

**ICT AND LIBRARY IN THE TEACHING OF ARABIC AND
ISLAMIC STUDIES**

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Definition

ICT is an acronym for Information and Communication Technology. It involves developing and using technology to process information and aid communication.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO (2002) defined Information and Communication Technology as the combination of informatics technology with other related technologies, specifically communication technology. This definition implies that ICT will be used, applied and integrated in activities of working and learning on the basis of conceptual understanding and methods of informatics.

Fayose (1995) defined a school library as a resource centre with collections of books, periodicals, magazines and newspapers, films and film strips, video-tapes, recording of all types, slides, computers, study kits, media and other information resources for use by teachers and pupils for learning, recreational activities, personal interests and interpersonal relationship of children in school. Contemporary school library holdings are more than books, the collections includes information and communication technology facilities and are to be fully utilized by both teachers and pupils or students to improve teaching and learning.

Background Context

The teaching of Islamic studies in Nigeria started in houses of Islamic scholars where verses of the Qur'an were learnt only by rote. An Islamic Scholar read verses of the Qur'an while his pupils repeat after him thereby memorizing them. Islamic education was introduced into Northern Nigeria about the 14th century and its aim was to enable pupils

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memorize the Qur'an and be able to recite it (Fayose, 1995). When an Islamic scholar is satisfied with his pupils in memorizing the verses of the Qur'an they then move to identification of alphabets with their respective sounds, then to formation of syllables with vowels, and then writing (Enoh, 1987).

The next stage in Islamic education is to understand the meaning of the Qur'an memorized by the pupils. This is done by translating the Qur'an to them. At this level of translating the Qur'an, other subjects of instruction are included in the pupils' training, such as hadith, fiqh, Arabic literature; comprising of Arabic grammar, poetry and rhetoric etc.

Western education was not included in the subjects taught during these stages of Islamic education because it was thought it would lower the standard of Arabic and Islamic studies. According to Umar (2000) Islamic education began to witness tremendous growth between 1976 and 1996 from sitting on mats in houses to benches at modern Islamic schools. Islamic schools were established to teach Arabic and Islamic studies alongside western education subjects. These periods, at the beginning, helped to change Muslims' long existing negative attitude towards western education particularly when available manpower could not fully utilize the employment opportunities created by the petroleum boom and during the implementation of the new national policy on education in 1976 when the Federal Government Introduced compulsory and free universal primary education (UPE), then in 1996 when government called for private sector, communities and non-governmental organisations' participation in the educational system. Some of the Islamic schools established at these periods were Arabic Teachers' College, Jos, 1976; Al-Iman International Schools, Jos, 1982; College of Islamic Studies, Bauchi Road, Jos, 1986; Taoheed Private Schools, Old

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Airport Road, Jos, 1983; Al-Hilal secondary school, Rikkos, Jos, 1996 etc.

The Arabic and Islamic teacher armed with the knowledge acquired from both formal and informal education impact it on his pupils and students. His tools of continuous reference in the process of teaching are personally possessed books. ICT age library resources are not available to the Arabic and Islamic teacher to demonstrate and update lessons. A survey of some schools in Plateau state teaching Arabic and Islamic studies shows that books on the subjects are either kept in offices or where there exists a library there is no sensitization on the use of these materials by both teachers and pupils or students.

Role of ICT age School Library in the Teaching of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

The knowledge of Arabic and Islamic studies is very wide to be covered extensively within the confines of classroom lessons. These confines can be broadened to cover all areas of the subjects using modern library resources to meet and stimulate the interest, appreciation and curiosities of school pupils and students. According to Wishart (1999) one of the key motivating factors of ICT is its ability to provide appropriate challenges for pupils of all abilities. The growth of information on Arabic and Islamic studies makes it necessary for teachers to embrace ICT age library resources to enable them acquire current and wider knowledge in these areas of teaching. A few primary and secondary schools in Plateau state have computers but are not necessarily using them to teach Arabic and Islamic studies. Even many schools in Nigeria as a whole are yet to embrace the use of computer for teaching and learning. According to Okiy (2004) many schools do not

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have microcomputers or teachers qualified to teach even computer studies, stressing that apart from the need to implement computer education and literacy in schools, it is also important to utilize computer in the teaching and learning process called computer Assisted Instruction (CAI). There is ample growth in information generation, storage and dissemination in the 21st century school library to facilitate teaching and learning process.

ICT age library resources for teaching Arabic and Islamic studies.

CD – ROM Databases

CD-ROM is an abbreviation for compact disc read only memory. Read only memory (ROM) means the information in the disc can only be read or listened to, but cannot be altered by the user. A CD-ROM is an optical compact disc used to store computer text and data digitally. One major advantage of the CD-ROM is that a large amount of information can be stored on a disc up to 700 megabytes.

Newspapers, dictionaries, encyclopedias, Arabic and Islamic subjects are produced on CD-ROM which support teaching and learning in schools.

CD-ROOM unlike online service has no time charges so that interruptions during a search are not going to increase costs. Pupils and students are more likely to be encouraged to access and browse the CD because no extra cost in doing so once the disc is bought (De Silva, 1993, P. 101-102).

Television

Television programme information can be used to supplement classes in Arabic and Islamic studies. The programme could be received from broadcast information services through television signals or through satellite. The latter need to be subscribed for periodically, and satellite dish and receiver are required.

Video Tape and DVD

Video programme can be viewed on television using a video tape player. This enables teachers and students to slot video cassettes of their choice in video cassettes recorder (VCR). There are video cassettes on speaking Arabic, Islamic History, and recitation of Qur'an etc.

Digital video disc or digital versatile disc (DVD) is an optical disc storage media format. Its main uses are video and data storage. It stores photographs, map of Arab countries and the world as a whole, written information etc, and DVD player or computer programme controls access to the information.

Computers

Pupils and students can use computers to enable them complete their homework and extend notes taken in the class using word processing. Other software students can use is Desktop publishing; it produces high-quality printing, using techniques from graphic design, typography and printing. And spreadsheet; this enable the insertion, manipulation and calculation of data and figures by using worksheets and formulae to convert graphical representation like graph and charts and display the input information in an appropriate format.

Internet Services

Online information is available on Arabic and Islamic studies. However, there must be Network connection in the school to have access to this service.

One can browse many Arabic and Islamic websites on the Internet, send and receive e-mail, contribute to the information on the internet, retrieve information from the internet etc.

Some Arabic and Islamic Studies Websites:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/koran.html>

<http://www.i-cias.com/babel/arabic/>

<http://www.arabacademy.com/>

<http://www.uga.edu/islam/>

<http://www.stg.brown.edu/webs/qiran-browser/>

<http://cecilmarie.web.prw.net/arabworld/Arabic>

<http://www.bbcarabic.com>

Some Search Engines

<http://www.answers.com>

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.google.com> } Sign up for e-mail box

<http://www.yahoo.com> }

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning>

Challenges of Teaching Arabic and Islamic Studies in an ICT era

Arabic and Islamic studies teaching encounters some challenges as mentioned below:

Inadequate Awareness

Many schools are not aware ICT age library resources can be integrated into the teaching and learning of Arabic and Islamic studies. They depend on books alone to prepare lessons, unaware of other resources such as CD-ROM databases, electronic books, electronic journals, etc.

Lack of a School Library

Some schools are yet to have a school library. School books, where available, are kept in a store or an office, dusty and unused, so that Arabic and Islamic teachers in some schools have limited choice of materials to use in preparing lessons and improving themselves. The condition of school library development in Nigeria is deplorable. The role of school libraries is not fully appreciated by most Nigerians even in this 21st century which is the age of great advancement in all spheres of human endeavour (Okiy, 2004).

Lack of ICT Skills

Some Arabic and Islamic teachers are not computer literate and are not making effort at having ICT skills that would enhance their job.

Lack of Funds

The acquisition of ICT age library resources is capital intensive and many schools are yet to source enough fund from their proprietors for the provision of these resources.

Conclusion

Arabic and Islamic education in Nigeria have come a long way from rote learning to classroom lessons and now the call for the integration of the use of ICT age library resources in the teaching of the subjects.

In a society of fast growing ICT use, standing and giving endless classroom lessons is gradually becoming old-fashion method of instruction. Lessons received in classroom need to be further experimented using ICT age library resources. It is for these reasons the following recommendations are made.

- Arabic and Islamic teachers should acquire ICT skills as soon as possible. Arabic and Islamic teachers can not be left behind in the acquisition of current and wider knowledge
- School administrators and proprietors should know the revolution in information in the modern world has made classroom lessons alone inadequate for teaching without the integration of the use of ICT age library resources. The provision and use of ICT age library resources are very important.

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