which reflect a student-centred orientation are discussed. Student-centred approaches can be understood as an umbrella term for methods such as structured pedagogy and Socratic questioning (see Chapter 3).

I draw on Vygotsky's (1978) idea of ZPD as the explanatory framework for this section. Constructivists view learning as facilitated through activities, that is, learning is achieving through collaborative and problem-solving. Vygotsky defines the ZPD as "*the distance between the actual problem solving level, as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development, as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers*" (Vygotsky 1978: 86).

I also draw on Bruner's (1996) notion of scaffolding and how it works within the ZPD. As mentioned earlier, this refers to a process through which a teacher or a more competent peer helps the student in their ZPD as necessary and tapers off this aid as it becomes unnecessary (Warford 2010; Khaliliaqdam 2014). The application of this notion yields a deeper understanding of the teacher educators and their students in the process of teaching and learning in Islamic education (Cooper and Mcintyre 1994; Edward 1995; Hoel 1997).

6.3.1. The teacher educator's role

In student-centred teaching approaches, the main focus is on student participation and their ability to take more control of their own learning (Sabki and Hardaker 2013). Teacher educators using this approach differ from the above group (categorised under teacher centred) because their emphasis is on students' ability to construct their own meaning, supported by their teachers. Students may work on a specific problem as they undertake systematic enquiry in a group under the teacher's guidance (Harland 2010). The following excerpt from the interview with Amas is an example of the role of the teacher in such an approach:

> *A student must learn to think and explain her thoughts. All I care about is the students' ability to build and discuss their own views. If a student doesn't want to talk (if she is shy, I don't force her to speak in class), I make her write her thoughts, and I encourage her to share these with the class later.*
>
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

Hayat similarly commented:

> *For me, I see my students as people who come into this class with their own understanding and knowledge of the world. Some of them know things that I don't know, so I respect their opinions and perspectives. If you are not careful, they might disgrace you one day with their better understanding of human nature and education in general… Trust me, I respect the association between what these students already know and what they are here to learn.*

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

These comments above suggest that these teacher educators gave students the space to develop their own knowledge and skills. Both Hayat and Amas saw their role as that of a facilitator of student learning by creating space for students to engage and reflect on the content of the class. Thus, they encouraged students to construct their own meaning in relation to the content and to debate their views with their classmates. This is an approach to education that opposes the dominant culture of teaching and learning in universities in KSA by seeing the teacher educators' role as being transmitters of Islamic knowledge in the classroom. It also challenges the idea that teacher educators are a source of knowledge and cannot be challenged or questioned by students.

The comments from the teacher educators resonate with Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that the starting point for instruction is the learner's current knowledge and skills. The assumption here is that each learner brings her prior experiences to the learning situation, and that existing knowledge can be applied to solve problems, resulting in the formation of new knowledge. This supports Harland's (2010) and Khaliliaqdam's (2014) argument that, from a constructivist perspective, there is always a strong relationship between what the learner already knows and can do, and what is to be learned. Regardless of the strategy a teacher uses, each student will construct her own meaning based

on the interaction between her prior knowledge and her current learning experiences. This is, perhaps, exemplified by Hayat's comment, '*Trust me, I respect the association between what these students already know and what they are here to learn.*' This approach is echoed in the comment made by one of Amas's students:

> *Honestly, I like the teaching approach of my teacher. She helps me to determine what I know and what I don't know. She shows much concern for what I know. She respects that... This inspires me a lot.*
>
> (Interview with student, 23.03.2014)

The teacher educators who use student centred approaches are also perceived as caring about their students' wellbeing. Amas states that she does not put shy students on the spot by demanding that they speak up immediately. Rather, she allows them time to think about the topic, write down notes, and present their views when they are ready. This suggests that she regards learning as making the students feel safe to construct meaning. Amas further reflects on this notion in the following quotation:

> *I ask my students many open questions, I ask them, 'Tell me what you think about this point. Do you agree? Tell me why.' I go to a quiet student and ask her, 'What do you think of what your classmate just said?' or I ask, 'What do you think of the benefit of X 'as an Islamic practice' on this? I believe in allowing these students to do things on their own after I have assisted them in solving a particular problem. Sometimes you have to step aside and leave them alone, you just watch them do their things.*
>
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

Abrar also commented:

> *I have a unique relationship with my students. By this, I mean there is a good rapport and cordiality between us… I have a way of questioning my students; if I want to probe an assumption, I ask, for instance, 'How can you disprove that assumption?' If I am interested in reasons and evidence, I may ask, 'What do you think are the causes and why?' If I am*

interested in my students' viewpoints or perspectives, I may ask, 'What is the alternative?'

(Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

She further said:

I ensure that these students support each other because I believe that this makes it possible for the students to complement each other's roles and supplement each other's knowledge and skills. The students who have progressed in one area will then help other students.

(Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

Similarly, Hayat stated:

I do this by encouraging my students to talk. I ask them questions that help all of us to go beyond the surface. We question just about everything, including their responses. The questions I ask my students are very focused, and our interactions are very positive. My interest is to help them think deeply or what you and I may call critical thinking at our level.

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

This comment from Hayat was supported by one of her students, who said:

She encourages us to talk and be very critical during classes. With her, get ready to answer questions and to do lots of discussion. One thing I love about her is the fact that she loves our responses no matter what they are. She will question all our questions and encourage us to continuously think. She is so lively.

(Interview with student, 10.03.2014)

The comments from these teacher educators resonate with Bruner's (1996) idea of scaffolding. Hoel (1997) explains that in an educational context, the concept is normally used to describe the support a student receives from the teacher or a more capable peer. Scaffolding may also refer to the way the teacher educators guide their students' learning via focused questions and positive interactions (Fani and Ghaemi 2011). This is exemplified by the way teacher educator Hayat asks questions which are '*very focused, and our interactions are very positive*'. Amas stated that she allows her students to do things in their own way after giving them instructions, and that she sometimes steps aside just to watch them, indicating scaffolding. Similarly, Abrar said she makes it possible for her students to complement each other's knowledge and skills.

The comments from the teacher educators also indicate their use of Socratic questioning styles to help their students think deeply and beyond the surface (Brunschwig and Lloyd 2003). The teacher educators encouraged students to critically engage with learning by adopting problem-solving, collecting students' perspectives, encouraging them to help each other with tasks, and exploring and questioning the content they are given or taught. According to Paul and Elder (2006), such questions are used to explore complex ideas, to open up issues and problems, to uncover assumptions, to analyse concepts, and to distinguish what they know from what they do not know.

The comments from the teacher educators suggest that teacher educators who adopted student-centred approaches to their teaching viewed their role as providing learning opportunities for their students. For instance, Amas posed open-ended questions to her students to allow them the opportunity to elaborate upon the issue and to speak their minds. She encouraged her students to reflect critically on their answers and to engage with other students' responses. In her teaching approach, Amas included every student in her classroom, even the quiet students to contribute, to the discussion.

Hayat, another teacher educator, articulated her role in a different light within this approach. She viewed her role as that of a coach who helps her students develop thinking and reflexivity skills:

> *You are not teaching them. They get trained to think. I ask many analytical questions, I make them do tasks such as 'analytical activities' and invite them to question everything that comes out of my mouth. Later in the class, towards the end of the lesson, I give them as homework critical thinking questions that do not have right or wrong answers.*

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

The quotation suggests that Hayat viewed her role as not only helping the students to engage with the lesson per se, but also supporting them to develop critical thinking skills.

Safya, another teacher educator, commented on her role thus:

> *Students are sometimes in conflict with what I have said in the lesson. They say, 'It's not right what you've said'. Then I go deeper, raise more focused questions, information, just to make them clarify their thoughts, and be able to change their thinking and views on life. Or alternatively, I adjust my views.*

(Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

This quotation shows how teacher educators like could critically build their own. In this way, these teacher educators encourage their students to bring their own experiences and prior knowledge with them to the classroom. What is more interesting in this quotation is that Safya believed that her students, through their experience, might provide insight that could lead her to change her own view. This indicates that teacher educators using this approach see learning as an interaction between everyone in the classroom, whereby everyone benefits.

Amas identified another role for teacher educators who adopt a student-centred teaching approach. She viewed her role as moderating and sustaining students'

interest inside the classroom and beyond. In the excerpt below, Amas explained how she viewed any concern or interest from her students as a learning opportunity:

> *Students raise concerns in the class. I don't ignore any of their concerns; this is why I'm always behind in my lessons… I always engage with each individual concern. These are learning spaces and shouldn't be wasted. Normally, I group these interests and get the students to work on them, and we collectively arrive at their answers.*
>
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

This quotation illustrates how some of the teacher educators acknowledged students' interests to facilitate their learning. They believed that doing so piques the students' curiosity, making them more engaged and enthusiastic learners. Amas took the interests and concerns expressed by the students as teachable moments in her lessons. The quotation suggests that she converted these issues into learning opportunities that not only respond to a student's needs, but also encourage the whole class to participate in constructing their answers. Thus, she used her knowledge to recognise teachable moments and used information from her students to further the lesson (Glasswell and Parr 2009), modifying her approach to teaching based on her students' needs, which they had raised in the classroom. Teacher educators' realisation of the spaces created by students' needs echoes the argument that teachable moments are spaces where teacher and student achieve what Bruner (1996) call a 'meeting of minds'. This refers to the interactional time, where teachers involve students in developing and constructing their own ideas based upon their concerns.

Picking up on these learning spaces means that the teacher educator helps students to re-construct their intended meaning in relation to the teacher's construction of that meaning (Glasswell and Parr 2009). Teacher educators like Amas and her students negotiate this space together; with the teacher educator (Amas) searching for ways to understand the students, and the students attempting to understand the teacher's perspective (Shwartz 2005). This idea is illustrated by a comment from one of Safya's students:

> *…while discussing… she questions some of my answers, even if I provide her with more answers, she asks me questions and helps me to explain my answers. She helps me to re-think and negotiate my answers with hers; eventually, I feel that I understand my own questions and I move forward with my thinking. I am glad to have this teacher.*

> (Interview with student, 25.11.2013)

This progressive approach to teaching raises some concerns about how FIE teacher educators who adopt such methods deal with the definite or revealed nature of Islamic knowledge. These concerns were raised with Amas in an interview, and she responded that there is nothing preventing Muslim students from using their reasoning capabilities. In her words:

> *Allah sent us texts and explanations of these texts in the Sunnah. Many verses in the Quran are clearly encouraging mankind to think through the Quran. Allah in the Quran invites us to use our brain by saying, 'Do they not, then, ponder about the Qur'an?' Why do we need to impose our understanding on our students?*

> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

This quotation shows that the teacher educators who showed a preference for the student-centred approach did not seem to view empowering students and inviting them to question and analyse Islamic discourses as an act of disrespect to Islam. In fact, they saw helping students to develop their critical thinking skills as an act of worship that is encouraged by a direct invitation from Allah (God).

This section has described the different teaching roles assumed by FIE teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred teaching. This preference reflects the notion of their role being that of facilitator, stimulator, and co-creator. In other words, the teacher educators facilitated students' learning so that they could participate in the process of creating knowledge. In general, these teachers perceived their role as helping students make the information their own.

Furthermore, the teacher educators who adopted the student-centred approach viewed teaching in relation to their students' learning. Such learning occurs through students' acquisition not only of knowledge, but also of the skills that can help them develop themselves academically (Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse 1999; Kirschner et al. 2006; Schweinfurt 2013; Alhawsawi 2013). Thus, the emphasis in this teaching approach is on the development of students' engagement in the learning process as well as the development of critical thinking skills.

6.3.2. The teacher educators' teaching practices

The data from the interviews as well as from the observations show that the participants who adopted a student-centred teaching approach enacted different teaching practices to engage the students in learning and to develop their critical thinking skills. They exhibited more interactive teaching practices in their lessons. These included class discussions and group work. As Abrar explained in the following excerpt:

> *This subject tends to be heavy in terms of information. I think it is more productive not to use lecturing. I like to use group work activities a lot. It does help the students to share and discuss meaning in groups. I don't like students to memorise what I say, I want them to be able the make the connection between concepts and the knowledge from their textbook, be able to discuss it among their particular groups, then share it with the rest of class… Yes... Sometimes the students struggle, but surely they can help each another or I can help when I have to.*

(Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

The above quotation suggests that the teacher educators in this approach favoured an interactive approach in which students are able to initiate the discussion, interact with the knowledge presented by the teacher educator and the textbook, draw individual conclusions, and then discuss and share their understanding with the whole class. Through her teaching practices, Abrar not only helped her students to access the knowledge, but also increased their

motivation and self-esteem. If students struggled to understand a concept, she would normally refer them to other students and make them work together to find an answer. Her teaching practices emphasised to the students that they are part of the active construction of their own understanding and are able to reflect on the information in the class through their own experiences.

Another practice used by the teacher educators who adopted a student-centred approach to their teaching is dialogue. A teacher educator might start the lesson by raising a particular point and then encourage the students to debate among themselves or even with her. They advanced their lessons through a dialogue between themselves and the students. This teaching practice is described in the following quotation from Amas:

In my teaching, I use discussion a lot. The students and I have very interesting debates; they are sometimes very loud, particularly when they confront my views based on their knowledge and experience.

(Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

This excerpt shows how discussion serves as one of the teaching practices in the student-centred approach. Amas appeared to break the boundaries between the knowledge that needs to be learnt by heart and that which involves intellectual debate. Through these teaching practices, students are allowed an interactive space where their prior knowledge and experiences can be applied.

Some of the teacher educators reported that in their lessons, they took the method of dialogue further by providing students with questions rather than answers to help stimulate students' thinking and enhance their critical ability. This is reflected in Safya's statement:

During the discussion, I pose questions that make them question what I am saying; when they think that they get the right answer, I throw in further questions that make them doubt their earlier answer. This creates lots of debate between all of us in the class. Students start to question

any information raised during the discussion. This makes all of us go through a journey of knowledge discovery that forces us to dig deeper for answers or more questions. When I start to notice that the students are starting to think for themselves, I try to just help them clarify their thoughts. All I want them to do is challenge the way they think.

(Interview with Safya, 32.11.2013.)

This quotation shows how Safya used dialogic teaching practices to develop critical thinking skills. Teachers can help their students to use reason to find an answer by asking further questions that may lead the student to discover the answers herself. The quotation shows how teacher educators like Safya believe that students are able to reflect on their answers and to change their thinking. This resonates with Wolfe and Alexander's (2008) description of what they called dialogical teaching. They argue (ibid.: 8) that it is not

conversation that tends to be relaxed and may lead nowhere and dialogue, characterised by purposeful questioning and chaining of ideas into 'coherent lines of thinking and enquiry' – the dialogic principle of cumulation. This tilts control of the conversational floor away from the teacher's initiating moves to student's responsive utterances, the R in I(R)F. By listening and responding to what children actually say and do, teachers are in a position to support individuals more effectively in their learning.

Hayat similarly shared how she poses questions as a way to encourage students to construct meaning and understanding. When I asked her how she ensures that learning is effectively achieved, she explained:

I add a question that requires students to discuss and apply their own experience. Justify the answer using their own experience. Students have to write a more in-depth response on a separate paper not only as an ongoing process but also at the end of the term.

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

The comments above from teacher educators Safya and Hayat suggest that both tended to use questioning that elicits different answers and different perspectives from the students. This method has been called Socratic questioning, which allows students to generate alternative responses and articulate their responses (Dreifuerst 2105).

Additionally, Hayat demonstrated teaching practices that reflect aspects of student-centred teaching which are closer to structured pedagogy, which in this study, is understood to be part of a student-centred approach (see 3.2.4). Data from the observation of Hayat in her lessons (observed on 15.02.2014) made it clear that she allowed time for discussions in which she asked the students to reflect on what she had taught them by posing questions or making comments. During these breaks, she tended to encourage the students to argue and debate amongst themselves. These teaching practices, although led by the teacher to organize the students' activities, allow many aspects of student-centred teaching to be enacted. Students are often invited to comment on the topics throughout the delivery, and space is given to them to deliberate amongst themselves in order to construct their learning. This observation data suggests that one of the teaching practices enacted by the teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred teaching is organizing the learning content for the students.

A further teaching practice of some of the teacher educators who adopted student-centred approaches is the creation of a relaxed and participative learning atmosphere. These teachers believed that the use of dialogue and debate in learning will not be productive unless a safe and relaxed atmosphere is fostered in the classroom. Safya suggested that debates about Islamic issues would have made many of her students uncomfortable had she not ensured a safe, participative and relaxing environment for the students. In her words, Safya said:

You see me in the class, I am relaxed with the students; I want them to feel free and to talk about any educational issues. Muslim girls face many challenges around them which can sometimes affect their faith… I'll tell

you about one incident. My students raised the issue of homosexuality, and they were debating it from an Islamic perspective. They had a very heated discussion among themselves, and they were able to provide very interesting questions and answers. Later on, I came to know that some girls in the class practice what is considered a social taboo, but I was still able to have a healthy debate where I helped different views to come out… and to be able to relate the discussion to the views of Islam on this issue. Believe me, this kind of discussion and the things I learn is beyond comprehension.

(Interview with Safya, 32.11.2013)

This excerpt highlights the importance of a safe and relaxed atmosphere for nurturing a healthy learning environment in the classroom. Due to the environment that Safya created in her class, her students could feel safe and comfortable even when discussing issues that are regarded as social taboos in their conservative society. Safya managed to create such an environment by getting the students to know and respect each other, and by building a level of trust amongst them. When the teacher establishes such an environment, she helps students build confidence so they can become involved in learning and develop knowledge and critical thinking skills. This enables them to face the challenges they encounter as young Muslims in relation to their faith, ethics, and so on. What is particularly interesting about the creation of a safe and relaxed learning environment is that the teacher educators do not judge the students, and nor are the students allowed to judge each other.

The teaching practices of the teacher educators who took a student-centred approach to their teaching of FIE have two main features. The first is the encouragement of interactive teaching, i.e., teaching through group work, dialogue, and debate. The second feature is the creation of a safe and relaxed learning environment. The key purpose behind these practices is fostering interaction between all the parties involved in the learning, namely, the teachers, students, learning materials, and learning environment.

Based on the data from the observations and interviews, it is clear that the participants who described their teaching as student-centred also expressed

some understanding of learning and teaching practices that fall under the teacher-centred approach. The observations show that the latter tended to establish an Islamic view on issues addressed in the class, upon which they would build the rest of their teaching activities. These teacher educators used lecturing to establish a concrete understanding of the important and basic issues of Islam. Teacher educator Safya best expressed this thus:

> *Students as Muslims need to understand the words 'There is no God but Allah', the basics of our religion, the most basic of all pillars of Islam. How can they practice the other four pillars if they don't comprehend the most basic of all?!!! I need to take time to lecture about it; for example, I say, imagine…*

(Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

The above quotation shows that Safya wanted her students to know the fundamentals of Islam, so she chose a teaching method that enabled her to achieve this goal. Although she expressed strong views about using a student-centred approach, she felt the need to simply tell the students about the basics of Islam. This means that there is some information that needs to be transmitted to the students, which the students need to understand, as it is stated in the Quran and the Sunnah.

The above suggests that while the teacher educators mainly followed one particular approach, some used elements of other approaches as in the case of Safya. Safya found that she needed to adopt a particular pedagogy that helped her to deal with sacred/revealed texts. Analysis of the work of student-centred educators in this study shows that dealing with sacred/revealed knowledge in the FIE curriculum creates tensions that lead teacher educators to adopt elements of teacher-centred approaches.

6.3.3. Assessment in the student-centred approach

This section discusses the process of evaluating students' progress amongst student-centred teacher educators. Assessment in student-centred approach is

concerned with the development of student learning. It can also make it possible for students to construct knowledge and develop thinking skills. It is thus more than a tool for evaluating the students' content knowledge or merely helping students pass the final examination. Safya demonstrated that she recognised this:

> *We all use mid- and end-of-term examinations for assessment. For me, that is one form of formal assessment. The students' scores are for them. I don't really focus on that; I bring easy questions to the class so that everyone is able to score well. The real assessment is what happens throughout the semester in lessons.*
>
> (Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

She added:

> *What really concerns me is that the interaction and discussion used in the classroom allows students the ability to challenge different views, bring their views, and reflect upon them. I told you, Muslim students need to be able face challenges from the basis of a strong Islamic understanding… using questions that generate dialogue and discussion among them to enhance learning skills.*
>
> (Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

Another teacher educator, Abrar, said:

> *My interest is usually in observing my students during classes. I mean, their non-verbal feedback, which for me is more important than just asking them to sit for some exams at the [end of the] term. I pay attention to their assignments and class discussions as an on-going process with the intention of assessing them- not judgementally- and it should be an on-going process.*
>
> (Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

The above comments indicate that the teacher educators who adopted student-centred approaches saw assessment as continuous evaluation and feedback to facilitate learning (Coffey et al. 2011; Shepard 2008). They viewed assessment

as more than the end-of-term exams. Assessment, according to Safya, is more than just measuring learning through formal examinations. This supports Sadler's (1998: 77) description of formative assessment as "assessment that is specifically intended to provide feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning". William and Leahy (2007) argue that an assessment is formative to the extent that information from the assessment is fed back into the system and then used to improve the performance of the system itself in some way. Abrar touched on this when she said that her intention was to 'assess them - not judgementally - and it should be an on-going process'. Thus, these participants used on-going assessment, which is formative in nature and focuses on skills like analysis, active discussion, and debate to develop students' intellectual capacity.

As the discussions about assessment in Chapter 5 in the relevant section (5.3) and above show, teacher educators using a student-centred approach might regard examinations as a limited form of what assessment should be or should do. For such teacher educators, assessment is not a practice that comes at the end, but rather it is a continuous process that helps knowledge to be developed. Amas best expressed this view of assessment:

> *What is it I need?! Is it this book?! I can give it to them, they memorise it for the examination. It is when you see them, discuss with them over and over, you will see they improve in the way they engage with you, putting forward their view, thinking about it, even the way they engage with their peers, it is non-stop work for non-stop development.*
>
> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

Similarly, Hayat believed that the commonly practised method of examination in the university mainly encourages knowledge reproduction and memorisation from the textbook. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the limitations of this practice:

> *An assessment that is on-going in nature is a process, not an end in itself. It is very necessary but not sufficient when used alone. The*

university encourages 'electronic correction' for student examination papers, so multiple-choice questions, they're easy to mark, but it lacks students interacting with the knowledge… this is not tested. There is nothing to see if more is learned then just having a good memory.

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

Hayat's comment to the effect that an assessment that is formative in nature is a process lends credence to Bennett's (Popham 2008: 6) argument that such assessment "is not a test but a process… that produces not so much a score as a qualitative insight into student understanding" and can inform instructional decision-making (Herppich et al. 2014; Shepard 2008). Hayat expressed the need to adopt a wider practice of assessment and effort, which should focus on activities that develop the self, skills, and experience. She stated:

However, alongside this, methods are needed to assess how students discuss their views and justify their responses.

(Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

Teacher educator Abrar commented:

I had trained students to analyse, judge, give reasons when working in class and for homework. If you noticed when observing me, I am always encouraging students to do additional reading, suggesting some books, extra research. I get them to share views, discuss, and learn more than what is in the book. On-going assessment is formative for me because it helps me to help the process of learning in the best of my knowledge as a teacher educator.

(Interview with Abrar, 03.03.2014)

Both Hayat and Abrar insisted that on-going assessment made it possible for them to effectively assist their students in learning. This is demonstrated by Furtak et al. (2008), who find that the use of formative assessment during classroom teaching was positively related to learning.

Hayat further shared how she took action to assess learning in terms of the construction of meaning and understanding. When asked how she ensured that learning is effectively achieved, she responded:

> *I add a question that requires students to discuss and apply their own experience. Justify the answer using their own experience. Students have to write a more in-depth response on a separate paper not only as an on-going process but also at the end of the term.*

> (Interview with Hayat, 02.03.2014)

Similarly, Amas reported that she always assessed her students through a writing task, and would find alternative ways to help students practise and develop skills and the ability to construct knowledge through student activities during the semester:

> *I make my students develop a summary for different chapters which we have studied. The crucial requirement is to write a paragraph discussing their individual views in relation to each chapter.*

> (Interview with Amas, 05.02.2014)

However, this view of assessment sometimes places students at a disadvantage, especially when the examination does not reflect the teaching approach the teacher typically uses. The university examinations require students to focus mostly on memorization (as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.3). There is divergence between what the teacher thinks assessment is for and the way the formal programme examination is set. This divergence sometimes forced teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred teaching to adjust their methods. This adjustment allows development of students' skills while still including aspects of rote memorization necessary for achieving high grades in formal examinations (Herppich et al. 2014). Safya succinctly explained this dilemma:

> *You have to make the students feel the value of what we are doing in the classroom, but also give them enough memory practices to enable them to pass the examinations. I understand that they need to memorise texts from the Sunnah but I believe that understanding the texts helps in memorizing them. If not, at least I am trying to create in my teaching a space for all the students to learn.*
>
> (Interview with Safya, 23.11.2013)

Although a few of the teacher educators espoused a student-centred approach that encouraged on-going assessment, they had to consider that the final examination evaluates only knowledge content. This is because assessment in FIE does not seem to reflect the active nature of the teaching approach that is emphasised in the programme curriculum, as discussed in Chapter 5. As such, assessment policy in the FIE course measures mainly content rather than critical thinking skills.

6.4. Summary

This chapter discussed how most of the teacher educators preferred teacher-centred approaches. They viewed their role as that of an authoritative figure in the classroom and considered themselves to be knowledge transmitters. These teachers made decisions regarding what is to be learnt and how their students should learn it. They viewed themselves, their own skills, and their learning materials as the only source of knowledge in the classroom, arguing that they knew their subject well and that the students were not able to actively contribute to the teaching and learning process.

These teachers regulated most aspects of learning for their students and adhered firmly to a defined, structured content and a set syllabus, mainly by using textbooks. These teachers deployed teacher-centred approaches, underscoring Islamic pedagogical concepts represented by the interplay between memorization, orality, and the use of the written word in support of the learning process. For the teacher-centred teacher educators, Islamic pedagogy was considered from a perspective that placed a premium on the inseparable nature of knowledge and the sacred in the Islam.

Such a teaching approach can be termed uni-directional teaching. In this approach, the teacher educators taught from the front of the class and would pause to ask questions to test the knowledge of students, indicating that they had a content-orientated conception of teaching, where students would recall what they had been taught. In terms of assessment, these teacher educators used it mainly to evaluate their students' ability to reproduce information, and their focus was mostly on the final examination. In so doing, they limited the assessment of their students to only the taught materials and formal examinations. Examinations in this approach are for testing the amount of information that a student is able to absorb and regurgitate accurately.

On the other hand, a few of the teacher educators were student-centred in terms of their approaches to the teaching of Islamic education. These teacher educators saw their role as guiding students' learning activities. In addition, they perceived their role as that of facilitators who create opportunities for students to develop their learning skills as well as their knowledge. Prominent among the points made here is that these teacher educators considered their students to be people equipped with the ability to take control of their own learning and to think critically. In addition, they maintained that learners bring experiences to the learning situation, and that their knowledge is very helpful in learning. Therefore, they encouraged the full participation of their students in the teaching and learning process. In this way, they respected their students' ability to construct meaning by themselves, while offering on-going support.

Teacher educators in this approach adopted different teaching practices and learning activities. They believed that teaching practices such as group work, class discussions, and Socratic questioning could help break down the subject and make it more meaningful to students. This approach allows students the space to develop their own knowledge and critical thinking skills (Brunschwig and Lloyd 2003).

By way of assessment, the teacher educators who took a student-centred approach suggested that on-going assessments are important to facilitate

effective learning through discussion, reflection, and questioning to construct and develop knowledge. Assessment for them not only takes place after learning has been completed, but it must be continuous and formative (Coffey et al. 2011). They believed that on-going assessment provides information the teacher can use to enhance teaching and learning as well as lesson planning. Therefore, these teacher educators considered final examinations to be a limited form of assessment. However, they conceded that the examinations committee emphasises rote learning and memorisation, and that their students might therefore be at a disadvantage in taking the formal exams compared to the students of the teacher-centred instructors.

The next chapter provides a summary of discussions as well as the main contributions of the study.

7: Conclusion and discussion

7.1. Introduction

The government of Saudi Arabia is undertaking several initiatives at all levels of the education system in order to enhance education quality. The TPPs at this university, in this respect, are responsible for providing schools with qualified teachers. Improving the quality of teaching and learning in TPPs in KSA is therefore considered to be vital. The government is also concerned in the context of reform with maintaining a culture of Islamic education, as the country is an Islamic state ruled by Sharia law. The emphasis on teaching Islam across all educational levels in KSA makes it important for a faculty of education to improve teaching and learning in Islamic education subjects. There is, therefore, a need to investigate the teaching practices used by teacher educators in the College of Education at CU who teach Islamic education. This study addresses this research gap by examining the teaching approaches of teacher educators of Islamic education in a college of education and exploring how these approaches are influenced by the institutional policy.

This chapter begins by summarising and discussing the main findings in relation to the two research sub-questions that make up the main research question. The contribution of this research to the body of knowledge is then highlighted. The chapter then outlines the implications of the findings of this study for various stakeholders: university and policy makers, teacher educators, and for future research. It concludes with some personal reflections on the research journey and on how this study has informed my own practices and will continue to do so.

7.2. Summary and discussion of the research questions

This research study was grounded by an overarching question: What are the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators, and how are they influenced by the institutional policy of City University in KSA?'

The key research question outlined above was broken down into the following sub-questions. The first sub-question was 'How does the university as an institution influence teacher educators' teaching of the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?' This sub-question was answered in Chapter 5, which focused on how institutional policies affect the teacher educators' practices.

The second sub-question was 'What are the teaching approaches of teacher educators teaching the Foundation of Islamic Education subject?' This question was answered in Chapter 6 by examining the approaches that inform the teaching practices of the teacher educators of the FIE course in the TPP in the College of Education at CU. The summary and discussion of the main findings in relation to the two research questions are presented below.

The main question was answered using a qualitative research methodology, specifically, the case study approach. A review of the literature, an analysis of documents and policies and interview, as well as observations all assisted in understanding the approaches teacher educators adopt in their teaching of FIE as well as the institutional influences.

7.3. Research question one: institutional policy

7.3.1. Summary of findings of research question one

This section summarises the answer to the first research sub-question regarding institutional influences on the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators in FIE, using institutional theory.

Chapter 5 of this study outlined the ways in which various policies and practices implemented by the university influence the way teacher educators teach. The analysis of the university's policy documents and interviews with lecturers and heads of department suggests that the main impact of the institution on teaching and learning comes from i) the provision of in-service training at the university, ii) class size and the size of the lecture halls, iii) the nature of assessment, and iv) the use of technology. These four topics capture how

institutional policy influences teacher educators' teaching approaches in the FIE subject.

7.3.1.1. *Provision of in-service training*

It was found that the university provides professional development courses for teacher educators. These courses are intended to develop teacher educators' teaching practices as well as their management and leadership skills. The university's provision of professional development courses, particularly pedagogical training, is intended to develop teacher educators' understanding and practice of student-centred approaches to teaching and learning. This assumption is clearly articulated in many of the university documents related to these courses.

The data show that although the teacher educators appreciated these courses, they expressed dissatisfaction with the teaching and learning methods used on most of the courses. The teacher educators found that these courses were mainly delivered in the form of lectures and that they were mainly content-based. They noted that they did not have the opportunity to practise on these courses. The lack of interactive delivery modes on these courses meant that the teacher educators were unable to develop their understanding of the concepts presented in these courses. As a result, there was uncertainty among the teacher educators regarding how the learning from these courses could be used in their teaching.

Another challenge that most of the teacher educators encountered in these professional development courses is the schedule and the frequency of the courses. They commented that the training sessions often conflict with their teaching schedules, and thus it is difficult for them to attend. Furthermore, the courses are not offered regularly, and thus, if they miss one, they do not have the opportunity to attend at a later date.

A further challenge that the teacher educators identified regarding the professional development courses is the discrepancy between the training

offered and the reality of the university's infrastructure. This is particularly true in the case of integrating technology into their lessons. Most of the lecture halls are not equipped with functioning ICT, and thus the teacher educators are unable to apply what they learn.

Moreover, most of these teacher educators did not fully grasp the content of the courses. This is evident in the teacher educators' understanding of the many concepts that were discussed on the courses. For example, there was no consensus among the teacher educators about what is meant by student-centred pedagogy and what it may entail.

While the university's provision of professional development courses is supposed to be a positive policy, the aim of which is to encourage teacher educators to adopt student-centred approaches to teaching, these approaches were not being implemented, as this study shows. In particular, they were often unable to use their learning from these courses to improve their teaching practices. Consequently, the teacher educators' teaching practices have not significantly improved in the direction that university policy is trying to encourage.

7.3.1.2. *Class size and the size of lecture halls*

University policy in relation to the number of students per class was found to influence the teacher educators' teaching approaches. Within the framework of the student-centred teaching policy, the university emphasises the fact that class size should not exceed 45 students so the teacher educators are able to implement active teaching approaches. However, in actual practice, the number of students per class was as high as 55. A related factor that further complicates the situation is the inadequate size of the lecture halls, which are not designed to accommodate such a large number of students. Even when teacher educators were interested in applying a student-centred approach, they were prevented from adopting activities such as group learning and peer work owing to the large number of students that are frequently crammed into a small physical space. Both the size of the halls and the teacher educator-to-student

ratio thus made it difficult for student-centred teaching approaches to be fully implemented, which undermined the university's commitment to active teaching approaches.

7.3.1.3. Assessment

The university assessment policy affects teacher educators' teaching practices. The data show that assessment of FIE is mainly in the form of a single exam comprising 80% of the total grade. Only 20% of the grade making up the subject are based on classroom activities. Furthermore, exams are predetermined and in a format that does not encourage student-centred teaching, as they test only memorisation of subject content and lower-order thinking skills. Thus, the teacher educators felt that they must choose between using student-centred teaching as recommended by the university and helping their students to pass examinations based on a behaviourist approach. Nonetheless, as noted in Chapter 5, some teacher educators were still able to make use of the 20% classwork components to develop students' critical thinking skills.

It is argued that the assessment system of the university does not reflect the active teaching and learning policy that it ostensibly seeks to encourage. Although the aim of the introduction of an active teaching and learning framework was to enhance teaching and learning at the university, the type of assessment used creates an environment, which undermines this aim.

7.3.1.4. The Use of Technology

The university explicitly encourages the use of technology in teaching and learning. The findings show that the teacher educators did try to integrate technology into their lessons. Some teacher educators adopted technology in their classes in order to facilitate communication with and among their students and to help students access various online materials. By adopting ICTs, the teacher educators were able to change their students' roles from being passive learners to active participants. However, in discussions with teachers and while

observing classes, it was found that the integration of technology was not happening as intended by the policy for several reasons.

First, as explained in Section 5.1.4, the training courses offered by the university did not help teacher educators develop active learning and teaching skills through the use of technology. Most of the teacher educators were uncertain about how technology could be integrated into their lessons. This created a large gap between what is intended by the policy and what is the reality of the teaching.

Secondly, the infrastructure in the university's lecture halls and classrooms hindered the integration of technology into teaching, since the rooms were not furnished with computer equipment. There was also no adequate internet connectivity and a very poor connection across the university.

Third, there was some disagreement among the teacher educators about the use of technology in teaching. Some of them were suspicious about the use of technology, particularly with regard to online resources. Most of the teacher educators who believed it to be part of their duty to provide students with the 'correct' knowledge found that encouraging the use of online resources would challenge their position. They expressed dissatisfaction with the vast amounts of information available online that could undermine the Islamic faith, for example, ideas that students might find online include support for friendships between members of the opposite sex and women's independence from male guardians.

Fourthly, the university had not created a space in which teacher educators could debate the application of this technology, thereby preventing them from reaching a consensus or at least a common understanding of its role. Consequently, many different interpretations were given of what the technology could mean and how it might influence the teacher educators' roles.

In these ways, the policy regarding integrating technology into the teaching of FIE was not only encumbered by technical challenges, but also presented a cultural challenge for the course.

7.3.2. Discussion of research question one

The influence of CU policies and the way they were being implemented were found to affect adversely the active teaching approaches advocated by the university. For example, CU encourages teacher educators to use interactive, student-centred approaches, but the data reveal that teacher-centred approaches are still dominant in the teaching of FIE. This means that the reality of the teaching approaches adopted by the majority of teacher educators does not always reflect the university's overall vision. There are several reasons for this, which are discussed below.

7.3.2.1. Infrastructural challenges

Infrastructural challenges, such as large class sizes, the physical size of the classrooms and the unavailability of ICT equipment, all hindered the teacher educators from promoting active learning. For example, even the most conscientious teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred approaches and hoped to use ICT in their teaching (Chapter 6) found it extremely problematic to adopt active teaching methods, such as discussions, in classes with more than 50 students in a small room. This gap between policy and practice resonates with the findings of De Segovia and Hardison (2009), who studied Taiwanese educational reform policies regarding the teaching of the English language. Their findings link the failure to implement effective student-centred teaching and learning to insufficient resources, such as teacher training and mentoring support.

7.3.2.2. The importance of CU recognising teacher educators' needs

The finding of this study resonates with the literature, which suggests that inappropriate, non-focused professional development will not empower teacher educators to improve their teaching practices (Blanchard and Thacker 2013). As

in this study, researchers have found that identifying teacher educators' training needs is the fundamental first step in the provision of appropriate professional development (Gould et al. 2004). This is because, without identifying the gap between the current performance abilities and the potential requirements of the workforce (McConnell 2003), the university or the institution will not be able to recognize issues and targets in training (Al Ghatrifi 2016).

It is evident from the findings of this study that the failure of CU and their development courses to acknowledge the needs of teacher educators has meant that most teacher educators do not really benefit from these courses. As discussed in Chapter 5, this study reveals that CU does not make any effort to identify professional development needs, nor does it consider teacher educators' feedback. Also, the content of these courses is not always relevant to the teacher educators' work. Additionally, CU does not consider the teachers' needs in terms of modes of delivery (for instance, by using workshops) and the use of more active teaching approaches. It is therefore unsurprising that the teacher educators in this study expressed dissatisfaction with the courses. This is in line with Blanchard and Thacker (2013), who argue that analysing teachers' needs not only provides a map for ongoing development, but importantly, it motivates teachers to take part in them because they feel that the development opportunities are responding to their needs and requests. This is particularly the case if these needs are in line with the institutional vision of teaching and learning.

7.3.2.3.   The importance of CU recognising teacher educators' voices in their professional development

The literature (McArdle 1998; Blanton and Stylianou 2009; Al Ghatrifi 2016) suggests that for teachers, having their voices heard and being given some leadership in their work are very important issues. These aspects are particularly important in the successful implementation of policy initiatives such as interactive, student-centred teaching approaches. The literature also argues for the need for educational institutions to create a space for teacher educators to express their concerns and debate solutions (Al Ghatrifi 2016). A successful school gives its teachers space to collaborate and discuss their development.

Bramming (2007: 48) argues that universities 'must be concerned with transformative learning' and education, and Cornelissen and van Wyk (2007) believe that a university is responsible for creating a process in with teachers and students are developed professionally. While it is suggested in Chapter 5 that CU attempts to create dialogical space through professional development, the study has found that in practice, teacher educators were unable to discuss their concerns about active teaching approaches. The current lack of sufficient opportunities for discussion makes it difficult for teachers to collaborate in achieving successful professional development.

Creating opportunities at CU for discussion would enable teacher educators to discuss and negotiate their understanding of active student-centred learning and the way they could implement it in the FIE classroom in particular. Teacher educators would be able to express the challenges and the difficulty they encounter in their learning of active teaching policies and professional development (Chapter 5, Section 5.1.1; Chapter 6, Section 6.2).

7.3.3. Conclusion

In the preceding sections, I have summarised and discussed the main findings of research question one about how institutional policies affect practice in relation to the promotion of active teaching and learning. The four main findings related to institutional policies are the following:

- Infrastructural challenges such as large class sizes and the physical size of the classrooms make it difficult for teacher educators to implement learner-centred education contrary to the intentions of policies.
- The professional development provided to teacher educators does not meet their needs, and as such, makes it difficult for them to promote the policy of learner-centred education advocated by the university.
- Teacher educators' voices are not acknowledged and recognised in the provision of professional development by CU. Therefore, the professional development provides support that is not perceived as useful.

The above summary shows how the teacher educators are not implementing as intended the institutional policies and practices that seek to enhance active teaching and learning.

7.4. Research question two: teaching approaches

As mentioned previously, data were obtained from interviews with teacher educators, document analysis, and personal observation in order to identify the teaching approaches used by teacher educators of the FIE subject in the TPP. It was found that the teacher educators' teaching approaches were underpinned by certain philosophies about teaching, and this affected how each teacher educator taught, their teaching practices, their methods of assessment, and how they perceived their roles as teachers, as discussed in Chapter 6. It found that few teacher educators seemed to adopt student-centred approaches to their teaching practice in teaching FIE course, although they were found to incorporate some aspects of teacher-centred teaching. The majority of teacher educators were found to adopt teacher-centred teaching approaches, which means that this approach is dominant in teaching practice in FIE courses in KSA.

7.4.1. Summary of the findings of research question two

7.4.1.1. Teacher-centred approaches used by teacher educators
Teacher educators' roles and teaching practices

The teacher educators who demonstrated a preference for a teacher-centred approach to teaching focused on imparting information. They believed that knowledge in FIE is fixed and sacred. They saw themselves as a source of ultimate knowledge that should not be challenged, and they viewed students as being unable to construct meaning or to reflect critically on it. Thus, they perceived their role as transferring knowledge to their students. This view of their role led many of the teacher educators to believe that they had the right to dictate to the students what should be learnt. As a result, they believed that it was their role to facilitate the transmission of the 'correct' information to their students.

The data further show that the teacher educators who used a teacher-centred approach asked the students numerous recall-type or lower order cognitive level questions to help them memorise the information. In the class environment, the teacher educators did most of the talking and gave students few opportunities to speak. When the teacher educators engaged the students, they focused mainly on the teacher's knowledge and not on the students' experiences and their ability to construct their own understanding. Although the teacher educators who showed a preference for teacher-centred teaching might assign students group work, such as creating PowerPoint slides, the students were not encouraged to reflect on their work or to create meaning. The teachers were thus able to control most aspects of student learning. An interesting finding from this research study is that while these teacher educators used some active teaching practices, such as pair- and group-work and getting students to participate in discussions and answer questions, it seems that their adoption of these practices was to reinforce content recall.

Assessment practices

Teacher educators who preferred the teacher-centred teaching approach often viewed assessment in terms of exams; that is, they used assessment summatively. Little of the process of teaching was recognised by these teacher educators as an opportunity for assessment. This is because they did not see assessment as a way of enhancing students' critical thinking. Their practices show that assessment was used to evaluate students' retention of and ability to reproduce information. Such an approach to assessment suggests that it is used to reinforce the marginality of the students' knowledge construction.

In this research, the teacher educators who used teacher-centred approaches indicated that what they valued in learning is 'memorisable knowledge'. The teacher educators claimed that the reason they insisted that their students memorise most of the knowledge they were taught was so that the students could apply Islamic knowledge and education in their daily practices.

7.4.1.2. Student-centred approaches used by teacher educators
Teacher educators' roles and teaching practices

The data show that the teacher educators who demonstrated a tendency to use a student-centred approach worked actively to maximise students' participation in their learning. The role of the teacher educator is to encourage students to reflect on and construct an understanding of the subject content as well as the knowledge that they themselves bring. Such teacher educators help their students to recognise the different sources of knowledge around them, such as the students themselves, their peers, their teachers, and the subject content. This helps to stimulate students to think critically about the issues presented in their classroom. The teacher educator's role is to facilitate students' development of learning skills.

Unlike advocates of the teacher-centred approach, the teacher educators who showed a preference for student-centred learning seemed to believe that activities such as peer work, group work, and discussions using Socratic questioning facilitate collaboration between students. More importantly, such activities create a variety of learning opportunities and provide students with the space for critical thinking. Based on the data, it could be said that the different teaching approaches and assessment practices that lecturers used are related to their age and experience. It seems that the teacher educators who adopted the teacher centred approach were mainly older (over 50). The teacher educators in this group also had more than 20 years of teaching experience (see Section 4.5). This seems to suggest that younger teacher educators have a greater tendency to use student-centred approaches to teaching. Thus, those who have more recently obtained their qualifications and have more exposure to the latest teaching practices that are creative are more likely to use student-centred approaches. This resonates with the study by Mahmoudia and Özkan (2015), which shows that new teachers are more likely to adopt an active learning approach.

Assessment practices

The teacher educators who showed a preference for the student-centred approach used formative types of assessment as an opportunity to enhance

learning. This is done through activities such as posing questions and getting students to construct and reflect on each other's opinions. Assessments such as final examinations are still required, but assessment is often carried out in daily learning through ongoing feedback from the students.

These teacher educators expressed some satisfaction with their use of assessment. However, they still had to teach what was in the textbook in order for their students to pass the courses, as per university regulations. This could, at times, cause confusion between their approach to teaching and the university policy, which presents assessment as focusing on prescribed knowledge.

7.4.2. Discussion of research question two

The findings of this study suggest that the majority of the teacher educators primarily used teacher-centred approaches when teaching FIE. The main reason given for using teacher-centred approaches was the content of the subject (see 2.3.1). This finding is in line with Sabki and Hardarker (2013), who argue that the approaches to teaching Islamic knowledge tend towards the teacher-centred approach, owing to the nature of the knowledge and the purpose of Islamic education (see also Albesher 2006; Al-Attas 1999). Islamic knowledge can be divided into two types: sacred knowledge and reasoning knowledge (Al-nabhan 2005; Al-Akk 1989). It is claimed that both types can only be acquired through memorisation and direct teaching.

The study reveals that teacher-centred approaches are related to debates about the nature of Islamic education. Although various methods existed in the early history of teaching Islam, the subject has since become associated with the *Madrasas* (Park and Niyozov 2008). Although a matter of debate in the literature, the norm in teaching Islamic education has generally been to adopt teacher-centred approaches. This norm has not been widely challenged. A few studies have provided evidence of the use of active learning and student-centred pedagogies in teaching Islamic education (Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007). These studies also report some difficulties in the implementation of such a pedagogy (Almufada 2005; Almufada 2006; Mustafa and Alkylany 2006).

The findings of this study reflect those of Park and Niyozov (2008), who argue that the teaching of Islamic education is changing the core of Islamic education, and its dependence on revealed knowledge is being challenged. Based on their surveys of *Madrasas* in South Asian countries, Park and Niyozov (2008) view this as a shift away from educational dualism to a more secular process. By this, they mean the integration of more secular educational approaches into school curricula for Islamic education. Researchers have encouraged teachers teaching Islamic education to adopt teaching practices that include cooperative learning, dialogical learning and teaching, and critical thinking teaching and learning (Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007; Alalawi 2013).

Teaching approaches of Islamic education are experiencing large changes and development processes that echo the findings in the research by Park and Niyozov (2008). This development seems evident when analysing existing student-centred teaching practices, although used by only a few teacher educators in this research.

Researchers who investigate teaching strategies often overlook the conception of knowledge in Islamic education and its relation to teaching approaches. The failure to address this issue leads researchers to view teaching strategies that are appropriate for subjects like Islamic faith (Alaqad 2010) as similar to those which are appropriate for Islamic culture (Alkhalidy 2007). However, the former is heavy with sacred knowledge, which needs to be acquired by memorisation and direct teaching, whereas the latter offers a large space for teachers' knowledge and students' experiences, and it can be acquired by discussion. A conclusion that may be drawn is that a failure to understand the complexity of teaching Islamic education and its related subjects leads teachers to adopt mainly teacher-centred strategies.

This study provides evidence that the interpretation of Islam has changed over time and in different cultures, along with teaching approaches. Thus, despite the majority of teacher educators using teacher-centred approaches, the new

government policy and the fact that some teacher educators have adopted student-centred approaches suggest that teaching approaches in Islamic education are more fluid and complex than researchers have previously thought. This is because of the changes in the interpretation of Islamic education. While this might be a good way forward in terms of encouraging active, student-centred learning, there are significant political and social-cultural barriers. For example, political barriers can be seen in the lack of adequate professional training, infrastructure, and investment. More importantly, social-cultural barriers are related to the fact that learning religious knowledge is widely understood to be best done through memorization.

Both CU's policies and the teacher educators' practices indicate a shift in Saudi Arabia in terms of religious understanding and its interpretation as well as in teaching and learning towards active learning. Therefore, the issue of Islamic education is more complex than that proposed by those teacher educators advocating teacher-centred education. This study shows that culture and religion change over time. Also, it shows how approaches to the teaching of Islam and the interpretation of how to teach Islam have also shifted over time. This signifies that culture and religion are lived experiences that change in context and that pedagogical practices shift in relation to cultural understanding and practices.

This study suggests that perhaps the choice of teaching approaches is not connected to the subject matter, but rather is linked to teacher educators' beliefs. Those who believe that Islamic knowledge is fixed and immutable choose teacher-centred approaches, while those who believe that Islamic knowledge can be co-created adopt student-centred approaches to teaching. This suggests that the beliefs of teacher educators cannot be discounted, as their beliefs have a significant influence on how they approach their teaching and the focus of their activities in the classroom (regarding students, content etc.). This is in agreement with the findings of numerous researchers who confirm the influence of teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning on their teaching practices (Pajares 1992; Trigwell and Prosser 1996; Kember and

Kwan 2000; Zemblas 2005; Richardson 2005; Norton et al. 2005; Postareff and Lindblom-Ylänne 2007; Mansour 2009; Lattuca et al. 2014).

7.4.3. Conclusion

In the preceding sections, I have summarised and discussed the main findings of research question two about teacher educators' teaching approaches to FIE. The main findings highlight two points:

- First, diverse teaching approaches to teaching Islamic education, while teacher educators use both teacher-centred and student-centred approaches, the teacher-centred approaches are predominant. Specifically the following changes were noted in the with little evidence in the following aspects:

    a) Teacher educators' role shifted from being a knowledge transmitter of Islamic education towards being a facilitator of student learning although the role of facilitator was still limited.

    b) Teaching practices changed from lecturing and dictating knowledge towards active teaching and learning, such as dialogical teaching and learning, and student group learning although there is little understanding of the students' role during active learning and providing them with the space for critical thinking.

    c) Assessment is developed towards a formative type of assessment, but it is restricted by some policies of CU, although the practice of the summative assessment still broadly exists.

    o The reasons for the existence and persistence of teacher centred approaches in teaching Islamic education are as follows:

        a) the nature of the content of Islamic education and the understanding of Islamic knowledge

        b) the historical association of Islamic education with *Madrasas* and the widely held concept of the transmission of Islamic knowledge

      c) the subject matter as well as teacher educators' beliefs.

- Second, changes in the understanding of Islamic education, which are due to changes in the interpretations of Islam and Islamic knowledge. The evidence is seen in the existence of the diverse teaching approaches in the Islamic education classrooms. This diversity is influenced by changing the understanding of conceptions of knowledge (reasoning and revealed knowledge), as well as some aspects related to the CU policies.

  - The reasons for these changes are related to the divers understandings of Islamic education, and these changes are as follows:

    a) changes in the interpretation of Islam in different Islamic cultures, which are reflected in the new government policy encouraging active, student-centred learning

    b) changes in the culture of Saudi Arabia and in religion over time, which would suggest that both are living experiences and develop within the particular context

7.5. Contribution of the study

This section outlines the knowledge and methodological contributions of this study.

Knowledge Contribution

The first contribution of this study is that it focuses on i) teacher educators, ii) higher education, and iii) their teaching approaches, a combination which is largely missing from the literature. Whilst there are many studies about teaching approaches and strategies, these have mainly been school-based. There are a few studies that have looked at Saudi higher education, but they have focused heavily on student learning and achievement and the testing of certain teaching strategies (Muallim 2009; Fallata 2014). Studies about teacher educators in higher education and their teaching approaches are largely missing from the literature. This study fills this gap by contributing to the knowledge about the

teaching approaches of teacher educators in a university setting. Moreover, a review of the literature suggests this is the only study addressing teacher educators' teaching approaches in Saudi Arabia.

The second contribution is that the current study adds to the literature by showing that the existing teaching approaches in CU in teaching Islamic education include both teacher-centred and student-centred strategies. There have been various studies on the teaching of Islamic education in the Middle East, as shown in the survey of literature in Chapter 3. These previous studies have covered the use of dialogue, prediction, questioning, cooperative learning, group learning and self-directed learning (Almufada 2005; Almufada 2006; Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alazamy 2007; Alkhalidy 2007; Alaqad 2010; Alalawi 2013). Most of the studies suggest that teacher-centred approaches are predominant amongst the traditional teaching methods in this field. However, this study emphasises this finding.

The third contribution is that this study further contributes to the literature on teaching and learning in higher education and in KSA specifically. It focuses on teacher educators who teach at the university level, specifically those involved in a TPP.

The fourth contribution is that this study also provides a comprehensive and in-depth account of teacher educators and the influences on their teaching practices in the College of Education. This is because this study has examined the links between teaching practices and teaching beliefs. In addition, it has investigated the link between teaching practices and institutional aspects, and the link between different teaching practices, i.e., teacher/student-centred approaches. The links between these elements (teaching practices within two approaches, teacher educators' beliefs, and institutional aspects) show that the teaching practices of teacher educators are complex. By revealing the different interrelationships, this study has been able to offer insights into the teaching approaches adopted by teacher educators, and explore how these approaches influenced their teaching practices at CU.

The fifth contribution is that this study contributes to the analysis of teacher educators by examining institutional practices and policies. Situating the discussion within institutional theory when discussing and investigating teaching and learning is unusual in the context of KSA (Alhawsawi 2013).

The sixth contribution is that this study reveals the shift in Saudi Arabia in terms of religious understanding and interpretation as it relates to the teaching of Islamic education (Majlis Ash-Shura 2013; KAICIID 2016). This change and development that accompanies the new views on teaching approaches in Islamic education, which are about using active student-centred approaches in teaching Islamic education (Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alazamy 2007; Alaqad 2010; Tatweer 2012; Alalawi 2013).

Methodological Contribution

This study has used an interpretive paradigm, locating teaching approaches within the broader social aspects of the context, to provide a comprehensive picture of teaching practices in Islamic education within the larger context of institutions of higher education in KSA (Scott 2001; Lawrence and Suddaby 2006). Moreover, this is one of the few qualitative studies conducted in the country, as most studies carried out in KSA have used quantitative and experimental research methods (e.g., Mustafa and Alkylany 2006; Alqahtany 2011; Alalawi 2013). Alriyami (2016) and Troudi et al. (2009) argue that previous studies in the Gulf countries have mainly used quantitative approaches, with a focus on students' performance. The use of an interpretive paradigm in this study is thus particularly significant. Furthermore, the use of qualitative tools such as observations and interviews (Shenton 2004; Cohen et al. 2011) is significant in a country like Saudi Arabia where they are not commonly used.

7.6. Implications of research for policy makers and practitioners

The implications of this research study are organised into two categories. The first set of implications is for policy makers and the second is for practitioners.

7.6.1. Policy makers

7.6.1.1. Encouraging effective professional development

The findings of this study show that professional development courses provided by the CU are not without difficulties. These courses use only a lecture mode of delivery, for example, which is not adequately responsive to teacher educators' needs and their requirement for more participative courses. Therefore, policy makers (e.g., university management and administrators) should encourage teacher educators to attend training courses by ensuring they meet the needs and methods best suited to learning. These courses should be scheduled with consideration of the availability of teacher educators. Policy makers should fund and offer regular courses during the semester which are practical and not only theoretical and that should be based on the identified needs of teacher educators.

7.6.1.2. Teacher-student ratio

This study found that the teacher educator-student ratio creates challenges to teacher educators adopting student-centred teaching and learning. Policy makers are aware of the detrimental effect of large numbers of students in small classrooms. This issue needs to be tackled urgently. The analysis suggests that the high number of students in each class significantly affects teacher educators' use of interactive teaching techniques in Islamic education. Therefore, it is recommended that the College of Education reduce the number of students per teacher educator, especially in Islamic education classes. This will also solve the problem of the size of the classrooms. This would help teacher educators incorporate more participative activities and give students more opportunities to use and construct their own knowledge based on their past experiences.

7.6.1.3. Enabling ICT teaching and learning environment

This research study found that the lack of technology, internet access, and ICT equipment in CU hinders the effective of integration of technology in teaching and learning. There are two interrelated recommendations for ensuring these

issues are resolved and that classes at CU have an environment that facilitates the use of ICT.

First, policy makers at CU should furnish classrooms with an adequate amount of ICT teaching equipment. At the time of the fieldwork, the classrooms had no ICT equipment, including computers, cables, overhead projectors, internet connections, or interactive whiteboards.

Secondly, the CU must pay attention to the quality and functioning of the provided equipment. Having poor quality equipment is equivalent to having no equipment at all, since the teacher educators and their students would not be able to make use of it in their teaching and learning. Therefore, the absence and/or poor functioning of ICT equipment prevents teacher educators from making good use of technology in their teaching practices and classrooms to promote teaching and learning.

7.6.1.4.   The structure of the classroom and the physical environment

Policy makers at CU should structure a suitable environment for active learning. One of the main obstacles to active learning or group work strategy is the physical layout and structure of the classroom. In particular, at CU, they do not have a large table around which students can sit to discuss issues collaboratively. It is therefore recommended that CU furnish all seminar rooms with a large table and arrange chairs in a circle, so students will be able to sit around them and share information

7.6.1.5.   Assessment

Policy makers need to modify student learning assessment to make it consistent with the active teaching approaches encouraged by the university. In particular, a variety of forms of assessment of student learning should be introduced. Assessment should also be less exam-focused. This could be done by stipulating that the final grade for FIE is based on an equal proportion (i.e., 50% each) of assessment grades (in terms of credit value) in an examination and of portfolios or activities that are formative in nature. Using the portfolio as a

form of assessment helps students to construct their understanding, develop autonomy and a sense of responsibility, and enhance their ability to reflect on and evaluate their learning.

The content, goals, and objectives of the portfolios should be set and negotiated by the teacher educators and their students. The students' interests and individual learning styles, rather than just the teacher educators' interests or school-based standards, should be reflected in the portfolios (Thomas et al. 2005).

A portfolio assessment could require students to include critical reflection and specific pieces of evidence that learning has taken place, for example, reports, essays, and articles. Also, assessment of work being submitted should be spread over time by periodic deadlines being set during a course. It is recommended that the work consist of short pieces produced weekly. This will enable the teacher educators to offer regular, periodic feedback to the students (Thomas et al. 2005).

Using peer assessment of portfolio work, in which students comment on each other's work, will mean they receive more frequent, timely, and detailed feedback from each other. For example, the teacher educators can make the students work in groups to reflect on each other's work.

7.6.2. Teacher educators as practitioners

7.6.2.1.   Understanding the policy

To improve teacher educators' practices in line with university and government commitments to active learning, the teacher educators need to be made aware of the philosophy underpinning the policy. Understanding the philosophy behind

the teaching approach would enable them to select appropriate teaching practices to encourage active learning. This could be achieved by reading about the philosophy underpinning the policy, and by involving them in professional development courses provided by the university.

7.6.2.2. The implementation of active strategy of teaching and learning

A key finding of this study is that teacher educators rely on teaching strategies that include the use of lecturing, recalling questions, and PowerPoint presentations from students' working in groups. It is recommended that teacher educators implement and expand the types of interactive teaching practices used, e.g., academic discussions in the classroom to help the students develop their learning and participation skills. They should also provide students with activities that require thinking skills and facilitate peer learning by making it possible for students to work in groups. The institution teacher educators work within need to help this happen.

7.6.2.3. The use formative form of assessment

Teacher educators use summative assessment due to the demands of the institution. They test students' measurable knowledge by marking students' correct answers. However, there is little attention paid to the provision of constructive feedback of students' learning. To improve teaching practices, teacher educators should also use formative forms of assessment and provide students with continuous feedback; this can be achieved through discussion, notes, and regular reflection on practice and work progress. The teacher educators could provide written feedback or give feedback through active teaching strategies, for example, allowing question and answer sessions. Therefore, timely feedback provides students with an opportunity to follow up on learning and use the information to improve their work or point to weak areas which need further study or better revision. In addition, teacher educators can use feedback to discuss and question students' understanding and construction of meaning with the aim of achieving the learning goals, e.g., developing thinking and learning skills as well as teaching curriculum content.

7.7. Implications for Further Research

Like all research projects, this study is finite in its scope. Therefore, further research and reflection are needed. In particular, this study offers four suggestions, as follows.

7.7.1. Conducting different case studies

This study was a snapshot qualitative case study investigating teacher educators in a particular context in Saudi Arabia for limited period of time. Although this research design allowed teaching approaches to be examined, and provided insight into teacher educators' teaching practices, it is recommended that further research be carried out, using a different type of case study, to explore teacher educators' teaching approaches in more detail, such as a pre-post case study approach (which examines teacher educators, for example, before professional training and after). Also, it would be interesting to see similar studies carried out using a longitudinal case study approach. This could enable researchers to follow teacher educators over the course of a year or more, and would also enable researchers to engage in repeated observations to illustrate patterns and changes in the phenomenon being studied over a long period. Different forms of case study could expand the aspects of the teaching approaches of teacher educators explored in this study.

7.7.2. Conducting different case studies

A comparative case study methodology could be adopted, involving, for example, other universities in KSA, including those in other regions, such as Riyadh. A comparison could be made between teacher educators at different colleges of education at different universities.

A comparison could also be made between teacher educators teaching different subjects in an individual college of education. The comparison could also be made between different subjects taught by a single teacher educator teaching in a single department of the college of education.

7.7.3. Studying male teacher educators

This current study considered only teaching approaches among female teacher educators in the context of the CU's College of Education. It is important to

study the teaching approaches used by male teacher educators as well, particularly those who teach female students through closed-circuit TV in the same programme, and compare the results to the findings of the current study.

7.8. Reflections on the research journey

This study is the product of a research journey, which explored teacher educators' teaching approaches from their own perspectives.

As a new researcher, I experienced great anxiety at the outset of this study. First, when I was thinking about teaching approaches, I thought the differences would be found only in some teaching methods, which would neatly assign teaching practices to one approach and not the other. If a teacher educator used lecturing, then she could immediately be classified as teacher-centred, and if questioning was used, she would be a student-centred teacher. It took me some time to appreciate and understand the philosophical stance behind the practices and see how it shaped the practices. In this process, my supervisor always confronted some of my assumptions and challenged the arguments I presented concerning teaching methods and practices at different stages of my research.

What was challenged in this process was my initial understanding of teaching approaches. I did not initially understand that teaching approaches involve many aspects, including the teacher educators' aims and understanding of teaching, their perspectives on their role, on their students' role, their beliefs, their teaching practices, and their methods of assessment. Understanding this made me realise that teacher educators' approaches to teaching are holistic and include several interrelated elements.

I found the issue of teaching approaches to be even more complicated when it comes to a subject like FIE. This is because the subject is part of me as a Muslim who practices Islam, as a teacher educator who educates student teachers in this subject, and as a student researcher who is studying abroad. In examining teaching approaches in relation to Islamic education, I found myself

defending Islam, and often my supervisor would tell me that my job as a researcher is not to defend my religion. Instead, I needed to look at the issues of teaching and learning critically and to justify teacher educators' teaching practices of their subject. It took me some time to be able to distance myself as a Muslim teacher educator who feels responsible for the religion and to see myself as a researcher concerned with the development of teaching approaches in the College of Education at a higher education institution in KSA.

Having come to the end of my journey, I am now more mature as a researcher and able to see the development I made in terms of my skills as a researcher and in the teaching approaches used specifically in the field of Islamic education, as well as in teaching and learning in the field of higher education generally. I believe this new-found understanding has enhanced my Islamic knowledge and has affected the way I learn and hope to teach.

7.9.   Conclusion

This study has highlighted teacher educators' teaching approaches to teaching an Islamic education subject. It has also shed light on the influence of the institution on their practices. The new understanding provided by this study will, therefore, help to eliminate tension and contradictions in approaches to teaching FIE. This will be done by improving understanding of the complexity of teaching Islamic education and by enabling teacher educators to deal with knowledge differently. This understanding will support and enhance teaching and learning in university education, and more generally in KSA by developing institutional policies.

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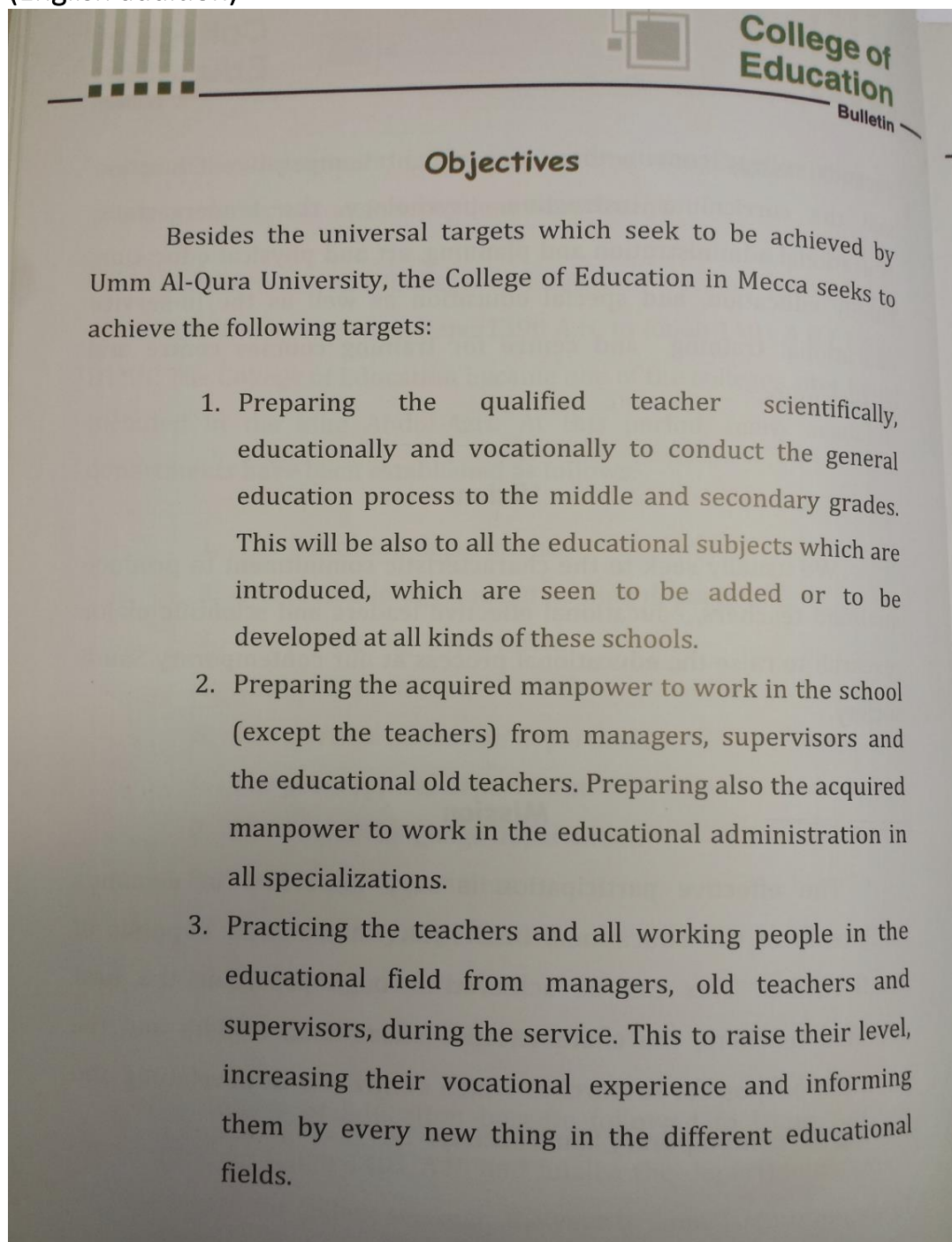
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Appendices

Appendix 1: the aims of the programme, as stated in the faculty documents (English addition)

College of Education Bulletin

Objectives

Besides the universal targets which seek to be achieved by Umm Al-Qura University, the College of Education in Mecca seeks to achieve the following targets:

1. Preparing the qualified teacher scientifically, educationally and vocationally to conduct the general education process to the middle and secondary grades. This will be also to all the educational subjects which are introduced, which are seen to be added or to be developed at all kinds of these schools.

2. Preparing the acquired manpower to work in the school (except the teachers) from managers, supervisors and the educational old teachers. Preparing also the acquired manpower to work in the educational administration in all specializations.

3. Practicing the teachers and all working people in the educational field from managers, old teachers and supervisors, during the service. This to raise their level, increasing their vocational experience and informing them by every new thing in the different educational fields.

(Arabic addition)

أهـــداف كلية التربيـة

إلى جانب الأهداف الجامعية التي تسعى إلى تحقيقها جامعــة أم القــرى تنفرد كلية التربية بمكة المكرمة بالسعي إلى تحقيق الأهداف التالية:

١– إعداد المعلم المؤهل علمياً وتربوياً ومهنياً لتولي عملية التدريس في مـــدارس التعليم العام للمرحلتين المتوسطة والثانوية ولجميع المواد الدراسية التي تقدم أو التي يتطلع إلى إضافتها أو تطورها في هذه المدارس بشتى أنواعها.

٢– إعداد القوى البشرية اللازمة للعمل في المدرسة (بخلاف المعلمــين) مـــن المديرين والمشرفين والموجهين التربويين، وكذلك القوى البشرية اللازمـــة للعمل في الإدارة التربوية في شتى تخصصاقا.

٣– تدريب المعلمين وكل العاملين في حقل التربية والتعلـــيم مـــن مـــديرين وموجهين ومشرفين – أثناء الخدمة – لرفع مستواهم وزيادة خبراقم المهنية واطلاعهم على كل جديد في الميادين التربوية المختلفة.

٤– الإسهام في رفع المستويات التعليمية في البلاد والمشاركة في إثراء البحــث العلمي في الميادين التربوية والنفسية بشتى فروعها.

٥– النهوض بمستوى المعلم المؤهل إلى مستوى أعلى ورفع كفاءة كل العاملين في التربية بشتى المستويات من خلال تقديم البرامج المتخصصة في الدراسات العليا في مجال العلوم التربوية والنفسية.

Appendix 2: Details of the Foundation of Islamic Education curriculum

(Translated into English)

Description of an academic subject

Institution: XXX

Faculty: Faculty of Education/Department of Islamic and Comparative Education

The name and code of the academic subject: Foundation of Islamic Education (T111)

A) Description of academic subject and general information about it

Number of credit hours: two hours certified

The programme or programmes offered (Foundation of Islamic Education subject) within:

Kindergarten programmes, the programme of Art education, TPP, and teacher preparation Diploma programme

Name of academic members teaching the above academic subject:

Xxxx

The educational levels at which this subject is offered:

The nine levels of the Kindergarten programmes, the programme of Art education, and the TPP

The first level of the teacher preparation Diploma programme

The location of the subject provision if not inside the main building of the educational institution:

B) Objectives:

1-Brief description of the main learning outcomes expected from students who enrol in the above academic subject:

Through this subject, the student will be able to achieve the following outputs:

- recognise basic conceptions of the assets of Islamic education
- identify the sources of Islamic education
- compare the characteristics of Islamic education with the characteristics of other types of education (schools of thought)
- derive educational effects from the belief foundations, worship foundations and intellectual foundations
- discuss the objectives of Islamic education

- draw straight goals for herself
- train to apply Islamic education methods in contemporary education and schools
- draw a concept map of Islamic education
- analyse some educational issues on the basis of Islamic assets
- gain self-learning skills and responsibility in the performance of duties
- gain basic skills that enable her to apply the principles of Islamic education in various aspects of life
- train to view any educational issues in the Holy Quran and Sunnah to find out the compatibility or disagreement of these issues with the Holy Quran and Sunnah's values and principles
- gain self-learning skills and responsibility in the performance of tasks
- train to use information and communication technology in her career
- gain dialogue and writing skills in communication with colleagues

2. Provide a brief description of any plans that have been implemented to develop and improve the teaching of this subject (such as the increased use of technology or Internet references, and change in content as a result of new research in the field)

- using communication by email

- using PowerPoint presentations

C) Outline description of the subject:

1-Topics that are going to be addressed:

Topics list	Number of Weeks	Number of Hours
Introduction Presentation of the main concepts (education, Islamic education, foundation of Islamic education)	1	4
Resources of Islamic education	1	2
Characteristics of Islamic education	1	2
The foundations of Islamic education (belief, worship,	3	6

intellectual)		
Mid-term examination	Week 10	2
Institutions of Islamic education	1	2
Methods of Islamic education	1	2
Objectives of Islamic education	1	2
Analysis of some educational issues in the light of Islamic education principles	1	2
Educational application of some Islamic education principles in the educational field	3	6
End of term examination	Week 16	2

Lecture 2* 15 Week	Content of the lesson:	Laboratory:	Practical/ training	Other (2 final exams)

3-Additional study hours: none

4-Improvement of the learning outputs in different learning areas:

This is as follows:

-Brief description of the knowledge and skills the subject aims to improve

-Description of teaching strategies used in teaching this subject in order to improve knowledge and skills

-Assessment methods used to evaluate student learning in this subject

A) Knowledge

1-Description of the knowledge students need to acquire:

- students need to recognise the meaning of each term (assets, education, Islamic education, the foundation of Islamic education) linguistically, and idiomatically
- students need to recognise the sources of Islamic Education
- students need to know some educational applications of Islamic education in the field of education

2-Teaching strategies to be used for the development of such knowledge:

Lecture, discussion and dialogue, teaching by thinking, brainstorming, mini teaching, cooperative learning and concept maps.

3-Methods of assessing acquired knowledge

Participation during the lecture, examination, homework, group activities in class, paperwork, portfolio and observation

B) Intellectual skills

1-Description of the intellectual skills the student should develop

- ability to compare the characteristics of Islamic education with other types of education (schools of thought)
- ability to examine the educational effects of 'the Islamic belief foundations, worship foundations and intellectual foundations'
- ability to discuss the characteristics of Islamic education
- ability to set future objectives for herself
- ability to apply the methods of Islamic education to the field of contemporary education
- the ability to analyse some educational issues in the light of the foundation of Islamic education
- gaining of basic skills that help in applying some Islamic principles to different life situations
- ability to assess peers' performance when they present their work

2-Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills:

Discussion and dialogue, workshop during the lesson, cooperative education, brainstorming, concept maps and research

3-Methods of evaluating cognitive skills in students:

Written and oral tests, observation, evaluation of some homework, evaluation of peer presentations, classroom discussions, evaluation, concept maps

D) Communication skills and responsibility skills

1- Description of the interpersonal skills and ability to take responsibility for skills development

- group discussion skills and accepting others
- listening skills
- skill of stating personal opinion with no bias
- skill of accepting criticism
- self-learning skills
- skill of cooperation

2-Teaching strategies to be used to develop these skills

- Group activities, exchange views on some educational issues, evaluate some peer work
- Concept maps
- Cooperative learning through working as groups and applying Islamic ethics in saying and doing

3-Methods of assessing student communication skills and self responsibility in learning:

Participation, discussion, observing students in different situations, homework

F) Communication skills and technology

1-Description of skills to be developed in students

Using information technology and communication in:

- Collecting data used in the subject
- Analysing, writing and storing these data in the form of research, concept maps and PowerPoint presentations
- Skill of verbal and writing communication with colleagues
- Skill of providing advice and guidance based on Islamic view

2-Teaching methods used to improve these skills

Brainstorming, cooperative learning, discussion and dialogue, communication by email and PowerPoint presentation

3-Methods of evaluating of students' communication skills:

Various examinations, assessing homework, assessing group discussions, observation, class feedback on tasks in hand

J) Psychomotor skills (if any)

1-Description of psychomotor skills needed for development: not applicable

2-Teaching methods used to improve these skills: not applicable

3-Methods of evaluating students' communication skills: not applicable

Table of evaluation of students' tasks during the semester

Assessment	Aim of assessment (write report, test, group work…)	Week	%
1	Individual project (concept map)	5th	5%
2	Group project	5th	5%
3	Mid-term examination	7th	20%
4	Presentation and discussion of homework	9th	5%
5	Workshop	14th	5%
6	End of year examination	16th	60%

K) Student support

H.) Learning Resources:

1-Required book

Al-ajmy (2007) Islamic Education, foundations and applications

Ali and Al-hamid (2004) Islamic education, 'conceptions and applications'

2-Main references

Al-nahlawy (2000) Foundation of Islamic Education

Alkhateeb (1995) Foundation of Islamic Education

3-Recommended references

Hassan (1999) Foundation of Education

Al-marsafy (1990) Introduction to Foundation of Education

4- Internet references

www.tarbyatonanat/articles

www.adabwafancom/dispaay/productasp

http://wwwislam-onlinenet/muasir/arabic/mainmuslimasp

5-Other educational materials:

e.g., ICT programmes/ CDs : not applicable

G) Important equipment

Identify supporting equipment needed: for example, size of classroom, laboratory, and computers

1-The building (lecture halls, laboratory etc.)

Large classrooms; include comfortable seats; tables help with group work

2-ICT resources:

Computer devices, own (? Whose?) equipment, smart board, microphones

3- Other resources

Overhead projectors, screen

Appendix 3: Observation of Teacher educators teaching

Observation schedule

Teacher educator code

Name of the subject

Lesson (new lesson, following up lesson)

Duration of the lesson   **Start time**   **End time**

Date

Section 1- Layout of the room and teaching and learning environment

Layout of the room

Layout of the room	Observation
How does the teacher educator organise the classroom seating?	1. in rows and she stands in the front 2. in a circle and she sits in the front 3. in different groups and she and the students move freely
Classroom size	Number of students

Teaching and learning environment	Observation/ comment
whiteboard, screen	
computer / Wi-Fi , overhead projector	
chair, tables	
air conditioning/ window	

students use laptops	
book	
other	

Presentation of the lesson Do teacher educators	Observation
show enthusiasm	-showing interest -design an authentic task
balance time between teaching, talking and learning time	-teaching time -learning time
control pace of delivery	-administrative tasks -keeping order in the classroom
make eye contact, respect learning	

Section 2 introduction,

Introduction Do teacher educators	Observation/ comment
secure student attention	
explain the aim of the lesson	
introduce subject	
provide links to previous lesson	
Teacher activities -e.g. mini lecturing, questioning, demonstration etc. -learning materials, e.g. book, computer, hand-out -act as guide, facilitator, observer, friend, instructor, elaborator, challenger -ask learner to demonstrate	

what they know	
Learners' activities -learning materials, e.g. book, computer, hand-out -listening, telling, questioning, reading, checking understanding, writing, investigating, reflecting, imagining	

Organisation of the lesson Do teacher educators	
use structured strategy	
emphasise the main points	
help student to find alternative explanations	
encourage learners to test ideas against alternative views	
give the learner ownership of the process used to develop to construct knowledge	
introduce and explain the task effectively	

Learners' involvement Does teacher educator	Observation/ comment
use group/ pair work	
clarify learners' understanding	

make sure all learners are involved equally in activities	
provide guidance	
monitor learners' progress	
make effective use of layout of the classroom	
Learners' activities -learning materials, e.g. book, computer, hand-out -listening, telling, questioning, reading, writing, investigating, reflecting, imagining	
provide opportunity for learners and support reflection on both the content learned and the learning process	

Conclusion Do teacher educators	Observation/ comment
review and summarise the main points	
ask learners to summarise the main points	

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Teacher educators

Interview schedule for teacher educators teaching foundation of Islamic education subject

Pre-Interview schedule

Bio-data

1. What is your name?
2. Which of the following age groups are you – : (25-35),(36-45),(46-
3. 55), (56-over)
4. How long have you been teaching at
    a) the college?
    b) in school?
5. What subjects do you currently teach?
6. What subjects have you taught?
7. Please list all your qualifications?
8. What is your current teaching position (teacher educators, lecturer, convener, and chair)?

General questions First session

1. Please tell a bit about your current work in the college
2. Please describe what professional training you have received in the say the last year?
3. Where did you get it?
4. What form did it take?
5. Did you find it helpful for your teaching?
6. Who provided it?
7. Do you attend any academic conferences or other programmes to improve your teaching practices? Tell me about them.

Second session

Learning

1. Please describe what you understand by the concept of learning in the foundation of Islamic education?
2. There are many different ideas about learning. I would like your view on two particular ideas.
a) For some learning is ensuring that an individual obtain the correct and precise information as prescribed by the authorities in the field. For example, learning in Islamic education is about following accurately of the senior Scholars. What do you think about this?

b) For other learning is about enabling the leaners to think critically and independently. What do you think about it in relation to your subjects foundation of Islamic education classroom.

c) There is a view that learning occurs best when the learner is involved in the learning and has chance to experiment and experiences the learning through for example problem solving? What is your view on this? How applicable you think it is to the subject you are teaching

Role of teacher and her perception of learners

1. As teacher educator of foundation of Islamic education) how do you see your role in learning situation?

Prompts: How do these terms describe your roles in your classroom.

2. What do you think is the role of the learner in your foundation of Islamic education classroom?

Prompts: How should the learner be a recipient of information?

Is the learner one who should be engaged and involved?

Is the learner one who is involved in learning with and from her classmates?

Teaching strategies

1. Explain briefly what is your teaching method in a foundation of Islamic education classroom

Prompts: Do you use the lecture method?

Do you have group activities?

Do you use peer learning?

Do you use a discussion in the classroom?

2. Can you explain a bit how you progress your teaching and discussion in the classroom?

3. To what extent do you think that your teaching methods are influenced by the subject you teach?

Prompt: Is it base of the influence of foundation of Islamic education subject?

4. Please describe what learning resources you use in your teaching Prompts:

Do you use textbook?

Do you use PowerPoint?

Do you provide student with reading material in advance with some questions?

Do you use pear learning?

Do you use Internet resources in the classroom?

5. What tasks and activities do you use to assess your students?
Prompts:

Examination, Tasks, Assignment

Open-ended

Are there any aspects you feel we have not covered but is impotent in understanding your teaching approach and what influences it?

Appendix 5: Interview Guide for Head of Departments

1. What is the teaching and learning philosophy of the college of education specifically?
2. What is the collage policy of the curriculum?

Prompt: who is decide the framework of the collage curriculum Is it college responsibility? Is curriculum approved by the college and adhered to by the Members educators?

3. What professional development teacher educators receive

Prompt: dose the collage holds scientific conferences and encourage teacher educators to participate? What is your role in that specially?

4. Questions about the kind of students they receive?

Prompt: what departments they come from. Number of students from various collages of the university.

5. Questions about how what happens to their students when they leave the college

Prompt: Do the college trace graduates and see whether they have been employed and when. Type of the job they obtain, and Position they hold

Appendix 6: Interviews Guides for Students

1. What was your best experience of a good teacher at university level?
Prompt: What made it so good?

2. What do you think of your teacher?
Prompt: What is it you like about Her teaching?
Prompt: What is it you don't like about it?

3. Your teacher uses (lecturing/ whole class discussion/questioning) method of teaching, do you think it is good for your learning?

Prompt: If yes, why?

Prompt: If not, why?

Prompt: If your teacher uses group work, group discussion in the class, do you think is better for your learning?

Prompt: If yes, why?
Prompt: If not, why?

4. What kind of things do you learn from your friends? How important is this informal learning to you?
5. Your teacher is made you do a small presentation as a group for the class, do you like this method of teaching?

Prompt: If yes, why?

Prompt: If not, why not?

6. Some students said that "they don't like student group presentation using PowerPoint as a class activates, because student only read their slides and it is useless" do you agree with her please?
7. How do you learn?

Prompt: How do teacher help you learn? How could she be more helpful?

Prompt: What is your understanding of learning?

Prompt: How do you assess how well you are learning?

Prompt: What kind of feedback or comments on your assignments do you learn best from?

Prompt: How do you challenge yourself to learn something you find difficult?

Prompt: What steps do you take?

Appendix 7: Consent form for the participants

Research Participant Consent Form

Title of research project:

Analysing teacher educators' understandings of knowledge, learning, learners, teaching roles and strategies in teaching Islamic and Qura'nic studies at the Female College of Education in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Researcher: Hajeej Alhawsawi, Ph.D. candidate, Department of education, University of Sussex UK

Please tick to confirm

1) I confirm that I have read and understood the project's information sheet

2) I have been given full information regarding the aims of the research and have been given the researcher's name, a contact number, and address if I require further information.

3) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. And without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

4) All personal information provided by myself will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available

5) I agree to participate in this research on the basis of my own free will.

Name of Participant   : .... Date: .... Signature ....

Signed by the researcher: .... Date.........................

Appendix 8: Ethical guidelines/ the University of Sussex Code of Practice for Research (2012)

US

University of Sussex

Social Sciences & Arts Cross-School Research Ethics Committee

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Reference Number:	ER/HA212/1
School:	ESW
Title of Project	Analysing teacher educators understandings of learning, learners, teaching roles and strategies in teaching Islamic and Quranic studies at the Female College of Education in Mecca, Saudi Arabia
Principal Investigator: **(Supervisor)**	Hajeej Alhawsawi (Sayed)
Expected Start Date:*	20/08/2013

*NB. If the actual project start date is delayed beyond 12 months of the expected start date, this Certificate of Approval will lapse and the project will need to be reviewed again to take account of changed circumstances such as legislation, sponsor requirements and University procedures

This project has been given ethical approval by the Social Sciences/Arts Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). *Please note the following requirements for approved submissions:*

Amendments to research proposal - Any changes or amendments to the approved proposal, which have ethical implications, must be submitted to the committee for authorisation prior to implementation.

Feedback regarding any adverse and unexpected events - Any adverse (undesirable and unintended) and unexpected events that occur during the implementation of the project must be reported to the Chair of the Social Sciences C-REC. In the event of a serious adverse event, research must be stopped immediately and the Chair alerted within 24 hours of the occurrence.

Authorised Signature	*Stephen Shute*
Name of Authorised Signatory **(C-REC Chair or nominated deputy)**	Professor Stephen Shute 16/07/2013

Appendix 9: Approval for fieldwork from City University (Arabic)

المملكة العربية السعودية

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

وزارة التعليم العالي

Ministry Of Higher Education

وكالة كلية التربية

الموضوع : بشأن تسهيل مهمة الأستاذة / حجيج هوساوي في إتمام دراستها الميدانية

سعادة رئيسة ، وكيلة ، مشرفة قسم /ـــــ   حفظكم الله

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ،، وبعد

نفيد سعادتكم بأن الأستاذة/ حجيج بنت يحيى هوساوي – المعيدة في قسم الدراسات الإسلامية

بجامعة الطائف – والمبتعثة لدراسة الدكتوراه في قسم مناهج وطرق تدريس التربية الإسلامية بكلية التربية في

جامعة سسكس ببريطانيا. تعتزم تطبيق دراستها الميدانية بأقسام كلية التربية في جامعة أم القرى، والتي

تتضمن إجراء مقابلات مع الخبراء ومشاهدات للأستاذات التربويات داخل القاعات الدراسية

نأمل من سعادتكم التكرم بالاطلاع و التوجيه لمن يلزم بتسهيل مهمة الأستاذة، والتعاون معها لإتمام

دراستها الميدانية شاكرين كريم تعاونكم و حسن استجابتكم .

ونفضلوا بقبول فائق التحية و التقدير .

وكيلة عميد كلية التربية

الرقم ١٤١٧/١٢٤ هـ   التاريخ ٢٩ / ١٢ / ١٤٢١هـ   المشروعات .

Appendix 10: Approval for fieldwork (English.)

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	**المملكة العربية السعودية**
Ministry of Higher Education	**وزارة التعليم العالي**
Umm AlQura University	**Umm AlQura**

Permission Request for Hajeej Alhawsawi to access fieldwork

Dear Heads of Departments,

We bring to your attention that Miss Hajeej Alhawsawi, a teacher's assistant in the College of Islamic Study in Taif University, and a PhD Student in Sussex University in the UK, is going to carry out her fieldwork in the College of Education in Umm AlQura University. The content of her study encompasses data collection which involve interviews with lecturers, Heads of Departments and students. Also, it includes classrooms observation.

We ask permission to do this and encourage your cooperation with her in all aspects in order to facilitate her study. Please note that confidentiality is assured and you are free to participate and share your views.

We kindly appreciate your responses and cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Sanna Fafeeh

The Head of the College of Education.

Date: 3 November 2013

Appendix 11: teacher educators training courses for the first semester 2014
 (Arabic addition)

(English translation)

Week	Month	Sunday	Monday	Thursday	Wednesday	Thursday
1	Dhū al-Qaʿdah / Aug/Sep					
2	Dhū al-Qaʿdah / Sep					
3	Dhū al-Qaʿdah / Sep					
4	Dhū al-Qaʿdah/ Dhū al-Ḥijjah / Sep	Action research	Action research		Professional ethics and skills	From thesis to book
5	Dhū al-Ḥijjah / Sep/Oct	Holiday				
6	Dhū al-Ḥijjah / Oct					
7	Dhū al-Ḥijjah	Writing CV	Managing group work 2 days	Managing group work 2 days		
7	Oct	Teaching strategies 5-day course	Teaching strategies 5-day course	Teaching strategies 5-day course	Teaching strategies 5-day course	Teaching strategies 5-day course
8	Dhū al-Ḥijjah / Oct	Creativity in managing change for effective management & leadership	Creativity in managing change for effective management & leadership	Social skills in work environment	Social skills in work environment	
9	Muḥarram / Oct	Empowerment and principle of negotiation	Empowerment and principle of negotiation	Forming assessment and examination	Forming assessment and examination	Forming assessment and examination
10	Muḥarram / Nov	Active learning	Active learning	Constructive learning	Constructive learning	Mini teaching
11	Muḥarram / Nov	Collaborative learning	Learning theory	Learning theory	Efficient, Effective Teaching	Effective teaching environment
12	Muḥarram / Nov	Research ethics	Research and competing for projects found	Managing Research group	Managing Research group	
13	Ṣafar / Nov	Writing report and judging research quality	Qualitative research methods	Publication in scientific Journal		
14	Ṣafar / Nov/Dec					
15	Ṣafar / Dec	Statistics /analysis	Statistics /analysis	Indicators for judging research quality		
16	Ṣafar / Dec	Persuasion and Influencing Skills	Persuasion and Influencing Skills			
17	Ṣafar Rabīʿ al-awwal / Dec	Assisting students	Assisting students	Class management	Time management	Time management
18	Rabīʿ al-awwal / Dec/Jan	Managing projects and electronic curriculum	Managing projects and electronic curriculum	Managing projects and electronic curriculum		
19	Rabīʿ al-awwal / Dec/Jan					
20	Rabīʿ al-awwal / Dec/Jan	Mid-term Holiday				

Appendix 12: sample of teacher educators' interview transcription

Name:	Amas (Pseudonym Of teacher educator)	Date:	Monday 11.01.2014 First session
Mobile:	Deleted	Time;	01:00-01:20
Email:	No email provided	Duration:	20 mins
		Location:	Teacher office

Pre-Interview schedule (first section)

Bio-data

What is your name?

Which of the following age groups are you – : (25-35),(36-45),(46-55),(56-over)

I belong to the third group.

How long have you been teaching?

at the college

I have been teaching at the university around seven years

in school?

I had taught at the public school nine years, they all were in secondary and junior levels.

MAIN QUESTIONS: What subject/s do you currently teach?

I teach most of subjects provided by our department. But this year I have mostly taught foundation of Islamic education, education in Saudi Arabia, and child education in Islam. I, as an academic, I can choose what subject I like to teach. I have been teaching the same content over the years, so I do not have any

problem to teach anything, although foundation of Islamic education is my favourite.

What subject/s have you taught?

As I told you, as everyone in the department, I taught all of the subjects offered by our department.

Please list all your qualifications?

I have Bachelor from college of Islamic Sharia. And Master from Islamic and comparative education, and my PhD is from the same department. I obtained all of them from this university (City university - pseudonym)

What is your current teaching position (Prompt: teacher educators, lecturer, convener, chair?)

I am a professional assistant, also I am holding position of 'female Head of department of Economics Science and Islamic Finance'.

General questions -

Please tell me about your current work in the college

I do teaching as the main job. Also there are some administrative work that we involve in voluntarily. Also, there are positions such as chairing some committees, for example, the examinations committee.

Prompt: you said your main job is teaching, tell me more about it, how do you select the textbook of subject you teach, or do you obtain them from the department.

The textbook and everything comes from the department. We find the curriculum details online. There are over six references for most of subjects. I, as a lecturer, I can introduce different references or textbook to my students. I don't need to follow particular reference or textbook. But the only thing I have to follow is the specific outline of the subject as stated in the university curriculum. You know, because of the examination, I have to refer students to one textbook for their marks' sake (...so they can memorise specific information to get the highest grade). Most of us as lecturers pick up one of these textbooks from university curriculum. But also I change the reference or textbook that I use for a particular subject every year. For example, in 'foundation of Islamic education'

subject, if this year I select X textbook, for next year, I don't select the same one, but I go for another one. Sometimes I do not use textbook from the curriculum, practically if I do not like the organization of the information in textbook. If you look at foundation of Islamic education curriculum some of these books are old.

You mentioned that you have long teaching experience, please describe what professional training you have received in, say the last year?

I really do not get involving in any of these training. This might be because of my limited time and other commitments at the top of my teaching commitment. Mostly not work commitments, but personal ones. My husband is a senior professor, thus he is always busy, so I have to be available for my children, you must understand how much responsibility you have to take on as a women in our Saudi society.

In addition, I was busy doing my PhD over these past years, I have just finished last year. I might tell you that I read a lot and developed myself as person and an academic. By the way, as PhD student, I used to attend some courses that helped me analysis my data such as SPSS 'statistical program for social science'. But I consider myself a lucky person as I do have the environment that is supporting my development, which is having my husband as a senior professor around me. You can imagine how many debates and rich conversations I have outside the boundary of the university with him. I believe that what I am exposed to is what is happening in academia life in the female campus as well as the male one (thanks to my husband). I feel I am satisfied with both my personal and professional development.

I am not inspired about these courses, yes I have my personal reasons, but most of the lecturers who attend them, did not really feel satisfied with their experience. Most of them said they are a waste of time. You can read about any course online. There is no need for attendance. Most of them if they attend one, never make any effort to attend. And I have had unpleasant experience myself. Most of those who attend, only do so for the certificate that the university asks about at the end of year, but still this certificate does not make any difference for my academic career.

You said you have attended SPSS course, can you tell me please where did you get it? what form did it take? Did you find it helpful for your teaching? Who provided it please?

These courses were provided by the university, by the development unit, and they are free. To be honest I did not like it, it wasn't that helpful to me. You

know it was given through the computer screen and the trainer was talking all time. I had to listen to him because I was desperately needing it for my PhD research, but eventually I had to get additional help, later, from some colleagues.

Do you attend any academic conferences or other programmes to improve your teaching practices? If so, tell me about them.

No, I am afraid, so far I do not have any intention to go for one, as I told you I just finished my PhD, I am still getting used to my normal life after studying so hard in the PhD. Maybe in the future, I hope to attend.

Name:	**Amas (Pseudonym Of teacher educator)**	Date:	Tuesday 05.02.2014 Second session
Mobile:	Deleted	Time;	**11:00-11:40**
Email:	No email provided	Duration:	**40 mins**
		Location:	**Teacher office**

Second session

Learning

Please describe what you understand by the concept of learning?

Learning is not... something.... straightforward Learning. It is when I see my daughter, my students develop in her thoughts, in ideas, in the way she carries out herself, and presents her views and even asks questions. It is important that the student builds her confidence to ask questions and initiate her questions and participates in the discussion and in different activities in the classes. For me, learning is this and confidentiality knowing what is going on in discussions in the class.

There are many different ideas about learning. I would like your views on two particular ideas. Prompt: a. For some learning is ensuring that a student obtains the correct and precise information as prescribed by the authorities for a particular subject, for example, learning in Islamic education is about following

accurately what is taught by the senior Scholars. Tell me what do you think about this?

No doubt that religious knowledge is important, but learning is not about forcing knowledge by memorisation... but it is about how the student expresses that learning here in the class. My dear Sister, you see Allah subhanahu wataala sent us texts and explanations of these texts in the Sunnah of the prophet Mohammed, (peace be upon him). Through the Quarn, whether through long Surahs and short Surahs, verses in the Quran are clearly encouraging everyone to think not only once but to re-think [through reading the Quran]. Allah subhanahu wataala in the Quran invites us to use our brain by saying, 'Do they not, then, ponder about the Qur'an?' Why do we need to impose our understanding on our students?

b. For others learning is about enabling the leaners to think critically and independently. What do you think about this in relation to the way you promote your subject - foundation of Islamic education.

I like this (critical thinking) view about learning. You see if students face different challenges that push them to think, you as a teacher challenge them and also create opportunities in the class. This is why I value the classroom discussions very much. I make students talk about their views. Personally, as teacher I find thinking skills are severely missing among our students, for example, we have in the course books different Islamic rules that come as long lists. What I do, I ask students their personal view and opinion of them to get them to think and analyse by themselves.

c. There is a view that learning occurs best when the learner is involved in the learning and has chance to experiment and experiences the learning through for example problem solving? What is your view on this? How applicable you think it is to the subject you are teaching

I am not sure about this. But as I told you, I am concern about my daughters being able to discuss their views and to be able to express their views, this very important to me.

Role of teacher and her perception of learners As teacher educator of foundation of Islamic education, how do you see your role in the learning environment?

We here in the department of Islamic and comparative education are responsible for student behaviour, but this is does not mean that I preach to my students the right or wrong way to behave according to Islam and how they much practice their religion, they know all of that. But I discuss everything with my students, share with them opinions. Some students come to me in my office and discuss with me some personal issues. This is because in the classes I encourage students to raise their concerns and speak their interests and share

it with the other student and me (in private) if they like. I feel it is my duty that I don't ignore any of their concerns, we go off the lesson and the topic we were supposed to study that day. I have to admit that I am always behind in my lessons because of that. I always engage with each individual concern. Students actually learn very much from this for themselves as individuals. I should not waste and ignore these learning spaces and use it for the benefit of all of students in the class. Normally, I link students' interests and I group them and get the students to work on them, and we collectively arrive at their answers.

What do you believe the role of the learner is in your foundation of Islamic education classroom? Prompts

How should the learner be a recipient of information?

Is the learner one who should be engaged and involved?

Is the learner one who is involved in learning with and from her classmates?

I think as I told you my way of encouraging students is to encourage them to participate in the discussion in the classes. I might add here that I really don't like any of my students to come to class and sit silently. Even the shy student, a student who doesn't want to talk, I make her write her thoughts, and I encourage her to share their views with the class later. We would probably discuss about it if it was interesting. As I mentioned to you earlier, a student must be encouraged to learn to think, talk and describe their thoughts. It is important for me that I help my students to develop their ability to build and discuss their own views among and with each other.

Teaching strategies Explain briefly what are your main teaching methods in the foundation of Islamic education classroom

Prompts: a. Do you use the lecture method?

You are a teacher and as such I do no use only one method, I sometimes use lecturing but, definitely, I use it if I need to, apart from that I use mostly discussions. I think it help learning a lot

b. Can you explain how you progress your discussion?

In discussions, I tend to make students articulate their views. Thus, I often ask my students questions that makes them able to explain and not bound them in narrow space [open questions], for example, I ask them, 'tell me what you think about this point? Do you agree? Tell me why?' I go to a quiet student and ask her, 'What do you think of what your classmate just said?' or as I told you about the lists of Islamic rules, I ask them for example, or I ask more specific questions, such as: 'What do you think of the benefit of X 'as an Islamic

practice' on this? These kinds of questions make the discussion come more alive. I think this helps in their learning, and development. I believe that these students should be allowed to do things on their own after I have assisted them in discussing and solving a particular problem. Sometimes you have to step aside and leave them alone, you just watch them do make sure they do their things.

c. Do you have group activities

Not very often I am afraid, though I have tried to conduct my teaching by asking students to sit in groups in very class. My dear you came to my class, and I am sure you went to other teacher classes, did you see how the poor students are squeezed in and they can't move and are feeling uncomfortable? You saw when students came in late, they can't get pass to find places to sit in the back. I tell my students to make a path at one side of the class so late students can move along easily.

d. When I observed your teaching, I realized that you used/do not use IT (PowerPoint presentation), If you use it, do you prepare it yourself, can you tell me why do you use it?

Using powerpoint in teaching has become a common practice across the college if you have noticed. The university encourages us using technology in teaching. I am not a big fan of it, but because of the university's insistence, thus I use it as part of a student group project. It is nothing really, the students prepare our lesson using the slides. You saw me teach, I rely mainly on the discussions in my teaching. Yes, I provide everything needed for the lesson; I mean I provide them with laptop, portable projector, and cables. Unfortunately, the university does not give us any of these; I make an offer of these things because my students enjoy using computer stuff.

To what extent do you think that your teaching methods are influenced by the subject you teach? a. Is it base of the influence of foundation of Islamic education subject? I think my experience as teacher and the long years influence the way I teach now. As I told you I used to be a school teacher for so many years, then I came to teach at the university, and as my husband is senior doctor. I think experience is important, particularly when I compare my teaching now with the early years of my career. I can confidently tell you that it is totally different. I think I grew up as teacher, in the way I see learning and education in broader terms. The subject Islamic education is related to the Islam we are all influenced by it in our personal life, no doubt, and it is important for me. But I think about leaning and teaching differently, for example, if students read the course book of Islamic education, she would benefit from it, but how I as teacher help her, this is I believe is the difference.

Through my experience, I learned that it is important for students' learning that I prepare myself for the lesson. I use very friendly ways to deal with them, I joke with them, laugh. I also use their jargons, words they use. My students are free to suggest or bring and practice any activities, and speak their ideas in the class. I want them to feel happy, comfortable while setting to learn. I realised that students this situation actually involve in class discussion and activities in, and are open and happy to share their thoughts and concerns with the rest of the class.

Please describe what learning resources you use in your teaching We use the FIE textbook. There are many references placed in the curriculum materials, and we as teachers can select any one for our students. You know students need it for the examination. Myself, it is not much important to me, I value more the discussion and what student could gain from that not from this book. Prompt: a. Do you provide student with reading material in advance with some questions? No, I am afraid, you know well that students don't really read if you tell them. Maybe after the discussion in the class some individuals ask for some references. b. Do you use pear learning? Not that much, may be when they work to gather for group activates. c. Do you use Internet resources in the classroom? Not that much. You know we don't have good Internet connection across the campus. You must know that internet does not work. If my students want to show some videos in their PowerPoint slides, they upload it in advance. Otherwise, there is no hope that it is going to work.

What tasks and activities do you use to assess your students?

I assess my students using different tasks. As you see there is the group projects, or some student choose to develop a concept map on some of the chapters of our course-book. But the important task for me is that I make it mandatory for every student to do the writing task. I do it in two ways: students either, she picks some chapters from the course-book and summarises and writes her own reflection of it. This is the important part, which I go through carefully. Or, students pick an educational problem and explain it and reflect on it providing personal opinion about it.

Prompt: what about the examination?

It is not for me, it is what the university wants. It relies mainly on any reference or textbook I choose. What is it I need to know as teacher for student to learn?! Is it this book? They know it all! I can give it to them, they can easily memorise

it for the examination. You know we go beyond the textbooks in the discussions, but at the end of the day I give the students the book. I say to them, 'Here is the book. You can go and memorise it for the exam'. [Then] they can get 60%, as the university wants. My own examination and assessment when I see them, I discuss it with them all the time in the class, you will see they improve in the

way they engage with you, and the way they put forward their view, think about it, even the way they engage with their peers, it is on-going and non-stop work for continued development.

Prompt: Ok, how do you divide the 100% marks?

As I told you, about 80% is set by university for examinations. I have choice for the rest of 20%, thus I give 10 marks each of the marks to continuous assessment for activities that involve reflection and critical thinking through our class discussions, such as writing summary paragraphs of each chapter of their textbook, where the students are advised to state their opinions about the chapter and what has been discussed in the class when we learned about a particular chapter.

Open-ended – final question to allow teacher educators to say anything else: Are there any aspects you feel we have not covered but is impotent in understanding your teaching approach and what influences it?

I cannot think about more now, but I am sure that my daughters will tell more about my teaching in the classroom.

Prompt: if necessary to.