Describing Spiritual Growth in an Online Religious Education Course: A Phenomenological Perspective

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Abstract
An estimated 33% of all college students take at least one online class (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Online classes are offered across a wide range of domains, including courses designed for spiritual development. Little research exists examining students' experiences in these types of classes. The purpose of this research is to help address this gap by describing the phenomenon of spiritual growth in an online religious education course. Brigham Young University-Idaho (BYU-Idaho) offers online courses designed to help students grow spiritually. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten students who took one of these classes and who reported positive gains in spirituality as a result of the course on an end-of-course survey. Interviews focused on two major ideas: First, how did students describe the difference between previous face-to-face religious education experiences and their experience in the online course? Second, what elements of the online course encouraged spiritual growth? Ideas from each interview were combined to create some key observations and a potential model for online religious education that reflects these observations. Findings suggest participants took a great deal of ownership of their own spiritual journey. The online course encouraged this through a curriculum that was flexible enough for students to explore, yet at the same time provided a structured environment for growth. Reflection through writing appeared to be important for students' success. Participants felt online instructors played a less prominent role in their spiritual journey than face-to-face instructors. The online course appeared to change the traditional role of the instructor from one who provides direct instruction into one who acts more as a guide and a facilitator. Interactions between students appeared to have minimal impact on spiritual growth as this particular course was designed, but some interviews suggest this is an area for potential impact.

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This is a phenomenological study of individual conversion experiences to Christianity from different religious traditions in India. The author has collected. This study also brings to light the hostilities to conversion in a multi-religious context. This is a preview of subscription content, log in to check access. Access options. Buy single article. Religion and the individual: A social-psychological perspective. New York: Oxford University Press. Google Scholar. Therefore, Christian education and spiritual development are more than just learning about the Bible. Included is the processing of Biblical knowledge and applying it to one's personal life throughout life (Estep, 2002). A phenomenological investigation was the most appropriate method to address the purpose of this study. Phenomenology is a description of the various experiences of a specific concept by those who. The Role of Spirituality. It depends on my exhibiting growth in front of you. Participants discussed whether they believe their staff perceives them as the spiritual leaders of their schools. Eight participants indicated their staff sees them this way. 3. How to grow spiritually. After we start our spiritual journey, it is important to gradually increase the level of our spiritual practice on a regular basis. The below table provides practical direction to seekers who would like to ensure that they do not waste any time and who want to gain a firm foundation for life-long spiritual practice. It can be used as a reference to assess one's efforts over an initial 2-year time-frame. [Please click on the below image to enlarge]. The steps outlined in the table are in line with the spiritual practice recommended for today's times. They also take i