



# **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN AFRICAN CONTEXT**

---

*A Presentation at ABTEN Meeting 2019, Brackenhurst, Nairobi*

# INTRODUCTION

- ❖ Is Plagiarism a moral or integrity issue?
- ❖ Plagiarism is defined as ‘academic theft.’ This act is complex to many people. It is generally described as lifting information or mix phrases without proper acknowledgement or replacing expressions with synonyms even if source information is noted. There are those who feel that unconscious borrowing could be excused while other feels it is an excuse.

---

Diana Hacker, *Rules for Writers: A Brief Handbook*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985), 320-321, 326-328.





# INTRODUCTION

---

- ❖ How much borrowing can be done without reference to source?
- ❖ How much references should be given?
- ❖ Is there any knowledge that is original to a particular researcher?
- ❖ Is knowledge not a virtual reality?
- ❖ Can there not be intuition that appears replication of earlier expressions?
- ❖ Are students being victimized when held responsible for plagiarism?



# INTRODUCTION

---

❖ It is difficult to argue that one can use information from others without knowing that they came across such ideas or thoughts from others. Often times, the actual source may not have come readily to mind; especially when discussing a familiar subject.





# INTRODUCTION

---

❖ The identity of plagiarism is complicated in Africa as a result of the traditional mode of transmission of knowledge – the fold tales. These are stories about wisdom, love, hospitality, marriage, obedience, etc. These are used to communicate virtues of society. They are repeated stories intended to be retold from generation to generation to build the morals of the society. The interest is in the morals being inculcated not the source of the content. The end value of the body of knowledge is the concern not necessarily the first representation of such knowledge associated with a source. In the light of the complexity of the act of plagiarism, certain factors affect its definition and the response provided to it.



# INTRODUCTION

---

❖ This reflection identifies the factors responsible and steps that could be taken to curb plagiarism. This presentation is given based on the observations and general expressions in research classes; the questions students ask; the factors that inform the questions and the general reactions towards institutional efforts at curbing the act. It is also an invitation to discussions at this forum (ABTEN) intended to harness insight toward raising authentic Christian African scholarship marked with academic integrity.





## FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMPROMISE OF INTEGRITY

---

- ❖ Giving of attention to ‘success’ and financial gain over-against acquisition of skill and competence
- ❖ Inadequate exposure of students to standard academic practice
- ❖ Ill-prepared teaching
- ❖ Cultural definition of honesty – Issues here concerns mode of teaching, goals of teaching superseding authorship matter, use to satisfy need versus commercial purpose,



## FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COMPROMISE OF INTEGRITY

---

- ❖ The mode of teaching leaning set in place
- ❖ Careless approaches to research
- ❖ Compromise in regards to entry requirements
- ❖ Inadequate supervision
- ❖ Dealing with issues not contextually cogent – driven by rote learning or indoctrination rather than investigation for solution to real contextual challenge



# COMMON FORMS OF PLAGIARISM

The most common forms of plagiarism include:

- ❖ 'Copy and paste' – Both large and small contents are lifted from print and online sources and used without giving credit
- ❖ Lift of words, ideas, and structures without references and quotation marks
- ❖ Paraphrasing and over dependency
- ❖ Padding of information
- ❖ Writing by someone else



# COMMON FORMS OF PLAGIARISM

---

❖ These are major samples. Institutions responses to these are informed by how much they are aware of the challenge. Some institutions have rules about the management of plagiarism but may not be elaborate. Some may not take the institution's rules seriously because they do not think of plagiarism as a serious moral issue if at all it is. So, some examples of responses are noted below.



# RESPONSE TO PLAGIARISM

## ❖ Sample provision in School's Documents

“Each student is expected to do his own work in preparation for the successful fulfilment of all the requirements of the courses in which he is enrolled. Any form of cheating, whether in examinations, tests, term papers, project, reports or otherwise will be dealt with severely and may lead to suspension or dismissal. Cheating also includes not giving persons or written sources appropriate credit through footnotes, bibliography, etc. (in other words) Plagiarism is appropriating material from another writer and passing it off as one's own work. It is a form of theft. It is unethical and shall attract punishment. Students must not plagiarise. All work should be documented properly.”

*BTSK Academic Catalogue, 2018-2014 (28-29).*

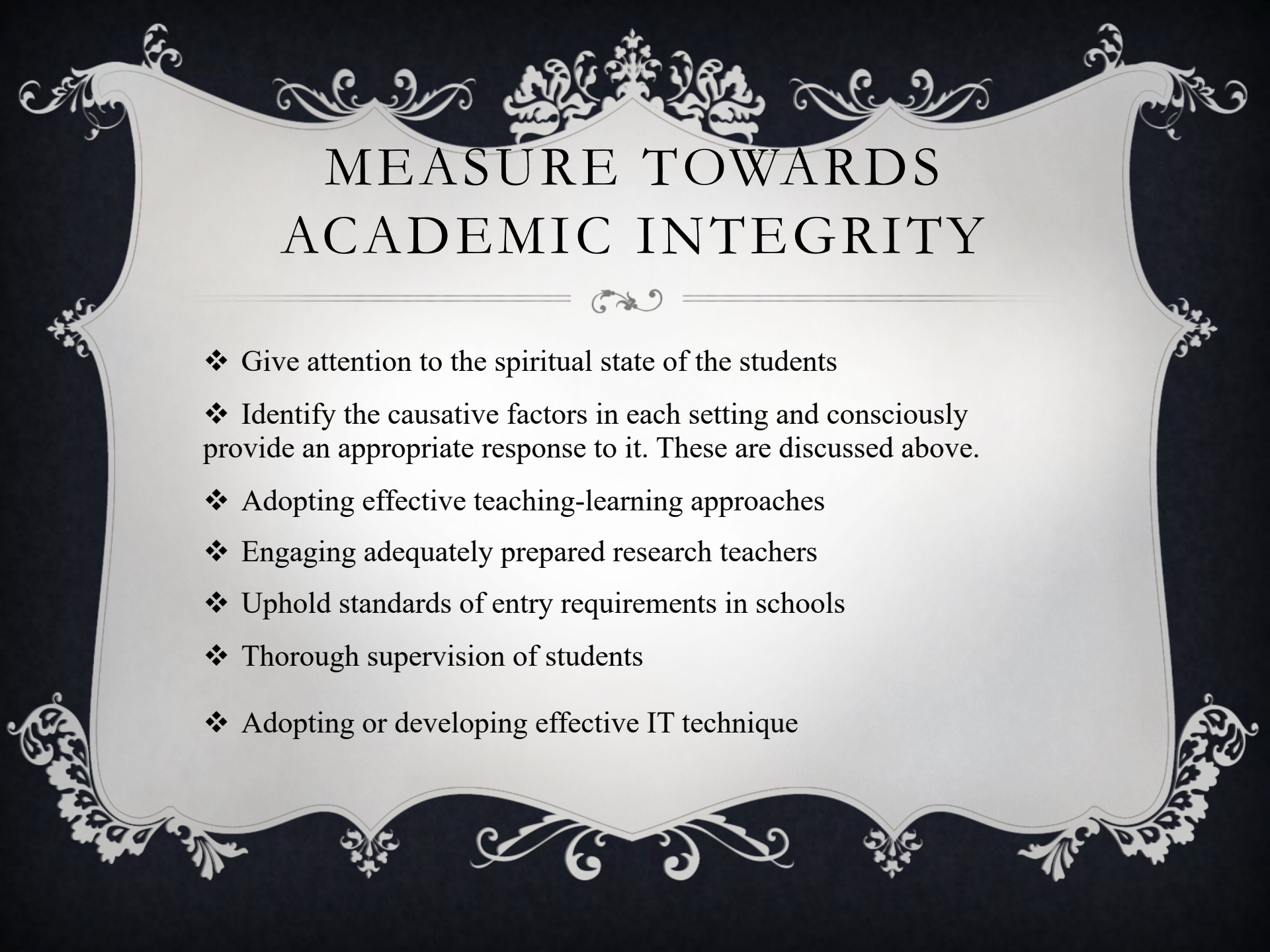


# RESPONSE TO PLAGIARISM

---

- ❖ Accommodation
- ❖ Mild punishment
- ❖ Harsh Response
- ❖ Dynamic Conciliar Response





# MEASURE TOWARDS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

---

- ❖ Give attention to the spiritual state of the students
- ❖ Identify the causative factors in each setting and consciously provide an appropriate response to it. These are discussed above.
- ❖ Adopting effective teaching-learning approaches
- ❖ Engaging adequately prepared research teachers
- ❖ Uphold standards of entry requirements in schools
- ❖ Thorough supervision of students
- ❖ Adopting or developing effective IT technique



# CONCLUSION

---

- ❖ There is the need to affirm that plagiarism is a compromise of academic and Christian integrity.
- ❖ Scriptural basis include but not limited to:
  - 2 Timothy 2:15 “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”
  - Titus 2:7 “In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness.”