Effective E-Learning Approaches to Teaching and Learning of Islamic History and Civilization in Malaysia and the Muslim World

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Abstract

The paper discusses a study on the concept and effective e-learning approaches in the teaching and learning of Islamic History and Civilization in the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (ICSS), Malaysia. The study involved about four hundred students from the selected secondary schools in Malaysia. The data were collected through the questionnaires, observation, and interviews. The study discovered that the e-learning method may provide various opportunities to the students in Malaysia to access the enormous Islamic heritage in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This may enhance their knowledge, understanding of the facts, and appreciation of the revealed artifacts and evidences of the truth of Islam. In fact, the e-learning approach is substantially suitable to be used as instructional instrument in distance education at all levels of education, particularly between Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries around the world.

Key-words: Effective E-Learning, Islamic History, Civilization, Knowledge, Integrated Curriculum.

Abstrak

Kertas ini akan membincangkan satu kajian mengenai konsep dan efektif e-pembelajaran yang berkesan dalam pengajaran dan pembelajaran sejarah dan tamadun islam dalam kurikulum bersepadu sekolah menengah(ICSS), Malaysia. Kajian melibatkan kira-kira 400 pelajar dari sekolah-sekolah menengah terpilih di Malaysia. Data telah dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik, pemerhatian dan temu bual. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa kaedah e-pembelajaran boleh menyediakan pelbagai peluang kepada pelajar-pelajar di Malaysia untuk mengakses warisan besar islam di kerajaan Arab Saudi. Ini boleh meningkatkan pengatuhuan mereka, pemahaman tentang fakta-fakta, dan penhargaan terhadap artifak dan bukti-bukti yang mendedahkan kebenaran islam. Malah, pendekatan e-pembelajaran adalah ketara yang sesuai untuk digunakan sebagai alat pengajaran dalam pendidikan jarak jauh di semua peringkat pendidikan, terutamanya antara Malaysia dan Kerajaan Arab Saudi dan negara-negara islam di seluruh dunia.

Kata kunci: efektif e-pembelajaran, sejarah dan tamadun islam, pengetahuan, korikulum bersepadu.

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Introduction

The diffusion of the education system is an on going process that cannot be resented by any individual. One of the obvious steps performed by the governments-agencies worldwide, including the Ministries of Education Malaysia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the exertion of optimum effort in ensuring that universities, tertiary education institutions, colleges, teacher training centers, and schools are equipped with sophisticated computer labs, computers, and related facilities. This is in line with the tremendous enhancement of education by dissemination of e-learning as one of the effective instructional methodologies that can be used by instructors in the studios, laboratories, lecture rooms, and classrooms.

In fact, we are in the midst of an e-learning revolution which brings rapid changes, numerous emerging technologies, and abundant opportunities to generate significant returns on the investments. The e-learning approach is fast gaining acceptance and intimate instrument that extended to the training and development of staff in mega corporate institutions.

What is e-learning?

Subashini (2008) states that e-learning is the delivery of learning via electronic means by the use of a computer or electronic device because the educational content is in electronic form comprising CD-softwares and internet based learning. Berman (2006) admits that e-learning acts as the means of education that incorporates self-motivation, communication, efficiency, and technology. Abdul Rashid, Fong and Hairul Nizam (2007) anticipate two types of e-learning as asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous Learning is the most widespread e-learning style that involves self-paced learning such as CD-ROM based, network-based, Intranet-based, and Internet-based. This may include access to instructors through online bulletin boards, online discussion groups, and e-mail. It may also be totally self-contained with links to reference materials in place of a live instructor. On the

other hand, Synchronous Learning involve a real-time communication with a live instructor facilitating the learning process. Every student logs in at a set time and communicates directly with the instructor and each other bilaterally, and perhaps, multi-laterally. This type of learning typically takes place via the internet using the text-chat, audio-chat and webcam video-chat.

In a simple term, e-learning is a learning environment supported by continuously evolving, collaborative processes focused on increasing individual and organizational performance. Effective e-Learning thrives at the nexus of web usability, communication, relationship, document, and Knowledge Management tools. E-learning is a bridge to enhance self regulated learning students by using self dependent learning software with minor facilitation from the instructor.

When instructor saves a document from the internet or uses the power point to teach, the instructor is not implementing e-learning but is using the computer and internet as an instruction tool. The difference between using the computer as an instruction tool and using the computer to implement e-learning must be understood, or then e-learning may bring no difference to the conventional way of teaching. Moreover, e-learning is intimately significant to the Knowledge Management in using information strategically to achieve one's business objectives. Knowledge Management is the organizational activity of creating the social environment and technical infrastructure so that knowledge can be accessed, shared and created (Logan 2008). It is rich, flexible tool chosen to create, collect and distribute information, on demand and contextually, to learners, intra and extra organizationally.

In summary, e-learning is a technological comprehensive method of how learner may access tremendous information; a dynamic process of transformation, personalization and customization of learner's demand and environmental variables; learners control their own interaction with the content, presentation, reflection and application; re-usable objects of content of any media that can be disposed to the most granular, meaningful level to allow combinations of objects to be assembled and dynamically presented for different environments and functional needs; possibility of high informal learning occurrences in meetings, in the corridors and break-rooms, through collaboration, in situational communities; can be transformed for use in a variety of standard

formats - XML, HTML, DHTML, PDA, etc. in a variety of environments, both formal and informal; promote communities in collaborative, self selecting and organizing groups of individuals that share the same interests and specialization; encourage RAD (Rapid Application Development) in incremental define, design, and refine processes of integrated and parallel dimension; continuously refining prototypes allows improvements to be integrated and tested with each iteration that offers an opportunity to increase the penetration and acceptance of the learning support processes; and, technological tool for enhancement of knowledge, skills, appreciation and positive-innovative attitudes.

Advantages and Paradigm Forces to E-learning

Reducing training-related costs is the chief driver in launching an e-learning initiative.

Nearly 75 percent of corporate learning professionals indicated that reducing education and training costs was their main driver for launching an e-learning initiative, followed by providing training to a geographically dispersed workforce (63 percent), building employee skills (46 percent), delivering just-in-time information (42 percent), and delivering to a large audience (40 percent). Corporate learning practitioners indicated they saved approximately 20 percent in training-related expenses by delivering e-learning programs. The percentage of corporate education programs delivered via the classroom is expected to decrease significantly by 2003 from 64 percent to 39 percent. Abdul Razaq and Isjoni (2009).

The paradigm for training and development has changed from being a one-time event to more of a process.

Learning is being incorporated into all stages of an individual's career and the distinctions between formal and informal learning and training and performance support are blurring. Based on these changes, many best practice organizations have realized the great potential in converging knowledge management systems with e-learning systems. Both systems share the one common goal of diffusing knowledge throughout an entire organization. Cap Gemini Ernst and Young, First Consulting

Group, and Level 3 Communications are examples of the many organizations that have taken on this effort. Knowledge management systems were common among organizations that launched their learning initiative 3 - 5 years ago (57 percent), organizations that offer more than 100 courses (55 percent), and organizations that have invested more than 30 percent of their overall education/ training budget in e-learning. IT and professional services organizations were also trendsetters in this area; with over 60 percent indicating their e-learning infrastructure contained a knowledge management system

While the trend in e-learning is to focus on tangible topics, such as computer applications or IT-related topics, we predict that in the next 12 - 18 months more corporate learning organizations will provide e-learning courses that focus on the "softer" side Currently, e-learning courses for the most part focus on technical training topics, such as computer or IT-related topics (63 percent), followed by functional training or topics specifically related to an e-learner's job (18 percent), and soft skill training, such as leadership or management development (18 percent). E-Learning technologies have become a proven way for corporate learning organizations to get a consistent message across the organization to large groups of people quickly. In addition, organizations have leveraged e-learning technologies for their new hire orientation programs.

Corporate learning organizations are leveraging e-Learning to provide education programs and services to their customers. For the most part, corporate learning organizations are targeting their e-Learning efforts to technical/IT employees (79 percent), customer service representatives (70 percent), sales employees (69 percent), first line supervisors (69 percent), professionals - excluding IT staff (69 percent), middle managers (67 percent), and administrative employees (67 percent). Twenty-three percent of corporate learning organizations target their programs to external customers and 13 percent target to suppliers. IT/professional services firms and mature learning organizations (organizations that began offering e-Learning programs more than 5 years ago) were more likely than any other segment to extend their offerings to external customers. "Edu-commerce," using education to drive commerce while reinforcing a company brand, is the latest phenomenon sweeping the corporate education marketplace. While providing education to

customers and suppliers is an old practice, the ability to deliver education to these audiences via e-Learning technologies is expected to make a tremendous impact in the corporate education marketplace.

David Stamp led a research on Learning Ecologies completed in 1998 identified thirteen work-related activities during which most informal learning occurs include; Teaming, which brings together employees with different skills and responsibilities within the organization to address problems or goals; Meetings, especially those at which employees at many levels are encouraged to express opinions; Customer interactions, especially in companies where customer feedback is encouraged; Mentoring, which was most commonly observed as a voluntary and loosely structured association between a novice and more experienced employees; and, Peer-to-peer communication, which is characterized by interactions among employees at all levels (Training, Jan, 1998, Learning Ecologies, David Stamp).

E-learning is learner controlled

E-learning does not restrict students to follow a sequential order. E-learning allows students to navigate their own learning. Power point presentation by the teacher is not e-learning as the sequence of the presentation is determined by the teacher. E-learning encourages students to discover and explore the content by themselves according to their own need and interest. E-learning is a non linear process that does not allow anyone but the students themselves to determine.

E-learning requires motivation

E-learning believes that students are responsible for their own learning. This means that the teacher acts as a facilitator. However due to the level of task provided in some software, students may not be able to acquire the knowledge on their own, and need the help of their teachers. Teachers could scaffold their students by giving extrinsic motivation. For example, teachers could provide students with reinforcements or token economy, urging students to put in more effort in the task given.

Technology Eliminates Waste of Time

Every day, period after period, teachers all over the world waste precious class time, office hours, and other resources, re-teaching the previous day's materials to students who have missed class. Helping students is an important but time-consuming task. When lesson plans must be followed, it's frustrating to have to re-teach material already covered. Teachers spend much time and effort deciding what and how to cover course material. Teachers could easily refer students to a pre-recorded session of the missed class. When students aren't able to stay after school or during breaks for explanations the teacher can't provide during class, wouldn't it be great if they could meet the teacher live online? By extending education time, online technology opens a whole new realm of possibility for both teachers and students.

When teachers direct students to an online classroom platform where they can view the lesson from previous days via a recording, and also view Power Point presentations with detailed assignment instructions, much can be accomplished without interrupting class or office time. In addition, teachers can make handouts available for students through a content-management system. Hence, e-learning applications such as WiZiQ.com, take distance learning light years beyond email, saving time in the classroom and cutting out extra hours of using campus energy and other resources. It also saves students' personal resources as they can go online from any location. The potential for transportation fuel savings alone are dramatic.

Implementation of E-Learning Experimentation at Schools

Jamie McKenzie ('**Technology & Learning',** January 1997) launched a properly constructed school Web site information systems and efficiently structure content to provide visitors with knowledge and insight. They deliver "the goods" and may also serve as "interfaces" providing bridges and translations to connect users to other worldly experiences. Given the sometimes poorly organized resources available on the Web, a good school Web site helps people find educationally worthwhile information with a minimum of time waste and wandering. It is discovered that the best school and district Web sites perform the following four goals:

> 1. They introduce visitors to the school - its mission, its character, its look, its offerings to children, its stance on new technologies and its overall spirit;

2. They point to excellent information on the larger Web - identifying the best resources the Web has to offer an educational family, those most likely to support the curriculum and the kinds of investigations likely to be undertaken by staff and students alike;

3. They offer an opportunity for the publishing of student works to both a local and a global audience - whether those works be art, music, or writing;

4. They provide rich data locally collected on curriculum related topics (such as local history), whether these collections take the form of data warehouses, virtual museums   or   virtual   libraries. Some school sites do all four of these, but most concentrate on providing quality for two or three of these elements. Those responsible for creating and then managing Web sites soon learn that ambitious designs require a vast investment in upkeep.

No Excuses for Missed Lessons

Not being able to attend classes is a major problem especially at tertiary level. One of the software of e-learning is the CMS (content management system). The CMS allows teacher to place their lesson on the internet allowing any student to access the information either at college and home. Any digital material such as schemes of work and lesson plans can be uploaded so that students can see the details of what was delivered, worksheets and PowerPoint files onto the server and there will no longer be any excuse for the students who miss a lesson for any reason.   E-learning enables teachers to assign task in the web program.

Problem Based Learning

E-learning uses problem based learning as it is certain to bring a lot of benefits to the learners. Among the benefits of problem solving is that it stimulates creative and critical thinking, give learning relevance and purposes, involves learning to think for one self, offers challenge and motivation, relates to the learner's need, and is concerned with applying knowledge and skills. With the integration of the profit of problem solving, e-learning

formulates to equip learners with contextualized real- life world situations. E-learning triggers the creative mind of the learner and allows them to apply the theories learnt to real life situation.

Every teacher should be familiar with presentation software such as power point not because presentation tools make great slide shows for teachers, but because they make great slide shows for students. Drawing tools, which can bring out the creative artist in even the most artistically challenged teacher, often are bundled in with productivity software. Teachers need to be skilled in the use of productivity tools, not just because they are the best tools for teaching, but more importantly, because they are excellent tools for learning. Every teacher should be able to troubleshoot technology-related problems that commonly crop up in the classroom.

The following section discusses a study on the implementation of e-learning method in the teaching of Islamic Civilization subject of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary Schools (ICSS), Malaysia.

Significance of the Study

It is very exciting that history in the ICSS has been included as one of the core subjects in the lower secondary and upper secondary levels of Malaysian schools. These subjects are officially included in the time table of the ordinary, religious, science, vocational and technical schools in the country (CDC 2007). One of the main contents of the curriculum is the concept, philosophy and development of Islamic Civilization during the Prophet (s.a.w.), Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn, Umayyad rulers, Abbasid rulers, and the Mughal rulers, advent of Islam in China, and Islam in the Malay Archipelago.

Since history is a compulsory subject, it is necessary to study and analyze the ICSS history curriculum to see if it really could achieve the objectives of the syllabus, successfully producing the Malaysian generations as stipulated in the Malaysian Education Philosophy, Malaysian development plans and meeting to a considerable extent the challenges of the Vision 2020.

Students were exposed to various types of teaching approaches in the learning of history and Islamic Civilization, such as lecture, group discussion, project, model, brainstorming, study of documents, fieldwork, and site visit. Mohamad Johdi (2003), the

author of this paper, found that one of the most interesting methods of teaching and learning history is the CAL - Computer Assisted Learning approaches. This study shows majority of the respondents agreed that the utilization of CAL manages to activate classroom environment, learning more interesting and improve computer skills of students.

However, due to various constrains, this study will only focus on to what extent that e-learning method can enhance the student's acquisition of knowledge, historical skills, appreciation towards the subject, and positive moral attitudes, specifically in the Islamic Civilization component.

Methodology of Study

The study was conducted at the selected secondary schools, particularly in the states of Perak and Terengganu, Malaysia, which involved about four hundred students. The respondents involved in the survey were stratified according to district, type of schools, levels of education, gender and ethnic groups. They were randomly selected from each sample frame until obtaining the required number of interviewees as aimed at in the study.

The researcher decided to conduct questionnaires and interviews with selected students. Every item the respondents answered in the questionnaires was manually keyed into a spreadsheet. Then, the data collected were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result and findings of the study is presented in the following section.

Results and Finding of the Study:Implementation of E-Learning in Islamic History and Civilization ICSS, Malaysia

The students were asked to respond to three types of questions on the students' 'interest' in and 'benefits' from the e-learning approaches of Islamic Civilization component in history subject:
1. Do you like e-learning approaches in Islamic Civilization component in history subject?
2. What are the most interesting things in e-learning approaches to the Islamic Civilization components in History subject?

3. What is the usefulness of e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject?

The result of the study is presented in the section below:

Question 1:
Do you like e-learning approaches in Islamic Civilization component in history subject?
In measuring the 'interest', first of all the respondents were asked to respond by saying 'Yes' or 'No' to whether they 'like' the e-learning approaches in Islamic Civilization component in history subject or not. The overall score is shown in Table 1 below:

Do you like e-learning approaches in Islamic Civilization components in history subject?

No.	Do you like e-learning approaches?	Total Responses (Pecentage)
1.	Yes	344 (86.0%)
2.	No	56 (14.0%)
Total Responses (%)		**400 (100.0)**

Table 1

About 86.0% (344) said 'Yes' and only 14.0% (56) said 'No'. More specifically, the finding shows that the respondents in Kuala Terengganu are more interested than those in Hilir Perak with 89.5% and 82.5% respectively out of 200 respondents each. In reality, there are more Islamic historical artefacts and sites in Kuala Terengganu than Hilir Perak. Therefore, there is a possibility that a great number of pupils in Kuala Terengganu were really attracted to the Islamic historical evidence in their locality, especially after exploring them, such as 'Batu Bersurat', the 'White Mosque', design of the Maziah Palace, and Islamic religious institutions.
It is interesting to discover from the study that the highest response was the science schools with 90.7%, followed by the regular ones with 86.1% and the religious ones with 80.7%. The high score of science schools which are attended by higher achieving students is in line with the statement and survey of Bateman (1996). The reason is that the students themselves are

interested in approaches which are scientific, professional and practical. There is also a possibility that the e-learning method is attractive and of higher quality, supported by more sufficient facilities and more competent instructors compared to the regular and religious schools.

The students' responses according to level of education, the study demonstrates that the Form One scores the highest with 91.2% respondents saying 'Yes', followed by Form 4 87.5%, Form Three 83.7%, and Form Two 82.5%. The finding reveals that the high score of Form One students should be taken as a good sign for the teacher to develop further and cultivate their interest so that they can benefit from the subject. The good impression the subject makes at the beginning can ease the teacher in the process of providing independent learning and self-confidence for doing future successful independent learning. The teacher just needs to give basic instructions and guide the students frequently in utilizing the e-learning approaches. This will make the student more familiar and adventurous in the learning process.

With regard to gender, it was found that boys responded 'Yes' marginally more than girls, that is 87.5% and 84.5% respectively, from the total of two hundred respondents for each category. The responses according to ethnic groups show that the Malays score the highest with 87.3% saying 'Yes', followed by the Indians (mostly Hindus) 86.5% and the Chinese (mostly Buddhists) 81.5%.

These responses were expected because most of the topics accessed by the students were related to the Malay-Muslim figures, buildings of Malay-Muslim identity and activities of Malay-Muslim culture. The researcher believed that the remnants of such events still attracted the students especially the Malays and so at the same time they were highly interested in e-learning approaches. As some of the Malay students said in the interviews that the historical remnants of the Malay Sultans and national events could raise their awareness of the contributions of Islamic historical

figures and stimulate loyalty to the religion and nation (S3, S5 and S8).

Moreover, the Malays are Muslim and their loyalty to the religion and country is unquestioned. This was proved during the reign of Melaka Sultanate (1400 – 1511) that the Malay-Muslim leaders, scholars, and followers really committed in the spread and practices of Islam in the Malay Archipelago. Among the prominent figures were Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah who had ruling characters like Khalīfah 'Umar Al-Khaṭṭāb and a Malay-Muslim warrior Tun Perak had characters like Khalīfah Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib. In fact, the Malays are more keen to believe that Islam came to Malaysia by the ulamā' and muballigh from the Arabian Peninsula rather than from India or China.

Question 2:
What are the most interesting things in e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject?

The students were given six items. They were asked to choose which one was the most interesting things in e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject. The result of the study is shown below:

Students' perceptions on the most interesting things in e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject

.	Items	Responses (Percentage)
.	Can see the past has really happened	81 (20.3)
.	Raise curiosity to ask more questions	38 (9.4)
.	Finding new information and evident	81 (20.3)
.	Raises interest and motivation to learn Islamic Civilization component	104 (26.1)
.	Something different from traditional teaching and learning approaches	56 (14.1)
.	The 'adventurous journey' to explore the artifact and heritage	40 (9.9)
	Total (%)	**400 (100.0)**

Table 2

The table demonstrates that the three highest statements responded by students are that e-learning approaches 'raise interest and motivation to learn Islamic Civilization component'. The distribution of 'most interesting things' selected by students in percentage is illustrated in chart 1 below:

Students' perceptions on the most interesting things in e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject
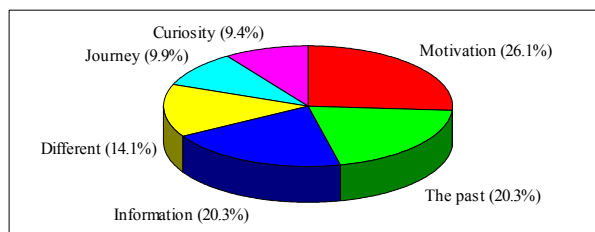
Chart 1

More specifically, the most interesting thing for the students in the state of Terengganu was item 4 with 30.5% responses, while the students in Perak were most interested in two items, that is item 1 and item 3 with 90 (22.5%) responses each. Regarding the schools, the most interesting to the students of Regular schools was item 4 with 40.5% (n=520) responses; for those in Science schools it was item 5 with 21.4% (n=140) responses and for those in the Religious schools it was item 3 with 23.6% (n=140) responses. For the level of education, the most interesting to the students in Form One was item 4 with 29.2%, in the Form Two was item 1 with 22.5%, in the Form Three was item 4 with 32.9% from 240 respondents for every form and in the Form Four was item 3 with 30% respondents. The most interesting things to the boys and girls is almost the same, that is item 4. The girls' score is 27.7% and the boys' is 24.5% out of 200 respondents each.

It is interesting to discover that all the ethnic groups were most attracted to the same item, that is item 4. The most interesting to them is that e-learning approaches to Islamic

Civilization components 'raise interest and motivation to learn Islamic Civilization component in History subject'. The highest score was of the Chinese with 31.5%, followed by the Indians with 28.8% and unexpectedly the lowest was the Malays with 23.9%. The result indicates that the earlier hypothesis saying that the Chinese and Indian students have lower interest in e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History Subject than the Malays is rejected.

Possibly, the present generations of the Chinese and the Indians are more 'situational and realistic' in learning and teaching commitment. They may have a high consciousness that e-learning approaches may enhance their knowledge and skills which are very important for their achievement in the examination. In fact, these were proven when the national examination result such as the PMR- Lower Secondary Assessment and SPM- Malaysian Schools Certificate show that a number of the Chinese and Indians students scored high grade in Islamic Studies subject that they optionally sat for.

Question 3:
What is the usefulness of e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject?

The students' perceptions of the usefulness of e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject were explored with the following questionnaire. Table 3 demonstrates the students' agreement and disagreements on the usefulness of e-learning approaches.

Students' perceptions of the usefulness of e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject

Do you think that e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components are useful to::		Pupils' Responses (N=400) Scale/ Percentage					
		1 Very Strongly Disagree	2 Strongly Disagree	3 Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree	6 Very Strongly Agree
o.	Items	Disagree			Agree		
.	develop interest and encourage the desire to study history.	(2.8)	(4.8)	(6.5)	(18.1)	(35.5)	(32.4)
		14%			86.0%		
.	develop interest of students in learning history as a whole.	(3.1)	(3.6)		(21.4)	(	(30.
		12.7%			87.3%		
.	create awareness among students towards a community, its culture and values, from historical and present perspectives.	(2.3)	(3.8)		(23.1)	(	(25.
		12.7%			87.3%		
.	encourage students to relate their local studies to the national and international context where possible.	(2.6)	(4.8)		(29.8)		
		18.2%			81.8%		
Total Responses (%)		(14.4%)			(85.6%)		

Table 3

The result shows that 85.6% respondents agreed that e-learning approaches are useful to develop interest and encourage the desire to study the Islamic Civilization components in History subject. It is interesting to discover that in both responses '2' and '3' 87.3% respondents agreed. The distribution of usefulness of e-learning approaches perceived by students is illustrated in chart 2 below:

Chart 2:

Students' perception of the usefulness of e-learning approaches to Islamic Civilization components in History subject
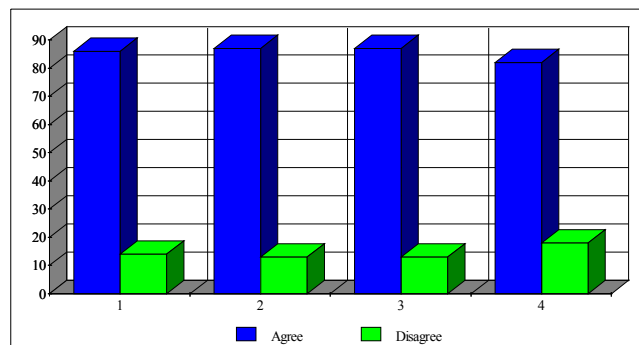
Interview: Discussion on the students' 'interest' in and 'benefits' from the e-learning approaches of Islamic Civilization component in history subject

Looking at the findings, it is proved that the e-learning method could cultivate more interest among students in the learning and teaching of history subject as a whole. Therefore, the objective formulated by the Curriculum Development Centre of the Malaysian Ministry of Education (2007) that is 'to create awareness and sensitivity during the e-learning adventures exploration, with the intention of developing the interest of students in learning history could be achieved.

As an addition, the students discovered new information through dealing with the topics around them, such as about their parents, schools, communities, place of residence and local figures. Majority of the students admit that they can make comparison between the evidence available around the country and the heritage available in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such as the location and

function of Masjid al-Ḥarām in Makkah, the people and environment around Masjid al-Nabawī in Madinah, and the vast hot desert of the Arabian Peninsula. The students (S1, S3, S7, S13) realize the struggle and self-efficacy of the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his companions in spreading and defending Islam as the true way of life.

The main advantages as mentioned by many of the students that through e-learning they can 'see', 'feel' and 'explore' on their own that the Islamic Civilization is really happened and 'history is still alive'. As one of the students from Science school said 'By studying the importance of the river I could justify the reason for the Ancient Sites were located at the mouth of river and most of the settlements were along the river (S13).

Another advantage is that e-learning approaches are reinforced by students' own discovery of 'facts' and 'evidence' during the search-exploration and can be matched with those written in the text books (S10, S16, S17, S19). One of the students in Perak said 'I could get the real facts and see on my own the reasons for Makkah as one of the busiest city in the Arabian Peninsula'. She added, 'First, Makkah was linked with roads from north and south; second, this town was surrounded by hill as shelter from the desert storm; and third, the 'barakah' of the do'ā of Prophet Ibrāhīm (AS). Confidently she ended, 'only some of these facts could be found in the history text book that we learned in class' (S14)

Another Science student (S18) said in the interview that 'by using e-learning approaches in Islamic history I could also compare between the history of different places'. He added: 'I came from Ipoh. I could realize that the function of Ipoh City has similarities with Makkah City which is located in the middle way of south-north trade centre. Ipoh is located in the middle of a journey from Kuala Lumpur and Penang was visited by many traders and settlers from various countries'. He concluded 'it is really interesting to be involved in e-learning approaches in Islamic Civilization subject'.

The students (S4, S11, S18) admitted that they agreed that e-learning approaches to history are useful. They said: 'this approach is useful for understanding that history is all around us and it really happens outside the classroom. We could see history did exist'. This means that this approach helped students consolidate some knowledge they already had of figures or sites by
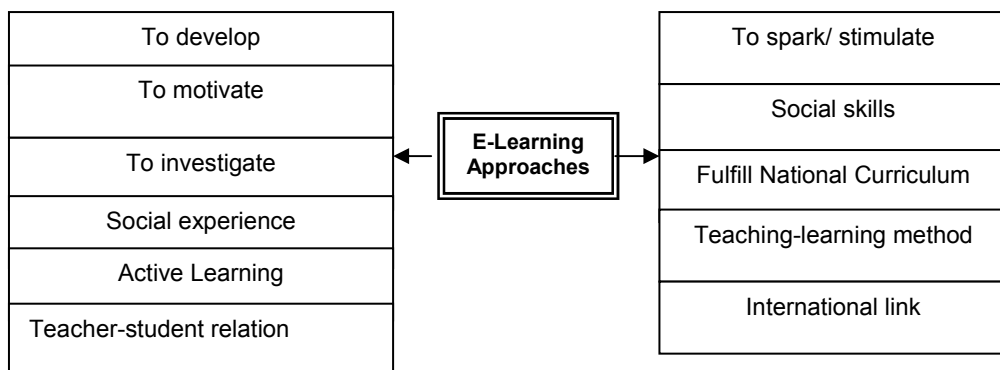
giving them a visual image of them. Students (S21, S24) state that they can learn the structure of arguments, explanations, descriptions and definitions. Learning the indicator words helped students navigate those structures and the information on all of these can be found online (S1, S3).

A Form Four science student (S13) stressed: 'The pupils learned about sources, change and continuity and a concrete primary source of evidence. The e-learning approaches helped the students visualize, for example a certain historical building, its function and life inside it'. This could help the students understand the concept of 'empathy' in history, help them understand more clearly and enable them to see history in context. Students (S1, S5, S9, S12) felt the intense sufferings of Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ who was tortured by Umayyah ibn Khalaf, and severe tortures inflicted upon the family of Ammār, Yāsir and Sumayyah.

E-learning approach is useful to students because this is a good opportunity for them to actively investigate and examine evidence. This is in line with a Form Three science student (S15, S16, S19)) who said: 'This approach could stimulate historical student-led enquiry. We learned investigation skills, that is, how to observe, examine and record findings'. Students (S27, S30) state that even more interestingly: Over time, we will begin to observe patterns and generalities, things that make consequences even easier to predict. They claimed that this would lead student to use evidence, draw conclusions and look at interpretation.

The 'E-learning approaches are Useful' is illustrated in figure 1 below:

Figure 1:
Advantages of the E-Learning Approaches

To develop		To spark/ stimulate
To motivate	E-Learning Approaches	Social skills
To investigate		Fulfill National Curriculum
Social experience		Teaching-learning method
Active Learning		International link
Teacher-student relation		

At the same time, this approach is useful to help students to develop other historical skills such as imagination and role play. This was mentioned by Form Four students (S21, S22, S25): 'We can act upon how the ruler entertained foreign guests as in the history of Kuala Terengganu which was then often visited by traders from Arab countries, China and Jawa'. On the other hand, the location of Kuala Terengganu town at the mouth of a river could be used by students to defend the town in a 'strategic thinking' discussion, as the 'Khandak Battle' at Madinah during the Prophet (s.a.w.).

Moreover, the e-learning approaches are useful to develop, stimulate or spark interest and enthusiasm. It is an active student-centred teaching and learning method that could encourage students to participate in asking questions such as in a quiz, game and role play in the classroom lessons (S22, S24, S26).

A Form Three students from a regular school stressed: E-learning approaches as useful for creating a 'noble learning environment' (S29). Even the first visit could help form the basis for future lessons. This is a good opportunity to re-affirm the 'interest in history' from concrete evidence. This is in line with one of the students who admitted: 'This is a good chance for a teacher to present the lesson in a different way and a different method of learning for students' (S27). Hence, this approach can also allow closer relations to develop between teacher and student.

Conclusion

The e-learning approaches can discover history through technology, extend use of technology beyond the classroom, increase students' chances to reach and surpass today's stringent education standards, inspire students to work in various capacities, develop various technological activities including Web page design, researching, scanning, creating layouts, and storyboarding, encourage cooperate and collaborative learning, provide opportunity to explore history by studying the development of featured sites including artifacts from museums around the world, educational resources for the classroom, interactive activities, multimedia presentations, and virtual tours that will help enhance students' learning and deepen their understanding of history. Students may enhance their self-efficacy through the learning and

appreciation about Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) and the four pious Caliphs or in exploring the life of a particular Caliph, e-learning approaches offer a variety of resources about the Prophethood, revelation of the Qur'an, Tawhīd, administration, da'wah, development of education & sciences, expansion of Islamic Empire. Students can discover that Islamic Civilization is great; it was based on justice and peace.