

DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL GROWTH JOURNAL FOR PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHER

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to elaborate on the steps of developing a printed spiritual growth journal for pre-service English teachers at the University of Pelita Harapan Teachers College. As a Christian university with a solid vision and mission applying holistic education, it is urgently needed to nurture and develop students' spirituality and to redeem learning lost due to COVID-19. The first part of Gall et al.'s (2015) research and development model is employed to produce a printed spiritual growth journal that begins with a needs analysis as initial research and information collection with lecturers from the Faculty and Christian religion education study program participated in it. The printed journal is designed to be used in nine weeks with four points to be filled and reflected to help the pre-service English teachers evaluate and understand self, express thoughts and feelings to the Lord, remember God's work in their life, and record their progress in all spiritual disciplines. This journal is recommended to be used not only for the new students but also for the existing ones, with feedback from the lecturer. For future research, it is suggested to replicate and modify it for 1st-year novice English teachers in their reciprocation as a means for professional development.

Keywords: *English language education, journal, pre-service teachers, spiritual growth.*

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INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teachers in the English language education program faced many challenges in their study due to COVID-19 which resulted in learning loss. The learning lost in a Christian higher education such as the University of Pelita Harapan is not only in the common cognitive, affective, and psychomotoric aspects but also in the spiritual aspect. Ream and Glanzer (2013) stated that Christian universities are guided by such a grand narrative so the purposes of Christian universities will diverge significantly from secular institutions. In contrast to secular universities, Christian universities place God and the worship and the study of God, particularly theology, at the center of learning. They added that the most important endeavor of institutions of higher education should be cultivating, directing, ordering, and enriching the students' loves in the context of their most important relationships and human practices. Therefore, the writers believe there is a need to ensure the accomplishment of the graduate profiles, a mature Christian teacher with international standards who impacts the community. The writers then proposed a spiritual check-up journal for pre-service teachers in the English language education program.

Christian pre-service teachers are trained to have a biblical worldview and that worldview determines how they think and teach. As there is no neutrality in education, if these pre-service teachers are not reflecting a God-honoring worldview in their understanding of their subject areas, pedagogy, and school structures, then they will be reflecting and nurturing their students in the future children in an idolatrous worldview (Edlin, 2008). Therefore, pre-service teachers must know the grand narrative of the Bible: Creation, fall, redemption, and fulfillment. They also need time to ponder and internalize it during their college years so they will be ready for their practicum and reciprocation.

Whitney (2014) stated that as a Christian, a journal is a place to record the works and ways of God in his or her life. The journals can also include a diary of personal relationships, a notebook of insights into Scripture, and a list of prayer requests. Klug (2001) added that it can also be a tool for self-discovery, an aid to concentration, and a mirror for the soul. When the journal is written or typed in English, there will be room for practice and improvement for the students as feedback from lecturers can also cover the technical things such as grammar, vocabulary choice, and effective writing. This opportunity confirmed the writer's plan to develop and try out the journal in the English study program. Willard

(1988) added that spirituality is not merely a concept we should strive for. It constitutes an inherent aspect of our being that we cannot elude, regardless of our thoughts or emotions towards it. It embodies both our essence and our ultimate path. So teachers need to make sure of their spirituality before teaching their students. One of the most important things in Christian education is to help students to know and experience Jesus in their personal life. So, it is impossible for teachers to teach the students that vision if their spirituality is not good enough. It is in accordance with the statement of Lase (2021) that Christian teachers should have good spirituality so that they can be role models in their teaching.

In addition to teaches spirituality, Tisdell (2001) believes that spirituality serves as a means through which individuals shape understanding and significance. It collaborates with the emotional, the intellectual, and the hidden and symbolic realms. Gibson (2014) also mentioned that we live in a fallen world, and it is not about what happened, it is about how we respond to it. So, Christian teachers should pay attention to their spiritual growth in order to have a more effective impact on the growth of their students. Just like what Graham (2003) stated, God reveals Himself and His truth to us throughout the Scriptures so that we might live accordingly. In order to do so, we must understand God's truth, grasp its meaning in our lives, and then do something about it.

In addition to the previous contexts, there is a connection between this spiritual growth journal and with few courses that the students took: Spiritual Formation and Foundations of Christian Education, both are three credits. The lecturers who delivered those courses supported and confirmed the writers' intention to investigate and develop a more formal spiritual check-up journal to be used throughout the students' first year of college and even for a more extended period. Moreover, an affirmation came from the curriculum team in the foundation who stated that this journal can be useful and visible to be used in the senior high school later. As Gall et.al (2015) stated that in order for educational research to play a role in improving practice, educators need to participate in an ongoing dialogue with professional researchers. The writers decided to collaborate to conduct this R & D research. With those contexts mentioned above, this paper aims to elaborate on the preliminary steps of developing a spiritual check-up journal for the English language education program and to share possible forms of it.

METHODS

The research and development method employed in this study followed the initial phases of Gall et al.'s (2015) framework, focusing on needs analysis and product development. The study commenced with a thorough needs analysis, encompassing stages one to three of the research process, culminating in the creation of the primary product prototype. To gather essential information, an informal onsite needs analysis was conducted among lecturers responsible for teaching courses on Spiritual Formation and Foundations of Christian Education (FCE), which included content related to spiritual journals.

In addition to the onsite needs analysis, a structured survey was administered to nine lecturers from the Christian religious education program in August 2022. The survey, conducted using Microsoft Forms, featured open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their views freely without being constrained by predetermined response options. This approach aimed to elicit detailed and insightful responses from the participants, providing valuable input for the research.

By combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, the researchers were able to gather a comprehensive understanding of the needs and preferences of educators regarding spiritual journals in the context of Christian education. The insights gained from these analyses informed the subsequent stages of product development, guiding the creation of a prototype that aligned closely with the identified needs and expectations of the target audience.

Furthermore, the iterative nature of the research and development process allowed for continuous refinement and improvement of the product prototype based on feedback and insights gathered from the needs analysis. This systematic approach ensured that the final product would effectively address the identified needs and provide meaningful support to educators in incorporating spiritual journals into their teaching practices.

In summary, the research methodology adopted in this study followed a structured and systematic approach, leveraging both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to inform the development of a tailored product prototype that meets the specific needs of educators in the field of Christian education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Upon reviewing the needs analysis provided by Christian religion education lecturers, it became evident that there was a consensus regarding the necessity of a printed journal for pre-service teachers. The lecturers recognized the journal as more than just a tool for reflection; they viewed it as a means for self-discovery and a mirror for the soul. This perspective highlights the profound impact that the journal is expected to have on the spiritual and personal development of the students at Teachers College.

Furthermore, the lecturers expressed support for the concept of the printed journal serving as a sacred space for students to document the works and ways of God in their lives. By emphasizing the importance of recording spiritual experiences and charting progress in spiritual disciplines, the journal is positioned as a tangible representation of the students' faith journey and growth. Additionally, the lecturers underscored the journal's role in fostering accountability among students, encouraging them to set and strive towards their spiritual goals.

Table 1, presented below, outlines the specific suggestions provided by the Christian religion education lecturers regarding the content, layout, and name of the printed journal. Their input offers valuable insights into the desired features and characteristics that will make the journal a meaningful and transformative tool for students. By incorporating these suggestions into the design and development of the journal, the writers can ensure that it aligns closely with the spiritual and reflective needs of the pre-service teachers at Teachers College.

Table 1. Needs analysis recap.

<i>Respondent</i>	<i>Suggestion for Content</i>	<i>Suggestion for Layout</i>	<i>Suggestion for name</i>
1	"It should identify self and the steps of growth."	"Interesting, simple, easy to do."	"Spiritual growth journal"
2	"It should help students discover their type of spirituality, making them find spiritual journal not as a burden or an obligation. Give them lots of space to	"Be creative and reflect the millennial's generation style."	"My daily digest"

	grow with their own pace and style, not with forced uniformity or unrealistic expectation.”		
3	“It should encourage students to share their spiritual journey from their hearts rather than their theological knowledge.”	“Simple, gen Z style.”	“Spiritual journey”

In summary, the feedback from the Christian religion education lecturers reinforces the significance of the printed journal as a multifaceted instrument for spiritual growth, self-reflection, and accountability. By embracing the journal as a sacred space for documenting spiritual experiences and charting progress, students are empowered to deepen their faith journey and engage in meaningful introspection throughout their time at Teachers College.

In response to the inquiry about which cohort of pre-service teachers would benefit most from the printed journal, the writers received feedback indicating that both existing and new students could benefit from its use. This recognition of the universal need for the journal highlights the importance of ensuring that the content remains engaging and relevant for all users, regardless of their level of experience or familiarity with the material. By catering to the needs of both existing and new students, the writers can create a journal that is accessible and valuable to a diverse range of individuals.

Moreover, the acknowledgment that all cohorts of pre-service teachers can benefit from the printed journal underscores the necessity of incorporating elements that can help vary or level the content to prevent monotony and boredom. To address this concern, the writers may consider incorporating diverse prompts, activities, and reflections that cater to different learning styles and preferences. By offering a mix of approaches and exercises, the writers can ensure that the journal remains engaging and stimulating for all users, regardless of their individual preferences or backgrounds.

Additionally, by varying the content and structure of the printed journal, the writers can create a more dynamic and interactive experience for users, fostering increased engagement and participation. This

approach not only helps to reduce boredom but also encourages users to explore different aspects of their personal and professional development, promoting a holistic and enriching learning experience.

In conclusion, the feedback received regarding the need for the printed journal among both existing and new cohorts of pre-service teachers highlights the importance of creating a diverse and engaging resource that caters to a wide range of users. By varying the content and structure of the journal to prevent boredom and monotony, the writers can ensure that the material remains relevant and valuable to all individuals, fostering a dynamic and enriching learning experience for users at all levels of experience.

Following the needs analysis, the writers proceeded to outline the framework of the journal content. The structure of the journal includes essential components such as a preface, the faculty's vision and mission statements to provide students with a clear sense of purpose, and a detailed guide on how to effectively utilize the journal. To cater specifically to first-year pre-service teachers, four key points were identified for inclusion in the printed journal. These points were carefully selected to align with the needs and developmental stage of these students, ensuring that the content is relevant and engaging.

One of the unique features of the journal designed for first-year pre-service teachers is the incorporation of designated days for journal entries, including Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. This structured approach not only encourages regular reflection and engagement but also introduces a level of consistency and routine to the students' reflective practice. By providing specific days for journal entries, the writers aim to create a balanced and manageable schedule that allows students to delve into their thoughts and experiences at their own pace.

The inclusion of different days within the journal serves a dual purpose: it helps to reduce monotony and prevent boredom by offering variety in the reflective process, and it also provides students with the flexibility to choose the most suitable times for more in-depth reflection. This flexibility empowers students to engage with the journal in a way that best suits their individual preferences and schedules, promoting a personalized and meaningful reflective experience.

Figure 1 below showcases the initial pages of the journal, offering a glimpse into the structure and layout that students can expect. These pages serve as a visual guide, setting the tone for the reflective journey that students will embark on throughout their use of the journal.



Figure 1. First pages of the journal.

Table 2 below describes the emphasis and the sections of the journal.

Table 2. The framework for journal content.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Part 1</i> <i>To help them evaluate and understand self</i>	<i>Part 2</i> <i>To help them express thoughts and feelings to the Lord</i>	<i>Part 3</i> <i>To help them remember God's works in their life</i>	<i>Part 4</i> <i>To help them record their progress in all spiritual disciplines</i>
Week 1 October Saturday	Write your main activities this week!	Write your prayer to God (express thoughts and feelings) here!	What blessings (4) you received from God this week?	How has your Bible reading been so far?
Week 2 October Friday	What have you done best this week?	Be open and direct in prayer to God. Write your prayer here!	List God's help in your life this week!	What Bible passage/message that spoke a lot to you this week?

Week 3 October Sunday	What have you done poorly this week?	Write your prayer here!	How did God help you this week?	How is your worship this week?
Week 4 October Wednesday	What feedback you received from classmates and lecturers this week?	Write your prayer here!	What blessings you received from God this week?	Did you have the chance to evangelize/share the Gospel to somebody this week? If not, why?
Week 5 October Saturday	How do you see yourself/your performance this week?	Write your prayer here!	List God's help in your life this week!	List here ways to serve others that you have done this week?
Week 6 November Friday	Write your main activities this week!	Write your prayer here!	How did God help you this week?	Did you fast this week? If not, why?
Week 7 November Sunday	List the things you did well and poorly this week?	Write your prayer here!	What blessings you received from God this week?	Did you have time to do silence and solitude this week? If not, what is your plan to do it by next week?
Week 8 November Wednesday	What feedback you received from classmates and lecturers this week?	Write your prayer here!	List God's help in your life this week!	Which spiritual discipline that you regularly did and which ones not yet?
Week 9 November Monday submission	How writing this journal for the past 8 weeks has helped you to evaluate and understand yourself?	Write your prayer here!		

The first week of the journal sets the tone for the entire nine-week journey, aiming to provide students with a gentle introduction to the reflective process. By offering more general prompts during this initial phase, the writers seek to create a welcoming and non-intimidating

environment that encourages students to engage authentically with the journal. It is crucial for the writers to convey to the students that the journal is not meant to be approached as a mere academic task or burden but rather as a valuable tool for personal growth and self-discovery. By framing the journal as a source of enjoyment and learning, the writers hope to instill a sense of curiosity and openness in the students, fostering a positive attitude towards the reflective practice.

As the students progress through the subsequent weeks of the journal, they are guided through a series of prompts and activities designed to facilitate introspection and self-exploration. Each week builds upon the previous one, gradually deepening the reflective process and encouraging students to delve further into their thoughts and emotions. The structured format of the journal ensures that students have a clear framework within which to engage with the content, allowing for a progressive and meaningful journey of self-discovery.

By the time students reach the final week of the journal, they have completed a comprehensive nine-week cycle of reflection and personal growth. The writers recognize the significance of this milestone and provide students with an opportunity to recap their journey using the journal. This moment of reflection serves as a valuable exercise in self-assessment, allowing students to review their progress, insights, and experiences over the course of the nine weeks. The writers also offer feedback to the students, guiding them towards a deeper understanding of their reflections and providing constructive suggestions for future growth and development.

In line with Santrock's (2011) assertion that effective teachers model and communicate good thinking skills, particularly critical thinking, the writers of the journal emphasize the importance of thinking reflectively and productively. Critical thinking involves evaluating evidence, questioning assumptions, and drawing logical conclusions based on sound reasoning. By encouraging students to engage in reflective practices throughout the journal, the writers aim to cultivate critical thinking skills that will benefit students not only in their academic pursuits but also in their personal and professional lives.

In conclusion, the structured and thoughtful design of the spiritual growth journal for pre-service English teachers provides a valuable platform for students to engage in reflective practices and foster personal growth. By guiding students through a nine-week journey of self-discovery, the journal encourages introspection, critical thinking, and continuous learning. Through careful reflection, feedback, and guidance,

students are able to enhance their thinking skills and develop a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.



Figure 2. Last pages of the journal.

CONCLUSION

Developing a spiritual growth journal for pre-service English teachers is a multifaceted process that requires a thorough understanding of the needs and preferences of the target audience. The initial stages of this development involve conducting both informal and formal needs analyses to gather insights that will inform the content and design of the journal. By engaging with pre-service English teachers through these analyses, researchers can identify the specific requirements and expectations that will shape the development of the journal.

The primary form of the printed journal is designed to be comprehensive and engaging, featuring essential components such as the preface, vision, and mission statements to provide context and purpose to the journal. Additionally, the journal includes guidance on how to effectively utilize the journal, ensuring that users understand its intended use and benefits. The structure of the journal comprises nine-week

sections, each consisting of four parts derived from the advantages of maintaining a spiritual journal. These sections are thoughtfully crafted to facilitate a meaningful and reflective experience for the users, guiding them through a journey of self-discovery and personal growth.

In terms of format, the journal is recommended to be in-print rather than digital, as the tangible nature of a physical journal can enhance the writing and reflection process. Moreover, incorporating color into the design of the journal can make it visually appealing and engaging for users, fostering a sense of creativity and inspiration. By starting each section with broad and open-ended questions or prompts, the journal aims to create a welcoming and non-intimidating environment for users, encouraging them to engage authentically with the content without feeling pressured or judged.

As the development of the spiritual growth journal progresses, it is essential to conduct further research that encompasses all steps outlined in the Gall et al.'s (2015) framework. This comprehensive approach will ensure that the final product meets the highest standards of quality and relevance, aligning closely with the needs and expectations of pre-service English teachers. Additionally, exploring the feasibility of replicating the journal for senior high students in grade 12 presents an exciting opportunity to expand the impact of the journal and cater to a broader audience.

In conclusion, the development of a spiritual growth journal for pre-service English teachers is a dynamic and iterative process that requires careful consideration of user needs, thoughtful design elements, and rigorous research methodologies. By following a systematic approach and incorporating feedback from stakeholders, researchers can create a valuable resource that supports the spiritual and personal development of educators and students alike.

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