

# **Knowledge sharing practices: A panacea for promoting student's reading culture and faith integration in Babcock University Ilishan-Remo, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

*Reading is an essential tool for learning utilized in different educational set up. Learning assists in the promotion and development of the intellectual capacity of the learner. Reading culture refers to a habit that is developed over a period of time. It is a constant activity that helps the learner in cultivating a habit identified as a major determinant for student's success in education. It is an essential tool for knowledge sharing and faith integration. Reading culture and knowledge sharing has a symbiotic relationship as an academic activity that increases ones skills without which the integration of faith by a Christian educator may not be successful. This paper highlighted the concept of reading culture, addresses the role of knowledge sharing practices in enhancing the reading culture of students and as a platform for the integration of faith in the classroom especially at Babcock University, Nigeria. The paper, among other things, provided an overview of knowledge sharing with biblical examples. It x-rayed factors influencing knowledge sharing practices and the role of teachers by recommending among other methods of teaching, knowledge sharing techniques that can assist in faith integration in the classroom. The objective of this paper is to bring to light different methods of knowledge sharing available to the educator that will help integrate faith in and outside the class room. This paper will help Babcock University lecturers in creating an atmosphere of teaching conducive enough for the purpose of knowledge sharing with the view of integrating Adventist faith. It highlights that knowledge sharing practices should be encouraged as this will enhance the reading culture of students. Thereby paving way for the integration of faith in the classroom hence, improving personal, spiritual growth and academic development of the students.*

## **Introduction**

The concept of reading culture in schools especially in higher institution does not suddenly develop in a child's life rather it increases gradually depending on the exposure and background of the child. Some children are exposed to reading for entertainment, knowledge, interest and for information at an early age. Sadly, Nigeria seem to witness a low rate of reading culture among its current generation in the primary and secondary schools which in turn manifest negatively when they gain admission into higher institutions where reading is not negotiable. This is because reading has never been a cultural phenomenon that must be imbibed into the educational system of the child as he or she often read during the time of examination. The importance of reading culture cannot be over emphasized because it instils a culture of discipline to the individual. When students masters the act of reading, their skill level tend to increase and better chances of been successful in the school and life after school. In the words of Igwe, (2011) "when students become skilled and adaptable readers, it improves their chances of becoming successful at school and beyond". Without a holistic reading culture, the fundamental essence of faith integration may not be successful.

Beyond the constructive indices that characterizes a Christian institution. Indices such as chapel seminar attendance, student ministries, discipleship groups, missionary volunteers, prayer groups, and prayer initiation in the class before a course is delivered, and bible classes. The academic experience of the student in a Christian institution especially Seventh - day Adventist institutions must be different, going beyond the visible indicators that envelops it as a faith based school. That is the expectation of parents when they enroll their children to a Christian school. Parents wants and expect the entire learning experience of their child to be framed in a Christian worldview, integrated with the child's growing faith. They want to see the character of the child showcasing the biblical worldview experienced and acquired in a Christian institution. In a faith based Christian institutions like Babcock University, Christian academic excellence must be pursued, the course content must be Christ centered. The teachers has the primary responsibility of integrating faith in the classroom. In other words he/she must create a knowledge sharing environment and platform in which students can participate in the pedagogy of faith integration.

Knowledge is an essential component in any human activity. From an individual, group and organizational level, knowledge is perceived to represent a decisive, intelligent, competent behavior. Among the basic initiatives or activities of knowledge management, knowledge sharing is fundamental. Despite the rising interest among scholars on the concept of knowledge sharing both in corporate organization and academic institutions, it has not been fully integrated in higher institutions especially in this part of the divide. In our contemporary society the concept has developed a huge interest due to its benefits to an organization and society at large. Knowledge sharing is a process where individual mutually exchange their knowledge and jointly create new knowledge opele (2017). The main purpose of this paper is to look at knowledge sharing practices as an enabler in promoting reading culture and enhancing faith integration in the classroom.

### **A background to reading culture**

Reading is a complex activity which links the eyes with the mind to come up with interpretation of written symbols (olanlokun, 1999). Yilben and Kitgkka (2008) postulate that reading is a basic life skill as well as the corner stone of a child's success in school throughout his or her life. As such reading becomes an aspect of learning that must be taken seriously because it is a way of acquiring knowledge. Oyeyemi (2005) states that reading is a means of tapping knowledge from superior minds. Igbokwe, obidike and ezeji, (2012) summaries by stating that reading is an essential tool for lifelong learning and is important for everyone to develop the culture of reading so as to survive in life. The culture of reading as regular and consistent activity, involves the cultivation of an attitude and possession of skills that makes reading pleasurable.

The culture of reading have been identified as the single most important determinant of a student's success in education in our modern complex society (Nssien, 2008). Other scholars such as Magara and Batambuze (2005) in their study on the ways of creating a reading culture for Uganda refers to reading culture as a situation where reading is part of the peoples living an constitutes a habit that is shared by members of the society. It is sad to note as it has been observed by scholars that the reading culture of this current Nigerian generation has dropped drastically. Some authors blaming the school system from the primary to secondary while others tend to blame the role parents. The negativity of reading culture manifest when students finally

enroll into the university were reading is not negotiable as reading reports and countless academic excises are handed down to the student who may find them difficult to complete due to poor reading culture. In the context of a faith based institution such as Babcock University where the integration of faith is a mandate it becomes a thing of serious concern as the student may not be able to comprehend, digest and inculcate the biblical truth in the course learnt as a result of poor reading culture.

### **The concept faith integration**

In recent time, Christian education is being challenged especially in situations where not just the teaching of Christian worldview but the integration of biblical principles in teaching is being frowned at. Eric (n.d) in his article on integrating faith in the public schools without mixing church and state highlighted some bias against Christianity where educators are not allowed not just to use Christian resources to teach but Christian worldview are not authorized in the educational system. Eric states that secular mindset among educators and school officials has pushed legitimate education about Christianity off to an ever shrinking portion of a public school student's life. Children go through years of education and never learn anything of significance about Christianity. In the same instance, we face similar situation in which students come into our educational system with a bias understanding of biblical worldviews. What they were taught is totally different from the biblical truth especially from the context of Adventist fundamental belief and philosophy of education. Therefore, it becomes the duty of the Adventist educator to integrate Adventist faith in teaching and learning as to redirect the students to the biblical truth against their preconceived secular worldview.

There are different meanings to the concept of faith integration. Rasi (1993), defines integration of faith and learning as a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise from a biblical perspective. Its aim is to ensure that students under the influence of Christian teachers and by the time they leave school will have internalized biblical values and a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Christ-centered, service oriented and kingdom-directed. It has been noted by different Christian scholars that the foundational distinctive of a Christian faith based education is the integration of faith and learning. As highlighted earlier,

integration of faith goes beyond the practices of praying in the class before a course content is delivered, or the initiation of chapel seminar activities and forming of prayer groups among other activities. What according to Stephen and Jane (2008) is a common misconception of faith and learning integration. According to them this high powered spiritual formation does not make Christian college integration distinctive. What is core is a deeper integration of faith right from the subject matter of any course. In the same note, faith integration goes beyond the assemblage of a high profile Christian educators, having a sizable number of students in a Christian institution or an addition of biblical theological teachings. Faith integration is accomplished in how a student worldview interfaces with each discipline in other words, integration of faith must go beyond the course programming to having a lifelong impact on the student throughout his/her academic pursuit in an institution.

The literature reveals in practical terms tools for the integration of faith in the classroom. As highlighted by Stephen and Jane which are reflective action and integrative question. Reflective action emphasizes engaging the student through a three level hierarchy of reflective actions through their course of study. First level is the “how” question. The “How question” allows the student to reflect on questions on the knowledge claims within a course. According to them at this level students are taught how to distinguish verifiable facts from value claims, irrelevant and relevant information are looked at, student tend to determine the factual accuracy of statements including credibility of the sources, and also identify unstated assumptions, logical fallacies. Some question the educator may be asking includes what are the foundational assumptions that are stated in the course, how true is the knowledge claim. On the second level the students asks “so what” reflective questions. On this level the student deal with the interpretation of the facts. At this point it is within the reach of the student to reject or accept concepts, approaches based on reflective thinking and further reading. It is the sole responsibility of the educator to ask how does the claims or conclusion in the course fit in with Christian faith. The third level asks the question “now what” which is based on application. Since it allows for reflective thinking, students are made to reflect on issues based on the identified gaps or clash of ideologies contradicting their preconceived knowledge as the case may be. Questions such as where is the hope here, how might we reclaim this are for the glory of God can be asked by the teacher. The goal of this activity is to allow the students through the guidance of the educator ask some fundamental question as regard to the content of the course under discuss allowing the student to

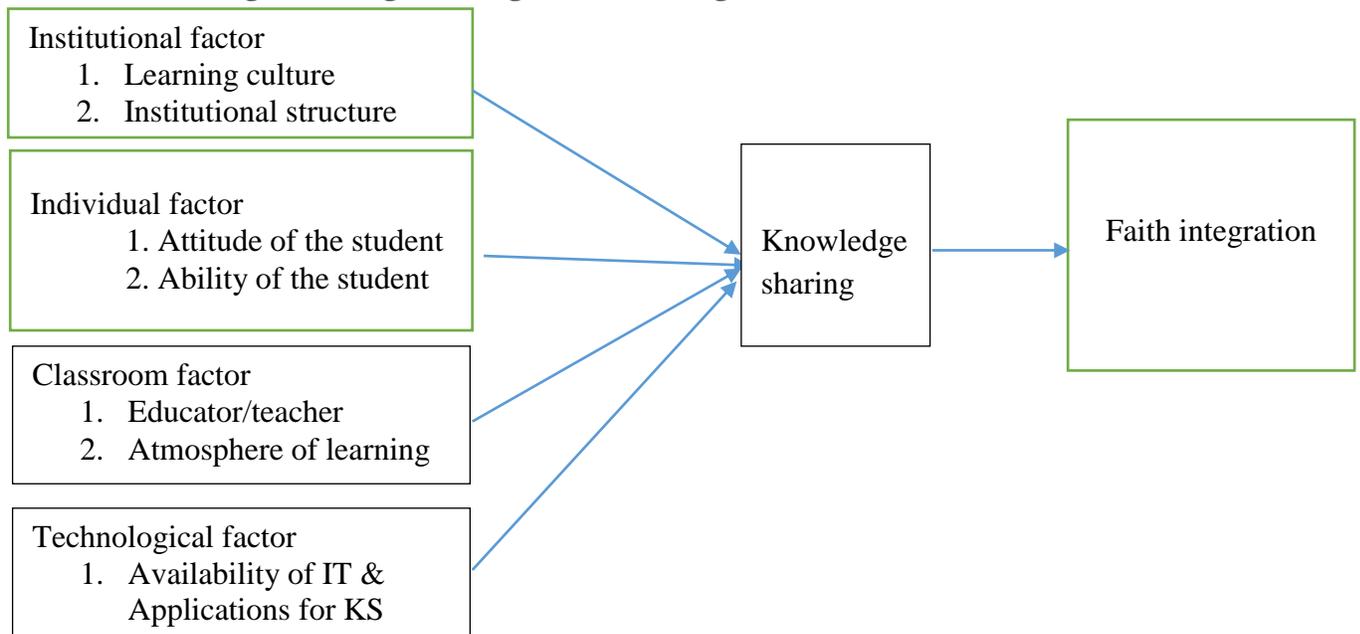
make some personal reflection through reading and asking question as to make life changing decision..

### **Knowledge sharing practices**

From a biblical standpoint, knowledge sharing has been a practice for ages. The scripture shows countless instances where God shares knowledge with his creation. In Genesis 3:8 God shared knowledge in the form of communication with Adam and eve. Looking at Genesis 1:28-30 scripture highlights instances where God takes his time to share knowledge with man, knowledge on how to take and carry out responsibilities. God also share knowledge with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Elisha and Elijah not to forget how God share explicit knowledge with Moses at Mount Sinai in form of the ten commandment. Also Jesus share tacit knowledge with his disciples in different settings, in teaching, in mentorship allowing them to ask fundamental questions. Specifically in Mathew 24; 14, 28; 18-20., Jesus commanded his disciples to make disciples of all nation, baptizing them in the name of the father and the son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things he has shared with them in form of teaching and faith integration that he will be with them till the end of the earth.

Knowledge sharing has be described by Heng-Li, Ted and Wu (2006) as and activity through which knowledge from one person, group or organization is transferred or spread to another person. From the works of Peterson and poulfelt, (2002), Chaudhry and Hawandeh, (2004) knowledge sharing involves face to face discussion with colleagues in class rooms through sign language, coaching, instruction in the form of teaching by listening, email, exchange, e-learning platforms, phone mail systems, discussion groups in the universities, interactions in the form of conversation and dialogues and chats.

## Factors influencing knowledge sharing and faith integration in the classroom



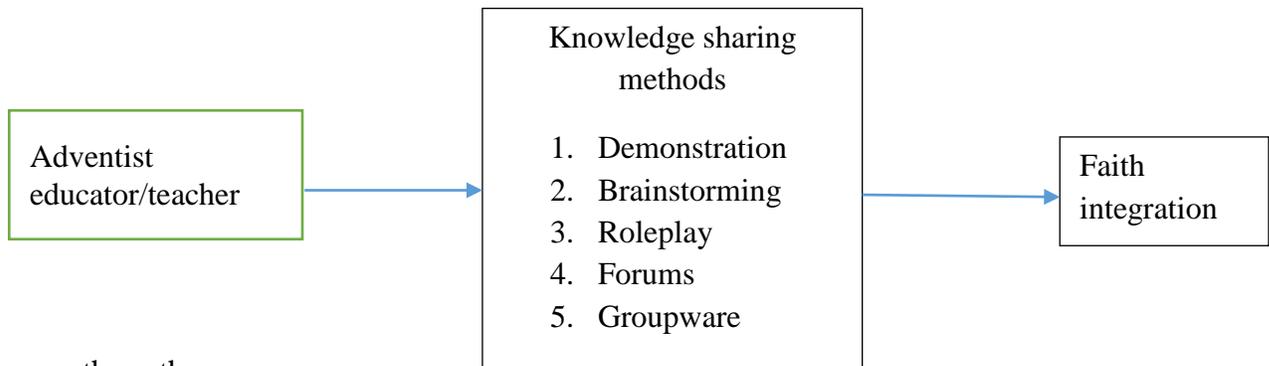
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*A conceptual model showing some factors that can influence knowledge sharing which in turn affects faith integration in the classrooms*

There are some factors that influence knowledge sharing. Chung and Lee (2007) identified such factors as individual, classroom and technologies. The individual factor lays emphasis on the willingness of an individual and his ability to share knowledge. Classroom factor is based on the support of the educator or the teacher in providing a conducive atmosphere for knowledge to be shared and technological factor which is dependent on the availability of the technology that support knowledge sharing. Other factors that influence knowledge sharing includes institutional structure and culture: Institutional structure and culture has a contributing factor to knowledge sharing practices among students in the university. Such practices includes knowledge creation, dissemination and utilization. The institution that cultivates the culture of knowledge sharing has the propensity of increasing the performance of her students. Learning culture also influences knowledge sharing in an institution. Learning culture is important to an institution to create and disseminate knowledge that is necessary for optimal performance in education. Institutions must create an environment that presents to the student that knowledge is subject to further

investigation in case of poor clarity. Presenting a new knowledge to the student as finite knowledge has its own short coming as the students may fill they are not allowed to scrutinize the validity of such knowledge presented to them. Hence the integration of faith in the class room must be done in such a way that the students are allowed to scrutinize the validity of such a knowledge that has bee presented to them so as to make informed decision.

### **Affirmative application of knowledge sharing and faith integration**



**Sources:** the author

#### *Conceptual model on the application of KS TO FI*

From the model above, the Christian educator/ teacher is at the front line in the process of initiating integration of faith not just in the class room but outside the classroom using different methods of teaching or knowledge sharing methods. Literature unveils different methods or types of teaching. These are teacher-centred methods, learner-centred methods, content-focused methods and interactive/participative methods. This paper proposes teaching/knowledge sharing techniques that can allow for knowledge to be shared, reading culture enhanced and making room for faith integration.

1. **Demonstration:** It has been observed that one of the most essential teaching skills is the ability to demonstrate, and the ability to explain. Demonstration involves showing by reason, explaining or making clear by use of examples or experiments. Demonstration has to do with any planned performance. it conceptualize class material more effectively as shown in a situation where students cannot or having a hard time understanding application of theories especially from a biblical perspective. For the purpose of faith integration teachers can group the students and join them in demonstrating the subject

matter. This will not only enhance the teaching strategy of the teacher but will allow for the integration of faith which will have a lasting impression on the mind of the students.

2. **Brainstorming:** Brainstorming is a medium of knowledge sharing that allows students to discover new ideas and respond to those ideas in a real time class room setting. It paves way of getting bright ideas and stimulates student interaction procedure. The focal point of brainstorming in a typical classroom setting is to collectively solve problems. Group of students are introduced to a problem and asked to brain storm for possible solutions or ideas. In this situation the goal of the teacher might be to ascertain the level of students understand or experience based on the content of the course. At this point the students are allowed to ask different questions and a debate like atmosphere is created where the teacher uses the opportunity not just to answer the various question resulting from the thinking section but to integrate faith by directing the students to the Christian world view especially Adventist world view in respect that the content under study. Brainstorming helps to increase spontaneity and rapidity of ideas, each participant is encouraged to call out his thought the instant an opening presents itself. It is highly motivating, increases task focus, and involves participant in the ownership of ideas (Dunn, Rita, & Kenneth, 1972)
3. **Role plays:** Role play as knowledge sharing techniques as well as a teaching method is useful in exploring, improving and examining the complexities and potential conflicts of group meetings. The teacher allows the student to use their own experiences to play a real life situation. When done well, role plays increase the student's self-confidence, give students the opportunity to understand and have a feeling of empathy for other people's viewpoints. According to some scholars role play help participants to consolidate different lessons in one setting and are good energizers.
4. **Forums:** The creation of small groups and large forums by the educator can serve as an opportunity to share knowledge among students. The educator has the responsibility of organizing students in different forums with learning in mind. The forums can be planned to be interactive, allowing students to make mini presentations in which questions that are difficult to handle by the student presenter are referred to the teacher who handles the

questions. The educator can as well send assignments to different forums, assign some reading text to the students for the purpose of clarity in grey areas.

5. Groupware: The intervention of information Communication technology (ICT) in education has made teaching and learning seamless. ICT is an important tool for a successful knowledge sharing implementation (Hwang, 2003). Knowledge sharing through technology leaves a lasting impression in the mind of the student even after the duration of the course. The use of group wares such as lotus ([www.lotus.com](http://www.lotus.com)) and project place ([www.projectplace.com](http://www.projectplace.com)) facilitate collaboration and communication within groups. A group ware provides a virtual space within which participants can share documents and experiences (Markwick 2001). The virtual space on the group ware can be organized into different virtual rooms or folders based on different topics or content to be discussed. Example of this platform is the use of google class room where and educator can allow students to be invited in to the class and teaching and faith integration can take place. Also the used of moodle application, WhatsApp application are good examples of platforms in which the Christian teacher can explore with the view of integrating faith in the class room.

This knowledge sharing platforms enables the reading culture of the student to be enhanced. Because materials can be forwarded to the student for further reading. In creating a knowledge sharing platform for students, the educator is as well enhancing the reading culture of the student. Making the student to study independently when outside the circle of the group. The investigative or further research attitude of the student will be enhanced.

## **Conclusion**

The Christian educator, especial an Adventist educator has been specifically called by God to be steward of his creation. The role of the Christian teacher is to redirect the minds of the student to biblical precepts through teaching, mentoring towards how to think within the context of Christian world view especially Adventist world view. The integration of faith in the classroom especially in an Adventist higher institution assist the student to understand who we are as

created beings and how we are to respond to the world as his creation. The Christian truth well integrated in the class room give direction to the students beyond the school environment and in the acquisition of further knowledge. According to Stephen and Jane in citing Apostle Paul states thus “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what Gods will is –his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Rom, 12:2).

As Christian Adventist educators called to integrate not just Christian worldview but Adventist worldview, the task of faith integration should be ingrained in the course content running throughout the duration of the course using different knowledge sharing platforms. The Adventist educator should go beyond looking at the indicators of a Christian institution as the bases of integration of faith. Indicators such as chapel seminars activities, prayer groups etc which does not mostly follow the student open graduation. The Adventist educator must strive to integrate faith in which must sink into the foundational assumptions and epistemology of our academic pursuits (beers & beers, 2008)

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