

9 A Spiritually Integrative Digital Pedagogy

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A spiritually integrative pedagogy in a highly interactive digital context helps students experience and practice life-giving, spiritually integrative care of whole sexual selves. We argue that the process of spiritual integration is foundational to learning about and practicing intercultural, evidence-based spiritual care. We define five competencies for such spiritual care, provide research on their importance, name intended learning outcomes, and illustrate our pedagogical strategies. The competencies are: (1) body-awareness of stress, emotions, and related values and beliefs about suffering and hope; (2) self-differentiation; (3) theological empathy and reflexivity; (4) cultural humility and intercultural competence; and (5) critical thinking skills in religious, theological, psychological, and cultural studies. This chapter describes how online teaching provides opportunities to demonstrate and assess competencies for spiritual care.

Our approach to intercultural spiritual care builds trust by listening for and respecting what is unique in the ways persons and communities search for meaning and experience transcendence and mystery.¹ A particularist comparative studies approach argues that searching for ways to talk about and do research on what is shared or universal across religions in the world inevitably erases what is unique and particular to each religion or culture (Hedges 2010; Moyaert 2012). Spiritual care in religiously diverse medical, military, educational, and prison contexts needs to be both intercultural and evidence-based in its use of psychological research on how aspects of religion and spirituality may help or harm people seeking whole sexual selves. Our socially just approach builds on an institutional commitment to social justice, especially in understanding how intersecting aspects of social identity often compound suffering arising from religious and spiritual struggles over sexuality.²

In our online classroom, students learn how to offer intercultural spiritual care to each other. We use both pluralistic and particularistic approaches to religions in the world to appreciate the shared and personal layers of spiritual orienting systems that shape values, beliefs, relationships, and ways of coping with aspects of sexuality. In what follows we describe how using this spiritually integrative online pedagogy alongside