

Institute for Christian Teaching
Education Department of Seventh-day Adventists

MEASURING INTEGRATION OF FAITH AND LEARNING
AT AN SDA COLLEGE: TWO ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of Christian education is to bring man back to his original nature and relationship with God his Creator. For many Christian educators, this goal can be achieved not only by teaching Bible courses in the schools but also by permeating Christian teaching (faith) through all non-Bible courses and activities (learning). Thus the concept of integration of faith and learning (IFL) in every aspect of school life.

Evidence from related literature indicates that many Christian educators have seen the need for integration of faith and learning and, as well, have accepted the challenge to implement it (Walsh and Middleton 1984, Heie and Wolfe 1987, Gaebelain 1968, Holmes 1975, and Rasi 1990). However, there seems to be hardly any instruments available to educators for measuring the extent to which they actually integrate faith and learning, and the effectiveness of such integration.

The need for such instruments was recognised by Denison (1989:15), and Kim (1989:14) who, after examining certain aspects of IFL, recommended that school administrators should develop an instrument for measuring the success of IFL programme overtime. Of course, the Bible admonishes the Christian to test and examine himself to see whether he is holding the faith (1 Corinth. 11:28, 2 Corinth. 13:5).

The Problem and Purpose

The problem addressed in this paper is two-fold:

1. To develop an instrument designed to help a teacher assess himself on the extent to which he integrates faith and learning; and
2. To develop an instrument designed to enable a school assess itself, through students' views, the extent to which a teacher integrates faith and learning

The purpose of this is to afford Christian teachers and administrators with knowledge valuable for improving the integration of faith and learning.

Definitions

The following terms are being defined as used in this paper:

1. Integration of faith and learning (IFL) refers to appropriate permeating of Christian teachings and beliefs through every aspect of school curricular and extra-curricular activity.
2. School denotes any formal educational institution.

Assumption

It is assumed that teachers and students will be sufficiently objective and fair in their assessments on the IFL.

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF IFL

The concept of integration of faith and learning has been addressed by many Christian scholars with the intent of delineating what it actually means and what it covers. Writing on this subject, Gaebelein (1968:IX-X) notes that:

To declare allegiance to an educational point of view is one thing; to integrate a school or college in all its parts - curriculum, student activities, administration, and everything else - with that point of view is another thing.

Further, Gaebelein states that the

...integration in Christian education...is the living union of its subject matter, administration, and even of its personnel with the eternal and infinite pattern of God's truth (p.9).

Gaebelein's idea on integration could therefore be said to be one of total immersion of every college activity - curricular and extra-curricular - in the word of God.

Several Christian educators seem to advocate this immersionist view. According to Holmes (1987:6) the unique task of a Christian college is to cultivate "the creative and active integration of faith and learning, of faith and culture." It is neither the often-seen interaction of faith and

learning nor "a disjunction between piety and scholarship...." Similarly, Rasi (1990:9) observes that:

The integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and systematic process of approaching the entire educational enterprise from a biblical perspective. In a Seventh-day Adventist setting, its aim is to ensure that students, by the time they leave school, will have freely internalized a view of knowledge, life, and destiny that is Bible-based, Christ-centered, service oriented, and kingdom oriented.

In addition, Rasi (1990a:1), after distinguishing integration from dysfunction, injunction and conjunction, asserts that in integration, Christianity starts from a biblical worldview and then "thoroughly permeates all aspects of learning -- including subject matter -- in the school life."

White (1952:30) affirms that "the work of education and the work of redemption are one." Elaborating on this she states that:

To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that the divine purpose in his creation might be realized - this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life (pp. 15,16).

Commenting on higher education White (1923:431) also declares that, "The true higher education is what makes students acquainted with God and His word, and fits them for eternal."

Evidently, White's idea of Christian education is one in which God is the center of every activity and redemption is the primary objective.

The role of a Christian school in the integration of faith and learning has also been alluded to by Knight (1980:224). In his view, the Christian school is to provide not only the knowledge for "the evangelistic imperative of the church but also practical guided activities" that will enable students perform their individual role in the light of the Bible.

The Bible is not silent on the integration of faith and learning. The Scripture declares that "the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7). This suggests that every knowledge should be acquired in the light of the expressed will of God since all true knowledge comes from God

(James 3:17, John 14:16). The Bible further instructs:

And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

Precisely, this Bible passage enjoins Christians to permeate the word of God through virtually every aspect of life and learning - spiritual, mental, physical and social.

From the foregoing, it is very evident that integration of faith and learning means a thorough penetration of a learning activity with the word of God. Moreover, integration is not limited to a number of learning activities. Instead, it covers every aspect of human endeavour be it mental, physical, social or spiritual.

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF THE TEACHER ON IFL

Successful implementation of IFL, like any other academic programme, requires, among other things, support from the administration, effort from the teacher and co-operation from the student. The role of the teacher, however, is very crucial. Gaebelain (1968:37) recognized and emphasized this point when he exclaimed:

Yes, the crux of the problem, lies with the teacher. The fact is inescapable: the world view of the teacher, in so far as he is effective, gradually conditions the world view of the pupil. No man teaches out of a philosophical vacuum. In one way or another, every teacher expresses the convictions he lives by, whether they be spiritually positive or negative.

The determinant role of the teacher on IFL is also noted by Holmes (1987:82). For him:

The teacher is the key to a climate of learning. His teaching is his ministry. His enthusiasm about ideas, his scholarship, and the importance he places on teaching provide a model.

Similarly White (1943:48) affirms that teachers have the opportunity and privilege of molding the minds and characters of the youth in their care. In order to have a positive spiritual influence on the student, White (1943:73) instructs that the Christian teacher should have self-control, patience, forbearance, gentleness and love. Further, he should be friendly, courteous, selfless and counselors to students (pp. 93-94); humble, faithful, kind, merciful, peaceful, and without any folly in his conversation (pp. 151). Also, he should be sympathetic, self-respectful, neither quick-tempered nor punishing students harshly, and exalting and glorifying Christ in all he does (pp. 152).

It is interesting to note that idealistic philosophers also see the role of the teacher as crucial. As Knight (1980:49) has explained, this group of thinkers sees the teacher as a living example of what the student can become in both their intellectual and social lives. A list for teacher self-assessment presented by Olds (1983) has been cited by Torres (1988:12). Through this list it appears that Olds has indirectly delineated certain responsibilities of the teacher. Some of the responsibilities will apply to the IFL concept and could be rephrased as follows:

1. Does the teacher plan skillfully for an effective teaching-learning situation?
2. Does the teacher individualize instruction where appropriate?
3. Does the teacher facilitate intellectual, motor skills and value development?
4. Does the teacher state and assess behavioural objectives effectively and efficiently?
5. Does the teacher accurately obtain scores on tests and use the information to improve the conditions of learning?
6. Does the teacher adjust values integration activities to group level of development?
7. Does the teacher facilitate development of moral character and moral behaviour?

In the light of the foregoing, it seems appropriate to state that the role of the Christian teacher in IFL is crucial and even determinant. Several duties or responsibilities associated with the role of the teacher have been identified. The list is not exhaustive and one can justly add to

it praying, playing, working, and discussing appropriate life issues together with students. Since the teacher is the student's role model it is important therefore that the teacher assesses himself on the basis of these and other related responsibilities in order to identify the areas where improvement is necessary in IFL. The remaining part of this paper presents two instruments for such teacher assessment.

MEASURING INSTRUMENTS FOR IFL

Two instruments are developed in this paper. One is for a teacher to assess himself, and the other is for a school to measure the performance of a teacher on IFL programme.

The Development and Testing of a Teacher Self-Assessment

Questionnaire

The teacher self-assessment questionnaire is an instrument designed to help a Christian teacher assess himself on the extent to which he integrates faith and learning in his curricular and extra-curricular activities. The questionnaire uses frequency to measure the extent of integration of faith and learning by a teacher.

The questions were developed with full cognisance of the curricular and extra-curricular activities of a Christian teacher; and the responsibilities already outlined in this paper form the basis of most of the questions.

The questionnaire was piloted among twenty Christian teachers and administrators and their suggestions were useful in developing the final instrument as exhibited.

INTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LEARNING:

TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION

Please indicate the Frequency at which you do each of the following by circling the number that stands for the frequency:

- Note: 1. Stands for seldom
 2. " " often
 3. " " always

Activity	Frequency		
	1	2	3
<u>A. MENTAL</u>			
1. Specifying objectives (including spiritual) in the syllabus	1	2	3
2. Assessing spiritual/value objectives in tests	1	2	3
3. Individualizing IFL when necessary	1	2	3
<u>B. SPIRITUAL</u>			
4. Appropriately relating subject matter to spiritual/value lessons	1	2	3
5. Counselling individual students on spiritual/value matters	1	2	3
6. Witnessing with your students	1	2	3
7. Praying with your students	1	2	3
<u>C. PHYSICAL/SOCIAL</u>			
8. Doing manual work with your students	1	2	3
9. Playing (games/sports) with your students	1	2	3
10. Dining with your students	1	2	3

Usage of the Teacher Self-Assessment
Instrument and its Data

The teacher self-assessment questionnaire, as the name implies, is to be self-administered by the teacher. It must be emphasized that this instrument is effective only to the extent in which the teacher is objective and honest in answering the questions. By answering the questions the teacher is reminded of his responsibilities on the integration of Christian faith and learning. Also, he becomes aware of those responsibilities that need greater attention for improvement. It is therefore recommended that a teacher self-administers this questionnaire twice in a quarter or term. It is also recommended that the first administration be at the beginning of the quarter, and the second in the middle of the quarter.

Information obtained from an objective self-assessment should be for the teacher's professional self-improvement. It should lead him to making modifications necessary for more effective integration of faith and learning. Knowledge about such modifications could be gained through further diligent searches, and consultation with colleagues.

The Development and Testing of the Teacher Assessment Questionnaire

The teacher assessment questionnaire is an instrument designed to enable a school measure, through students opinion, the extent to which teachers integrate faith and learning. This questionnaire is essentially the same as the teacher self-assessment questionnaire except that the questions are re-worded to apply to the student. It was also piloted among experienced Christian teachers, administrators, and students whose suggestions were incorporated in developing the final instrument shown below.

INTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND LEARNING:
TEACHER ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTION

Please indicate the Frequency of the following with regard to your teacher by circling the number that stands for the frequency:

- Note: 1. Stands for seldom
 2. " " often
 3. " " always

Activity	Frequency		
	S	O	A
A. <u>MENTAL</u>			
1. Teacher specifies objectives (including spiritual) in the syllabus	1	2	3
2. Teacher assesses spiritual/value objectives in tests	1	2	3
3. Teacher individualizes IFL as necessary	1	2	3
B. <u>SPIRITUAL</u>			
4. Teacher appropriately relates subject matter to spiritual/value lessons	1	2	3
5. Teacher counsels you on spiritual/value matters	1	2	3
6. Teacher witnesses with you	1	2	3
7. Teacher prays with you	1	2	3
C. <u>PHYSICAL/SOCIAL</u>			
8. Teacher does manual work with you	1	2	3
9. Teacher plays (games/sports) with you	1	2	3
10. Teacher dines with you	1	2	3

Usage of the Teacher Assessment
Instrument and its Data

The teacher assessment questionnaire should be administered to students by the Academic Dean and/or the Registrar of a school with an enrolment of about 300 students. For a school of about 400 students and above, with larger Departments the questionnaire should be administered by the Department Chair. Separate answer sheets with a space for course title should be used for students's responses so that the question sheets could be reused several times -- this will help reduce costs. It is recommended that the questionnaire be administered yearly during the eighth week of the spring quarter. At this time, the questionnaire should be administered to the students of at least two classes of each teacher. The need for objective responses should be emphasized to students.

The data collected from each teacher's classes should be carefully analyzed - taking advantage of the less busy summer quarter. The summary of the findings on each teacher's performance should be presented to him in good time by the Academic Dean/Registrar/Dept. Chair to enable him make modifications, if any, in preparation for the autumn quarter.

Information gathered from the teacher assessment instrument should give the school administrators a good knowledge of the status of integration of faith and learning in their school. With such a knowledge the administrators can plan on how to make things better as there is always room for improvement.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This paper addressed the problem of developing instruments designed to help a teacher and a school assess a teacher integration of Christian faith and learning. The role of the teacher was seen to be crucial in IFL and, as such, two similar questionnaires were developed based on the responsibilities of the teacher.

The teacher self-assessment questionnaire will be invaluable in reminding the Christian teacher of his duties in the integration of Christian faith and learning. This questionnaire will also make the teacher aware of specific areas of his responsibility that need greater attention for improvement in IFL.

Similarly, the teachers assessment questionnaire will afford school administrators valuable insight on the state of integration of faith and learning in their school. With such insight, plans for improvement in the future could be made.

The success of any integration of Christian faith and learning programme will depend to a large degree on how well Christian teachers and administrators accept and apply valuable approaches like the ones presented in this paper.

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