

## SOURCING AND UTILIZATION OF MATERIALS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN UNIVERSAL BASIC SCHOOLS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Effective teaching of any course requires diverse methods especially in this information age. Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies like others are required to acquire relevant and current skills in information searching in order to impart useful knowledge to pupils in the lower universal basic education schools. This paper discussed on various information sources and they relate to the teaching of Islamic Studies in the lower basic schools.. The paper further stressed how the materials can be accessed or sourced bibliographically and physically for effective teaching of Islamic Studies. Some of the suggestions made include, that the Kwara State Universal Basic Education Board should as a matter of urgency establish a well equipped library resource centres in primary schools. Qualified professionals should also be employed to man the centres while the Nigerian library Association in collaboration with State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should organize a workshop on information literacy skills to enhance information accessibility and use.*

### Introduction

Education at lower basic level is the foundation ground to all other levels of education. The effectiveness or quality of education received at this basic level to some extent determines the future of a pupil academically. Afolabi (2002:72), while describing the primary education as one of the three components of universal basic education, states that:

*Basic education is meant to providing education for all Nigerians to fully explore and utilize their potentials. Besides, it aimed at installing sound moral values and attitudes into the young ones as well as developing their intellectual capacity and recognition. Basic education lays the foundation upon which all other levels of education rest, and a key to the success of the whole educational system.*

To install and consolidate sound moral values and attitudes into the hearts of our pupils in primary schools and even beyond, there is a need for religious education and particularly Islamic studies in our schools. This is why Islamic studies has been incorporated into the primary school curriculum which is mandatory to all Muslim pupils. In a contribution, Maina (2005) quoted Aishat Lemu to have highlighted the followings as the aims and objectives of teaching Islamic education in our primary school;

- i. Awakening in the child a consciousness of Allah as the foundation of his intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth, and to provide a sound Islamic basis for rational and reflective thinking, and in understanding of the world around him;
- ii. Teaching the child to be conscious of his responsibilities to Allah, serving him with all talent and resources he has given him,
- iii. Enabling the child to know how to worship Allah in the manner he has prescribed; and
- iv. Training the child's personality toward the best moral and social conduct, healthy attitude and self-discipline in accordance to the guidance of the Qur'an and Hadith, and to encourage him to be good citizen who will contribute to the well being of the society and humanity in general.

The attainment of the aforementioned objectives necessitates an effective teaching. Teaching of Islamic studies in primary schools can be promoted through adequate provision of human, financial and particularly material resources. Some authorities like Ibrahim( 2002) ; Akindoyin( 2004) ; Adegoke( 2004) and Maina( 2005) have at different levels identify lack of library facilities, lack of

suitable textbooks and other instructional materials among the major constraints of Islamic studies teaching in our schools. Thus, addressing the problems is very essential as a way of facilitating Islamic studies teaching in our primary schools.

### Information Materials

Information materials can be described as such resources which contain relevant facts capable of promoting teaching and learning process. In other words, materials that can expose teachers and pupils to needed information and capable of increasing their background knowledge in teaching and learning. These include books (recommended textbooks), newspapers and magazines, journals and picture stories in the primary schools.

The appointment of some prophets and messengers of Allah to teach or disseminate certain obligations are not without certain literature or texts referred to as holy books. The revelation of such books was to facilitate acquisition of knowledge during and after the lives of these messengers. In essence, such books are reference materials that will be consulted to satisfy the information curiosity of any reader. This is why *Surat Alaq*, the first chapter revealed to prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasizes reading (Iqra'a), thus:

"Read! In the name of your Lord who has created (all that exist), He has created man from a clot, read! And your lord is the most generous, Who has taught by the pen, He has taught man that which he knew not" (Quran 96:1-5).

It can be deduced from the above verses of the Qur'an that "reading" is an essential skill for any person and more particularly to the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic studies. Reading can also be identified as a technique of retrieving facts from the various information materials or documents. Specifically, the Qur'an is the primary source of information for the effective teaching of Islamic studies in primary schools. To get the much expected benefits from the Qur'an, it is imperative for teachers of Islamic studies to teach the pupils the required skills to read the Qur'an fluently in Arabic with good pronunciation before the completion of the junior basic education.

In this modern period, over dependence on old Islamic literature only is detrimental to effective teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies in primary schools. Materials that contain modern illustrations and techniques are the most appropriate in the modern time. Recommended textbooks in the curriculum and other relevant ones are good information materials which teachers and pupils must be encouraged to possess to achieve effective teaching and learning. Reading assignment of certain portion of a recommended book is imperative for pupils before the next class in order to promote reading, independent study and fore knowledge of a lesson. However, this can be a constraint to those who do not have recommended text books and thus a barrier to effective teaching of Islamic Studies.

Current and first hand information is always found in journals, magazines and newspapers. This set of information materials is valuable to the teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies in primary schools. Ahmed (1997), remarks that serial publications, (journals, magazines, and newspapers) contain articles which are of immense importance to scholars, researchers and students. The articles are very short and usually very fascinating. He adds that such materials have first-hand source of information on some branches of knowledge or disciplines. Without any doubt, Islamic journals or magazines like those of National Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS), National Association for the Study of Religions and Education (NASRED), National Association for the Promotion of Studies in Religions, Education, Languages and General Studies (NAPSRELGS), Ilorin Journal of the Humanities (IJOH), a publication of the Kwara State College of Arabic and Islamic Legal Studies, Ilorin will go a long way in providing enlightenment and information to teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in the primary schools.

It is pertinent to add that some reference materials like encyclopedia and dictionaries are also significant to effective teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools. In a situation where a teacher of Islamic studies cannot lay hand on relevant textbooks, he can consult an encyclopedia especially encyclopedia of religions, encyclopedia of Islam, etc. which contain

comprehensive information on relevant topics. In the same vein, language skill is better promoted with the use of dictionary, be it Arabic, English or Arabic-English. Pupils particularly those of senior classes can also be trained and directed on the use of dictionary for spelling, pronunciation, origin or usage of words. It is high time for Islamic studies teachers to improve their communication skills through the perusal of the aforementioned valuable materials so that they can compete with their co-teachers in other fields.

Other information materials which can also stimulate teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic studies in the primary level are what are known as non-book materials. These materials are also referred to as education technology, resource materials, instructional materials, audio-visuals, while the most current term for this set of materials is Learning and Instructional Materials.

#### Learning and Instructional Materials

A total reliance on one teaching method or technique may be boring to pupils. The primary goal of teaching, according to Ogunsola and Adesope (2004), is to ensure learning and to instill good behavior in students, which indicates that learning has taken place. To them, before an idea can be conveyed to others, it has to pass through a method and that the most popular method in operation in the developing countries is the spoken word (lecture method). Obviously, this is grossly ineffective and inefficient. The best is to explore multifarious teaching methods based on the topic or lesson and more importantly the use of learning and instructional materials for the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools. Akindoyin (2004:123) quoted Abolade (1986) to have defined Learning and Instructional Materials (LIMS) as:

*Those resources human and non-human, that can be used to enhance knowledge dissemination, information retrieval, acquisition and retention in an education industry. In other words LIMS are those information carriers that can be used to promote and encourage effective teaching and learning activities.*

Arabic and Islamic Studies teachers require the use of certain objects in order to make their lesson clearer, alive and interesting to pupils. By so doing, this may bring about effective teaching and learning in the twin subjects. For a better understanding, it is appropriate to classify the learning and instructional materials into the following:

- (a) **Audio Materials:** This is a set of instructional materials which appeals to the hearing senses e.g. radio, compact disc (CD), cassette, tape recorder, record player, etc. Here, a teacher of Islamic studies who intends to teach recitation or reading of a chapter can make use of audio tape recorder with a Quranic cassette. Alternatively, a compact disc with its player can also be adopted thereby promoting the learning process. More importantly, the use of audio materials is of great blessing to blind pupils thus facilitating effective participation and sense of belonging in the class.
- (b) **Visual Materials:** These are instructional objects whose benefits can be derived through viewing or visual senses (human eye). They are very useful for the teaching and learning process particularly with children. They include: still pictures like non-projected materials (photographs, illustrations, etc.), projected materials (slides, filmstrip, overhead projector/transparent projector, opaque projector, etc.). Others are boards like chalkboards, bulletin board and flannel graphs; three dimensional materials like real objects, models and specimens; graphics like charts, graphs, maps, globes, posters, diagrams, etc, and printed materials like textbooks, workbooks, serials which have been earlier treated in this paper. The utilization of these valuable materials by teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools will make teaching easier and learning pleasurable. For instance, a teacher who intends to teach Hajj (the fifth pillar of Islam) can use multiple instructional materials to appeal to pupils and for effective understanding. In fact, posters, photographs and slides on the various activities of hajj can be displayed or shown to pupils for a real situational knowledge of that obligation. The adoption of a mere talk on the topic may only succeed in making the pupils possess an imaginary or vague notion, which is less effective.

- (c) Audio-visual Materials: They consist of materials that provide double privileges i.e. hearing and viewing advantages. In other words, instructional materials which appeal to both the hearing and viewing senses are referred to as audio-visual materials. In a contribution, Fayose (1995) asserts that this set of materials is becoming increasingly more important in school libraries because of their expected role in the provision of educational excellence. These include: television, motion pictures, visual compact disc (VCD), video tape, video recorder and player.

The teaching of Islamic studies in primary schools can be improved through the use of audio-visual materials. For example, a teacher can use the materials to teach hajj by showing all its activities through television, video tape or VCD while stories of prophets (e.g. Prophet Muhammad, Yusuf, et-al) which have been acted as play or drama can be shown through video and television. A pupil who watches this play will have a good understanding of the messages of the prophets and also have a good reflection on the lessons therein.

Obviously, from the above classification of learning and instructional materials, one can submit that their relevance to the teaching of Arabic and Islamic studies in our public primary schools cannot be underestimated. Adesina (1989), while making a general examination of the importance of instructional materials in schools stresses that classroom learning in Nigerian schools is dull and unattractive; as a result, students become easily bored and hence develop distaste for the lesson. He remarked further that no matter how interesting a topic may be, learners feel refreshed when teachers introduce a change by presenting them with an audio-visual to improve their perception and concept learning. The younger the learners are, the more often they need a change of activity and a new focus of interest through reviewed approach in methodology and audio-visual aids.

Furthermore, instructional materials motivate pupils to learn thereby promoting understanding within a shortest time. In fact, the rate of pupils retention to what had been learnt through instructional materials is usually higher than verbal instruction. This is substantiated by a study in which Opeloye (1991:125) quoted Nacino-Brown (1982) as saying "research findings indicate that learners remember only 10% of what they read, about 20% of what they hear and about 80% of what they hear and see". He suggests that pupils learn and understand better in classroom situation where there are instructional materials particularly audio-visual item.

In conclusion, effective and efficient utilization of instructional resources by Islamic studies teachers in primary schools is sine qua non to academic success. In essence, both the teaching and learning efforts will be influenced qualitatively when suitable instructional materials are applied. It is in this recognition that Olaitan and Agusiobo (1988) highlight that these materials have the primary objectives to:

- a. stimulate the interest of the pupils,
- b. reduce the number of verbal responses,
- c. make learning more permanent,
- d. provide experiences not easily secured in other ways,
- e. offer a reality of experience which stimulates individual activity,
- f. motivate pupils to investigate or explore thereby increasing voluntary reading in pupils.

#### Sourcing for Materials

The relevance of learning resources (information and instructional) to the effective teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools is indisputable. The controversy, however, is on how to source, retrieve or have access to such materials adequately and very timely. Lemu (1980) observed that there are very few ready-made audio-visual aids for Islamic studies. She stated the followings as factors for the inadequacy of the materials:

- a. Islamic studies is still being taught by untrained or unqualified teachers who rely on traditional methods and may not appreciate their value and use,
- b. The publishers of charts and visual aids for other school subjects are not aware of the dear needs of teachers of Islamic studies,

- c. Many higher institutions have not yet set up their own projects or workshops for the development of audio-visual aids for Islamic studies subjects.

In the light of the above, the institution that can provide the right materials to the right people in the right format and at the right time is the School Library Resource Centre, Media Resource Centre or Instructional Materials Centre. Fayose (1995:15) describes School Library Resource Centre as:

*That part of the school where a collection of books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and filmstrip, video-tapers, recordings of all types, slides, computers, study kits, realia and other information-bearing resources are housed for use by teachers and pupils for learning, recreational activities, personal interests and interpersonal relationships of children in a school.*

The place of resource centre in schools is at present not given its due recognition because of the economic hardship which has not been making it possible for parents to feed their children adequately not to talk of purchasing recommended textbooks. This constraint is also affecting all categories of teachers whose salaries particularly at primary school level can hardly accommodate the acquisition of relevant textbooks in their fields of discipline individually.

With the economic depression therefore, the best avenue to source for relevant materials which will in turn enhance teaching and learning is the School Library Resource Centre. Here, a qualified Librarian, Library Officer or Teacher-librarian is expected to stock various useful collections in accordance with the primary school curriculum. In essence, the collection will be dictated or tailored towards the subjects especially Islamic studies. Teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies together with their pupils can resort to the use of available resources in the school library.

Furthermore, teachers and pupils of Islamic studies have also the privilege to complain to officer(s) in the resource centre in case the needed materials are not available at that given centre. It is the responsibility of that officer to source for such materials in other libraries or centres known as inter library networks or resource sharing. In another perspective, a teacher or pupil can be given a recommendation letter to other resource centres to utilize their materials.

For effective sourcing or retrieval of needed materials, provision of catalogue is very essential in each resource centre. The catalogue is a list of available collection in a given centre and which contains detailed descriptive elements on each information resource or material. The catalogue will allow user or patron to identify a given material whose author, title or subject is known in the provided entries (author, title and subject). The knowledge of the catalogue is very imperative for teachers and pupils of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools. The degree of benefit to be derived from an educational or library resource centre depends on the level of knowledge about the use of catalogue. A sample of an author entry is shown in figure 1.



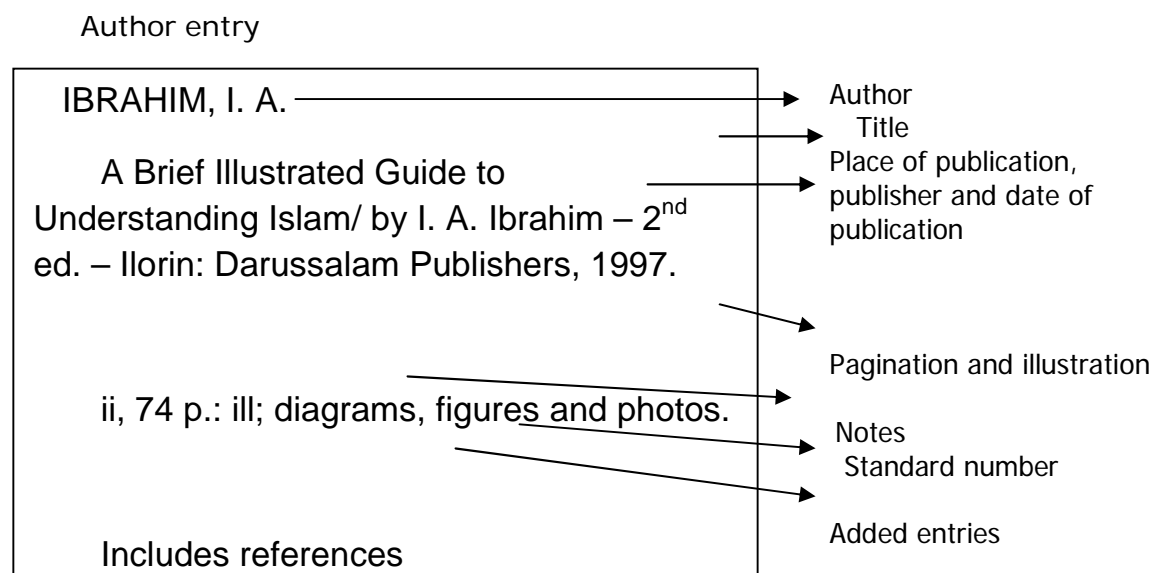


Figure 1: A sample of an author catalogue

Materials on Islamic studies can also be gathered through interpersonal exchange between teacher to teacher and pupil to pupil. For instance, a teacher who possesses a book or instructional material on an aspect of Islamic studies can assist a fellow teacher or in exchange with another material. Since no teacher or pupil can adequately possess all the recommended materials, thus exchange becomes important to facilitate teaching and learning in the school.

We are in an information age whereby material sourcing can be more effective through the use of modern technology. In essence, the use of computer with Internet connectivity is a modern technique of searching information with a speedy access than the analogue or conventional method. The knowledge of the use of modern gadgets by teachers and pupils of Islamic studies is a further means of stimulating teaching and learning activities. Specifically, Islamic-oriented websites contain relevant information with good illustration of all instructional materials on each aspect of Islamic studies.

#### Recommendations and Conclusion

There is no dispute that information and instructional materials are essential tools or instruments for effective teaching and learning of Islamic studies particularly in primary schools. However, the sourcing or accessibility to such materials is as important as the materials. The following suggestions are thus proffered to promote the accessibility:

- (i) The State Universal Education Board (SUBEB) should as a matter of urgency establish a well equipped Library Resource Centre in all the universal basic schools. This centre should contain relevant information and instructional materials with modern technology.
- (ii) For effective co-ordination of the School Resource Centre, qualified personnel (Librarians or Library Officers and Educational Technologists) should be employed. The financial and material resources devoted to this course will be wasted if they are not effectively coordinated or manned.
- (iii) Scholars of Islamic Studies are enjoined to publish textbooks individually or collectively which should have modern illustrations to Islamic studies curriculum in our primary schools. A continuous dependence on the old materials alone is a constraint to educational excellence.
- (iv) Teachers of Arabic and Islamic studies in primary schools should be encouraged to go for further studies or attend regular seminars/workshops/ conferences. This opportunity

will afford the teachers to be exposed to current trends in this field. In the workshop, participants should be practically taught on how to construct and utilize instructional materials to facilitate teaching. Islamic studies teachers should be creative and possess the required skills to construct relevant instructional materials. Thus, a workshop of this nature should be organized annually.

- (v) The Nigerian Library Association (NLA) in collaboration with the SUBEB should organize a workshop to educate teachers of Islamic studies on how to source and utilize learning resources effectively. The various techniques of patronizing the School Library Resource Centre should be provided to assist the teachers in sourcing for materials conventionally and technologically.
- (vi) The teachers are also enjoined to be technologically inclined by accessing relevant programmes in the satellite and internet. Specifically, programmes like *Al-Huda*, *Al-Masjid 3 and 9*, *Every Muslim net*, etc are very educative and expository. In addition, Islamic software on all aspects on the field like *Al-Alim* can be installed in to computer for effective use and teaching.

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