



ISSN Print: 2664-9799
ISSN Online: 2664-9802
IJHER 2024; 6(1): 86-89
www.humanitiesjournal.net
Received: 03-02-2024
Accepted: 10-03-2024

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Heutagogy and self-determined learning: A review of the approach for lifelong education

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26649799.2024.v6.i1b.77>

Abstract

The paper aims to introduce the concept of Heutagogy, the needs of this concept, and how it encourages lifelong learning. Heutagogy is a term denoting a learning theory and educational strategy that prioritizes self-directed learning. It is founded on the principle that learners ought to assume an active role in their educational journey, rather than depending exclusively on conventional pedagogical approaches where educators impart knowledge to passive students. Heutagogy, a style of self-directed learning based on principles derived from andragogy, has made a comeback as a learning method after a decade of relative obscurity. In this pedagogical approach, learners have significant independence and self-determination, and the focus is on fostering the growth of learners' skills and abilities. The ultimate aim is to prepare learners effectively for the challenges of the modern workplace, emphasizing autonomy and self-determination. These methods prioritize autonomy, critical thinking, and active engagement. Heutagogy requires educators to act as facilitators and mentors rather than traditional instructors. Flipped Classroom is a technique of Heutagogy, in a flipped classroom, students take responsibility for their initial exposure to new content through pre-recorded lectures or readings outside of class. Class time is then used for discussions, problem-solving, and activities, where the teacher serves as a guide.

Keywords: Lifelong learning, self-directed learning, learner's autonomy, self-determination, flipped classroom

Introduction

Heutagogy, pronounced hyoo-tuh-goh-jee, originates from the Greek word "heuristic." According to Graham R. Parslow, "heuristic" is the Greek verb for discovery and forms the etymological basis of "heuristic," which refers to a teaching method enabling students to explore and learn independently. Coined in 2000 by Hase and Kenyon, heutagogy is a term that denotes self-directed learning that occurs outside the confines of formal teaching.

Educators in the present era face the challenge of nurturing individuals who can adapt and excel in a global knowledge-driven economy. These individuals need the capacity to apply their skills and competencies creatively and effectively in ever-evolving, intricate environments (The World Bank, 2003) [14]. Traditional teaching methods, whether pedagogical or even Andragogical, are no longer fully adequate for preparing learners to thrive in the workplace. Instead, there is a growing need for a more self-directed and self-determined approach, where learners actively reflect on what they learn and how they learn it, and educators guide them in acquiring the skills to become self-educators. Moreover, the rapid advancements in new teaching techniques, learning resources, and digital media driven by new technologies have led some educators to question the relevance of andragogy, considering it "outdated in light of recent developments".

Heutagogical learning deviates from conventional linear or planned approaches, adopting a more informal and parallel structure that aligns with how individuals thrive in learning beyond formal academic settings. In this context, the teacher assumes the role of a coach—a valuable resource available for support when needed, but not the primary fount of knowledge. Heutagogy stands out as a captivating concept with the potential to significantly impact our students.

Characteristics of heutagogy

- **Use of technology as a resource:** In the approach of heutagogy, technology serves as a significant resource, playing a crucial role in facilitating self-directed and self-determined learning experiences.
- **Self-directed learning:** Self-directed learning is a core aspect of heutagogy, emphasizing the autonomy and active involvement of learners in shaping their educational experiences.
- **Learners' autonomy:** Learners' autonomy is a fundamental and defining characteristic of heutagogy. In heutagogical approaches, learners are granted a high degree of autonomy, allowing them to play a central role in shaping and directing their own learning experiences.
- **Critical thinking:** Critical thinking is a crucial component of heutagogy, emphasizing the development of learners' abilities to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information independently. In heutagogical approach, critical thinking is woven into the fabric of the learning process.
- **Active learning:** Active learning is a key component of heutagogy, emphasizing the active and engaged participation of learners in the learning process. In heutagogical approaches, learners are not passive recipients of information; instead, they actively contribute to and shape their own learning experiences.
- **Lifelong learning:** Lifelong learning is a core principle within heutagogy, reflecting the idea that learning extends beyond formal education and persists throughout an individual's life. In heutagogical approaches, learners are encouraged to adopt a mindset of continuous development, taking charge of their learning journey across various stages of life.



Fig 1: Characteristics of heutagogy

- **Reflection of learning:** Reflection is a cornerstone of learning in heutagogy, playing a crucial role in the development and refinement of a learner's understanding and skills. In heutagogical approaches, learners are encouraged to engage in reflective practices as an integral part of their self-directed learning journey.
- **Problem-solving:** Problem-solving is a central component of heutagogy, emphasizing learners' abilities to independently identify, analyze, and solve real-world

problems. In heutagogical approaches, problem-solving is integrated into the learning process to foster critical thinking, self-directed inquiry, and the application of knowledge.

Heutagogy and self-determined learning

Heutagogy, also known as self-determined learning, advocates for students to take an active role in their learning process. Instead of adhering to a single-loop learning model, where the learner identifies a problem, takes action, observes the outcome, and starts anew with a new problem, double-loop learning under heutagogy prompts students to reflect on their learning. They assess how it has influenced their beliefs and actions and consider how to apply their newfound knowledge to other domains. In this approach, teachers transition into facilitators and leaders, offering suitable guidance, resources, and models to support the students' self-directed learning journeys.

The central concept of Heutagogy involves the shift of control from teacher to learner, as highlighted by Blaschke (2016) and Blaschke. In this approach, learners take on the role of "architects" of their own learning experience, as noted by Snowden and Halsall (2016) ^[13]. Within Heutagogy, learners are granted the autonomy to define their learning objectives based on their interests and needs. They are also empowered to design the learning strategies that will support them in achieving those objectives, as emphasized by Wehmeyer *et al.* (2012). The concept of self-determined learning, inherent in Heutagogy, enhances learner engagement by providing the freedom to manage behaviour through improved instruction, monitoring, and evaluation, as discussed by Wehmeyer *et al.* (2017) ^[15].

Problem-based, Collaborative Learning and Reflection and Metacognition

Heutagogy aligns with the principles of reflection and metacognition, akin to the problem-based learning approach. Reflection enables students to contemplate what they have learned and how they learned it (metacognition) by revisiting potential solutions and finding ways to enhance or adjust outcomes (Blaschke, 2021; Hase & Blaschke, 2021a) ^[3, 10]. Reflection and metacognition involve learners assessing past and present experiences, knowledge, or behaviors to inform future knowledge and actions. In essence, these processes integrate hindsight, insight, and foresight to navigate through problems emphasizes that "the reflection process also allows [learners] to practice more analytical and critical thinking and to engage in complex reasoning and problem-solving". Ultimately, reflection and metacognition can elevate cognitive activity levels, enhancing a learner's capacity to analyze and synthesize problems.

Lifelong and student-driven learning

The World Economic Forum (WEF) projected in 2018 that an additional 101 days of learning would be necessary by 2022 to adapt to the evolving landscape of work. Ashton and Newman (2006) ^[2] conducted a study on academics involved in a university program for training new teachers and concluded that "heutagogy provides an enriched teaching methodology for lifelong learning in universities in the 21st century". Lock *et al.* (2021) ^[11] acknowledged the complexities of a changing world, asserting the need for individuals to embrace lifelong learning. This aligns with

the principles of heutagogy and Education 4.0, both emphasizing the crucial role of fostering lifelong learners to equip them for the dynamic challenges of the evolving work environment.

Flipped classroom in heutagogy practice in the classroom

- The integration of a flipped classroom model within heutagogy represents a dynamic and learner-centric approach to education. In a heutagogy context, where learners are encouraged to take control of their learning, the flipped classroom model becomes a valuable tool.
- Learners take on a more active role in acquiring knowledge outside the classroom, often through self-directed study, online resources, or collaborative learning. Classroom time is then dedicated to interactive and participatory activities, discussions, and application of the acquired knowledge. This shift allows learners to explore and absorb information at their own pace, aligning with the principles of heutagogy that emphasize self-determined learning.
- The combination of a flipped classroom and heutagogy

promotes a more personalized and flexible learning experience, fostering a deeper understanding of the subject matter and encouraging learners to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It also empowers students to take responsibility for their learning journey, aligning with the overarching principles of heutagogy.

Principles of heutagogy learning

A crucial aspect of Heutagogy involves placing the learner at the focal point of the learning process, while teachers are responsible for supplying learning materials and serving as facilitators to steer the learning journey (Blaschke, Kenyon & Hase, 2014; Hase & Kenyon, 2000) [6, 8]. Within the framework of Heutagogy as a teaching and learning concept, the fundamental conceptual elements encompass learner-driven learning, metacognitive reflection, collaboration, and capability development (Ashton & Elliot, 2007; Blaschke, 2012; Canning, 2010; Canning & Callan, 2010; Hase & Kenyon, 2000; 2013) [1, 5, 9, 8].

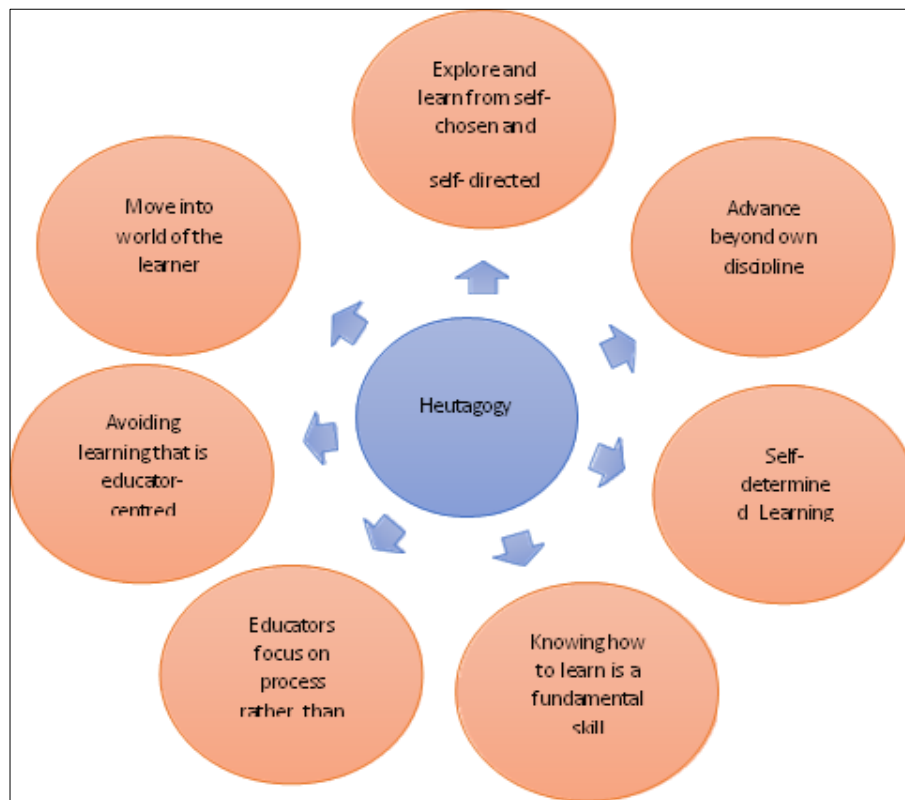


Fig 2: Principles of the heutagogy (by McAuliffe et. al, 2011)

PAH (Pedagogy-Andragogy-Heutagogy)

Considering the various concepts associated with heutagogy, it can be succinctly stated that learners play an independent role, possessing the authority to govern and shape the entire learning process (Blaschke & Hase, 2019) [4]. However, achieving this level of independence is not a straightforward task. As highlighted, the progression from pedagogy to andragogy and finally heutagogy, represented by the PAH continuum, outlines the journey from traditional, instructor-directed learning to self-directed and ultimately self-determined learning (Eberle & as cited in Blaschke & Hase, 2019) [4]. Along this continuum, learners

refine their learning skills as autonomous entities (Blaschke & Hase, 2019) [4].

It's important to note that the PAH continuum is not strictly a linear process, allowing for a flexible and blended use of each element. According to Garnett and O'Beirne (2013), the features of pedagogy, andragogy, and heutagogy can be integrated in a mixed manner, depending on the specific needs of students and the learning context. Blaschke (2012) [5] expanded on the graphical representation by Canning (2010) [9] and proposed that learners can transition between the steps based on the subject matter or content, as well as the intellectual capabilities of the learners.

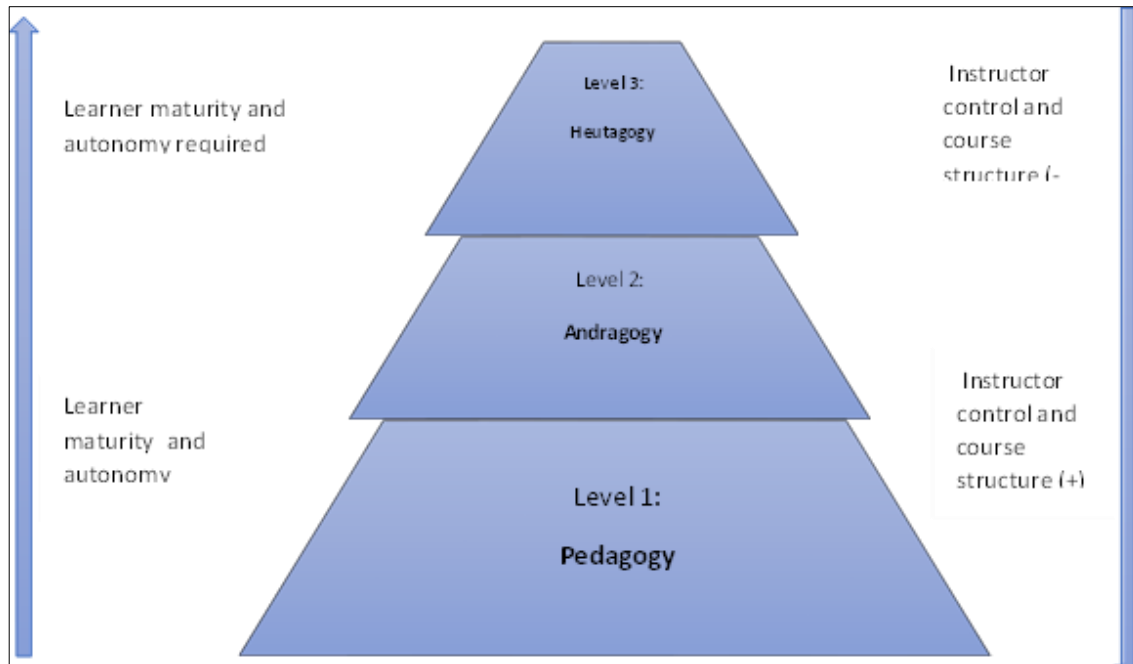


Fig 3: Pedagogy-Andragogy-Heutagogy (PHA) Continuum (Blaschke, 2012^[5], adopted from Canning, 2010^[9])

Conclusion

After reviewing the following research, the researchers came to the point that the approach named as Heutagogy is an effective teaching method because the 21st century is known as the learner century and the learner is the key element of the whole teaching-learning process the approach is the best for the learner. It may be reported that teacher administrators were not sufficiently aware of the innovative approaches in education. Even if they did not know the name of the approach as heutagogy they knew the related issues such as self-determinism, life-long learning, capability, double-loop learning, and self-reflection. Thus, they gave useful opinions about the practicality of the issue and some recommendations as well as some negative ones. While several participants believed the necessity to make the learners active leaders of their learning; some of the respondents still supported teacher-centered approaches although they knew the requirements of the 21st century.

In summary, heutagogy, as a forward-thinking approach for the 21st century, deserves greater attention and implementation among educators and students. The ongoing advancements in both education and technology provide learners with enhanced capabilities. Davis and Hase (2001a)^[10] likened the education process to a dynamic river rather than a stagnant lake, emphasizing its constant evolution. Therefore, educators who genuinely aim to assist learners in meeting the educational demands of the 21st century should actively embrace and incorporate innovative methods.

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