

**Diane-Sophie Girin (École Pratique des Hautes Études)**

# **Islamic religious education in France**

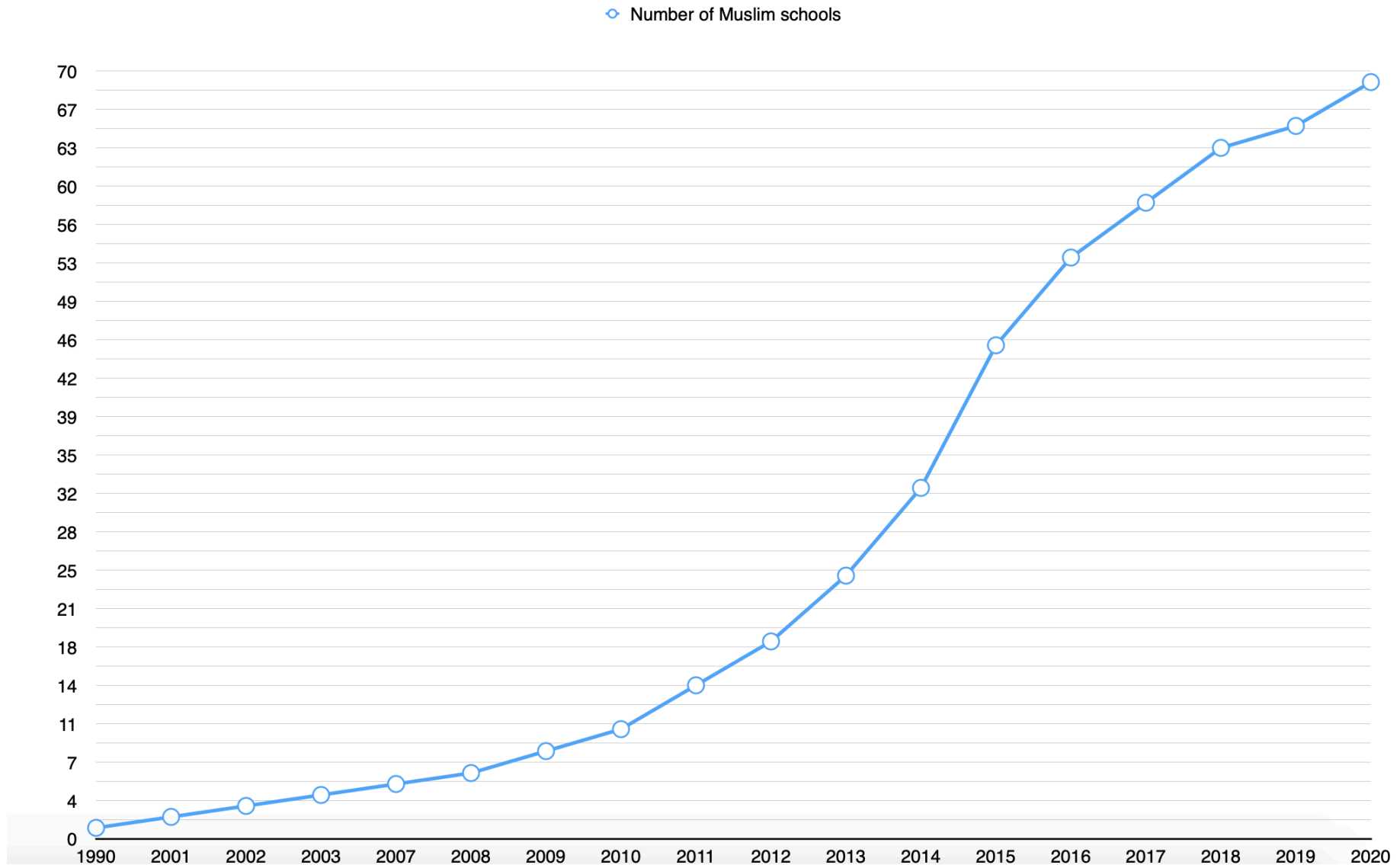
**Denominational education for Muslim pupils in non-governmental elementary Muslim schools in France**



**École Pratique  
des Hautes Études**

# **I. Muslim schooling : an offer under pressure**

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*Respectabilisation*

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*Respectabilisation*

*Distinction*

model = public schools + catholic schools

Beverley Skeggs

Evelyn Higgibotham

Margot Dazey

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*Respectabilisation*

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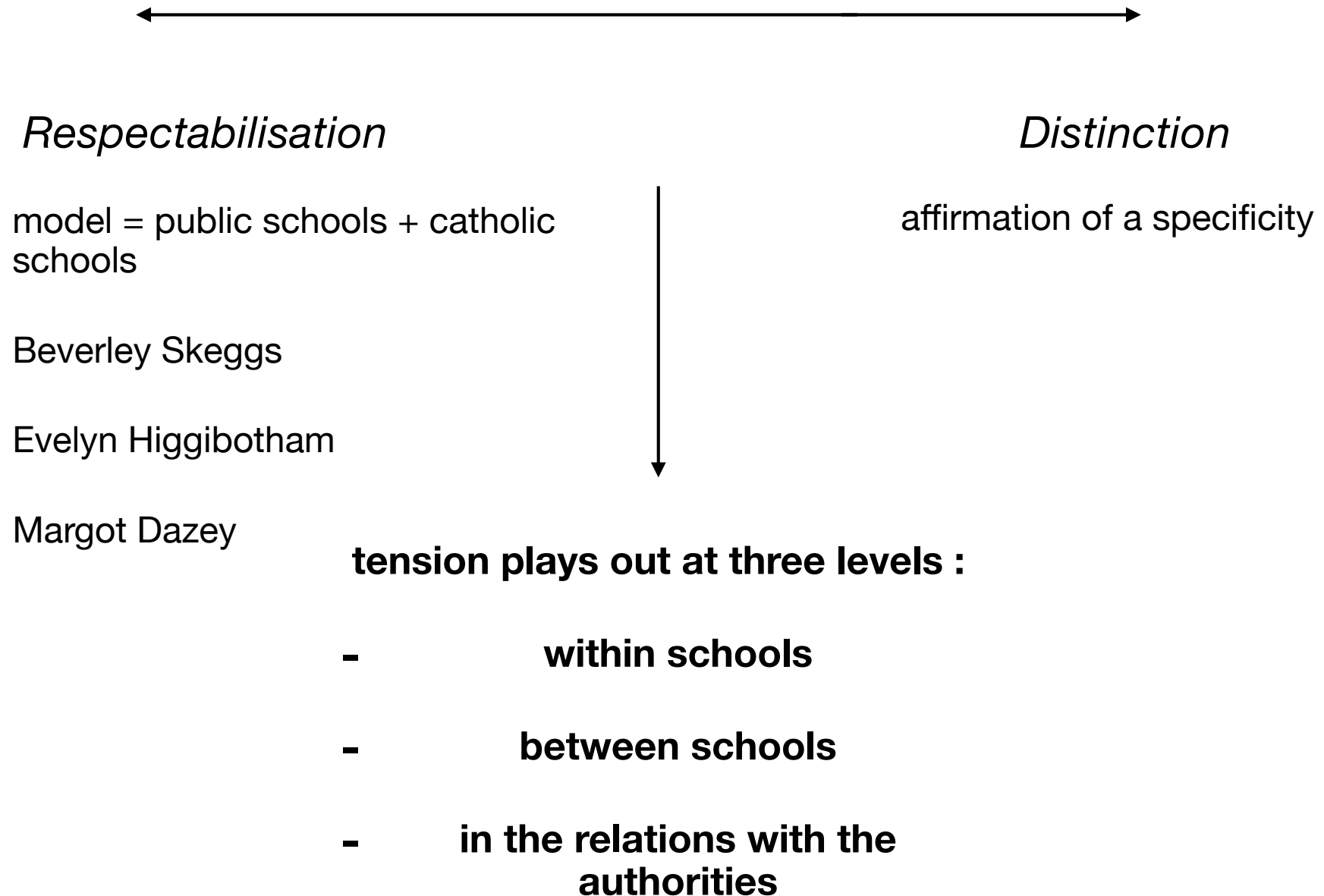
Margot Dazey

*Distinction*

affirmation of a specificity



# I. Muslim schooling : an offer under pressure



## **II. A variety of IRE practices**

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### **1. Teaching volume**

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## **1. Teaching volume**

“We need our hours for general education, knowing that there are already five hours of Arabic language, so the choice was made this year to do IRE... let's say more of an attitude and behaviour than actual teachings”

**Inès V., Headteacher school F**

# **II. A variety of IRE practices**

## **2. Contents**

# II. A variety of IRE practices

## 2. Contents

### a. « traditional » contents

- continuity with the coranic school
- half of the Muslim schools of our sample have strong historical connections to their local mosque (e.g. same founders, leaders, staff, premises).
- fundamentalists interpretations
- « non-negotiable beliefs of Muslims »
- socialising pupils to virtuous fear
- Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, 2011

# II. A variety of IRE practices

## 2. Contents

### a. « traditional » contents

- Example : Masy's class (School B)
  - « Last week, one of you cried because she couldn't do her prayer on time »
  - this kind of behaviour proves « where you are in your relationship with Allah (...) it has to hurt if you don't do your prayer on time... it should hurt. ».
  - seeks a balance between *tahrib* (fear-inducing) and *targhib* (reminder of God's love) style of preaching

# II. A variety of IRE practices

## 2. Contents

### b. « acculturated » contents

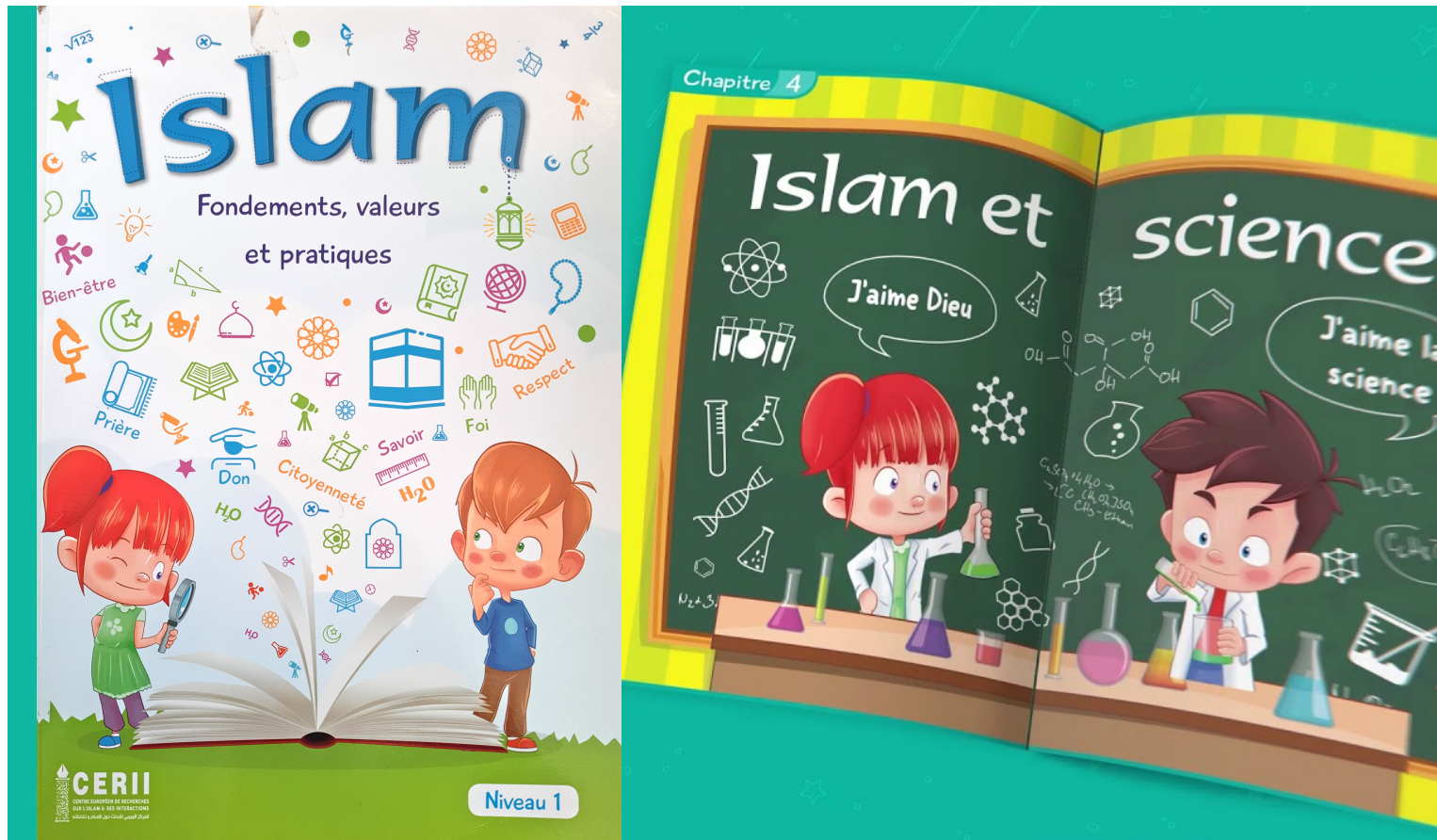
- Adapting to the pupils' lives
- goal is to create links between French social norms and Islamic values
- highlighting themes presented as common (ecology, social justice)
- carrying out actions linked to the French context (collecting food for a soup kitchen, cleaning up the neighbourhood, etc.)
- Exclusive use of French language
- « Dieu » VS « Allah »



# II. A variety of IRE practices

## 2. Contents

### b. « acculturated » contents



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# **II. A variety of IRE practices**

## **3. Pedagogical approaches**

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## **3. Pedagogical approaches**

### **a. « classic » or teacher-centric**

- the teacher, conceived as a knowledgeable person, transmits knowledge to ignorant pupils
- Examples : lectures, repetition, memorisation

# **II. A variety of IRE practices**

## **3. Pedagogical approaches**

### **b. « progressive » or pupil-centric**

- continuity of the pedagogical and didactic norms of the national Education (« Éducation nationale »).
- religious knowledge is 'good' if it can be associated with pedagogical virtues, similar to those worked on in general subjects
- Example : School C
  - manual activities
  - project-based pedagogy
  - goal is to « make students love Islam and its Prophet » by « having a good time »

# **II. A variety of IRE practices**

## **3. Pedagogical approaches**

### **b. « progressive » or pupil-centric**

« [The pupil] sat still and swallowed, swallowed, swallowed informations. Here the information is not so important. At the end, the amount of information given is a bit... I was going to say like the expectations of the national Education : we prefer the child to have a well-constructed mind rather than a well-filled one and not to know, not to give meaning, to what has been given to him. »

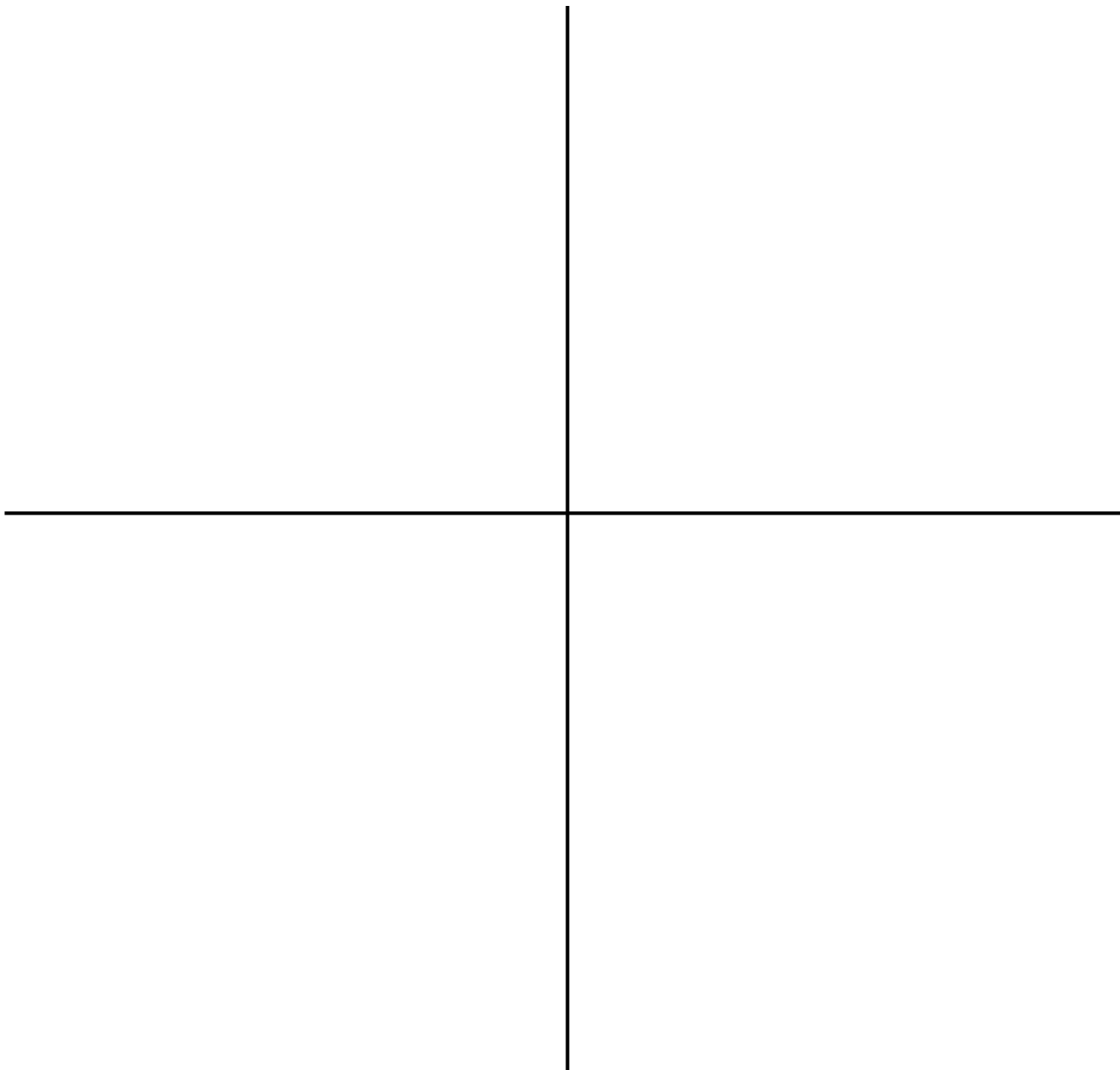
**Rania, head of religious teachings at School C**

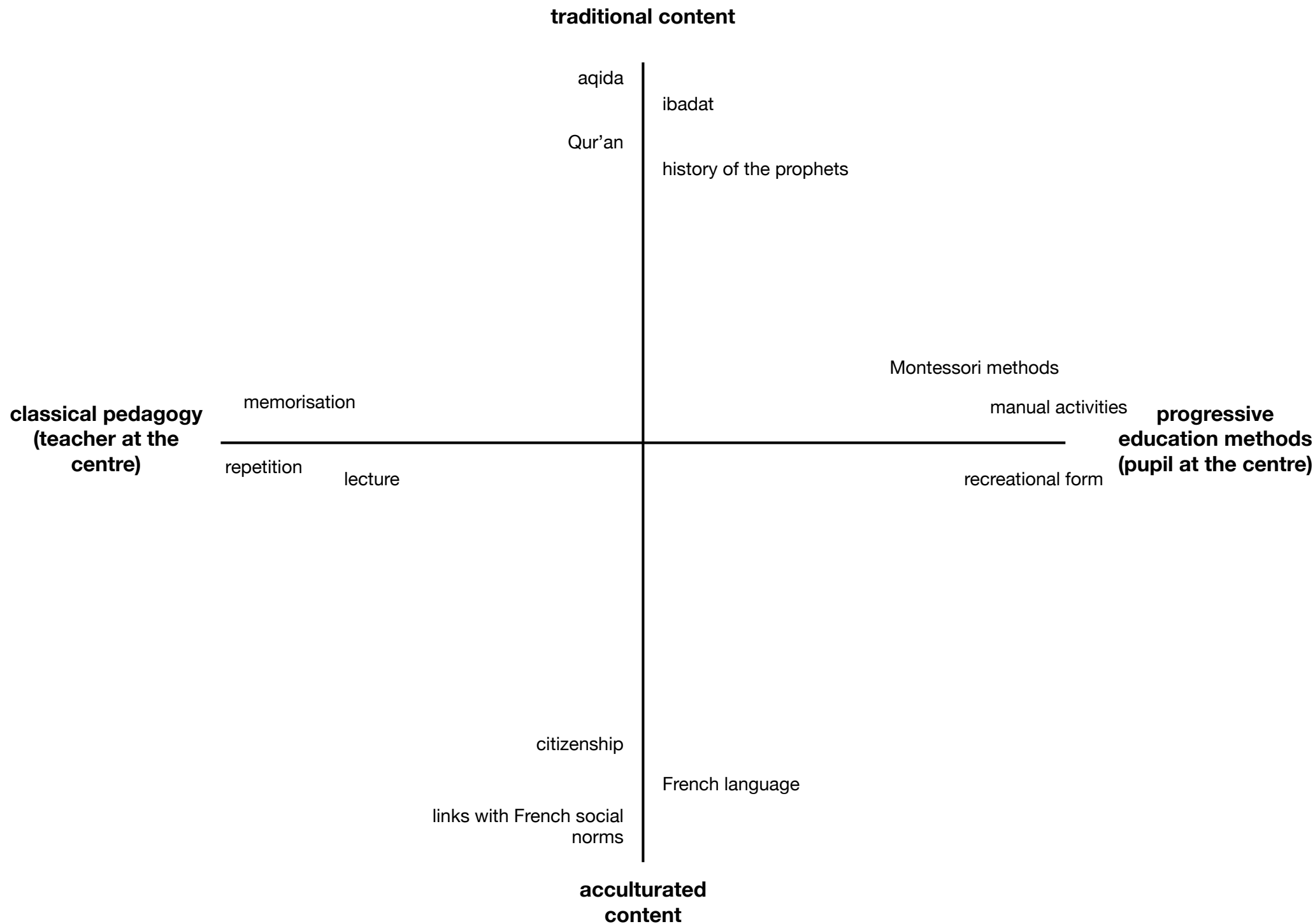
**traditional content**

**classical pedagogy  
(teacher at the  
centre)**

**progressive  
education methods  
(pupil at the centre)**

**acculturated  
content**







TRADITIONAL IRE

traditional content

aqida

ibadat

Qur'an

history of the prophets

classical pedagogy  
(teacher at the  
centre)

memorisation

repetition

lecture

Montessori methods

manual activities

progressive  
education methods  
(pupil at the centre)

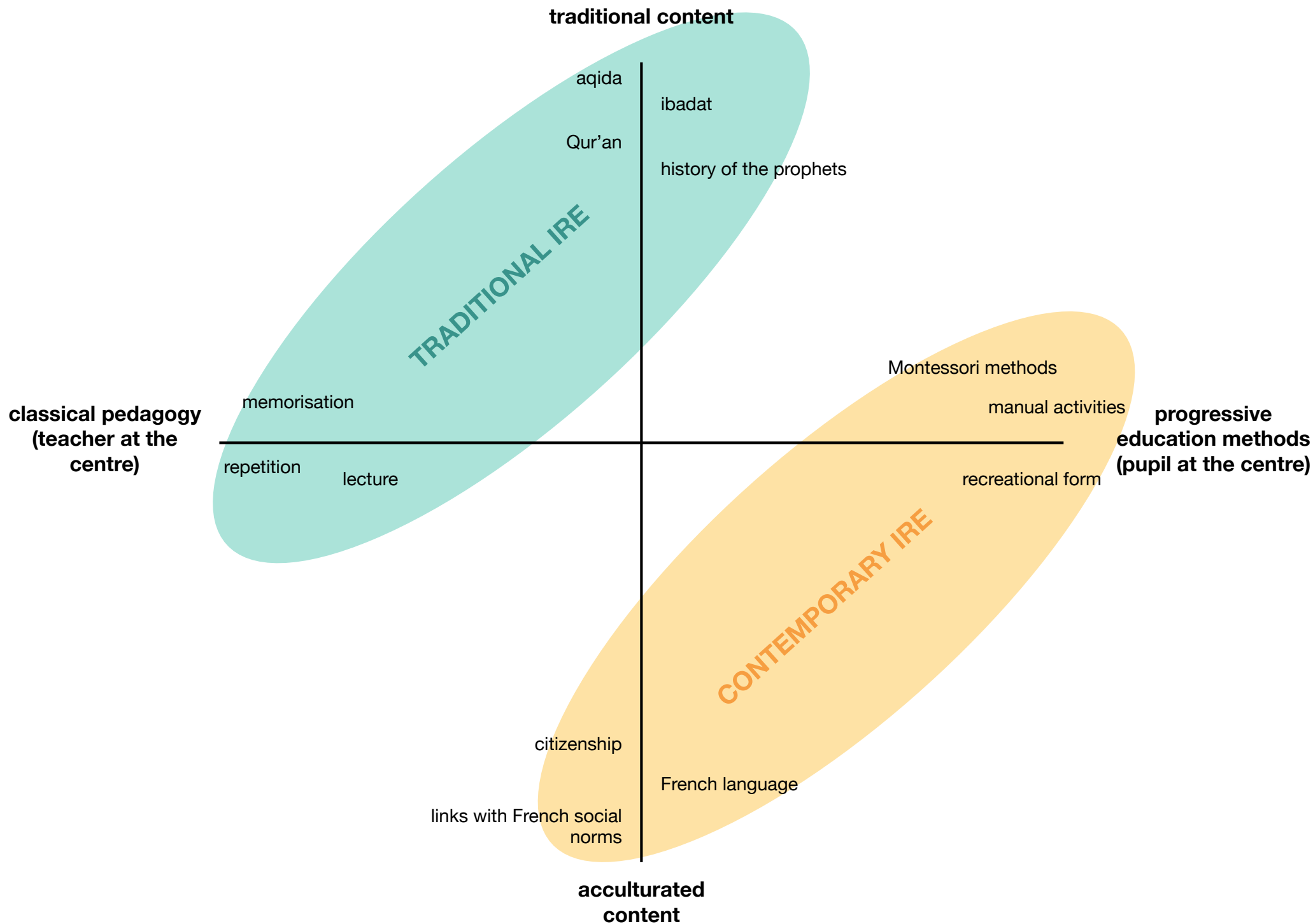
recreational form

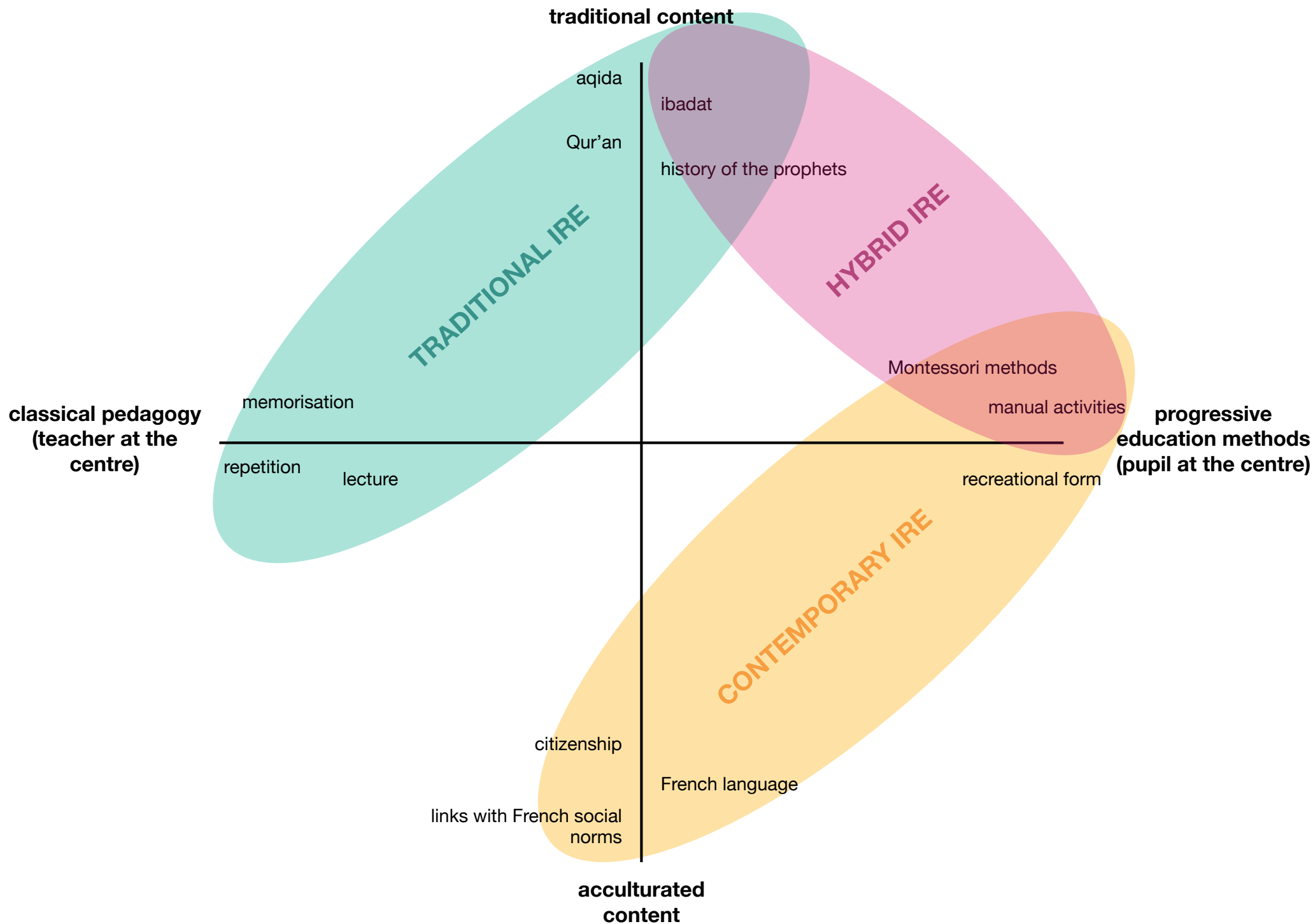
citizenship

links with French social  
norms

French language

acculturated  
content

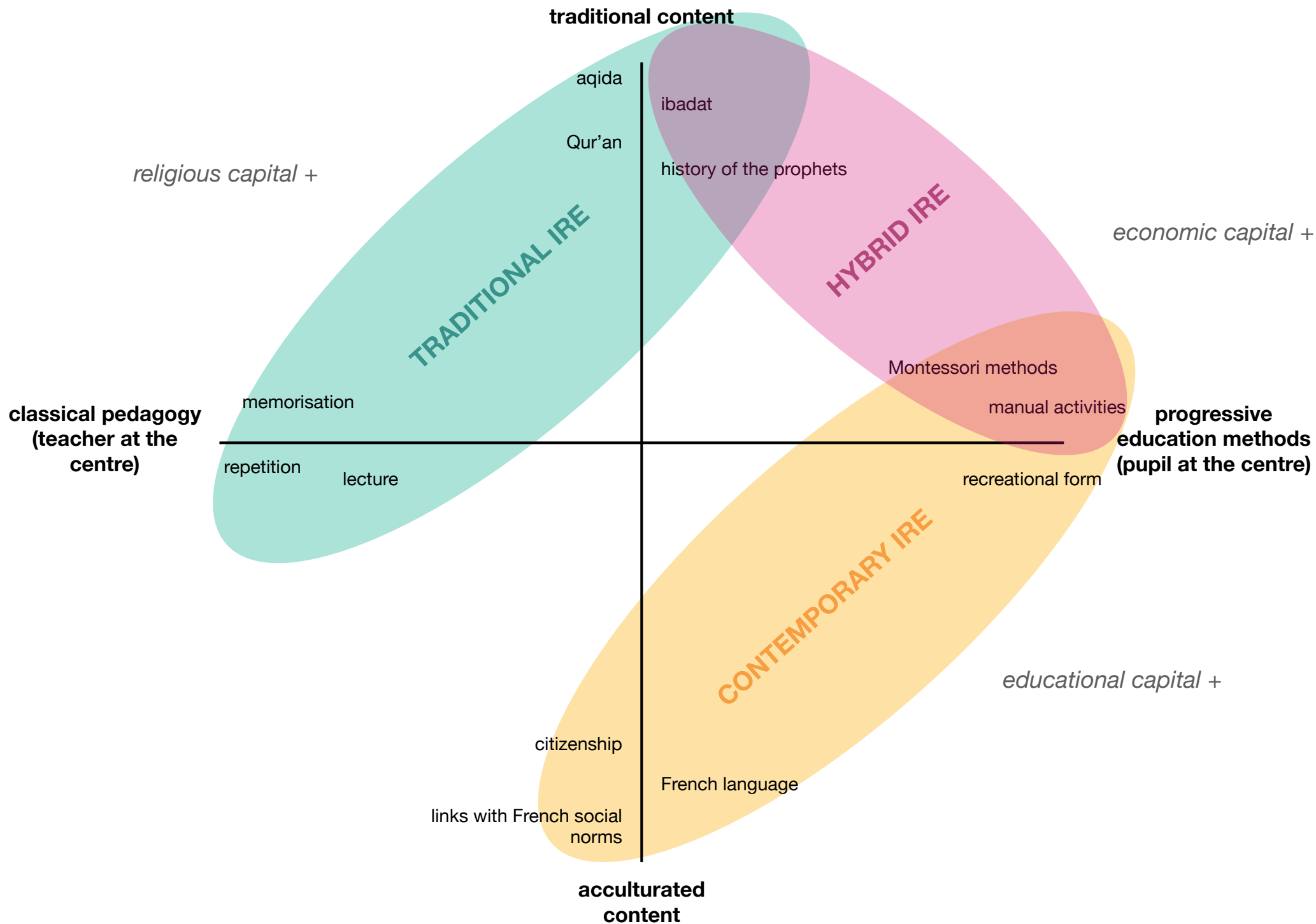


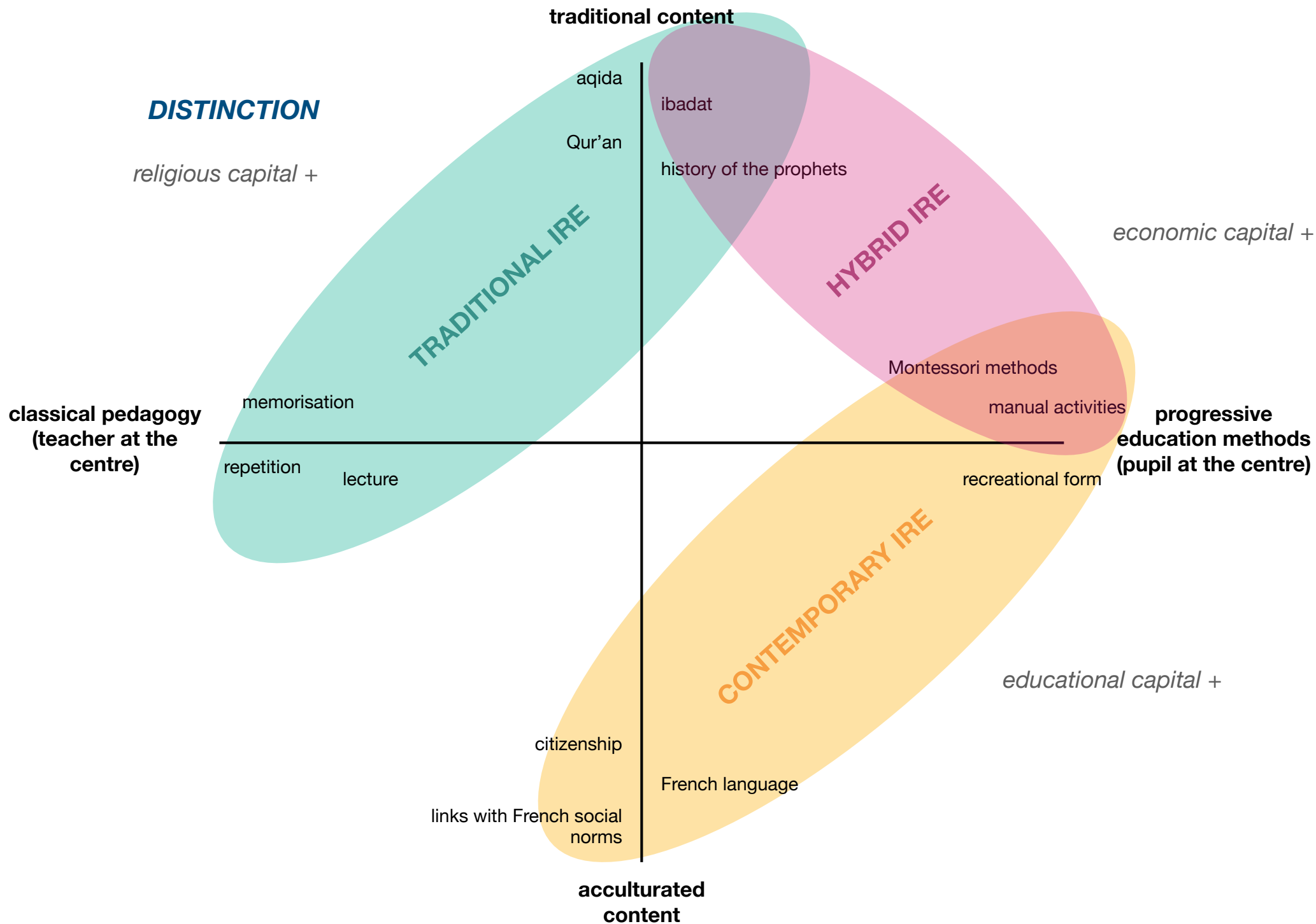


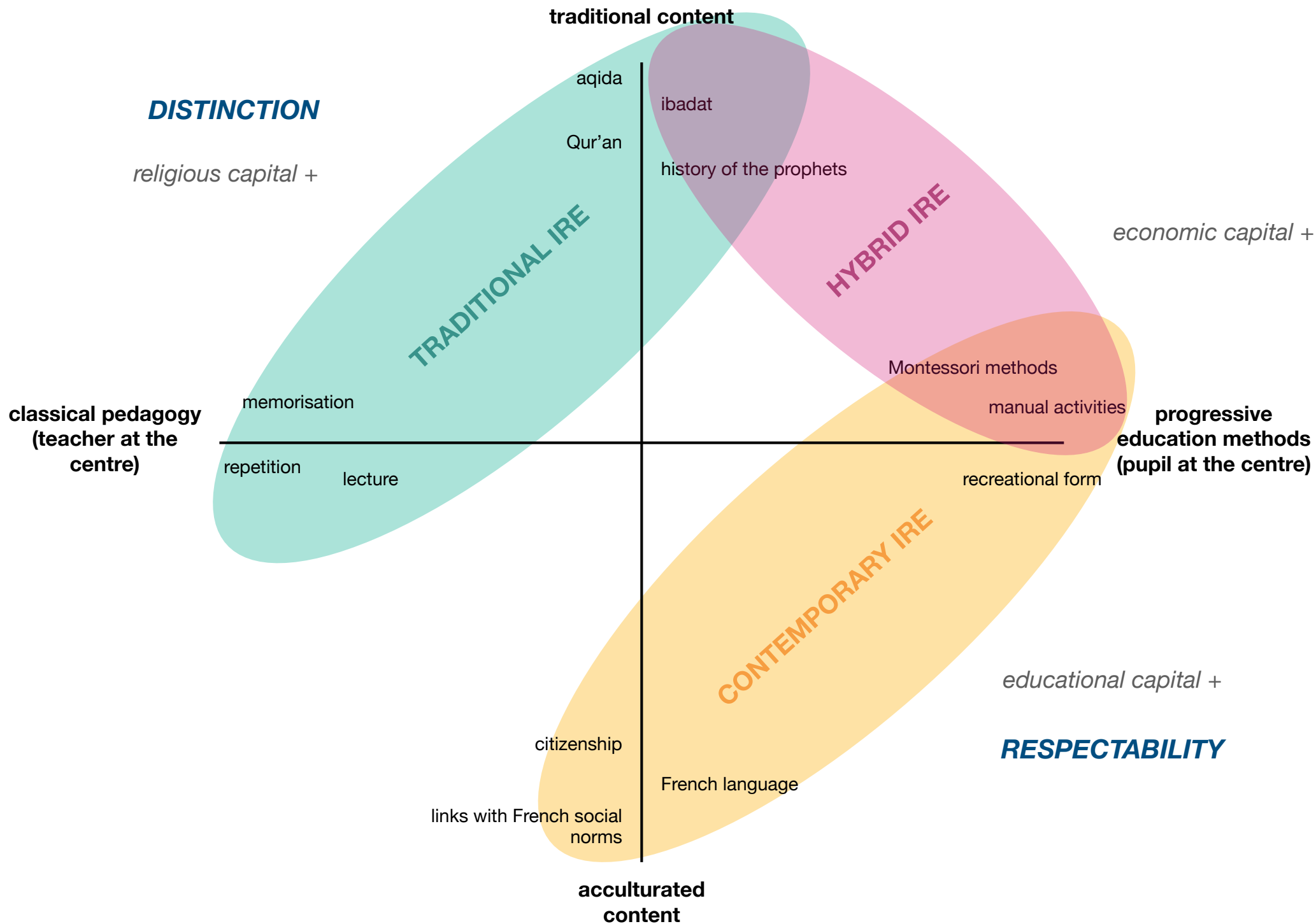
Le **jeûne** ou **siam** est le 4ème pilier.  
Pendant un mois lunaire, de l'aube au  
coucher du soleil, le musulman doit  
s'abstenir de manger, de boire et  
d'avoir des rapports sexuels. C'est un  
moyen de se purifier et de gagner le  
pardon de Dieu. Le jeûne a lieu tous  
les ans pendant le neuvième mois de  
l'année lunaire. (mois de Ramadan)



siam







**Thank you  
for your  
attention**



Crédits photographiques : Miloud Kerzazi