



## Effectiveness of Activity Based Teaching (ABT) for Compulsory Subject of Islamiyat (A Case Study at Elementary School Level)

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### **Abstract:**

In this paper, effectiveness of Activity Based Teaching (ABT) for compulsory subject of Islamiyat has been investigated. The research was triggered by observing unsatisfactory learning outcomes of traditional teaching methods being used to teach the compulsory subject of Islamiyat at elementary level. According to nature of study the experimental research method was applied to evaluate the effectiveness of Activity Based Teaching. The researcher designed a role play activity for the students of elementary level, which was carried out in a school, monitored by Government of Punjab. The activity was based upon two steps (pre-test and post-test). The results obtained from the pre and post-test established that ABT was enormously effective as it remarkably improved the students' knowledge, concepts, skills and expertise as well as developed the learning attitude, interest and confidence. The research therefore recommends that ABT should be applied to teach Islamiyat at elementary school level in order to gain conceptual clarity, accomplish Islamic goals and for the development of Islamic values. Using ABT will provide an opportunity to students in attaining sound knowledge, conceptual clarity, self-belief, and provoking interest in their religion.

**Key Words:** : activity-based teaching, Islamiyat, elementary level, education.

## Introduction

In Oxford Dictionaries Language matters, Activity is defined as “A *thing that a person or group does*”. In an educational context the term ‘activity’ refers to the “*work that involves direct experience by the student rather than textbook study*”. Suydam, Marilyn and Higgins (1977) define ABT as “it is the learning process in which students are involved in doing or seeing something done”. According to them ABT frequently involves the use of manipulative materials.<sup>1</sup>

Harfield, Davies, and Panko Kenly (2007), comment upon the significance of ABT that in this method “students actively participate in the learning experience rather than passive learners”.<sup>2</sup> They said by quoting Prince (2004) that ABT is different from traditional method of teaching in two ways: First is active role of students and second is collective collaboration among them.<sup>3</sup> Van der Molen, J. H. W., & Peijs, J. S. (2009) quoted the famous saying of Confucius that “Tell me, and I will forget, show me, and I may remember, involve me, and I will understand”.<sup>4</sup> Hence ABT in its nature is a child centered approach in which students participate both; mentally and physically. Learning by doing is the main objective of ABT which provides an opportunity to students in participating rigorously and bringing about efficient learning experience. They internalize and implement concepts compatible to their needs willingly and enthusiastically. It could be carefully said that in ABT, activities are generalized under three main categories: a) exploratory b) constructive and c) expressional. By using these approaches, teachers focus on experiencing, memorizing and understanding of learners. This process of organizing activities is based upon national, social, and cultural needs, students’ interest, their mentality and skills.

Historically, the fundamental idea of ABT dates back to Rousseau as far as back to Plato. In modern education, Dewy, in 1897 used the term ‘activity program’ a form of ‘activity base teaching’. Likewise the term “Active Learning” was introduced by an English Scholar R. W. Revans (1907-2003). In subcontinent ABT was started in 1944 around World War II, when a British man David Horsburgh came to India and decided to settle down here. He was an innovative thinker and charismatic leader. He started teaching in ‘Rishi Valley School’ and also joined the British Council. After his retirement, he located a 7 acre site in district Kolar and started his schooling system Neel Bagh which was based on an innovative idea of student-centered approach. It was well renowned school for its creative teaching methods and well planned learning materials.

While looking upon the Islamic history one could easily find the roots of ABT in Islamic education system. A number of examples could be seen in the life of Holy Prophet Mohammad PBUH as he (PBUH) taught his companions by demonstrating and involving them practically in process of learning. For instance, A man came to `Umar bin Al-Khattab and said, "I became *Junubi* but no water was available." `Ammar bin Yasir said to `Umar, "Do you remember that you and I (became *Junubi* while both of us) were together on a journey and you didn't pray but I rolled myself on the ground and prayed? I informed the Prophet about it and he said, 'It would have been sufficient for you to do like this.' The Prophet then stroked lightly the earth with his hands and then blew off the dust and passed his hands over his face and hands."<sup>5</sup> This hadith and many others indicate the importance of ABT in inculcating the Islamic concepts and values in order to nurture the mind of students. Due to this importance of ABT as a modern teaching technique the

researcher intended to explore the effectiveness of ABT in teaching the subject of Islamiyat up-to elementary level.

## Objectives of the Research

This study is particularly designed:

1. To examine the effectiveness of ABT for compulsory subject of Islamiyat.
2. To evaluate the efficiency of traditional teaching methods being used for teaching Islamiyat.
3. To give some recommendation in the light of conclusion for the effective teaching of Islamiyat in order to accomplish the defined objectives.

## Literature Review

It is concluded by many researchers that ABT is much effective to achieve educational goals as compare to other teaching techniques. According to NTL (National Training Laboratories) report, learning retention rates by lecture, reading, audio visual, demonstration, discussion in group, practice by doing, and teaching others are 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 50%, 75%, and 90% respectively. It clearly shows that ‘teaching others’ is the only tool which produces better results than that of ‘practice by doing’ (ABT). Souse (2001), Danielson (2002), Drews and Milligan (2003) all have commented on the Learning Pyramid and emphasized that the students learn best by practicing the knowledge.<sup>6</sup> As the better retention rates are at the bottom of Learning Pyramid which means that teacher has to equip with the knowledge and give opportunities to the students to learn knowledge with practice.



With the advent of the concept of discovery learning many scholars today widely adopt more supple student-centered method (ABT) to enhance active learning (Greitzer, 2002).<sup>7</sup> Most of the teachers today apply the ABT (student centered approach) to promote interest, analytical research, critical thinking and enjoyment among students (Hesson & Shad, 2007).<sup>8</sup> The approach (ABT) also motivates goal-oriented behavior among students, hence this method is very effective in improving students achievements (Slavin, 1996).<sup>9</sup> Passman (2000) applied the student-centered teaching approach (ABT) to teach social studies to 5<sup>th</sup> grade and found that it improves social skills and confidence in students.<sup>10</sup> Means and Olson (1995) used technology as a form of constructivist and found that the effect of technology in elementary school students enhanced their work interest, motivation and self-esteem, and changed the students and teachers’ role.<sup>11</sup> Ogawa (2001) taught History of World War II to the students of middle standards and concluded that students learned about the war, analyzed the US textual passages of atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese text books, interviewed veterans, conducted classroom observation and writing tasks, had discussion session and finally ABT improved their historical perspective talking skill.<sup>12</sup> Stout (2004) also used ABT method to teach the history of America to elementary level of students and concluded that students became able to work collaboratively to develop deep understanding of historical

content and to negotiate difficult primary source text.<sup>13</sup> Rowe (1996) found that student-centered approach (ABT) improves the students' attitude and learning behavior in elementary grade students.<sup>14</sup> The learning environment promoted the students' self-esteem while using ABT in schools (Wilkinson, Teagust, Leggett & Glasson, 1988).<sup>15</sup> The ABT fostered reading, writing, speaking and listening skills (Luke, 2004).<sup>16</sup> A close look at the main findings of the studies seems to reveal that with those studies involving the student-centered approach (ABT), students mainly showed changes in non-academic areas; behavior, attitude, interest and self-confidence (Feng & Wayne, 2007).<sup>17</sup> Hussain, et al. (2011) reached the conclusion that ABT is more effective than a traditional teaching method at elementary and secondary level.<sup>18</sup> Doucet et al. (1998) and Blake et al. (2000) also found that students who were taught through ABT performed significantly better in both basic and clinical sciences.<sup>19</sup> Gallagher et al. (1992) noted remarkable improvement in the results of activity based learned students than their counterparts and viewed that ABT is an effective method of developing "problem-solving process and skills".<sup>20</sup> Hung, Jonassen and Liu (2008) mentioned that ABT has "positive impact on students' abilities to apply basic science knowledge and transfer problem-solving skills in real-world professional or personal situations".<sup>21</sup> Choo (2007) noted the positive impact of ABT on the students as well as teachers in a vocational institution.<sup>22</sup>

All the above references clearly revealed the effectiveness of ABT in teaching almost all subjects including: history, social studies, science, geography etc. Unfortunately ABT is not being used to teach the Islamiyat at elementary level schools. Therefore the researcher stepped forward in order to assess the effectiveness and worthiness of ABT in teaching Islamiyat at elementary school level. For that, the researcher gave an opportunity to the students to perform activity and then collected results with the help of pre and post activity test.

## **Research Methodology**

The approach adopted in this research was experimental in nature. A wide range of previously published scholarly literature which included, research articles, theses, authentic books was thoroughly reviewed and relevant material was quoted into the paper. In addition to that secondary sources from internet and library were also consulted after their assurance and authenticity. By following the modern research techniques and to get more accurate results, the researcher designed a role play activity which was performed by the students. A pre and post test was taken to examine the effectiveness of ABT which led towards the conclusion of this research.

### **Title: Hajj (The pilgrimage)**

Following points were considered the objectives of this activity;

- To teach students five pillars of Islam (particularly Hajj).
- To introduce students with Prophets of Islam and their sacrifices.
- To make the students aware with the cultural and artistic expression of Islam.
- To give the concept of unity and importance of equality in Islam.
- To clarify the concept of cleanliness in students.
- To teach them History of Islam.
- To develop social, political and moral Values of Islam.

## **Contents**

- Basic teachings of Islam
- Cleanliness
- Philosophical and Historical back ground of Hajj

## **Type of Activity**

- Role-play of Hajj (The pilgrimage)

## **Material**

- Computer for video (a visual guide for Hajj, a 15 minute video tutorial)
- Books, charts, white sheets
- Safety pins
- Copies of the short scripts to place at each station
- Chairs, tables
- Black cloth
- Treats for the sacrifice

## **Time**

- Two days, 60 minute/day

## **Day 1**

### **Step 1: Pre Test**

Before starting the activity, the researcher took a pre-test from students comprising of following questions;

1. Write the names of pillars of Islam?
2. Which is the month of pilgrimage?
3. Write the elements of pilgrimage?
4. Who should go to Makkah for pilgrimage?
5. How many times Muslims walk around the Ka'bah?
6. What do you know about Safa and Marwah?
7. How many times Muslims walk between Safa and Marwah?
8. Why do Muslims walk between Safa and Marwah?
9. Why do Muslims sacrifice on Eid-ul-Adha?
10. What does the Hajj (Pilgrimage) teach us?

Unfortunately, not a single student out of 14 students could answer the above mentioned questions appropriately.

### **Step 2: Preparation**

The role play activity was comprised of various stages. On the first three stages researcher provided the primary direction to students. At the remaining stages, students read the short scripts describing where they were and what they had to do. The researcher

and a helping teacher, along with the students participated in the various parts of Hajj to demonstrate the actions and voice of tone. They also showed the students a video (a visual guide to Hajj and Umrah) of 15 minutes, briefly discussed all of its stages and guided them by providing scripts. Students were told the importance of Hajj, Makkah, and Ka'bah along with brief history of Prophets and their sacrifices.

## **Day 2**

### **Step 3: To Put On Eham**

When students arrived into the class room, they put on two sheets which Pilgrims used to wear on Pilgrimage commonly known as Eham. During this activity, researcher discussed with students importance of equality and unity of Ummah in Islam. Students were told that why were they performing this tradition so respectfully. They were also told that women usually wear white dress by covering head but uncovering face.

### **Step 4: Wudu (Ablution)**

A complete activity of ablution was conducted under the guidance and supervision of researcher. Ablution included following contents;

- Washing hands
- Rinsing mouth and nose
- Washing face
- Washing arms with elbows
- Wetting head with wet hands
- Washing feet, first right then left

### **Step 5: Tawaf E Ka'bah (Walking Around Ka'bah)**

Researcher guided students in walking around the Ka'bah seven times (quickly and slowly). They were also told to proclaim the Talbiah when started tawaf around the Ka'bah.

### **Step 6: Sae (Walking Between Safa and Marwah)**

Walking between the two hills SAFA and MARWAH was guided by the researcher.

### **Step 7: Stay at Mina**

Students were guided to stay, sit, rest and talk with each other at Mina before the religious sermon and saying the afternoon prayers. By facing Ka'bah, they went through a series of prayers. They were also taught to stand for a minute imagining the hot sun.

### **Step 8: In Muzdalifah for Gathering Pebbles**

Then students proceeded to Muzdalifah where they laid down to rest and then awoken to gather pebbles.

### **Step 9: Festival of Sacrifice**



At the end of Pilgrimage, they celebrated Eid-ul-Azha, offered a sacrifice and quietly returned to the class room.

### **Step 10: The Ritual Stoning**

They came back into Mina and went to three pillars where they threw pebbles at one of the pillars. The teacher also told them the details of this activity.

### **Step 11: Tawaf-e-Wida (Walking Around Ka'bah)**

Now they returned to Ka'bah and walked around the Ka'bah seven times where they kissed and waved to black stone when passed by it.

## **Results and Discussions**

The researcher designed a role play activity of pilgrimage to assess the usefulness of ABT and conventional teaching methods for Islamiyat. A pre-test was conducted before role play activity which demonstrated clearly that traditional teaching methods badly failed to clear the concept of Pilgrimage, its historical background, wearing Ehram, tawaf, Sae, purpose of sacrifice, and unity of Muslim Ummah. After conducting the pre-test, same concepts were taught with the help of ABT and a post test was taken by the students which showed excellent results. It was also observed that all the students participated enthusiastically and vigilantly into the activity. The results illustrated that students learned better by ABT than that of conventional teaching methods.

## **Conclusion**

In the light of above findings, the research concluded that ABT is equally effective in teaching Islamiyat like other arts and science subjects. The pre-test and post test results clearly revealed that by using ABT method, students could have better understanding of concepts as compared to traditional teaching methods. Moreover, ABT is quite simple in its nature and useful to develop Islamic values in the students at elementary level. In this connection the research recommends that the competent authority and curriculum wing should take notice seriously and design the contents of compulsory subject Islamiyat in accordance with ABT method.

## **Summary**

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of ABT and traditional teaching methods for compulsory subject of Islamiyat. It has been established by the researcher that ABT is equally useful for the arts, humanities and social sciences. Many researchers used ABT for the teaching of history, psychology, sociology, economics, and environmental sciences and achieved better results. But unfortunately ABT is not still used for the teaching of compulsory subject of Islamiyat especially in government school. In this connection the researcher under the guidance of Dr. Tufail Hashmi stepped forward to examine the effectiveness of ABT in the subject of Islamiyat. for this purpose a role play activity was designed which was comprised of pre and post-test. On the completion of role play activity the study found that ABT was equally effective for teaching Islamiyat like other subjects. It produced extraordinary results and helped significantly in achieving the objectives of teaching Islamiyat. it is therefore

recommended that government of Pakistan should take an immediate notice to revise the policy regarding teaching method for Islamiyat and should introduce ABT in the schools. Some implementable suggestions are given in recommendations portion.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of above research some recommendations are given below which may be useful in eradicating the obstacles in the development of Islamic values at elementary level.

- Appropriate training of Islamic values is possible through ABT method in primary and elementary schools. Therefore, curriculum of Islamiyat at elementary level should be designed in keeping view ABT method.
- At least one period should be spared for Islamiyat on daily bases because the students are unaware even from the basic teachings of Islam. Moreover the traditional method of teaching Islamiyat should be replaced by the ABT.
- Not only parents but teachers are equally responsible for the Islamic and moral training of the students therefore they should play their role efficiently by teaching students in a practical way and by quoting example from daily life instead of giving them abstract ideas.
- It has been observed that the students and teachers usually depend upon the text book for teaching-learning process therefore text books should be designed in keeping view the ABT method.
- Teachers should be encouraged to adopt ABT method instead of traditional method of teaching and must have a sharp look upon the latest teaching methods. It would be helpful and interesting task to conduct activities on Islamic events by consulting Islamic calendar
- Teachers and parents should inculcate the importance of combine family system in the children because it is the main source of real and long lasting training of the children according to Islamic values.
- At the stage of elementary level, many physical, biological, emotional, and genetic changes occur in the students therefore it is very important to give them training according to Islamic teachings at this stage. For this purpose it would be useful to provide them an environment where they can learn and practice Islamic commandments.

Drop out ratio of the students in the Government schools could be controlled by making the contents of different subjects interesting. For that purpose a reflection of ABT in all subjects particularly in Islamiyat would be helpful in achieving defined goals.



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