HEUTAGOGY : A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH TO ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract

The present article aims to highlight a better understanding Meaning of The Heutagogical approach, Characteristics of heutagogical approach and Significance of heutagogy in Distance Education. The aim of the present paper is to provide the reader with an overview of relevant theoretical perspectives on heutagogical approach, the key elements of heutagogical approach. The phenomenon of heutagogical approach is investigated by reviewing the (early) literature and an attempt is made to extrapolate the concept of heutagogical approach. Hence, the present article entails a theoretical discussion of issues in heutagogical practice and approaches and provides a basis for discussion and research into heutagogy as a theory for guiding the use of new technologies in distance education.

Introduction :

Education is built of two basic components, teaching and learning. Learning, as a phenomenon, is not restricted to the classroom but happens everywhere. Learning as "any process that in living organisms leads to permanent capacity change"(Illeris, 2007, 3)[1].Teaching is any interaction between the teacher and the students. Therefore interactions between the teacher and student are the basic fabric of education. Ideally these two components are well balanced and complement each other, providing effective teaching results with meaningful learning experiences. For the interactions between the teacher and the students, various approaches are in practice. Today's education system adopts pedagogy and andragogy in our education. For pedagogy, the learning occurs in a structured or controlled environment with very little learner's maturity and autonomy required. For Andragogy, the educational institution respects adult learners' needs and offers learning in a somewhat constructed environment. Today's universities adopt pedagogy and andragogy in our education. However, with the need to increase "open education resources, universities will only survive and thrive in a global knowledge economy by reach out to the learners who do not physically reside in the university. The purpose of establishing

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an Emory Open Education Resource can not only prepare its learners to a lifelong learner to local students, but, reach out to students globally. It can be achieve by such the method or approach which itself promotes learning in a self-directed, self-tailored, and self-seeking style. It may be argued that the rapid rate of change in society, and the so-called information explosion, suggests that we should now be looking at an educational approach where it is the learner himself who determines what and how learning should take place. Heutagogy, the study of self-determined learning, may be viewed as a natural progression from earlier educational methodologies - in particular from capability development - and may well provide the optimal approach to learning in the twenty-first century.

Concept of Heutagogy -:

Heutagogy (based on the Greek for "self") was defined by Hase and Kenyon in 2000 as the study of 'self-determined learning'. Heutagogy applies a holistic approach to developing learner capabilities, with learning as an active and proactive process, and learners serving as "the major agent in their own learning, which occurs as a result of personal experiences" (Hase & Kenyon, 2007, p. 112). As in an andragogical approach, in heutagogy the instructor also facilitates the learning process by providing guidance and resources, but fully relinquishes ownership of the learning path and process to the learner, who negotiates learning and determines what will be learned and how it will be learned (Hase & Kenyon, 2000; Eberle, 2009).

Heutagogy is the study of self-determined learning. Heutagogy expands upon the self-directed learning practices of andragogy by having learners take an active role in developing their own learning skills to meet their needs. Therefore, the instructor acts as a tutor or mentor, but unlike in andragogy, the student chooses the learning path by reflecting upon his or her strengths and weaknesses, and exploring new strategies that fit his or her learning style. This process of self-reflection allows for double-loop learning, where the learner assesses the effectiveness of the problem solving process by considering alternative resources and his or her actions and beliefs (Blaschke, 2012). Through double-loop learning, learners develop the competency or ability to attain the necessary skills to accomplish their educational goals, and the capability or confidence to construct and follow through on their own learning plan. Consequently, a capable self-determined learner exhibits self-efficacy, sound communication and teamwork skills, creativity, and a positive attitude. In addition, heutagogy involves a non-linear design and learning approach by having instructors allow their students to develop their own curriculum and assessment criteria.

The concept has lain dormant for years but has resurfaced with renewed interest alongside

the rise of Web 2.0 technologies that embraced a learner-centered approach. While effective heutagogy has roots in androgogy, it doesn't just refer to learning itself. It expands upon androgogy's self-directed learning practices by focusing on metacognition and how people learn effectively online. Furthermore, heutagogy recognizes the need for flexibility when it comes to learning, where the instructor acts as mentor or tutor that provides resources but the ultimate power to design the actual course rests in the learner. In other words, <u>Heutagogy</u> gives the learner the power to determine what and how they learn. Embracing heutagogy is especially important in today's information-rich world. It's the same learning environment that changes at a quite rapid pace. Traditional learning methods and strategies are not only inadequate, many have already become obsolete. The need for immediacy and flexibility in learning justifies the need for heutagogy. There are several ways to effectively implement heutagogy in eLearning environments. So far the most common is to offer extremely self-directed exercises and practices that promote critical thinking and active learning in more problem-focused, professional and experiential contexts.

Heutagogy as an Extension of Andragogy-

The heutagogical approach can be viewed as a progression from pedagogy to andragogy to heutagogy, with learners likewise progressing in maturity and autonomy (Canning, 2010). More mature learners require less instructor control and course structure and can be more self-directed in their learning, while less mature learners require more instructor guidance and course scaffolding (Canning & Callan, 2010; Kenyon & Hase, 2010). Cognitive development of learners, a requirement for critical reflection and discourse to occur, could also be integrated into this pyramid, with cognitive development progressing in parallel with learner maturity and autonomy (Mezirow, 1997).

Characteristics-

1. Learner-centeredness in terms of both learner-generated contexts and content.
2. Reflective practice, a critical learning skill associated with knowing how to learn.
3. Collaborative learning is a critical component of the heutagogical classroom.
4. Creation of learner-generated content, active engagement in the learning process and with instructors and other learners.
5. Group collaboration, and reflective practice through double-loop learning.

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Significance of heutagogy in Distance Education-

Distance Education requires and promotes autonomy, a characteristic central to heutagogical teaching and learning. Students are usually mature and possess life experiences that can help them develop their own learning skills and learning plan to achieve their objectives, and negotiate assessment strategies with their instructor (Blaschke, 2012). Heutagogy is of special interest to distance education, which shares with heutagogy certain key attributes, such as learner autonomy and self-directedness, and has pedagogical roots in adult teaching and learning. Self-determined learning, characteristic of distance education formats such as contract learning and prior learning assessment, is also an attribute of distance education. Distance education and heutagogy also have in common the same audience: mature adult learners. Specifically, heutagogy has the potential to become a theory of distance education, in part due to the ways in which heutagogy further extends the andragogical approach and also due to the evidences it offers when applied to emerging technologies in distance education (such as Web 2.0). Distance education is a unique position for creating learning environments for supporting a heutagogical teaching and learning approach, as well as for contributing to further research into heutagogy. Specific characteristics of distance education that align themselves with heutagogy include:

• **Technology:** Technology's symbiotic relationship with distance education requires that, with each emerging technology, distance educators consider the implications of the technology on distance education theory and practice. Heutagogy has been identified as a potential theory for applying to emerging technologies in distance education (Anderson, 2010; Wheeler, 2011), although additional research and discussion is necessary in order to determine the credibility of heutagogy as a theory of distance education.

• **Profile of the distance education learner**: Traditionally, distance education has been designed, developed, delivered, and targeted to the adult learner, usually working adults with extensive life experience and more maturity than campus-based students The distance education practice has historically been strongly influenced by Knowles' andragogical theory of teaching and learning, and as an extension of andragogy, heutagogy could be considered as a relevant theory for adult distance education.

•**Learner autonomy**- Distance education, as a distinct form of education, both requires and promotes autonomy, a learner skill that is central to a heutagogical teaching and learning approach (Peters, 2001). Because learner autonomy is characteristic of and promoted in distance education learning environments, distance education inherently supports heutagogical practice. It may be

argued that the rapid rate of change in society, and the so called information explosion, suggest that we should now be looking at an educational approach where it is the learner him/herself who determines what and how learning should take place. Heutagogy, the study of self-determined learning, may be viewed as a natural progression from earlier educational methodologies - in particular for capability development and may well provide the optimal approach to learning in the twenty-first century. This revolution recognizes the changed world in which we live. A world in which: information is readily and easily accessible; change is so rapid that traditional methods of training and education are totally inadequate; discipline-based knowledge is inappropriate to prepare for living in modern communities and workplaces; learning is increasingly aligned with what we do; modern organizational structures require flexible learning practices; and there is a need for immediacy of learning. In response to this environment, there have emerged some innovative approaches that address the deficiencies of the pedagogical and andragogical methods.

Challenges of adopting a heutagogical approach- such as

1. Academic resistance to change and a fear of relinquishing power (from instructor to student).
2. Increased financial and learning pressure on students due to new technology requirements.
3. Continued student focus on assessment and grades rather than the learning process.
4. A lack of student preparedness and acceptance.

Conclusion- Heutagogy, a form of self-determined learning with practices and principles rooted in andragogy, has recently resurfaced as a learning approach after a decade of limited attention. In a heutagogical approach to teaching and learning, learners are highly autonomous and self-determined and emphasis is placed on development of learner capacity and capability with the goal of producing learners who are well-prepared for the complexities of today's workplace. The approach has been proposed as a theory for applying to emerging technologies in distance education and for guiding distance education practice and the ways in which distance educators develop and deliver instruction using newer technologies such as social media. Distance education has a particular affinity to the heutagogical approach, due to distance education's inherent characteristics of requiring and promoting learner autonomy, its traditional focus on adult learners, and its evolutionary and symbiotic relationship with technology – all characteristics shared with this emerging theory. Because of this affinity, distance education is in a unique position to provide a sustainable environment for studying and researching this teaching and learning method – and for assessing and evaluating the theory's appropriateness as a theory of distance education.

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