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## **EFFECTIVENESS OF INNOVATIVE LEARNING METHODS TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE OF STUDENTS OF ISLAMIC STUDIES IN NIGERIA**

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### **Abstract**

*Teaching is among the most essential professions in the world. It requires numerous techniques and methods which make it different from other professions. Islamic Studies is a religious- subject that always portrays the teachings of Islam from the beginning to the end. To make the teaching and learning of the subject rich, recent, and viable, modern techniques recently discovered should be adopted during the teaching and learning of the subject to make it relevant to the needs and demands of the world. This study examined the effectiveness of innovative learning methods to enhance the academic excellence of students of Islamic studies in Nigeria. The study revealed that Didactic questioning, Concept mapping, and Fishbowl are effective innovative learning strategies that would enhance the academic excellence of students of Islamic studies in Nigeria. It was concluded in this study that the application of innovative methods (Didactic questioning, Concept mapping, and Fishbowl) in teaching and learning of Islamic Studies would accelerate students' academic performance in the subject. It was also suggested that the government should organize seminars and conferences on how to effectively use Didactic questioning, Concept mapping, and Fishbowl learning strategies to enhance effective and efficient teaching and learning of Islamic Studies in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** *Effectiveness, Innovative, Islamic Studies Learning, Method,*

## Introduction

Teaching and learning Islamic Studies with traditional methods of teaching during the 21st century may render the instructional objectives designed for the subject unachieved. Modern and innovative techniques in teaching nowadays make teaching and learning more effective, efficient, enjoyable, and productive. Technique is a logical and systematic way of acting and therefore to make learning an effective teacher needs to apply effective techniques. According to Cheema and Mirza (2013), learning is a purposive and conscious process of imparting knowledge through the application of useful and effective techniques. In this study, didactic questioning, concept mapping, and fishbowl were the learning variables considered in this study.

Didactic questioning is a teaching and learning technique where different questions are posed to the students to diagnose the students' ability to recall, comprehend, and respond. This form of learning technique is effective because it aids retention and comprehension. According to Opara and Uma (2020), didactic questioning is an interactive method of teaching that helps teachers to determine students' learning behaviours and diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of their comprehensive and retentive ability. This learning technique opens room for interaction and communication between the teacher and the students. Uka (2007) asserted that this style of learning technique allows students to use their brains to manipulate concepts, ideas, and perceptions. Opara and Uma (2020) added that this learning technique enables students to develop ways of generating new and original solutions to the problem. This style of learning strategy may be divergent questioning and conventional questioning methods of teaching.

The divergent questioning technique of teaching and learning is an instructive and informative way of asking questions from the students to strengthen their retentive and comprehensive power of communication. According to Opara and Uma (2020), this technique is a new technique that is useful especially in memorization and repetition of new words or terms in a topic. This teaching and learning technique is very relevant in Islamic Studies since verses of the Glorious Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet may be delivered to the students using divergent questioning to detect student retention.

The conventional questioning approach of teaching and learning is the oldest technique of teaching and learning when the teacher asks questions directly from the students without

considering certain logic that will aid the students' thinking. According to Uka (2007); and Opara and Uma (2020), the conventional questioning technique is the lecture method of teaching where the teacher delivers the instruction properly to the students but through asking direct questions such as recitation of a portion of the book. This technique will not in any way allow students to think deeply before answering the questions.

It implies from the above submission that the didactic technique of teaching and learning is among the effective and innovative teaching and learning techniques that can enhance students' retention, memorization, and recall. This technique is very relevant to Islamic Studies, and it can enhance students' strength of communication and understanding.

Concept mapping is another innovative teaching and learning technique that was considered in this study. Concept mapping refers to the diagrammatical representation of the body of the lesson alongside their relationships. According to Ganiyu and Adetunji (2021), concept mapping is diagrammatical representations of concepts, ideas, or knowledge that display a logical explanation of the relationship between the diagrams and the concepts, ideas, or knowledge with the use of circles or cross-links. Similarly, Cheema and Mirza (2013) delineated concept mapping as a virtual representation of concepts and their relationship. Ganiyu and Adetunji (2021) further explained that this learning technique is effective due to its ability to present meaningful learning, assessment, and instructional planning.

Chawla and Singh (2015) stated that there are three fundamental characteristics of concept mapping which are: a list of the concepts, ideas, or knowledge, lines that represent the relationship between the concepts, and diagrams and designs for linking the two together. Opara and Uma (2020), explained that the map should be typically designed in such a way that is based on central ideas in order not to mislead the students. Secondly, the principles guiding the lesson should be subdivided into simpler units that will be meaningful to the students. Thirdly, linking terms used should not be ambiguous. Lastly, the cross-linkages should be designed in a logical, systematic, and simpler way.

Significantly, concept mapping enhances long-lasting retention, assists students in thinking based on their level of understanding, aids cognitive and psychomotor aspects of learning, and provides teachers with substantial and practical aspects of learning (Opara and Uma (2022). This

shows that concept mapping is relevant to teaching and learning Islamic Studies because it will improve students' engagement and participation in the classroom.

Fishbowl technique is another teaching and learning technique that is considered in this study. This technique is known as a collaborative learning technique where students will be divided into different groups for debating or group presentation. According to Akbar et al. (2018), the fishbowl teaching and learning method is a cooperative mode of instruction where students will be classified to debate or present arguments on topics being given to them in the classroom. This form of teaching and learning technique allows students to develop cooperative and collaborative spirits that enhance effective and efficient performance (Barkley, 2005).

### **Steps for Setting up Fishbowl Technique**

There are certain steps in which the fishbowl technique should be built and among those steps are the following.

- a. Formation or creation of two panels; one is the fishbowl panel, and the other is the external panel.
- b. The group in the fishbowl panel will be instructed to perform certain collective actions.
- c. The group in the external panel will be directed to follow, indicate, examine, elucidate, and interpret.
- d. The teacher will sit either in the fishbowl panel or in the external panel and watch.
- e. Replacement of members in a fishbowl is allowed if the teacher detects something.

### **Procedure for the Fishbowl Activity**

In the use of this technique, there are some procedures that teachers need to follow to have positive achievement at the end of that programme. These procedures according to Akbar et al. (2018) are:

1. Teachers need to constantly modify the positions of two groups following the completion of a panel before starting another. This simply means that in applying this technique teacher should try to move those who occupy the fishbowl panel to where the external panel group used to allow every member to enjoy and taste a similar experience.

2. The teacher should place a vacant chair in the external panel. This means that an empty chair in an extrinsic panel would be used by the teacher when an exchange of position or place is done.
3. The teacher must go out of the fishbowl even if for a few minutes. This is encouraged because some students will not be able to respond to or ask questions when seeing the teacher.

Significantly, this teaching and learning technique enhances students' cooperation, thinking, and communication skills. It helps students to develop cognitive power and a retentive spirit. This technique, according to Opara and Uma (2020), assists teachers in detecting students' differences in terms of understanding, communication, and oratory.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded that the application of innovative methods (Didactic questioning, Concept mapping, and Fishbowl) in learning Islamic Studies promotes students' academic performance in the subject.

### **Recommendations**

It is suggested that the government should organize seminars and conferences on how to efficiently use Didactic questioning, Concept mapping, and Fishbowl learning strategies to enhance improved academic performance as well as effective and efficient learning of Islamic Studies in Nigeria.

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