



EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF LOCAL TEACHING AIDS FOR COST CONTROL IN LEARNING ISLAMIC STUDIES IN NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

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Formal Islamic Education received tremendous boost with rapid increase in the number of Schools and Teachers in the recent past in Northern Nigeria generally and Nasarawa State specifically. Predictably, Pupils enrolment also incredibly expanded. This burst of Islamic educational activities brought in its marked changes, some positive, while others negative. Thus, the rapid increase in enrolment figures and the clamour for better and quality Islamic education by educationally conscious parents began to impose pressure on available resources. Loud grumbings started to manifest from members of the public about deterioration in the quality of Islamic education offered pupils in many Islamiyyah Schools. It is in view of the above that this paper attempts to explain the use of local teaching aids for cost control in learning Islamic Studies in Nasarawa State.

Contribution/ Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have investigated the importance of using local teaching aids in the teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nasarawa State.

1. INTRODUCTION

Low cost teaching aid refers to aid prepared with simple materials costing very little by involving teacher and pupil. In-expensive aid could be prepared easily with little or no money to make learning effective, comprehensive and fascinating (Sivakumar, 2014). An Islamic Studies teacher with a certain amount of skill and enthusiasm can replace many pieces of apparatus by an adequate and unconventional, improvised substitutes. Low cost teaching aids have an advantage of offering learning to the learners appropriately and convincingly. When teachers and pupils plan, produce or create their own educational materials, they invariably manifest pride and pleasure in utilizing them to the maximum. Effective teaching of Islamic Studies teaching depends on three factors, teacher, teaching materials and presentation. Locally produced low cost equipment, teaching aids or models can serve the needs of the teacher, the pupil and the curriculum more effectively and is easier to maintain. On the other hand, Teaching aids are materials that the classroom teacher uses to help students understand the concepts she introduces during her lesson. These teaching aids can take numerous forms, from the beans students might count while learning simple math in kindergarten to the photos of famous people and places teachers might display during a

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history lesson (Rickey, 2001). Any efforts to improve instructional strategies must involve effectiveness in the application of Local teaching aids. Effectiveness is the extent to which the set goals or objectives of a School programme are accomplished. Such effectiveness can be seen in relation to either the quality, quantity, equity or equality of educational instruction given in a School. Effectiveness in achieving educational objectives also reveals the relationship between resource cost, (i.e. the educational inputs measured in physical units such as the number of textbooks, teachers, classrooms, instructional materials etc.) and total educational cost.

Financing Islamic education becomes such a nightmare for some State Governments that they were compelled to re-impose various kinds of levies on parents. Teacher's morale too suffered some battering by irregular or non-payment of salaries not to mention fringe benefits. All these happened despite the clear goals and objectives optimistically set out by the Islamiyyah Schools. Cost, is not always related to quality Islamic education, and quality is, in any case, hard to measure; it is often much easier to perceive the relationship between quality and cost.

Despite the fact that Islamic education is to the Muslim, the basic foundation upon which the entire moral and educational systems of a child is built upon, it is, mildly put, not very satisfactory. However, to achieve the moral and educational objectives, a lot of funds needed to be injected into the Islamic education industry.

Conversely, the resources of parents who are the chief proprietors of Islamic education industry are very limited and in the face of other important societal demands, it is unlikely that parents can increase their allocation to Islamic education to a level where all the short comings in productivity and equity in Islamic education can be overcome. In order to ensure that the most common assessments of Islamic education by the Muslims that; "the standard and quality of Islamic education have fallen" is reversed, certain necessary measures should be adopted in achieving effectiveness in terms of instructional strategies, teachers competence and instructional materials. Because of inadequate instructional strategies by teachers, methods of instruction in Islamiyyah schools tend to be predominantly routine lectures, thus, limiting Pupil's participation and creativity especially in the practical aspect of Islam and its sciences. Preferably, all lessons is expected to be accompanied by relevant teaching aids so as to foster better and quick understanding of what is taught. Thus, while many Islamiyyah schools in many developed countries have long gone computer and since our economy cannot presently and comfortably afford using computers in our Islamiyyah schools, the use of local teaching aids as substitute cannot be over-emphasized.

1.1. Developing Low Cost Teaching Aids

The main task of an Islamic Studies teacher is to develop low cost teaching aids by using locally available materials. An Islamic Studies teacher should be an active participant in preparing the low cost teaching aids. Teacher by himself or with the help of some pupils may carry out the process. To design the effective low cost teaching aid, teacher should have thorough knowledge of the objectives and Islamic Studies concepts. The teachers should have adequate knowledge to provide learning experiences, locally available resources and environmental conditions.

To enhance learning process, Islamic Studies teachers who have real interest in the field, prepare their own teaching aids with the help of available resources. By sufficient encouragement from the superiors, parents and the community, the quality and effectiveness of these low cost teaching aids may be improved.

1.2. Effective Design of Low Cost Teaching Aids

The following basic principles may be used while preparing low cost teaching aids.

- i. The concept should be explained accurately, and in a simple way, so that all the pupils can understand the situation.
- ii. It must attract attention and promote sharp thinking.
- iii. The low cost teaching aids must be very simple and easy to handle.
- iv. Much money can be saved and some complexities of sophistication can be avoided (Aggarwal, 1998).

1.3. Advantages of Low Cost Teaching Aids

Improvisation and experimentation play a major role in the success of teaching and learning Islamic studies in Islamiyyah schools. The following are some of the advantages:

- i. It helps to have more knowledge and understanding of the lesson content
- ii. Improvisation makes Islamic Studies more practical instead of too much talking
- iii. It promotes pupils maximum participation in the learning process
- iv. Improvisation ensures longer retention of the information gained
- v. It provides firsthand experience in a variety of ways
- vi. It develops Islamic morality, spirituality and positive attitude in children
- vii. It cultivates research mindedness in children
- viii. It promotes educational interaction between teachers and pupils
- ix. It promotes positive and educational interaction among pupils
- x. Improvisation generally add an interest of pupils and their involvement in the lesson
- xi. It encourage co-operative attitude in children
- xii. It also develops self confidence in the pupils
- xiii. It helps the pupils to make use of their leisure time
- xiv. It helps the school to become self sufficient
- xv. With the help of the improvised aids, the presentation of the lesson content will also be more attractive and Stimulating
- xvi. It also facilitates the propagation of new curricular ideas
- xvii. It helps to improve efficiency
- xviii. It accelerates the rate of learning and increases the span of retention
- xix. Learning experiences appending to the senses are far more effective than abstract learning experiences.

Learning is an active process in which the learners must be involved and not just swallowing everything hook, line and sinker. Learning proceeds more effectively if, the learner is made an active participant in the learning processes, the learner understands what he is learning. Hence, no tangible learning can take place without the effective application of local teaching aids as a cost control mechanism in our Islamiyyah schools. The learning needs of children of Islamiyyah school age can be identified in terms of personal and social dimension. These needs comprise both essential learning tools, such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving. Added to these are, the basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes requirement to enable them to survive, develop their full capacities and to improve the quality of their lives.

In general, direct experience is preferable to vicarious experience more specifically with young children or with any learner who is exploring areas new to him. Even learners who are not very bright, they are given vicarious experience through materials, which can easily be related to their own direct experience. Closely related to direct experience is motivation, which is another basic condition of effective learning. Children learn best and remember most, what arouses their curiosity most intensely. Everyone from his own experience can recall a number of instances where he has learned apparently, effortlessly and most effectively, a great deal of complex information because he was at the time unusually interested in, for example names of Prophets or compulsory steps of ablution. All of which empirically confirms what the Muslim psychologists observed as follows: 'he learns best who experiences most urgently the need to learnt and whose whole personality is intensely involved'. "Necessity is the mother of invention" is an adage which will serve as a lead-way to effective application of local teaching aids for cost control, effective and quality Islamic education. Children do not always wait for parents to purchase costly and ready-made instructional materials to work with. One sees how they always improvise with whatever is handy. For

example, a pebbles are made rosaries to supplicate after prayer, tube are improvise as cane for punishing offenders in the slate schools (Makarantun allo) in the absence of the real skin-made cane, ordinary stick are made pen to write in the absence of real writing pen and charcoal are used as writing materials in the absence of chalk etc. In our Islamiyyah school classrooms, there are many necessary items we need to apply as teaching aids to make learning effective, interesting and save cost. We are concerned in the elementary level with building broad concepts, not precision measurement. Improvised effective application of locally made items satisfactorily enables the child to explore and extract the basic concepts or skills.

Apart from the conventional chalk board and text books that our teachers are used to, there are a number of teaching aids we can produce e.g. models, slate, flannel board, wall display board, flip charts etc.

For summarizing complex information the teacher can use; -

- (a) Bar-Chart- This is used when comparing like number of boys and girls who easily memorized the verses of the Qur'an they were taught. It is usually displayed in a way that the children will easily understand.
- (b) Line Graph:- It is useful in showing change over a period of time e.g. rise and fall of performance in the class memorization of Glorious Qur'an (Tahfiz), number of Ahadith that were memorized and applied in daily life etc. Chart movements are indicated by troughs and peaks in the line. One could compare two or more sets of data on the same graph using either coloured lines or lines drawn in different ways.
- (c) Pie-Chart:-This is a circle divided into sections of different sizes proportionate to the total quantity of what the graph represents. The straight lines separate the sections radiate from the centre of the circle.
- (d) Flow-Diagram:-This shows the movement successively step by step through a process from start to finish e.g. The step by step memorization from *Surah al Ahqaf* to *Surah al Nas*.

Apart from materials that could be found within the environment/school, human resources could be effectively put into use to save cost. Visits can be organised to places that would facilitate teaching/learning. For instance, a slate school (Makarantar allo), advanced school (Makarantar 'ilmi), *Ta'alim* schools or even mosque, etc, could be made at process of imparting knowledge and practice of Islamic rituals for first hand information.

In peculiar situations, where the teacher cannot lay hand on or apply dexterous teaching aids, prominent individuals in the community such as scholars, politicians, professionals, artisans or even other teachers could be invited to give talks/demonstration as resource persons.

When the teacher applies local teaching aids, the following principles should be borne in mind:-

- (i) It must be appropriate for the intended lesson
- (ii) It must be suitable to the pupils
- (iii) It must be attractive, portable and easy to handle
- (iv) It should be colourful
- (v) It should portray the true image of what it represents
- (vi) Materials must not be too costly.

When a teacher improvises or produces materials himself, it is important that;-

- (i) He knows the goals of the lessons
- (ii) He knows the learner's characteristics. The materials applied as teaching aids must be suitable to the learners' level and needs.
- (iii) He knows the environmental factors that may facilitate or hinder the application of the items during learning
- (iv) He knows the characteristics of the subject matter.

For effective application of any local teaching aids, it is important that the teacher should know the learner and his characteristics, know the environmental constraints, which may be physical and social, know the principles of learning and instructional situation, know the peculiar attributes and limitations of the materials and equipments (Best and Kahn, 2006).

When professionals are invited as resource persons, the following conditions should be borne in mind:-

- (1) The resource person must be somebody who is knowledgeable in his area of specialization.
- (ii). The resource person, should be instructed the amount of time allocated to him for the talk or demonstration
- (iii) The pupils should be given background information about what the resource person is coming to talk about so as to prepare them in advance.
- (iv) Towards the end of the demonstration or talk, pupils should be given opportunity to ask questions on things they do not understand during the process.
- (v) A formal message of appreciation must be sent to the resource person for sparing his valuable time and energy to deliver the lesson, and for being of great assistance to the teaching learning process.

When organizing a field trip, the teacher must observe the following:-

The site to be visited must be inspected with regards to relevance and safety of the children. Parents of those to be taken on the trip must be contacted to secure their consent. Pupils should be encouraged to ask questions on the trip. The pupils should take notes in the process. A report on the field trip is to be compiled either collectively or in groups. Field trips should be encouraged at the senior classes only as they are likely to make more reasoning out of it.

2. CONCLUSION

It is a well-known fact that the standard of Islamic education which is the foundation upon which our entire moral and educational system is built, is, to put it mildly, very unsatisfactory. To reverse this uncompromising trend, the achievement of educational goals depends on adequate moral and financial support. However, if the moral and financial support is inadequate, as it is now, improvisation of local teaching aids is inevitable. Society irrevocably, re-affirms its policy of using Islamic education as an instrument par excellence for promoting sustainable peace, morality security and national development. Education generally is undoubtedly an expensive commodity; therefore, it demands wholehearted intervention and active participation by all and sundry to achieve set goals.

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