

The Use of Instructional Materials in Teaching: A Challenge to Islamic Studies Teachers

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Abstract: Modern method of teaching is increasing becoming difficult in view of the divergence of the characteristic of learners and the requirement for modern technology. The task is even more herculean in Islamic Studies with critical limitations enshrined by religious limitations. Thus the use of instructional materials become quite handy in driving teaching and learning successfully enjoyable. This paper explains the use and importance of using instructional materials in teaching Islamic Studies at grammar and secondary schools.

Keywords: Instructional Materials, Islamic Studies, Teaching, Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Instructional materials are the materials a teacher uses to aid and enrich him in the teaching and learning process. These include audio-visual materials projected and non-projected, print and electronic media, posters, chalk and chalkboard etc. These materials are necessary tools in making teaching and learning process effective. In fact Dubey and Barth [1] rightly claim that most learning activities may not even take place without resources (instructional materials). This assertion as we shall see subsequently is true for the teaching of Islamic Studies.

THE CONVENTIONAL METHODS OF TEACHING ISLAMIC STUDIES

The central focus of Islamic education since the time of the Prophet (SAW) was the Quran. The first duty of a Muslim is to memorize the Quran. This is started by first memorizing the smaller chapters of the Quran by dictation. Some scholars have criticized this method in which the Quran is memorized before learning how to read and write. The argument put forward is that if the Quran is only memorized without knowing the meaning, the blessing may not be obtained. Ibn Mubarak cited in al-Ibrashi [2] argued that the first thing in learning is intention, then listening, then understanding, then memorization, then application and finally propagation.

In the same vein Ibn Khaldun [3] criticized the system of memorizing the Quran before making the students understand what they were memorizing. He also criticized lecture method in which students are made to be dependent on texts and short discourses in different fields of learning. Ibn Khaldun [3] goes

further to suggest how teaching ought to be. He said a lesson should be presented gradually taking it little by little giving general overall idea of a subject and then moving to the details of each point, after the generalization bearing in mind the students' inclination in the intellectual field.

This suggestion appears to be a break from the old ways of teaching Islamic education. This seems to conform, with the modern way of teaching. There are a variety of instructional materials to choose from, which may fit into the thesis made by Ibn Khaldun. The Islamic Studies teacher must wake up to the challenges of modern teaching, particularly in the face of growing number of students who are rapidly growing making it difficult for individual instruction without the assistance of other aids.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Instructional materials if used appropriately make the teacher more effective because they extend the teachers ability to communicate. Most learning activities according to Dubey and Barth [1] may not take place without instructional materials. Therefore to properly use them is to identify them, know how and when to apply them in the teaching and learning process. With instructional materials the teacher can enrich and enliven his teaching and stimulate the students desire to learn.

When used properly instructional materials can make teaching more efficient, effective and hence more productive in terms of students learning. They can be used to arrest and sustain attention of the students.

According to Balogun, Barth and Tanko [4] “media properly used by the teacher can help the teacher to be bigger than life”. When used systematically media extends and promotes our ability as teachers to communicate.

According to Dale [5] all teaching can be greatly improved by the use of audio visual materials because they can make the learning experience memorable and when used intelligently they enhance learning in both adults and children. This is especially so in the use of films and film strips which affords the students the opportunity of paying more attention.

In his own view Gana [6] has argued that instructional materials are effective in promoting learning because they appeal to more than one sensory organs. This as a result facilitates permanency of learning in students. According to Liman [7] sighting Patterson has show that 83% of information is received through sight and that 50% information both seen and heard is remembered in contrast to information heard orally.

What all the foregoing suggests is that learning is better attained if more senses are involved. There is no other way of involving all other senses than the use of a variety of instructional materials. Not only are more sense involved but instructional materials also involve students participation in the teaching and learning process.

UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN THE TEACHING OF ISLAMIC STUDIES

The Islamic Studies teacher who teaches Islamic religion, a universally relevant and practical knowledge, a subject which is not only useful but highly necessary for the success of mankind both the world and hereafter must be up to date in the teaching and learning process. This means, availing himself of the opportunities provided by instructional materials. This will make the teacher have a complete break from the old traditional methods of teaching the Islamic Studies, whereby as Dauda [8] argues, the teachers of Islamic Studies teach the subject through dull process. He argues rightly that the subject is being taught in such a very poor, uninteresting unmotivating and unlively manner, making the subject look dull, dry, irrelevant to contemporary situations and challenges. Utilization of instructional methods is what guarantees a break from this dull process of teaching the universal religion.

To break away from teacher centered teaching the teachers must be supported by making the instructional materials available. When made available the Islamic Studies teacher must be ready to utilize them as the Islamic studies teacher cannot afford to live

in isolation from the challenges of modern teaching, involving instructional materials, particularly in the face of growing number of students who are rapidly growing beyond individual instruction without the assistance of other aids which instructional materials represent.

Instructional materials are found to be relevant in teaching all aspect of the religion. In teaching prayer, for example, the practical aspect of the prayer can be visually taught using film and film strips. The audio visual materials can illustrate the correct posture of the prayer. The ablution preceding the prayer can also be practically demonstrated on the screen.

In utilizing instructional materials the Islamic Studies teacher will find the use of models very relevant. The models are called three dimensional materials or real things. These are display, diagrams and materials, which are visual and non-projected. Models are useful in teaching Islamic Studies. Islamic Studies is a subject with a lot of historical truth needing reconstruction for the benefit of the present generation. For example, many historical facts such as the “jahiliyya” period, the “Hijrah” the Islamic wars, the reigns of the four orthodox caliphs are themes that can be taught through displays and diagrams.

In addition models can also be moulded in the context of Islamic tradition in the form of paper model, clay and sand models, cardboard cutout. The Ka’abah, mount Arafat, cave hira can all be moulded to bring the real thing to the students. These models are appropriate and relevant as the true objects are not within easy reach of both the teacher and the students.

The radio, recorder and record player are the audio materials that can be of immense benefit to the Islamic Studies teacher. As instructional materials they increase teaching efficiency as they provide listening participation. Moemaka [9] rightly observed that pronunciation is better for audio listening. This provides opportunity for the Islamic studies teacher teaching the correct recitation of the Quran. A larger number of students can be taught the correct way of reading the Quran by using the radio and tape recorder. These audio materials which make reading more effective are cheap and do not necessarily require electricity. This means they are quite accessible to even the rural areas. In addition the audio materials, recorder and record player takes care of individual differences among students. This means slow learners can learn at their own pace.

In the library useful instructional materials for the Islamic Studies teacher can be found. These are books, journals, newspapers and magazines. These are also found in possession of teachers and students. These constitute valuable instructional materials for

teachers for teaching of all subjects. We may be in the internet age where all sorts of information can be sought and retrieved. Nevertheless printed materials will still remain essential source of information. This is more so in a society such as ours where computer literacy is still at its infancy. In fact Islamic Studies stands out in benefitting from books. This is because there are several thousands of books spread across the Muslim world which provide source of truth for the Muslim students. However, there is an impediment to utilizing this important source of information, which must be overcome for optimal utilization. This impediment is the deficiency in the Arabic language. This deficiency is identified by Karkarku who argues that teachers of Islamic studies from primary to tertiary institutions are deficient in the Arabic language. This must be overcome if the Islamic studies teachers must avail themselves of original information provided by thousands of Islamic Studies books written in Arabic.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing it is clear that with instructional materials the Islamic Studies teacher can enrich and enliven his teaching and thereby enhance the teaching and learning process. It is therefore essential to make it an integral part of the teaching strategy of the Islamic Studies teacher. As it is now the teacher remains at the centre of the teaching and learning process with little or no participation from the students. To break away from the teacher centered learning the teachers must be supported by making the instructional materials available in our schools.

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