



The role of technology in facilitating heutagogical approaches in HE

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Overview

What is heutagogy?

Heutagogy and its importance in today's society

Applying heutagogical principles

Case study on the use of technology to apply heutagogical principles

Supporting learners through heutagogy

What is Heutagogy?

- Emerging form of pedagogy first coined by Hase and Kenon in 2000
- Based on the Greek word 'self' the principle of self-determined learning is the core, the learner becomes autonomous and responsible for their own learning
- Heutagogy advocates a living curriculum that is fluid and responsible to the needs of the learner. Learner identifies what is to be learned and how.
- Motivates learners to become life long and life wide
- Challenges the discipline-based approach to education which students learn in silos with those from similar backgrounds. Advocates learning across boundaries, whatever is required to address the learning need

What is Heutagogy?

- Traditional pedagogical approaches are largely top down where a teacher prescribes what and how content is to be learned
- Heutagogy encourages a bottom up approach in which learners explore what they need to learn and why, self awareness is key
- Limited application of heutagogy in practice, elements of heutagogy have been applied e.g.
 - Flexible modes of learning using TEL (Canning and Callan, 2010)
 - Reflective learning through journals, social media (Blaschke & Brindley, 2009; Blaschke, 2012)
 - Collaborative learning (Blaschke, 2014)
 - Action research (Hase and Keynon, 2013)

What is Heutagogy?

Characteristic	Explanation
Learning is initiated based on an authentic need	The learner identifies a need to learn something based on a change or predicted change in their environment and learning assists students to apply material to this context.
Double loop learning/ Reflection	What the individual learns impacts on their underlying assumptions and beliefs
Flexible curriculum	The curriculum is a 'living curriculum' and changes based on the learners needs which evolve over time
Learner centred	The learner is at the centre of the educational experience and is based on their individual needs
Non-linear	Learning is iterative and non-sequential involving periods of reflection and adapting
Emphasis on learning process rather than content	The learner is aware of how they learn and if it is successful or not and how to acquire new knowledge and skills
Collaborative	Learners work together to solve a problem and learn
Focus on developing learner capability	Giving learners the confidence to apply their learning to unfamiliar situations
Learners create knowledge	Learners contribute to the content

Table 1: Characteristics of Heutagogy (Blascke, 2012;Hase and Kenyon, 2007)

Importance of heutagogy in today's society

1. Uncertainty only certainty in today's economic climate
2. Preparing people to be unprepared
3. Heutagogy emerged from complexity theory which explores how people cope with uncertainty and understand systems approaches
4. Need to develop learners that can identify and fill knowledge gaps autonomously
5. Skills such as problem solving, creative thinking and communication are core
6. Glorious failures.....encourages risk taking and the role of failures in learning
7. Furthermore the development of metacognitive processes that can be applied and reapplied key
8. Also important for learners to realise the impact of their actions on others



How to apply the principles of heutagogy



Curriculum design

Learning is cross curricular and based on an individual learners need

Learning outcomes focus on process and product

Learning outcomes contain narrow and broad skills to allow learner negotiation

Student Voice



Delivery

Learners become aware of their motivations for learning and needs as learner

Learners provided with a choice of content so they can select the information most relevant to their needs.

Collaborative learning opportunities are provided.

Learners encouraged to identify knowledge gaps



Assessment

Encourage learners to create knowledge/material and fill in knowledge gaps to contribute to the learning experience

Learners self assess and peer assess to build self awareness and autonomy

Authentic opportunities for applying learning in practice

(Blaschke, 2012; Jones et al, 2019)

Case study: Using technology to apply Heutagogical principles

Initial stages: Identifying the learner need

- Using a reflective journals ask learners to reflect on what they want to learn and why and how they would like to apply it to their own practice. This will allow the educator to tailor their learning to the learners needs
- Using a community of inquiry model (discussion forms) ask students to identify if they had to drive somewhere they had never been before, how would they prefer to get directions and why. Discuss how this relates to how they learn, what impact it has on other learners in their class and on their practice.

Flexible curriculum

- At the end of each class use polling software to allow learners to identify which elements of the curriculum they want to focus on for the next lesson.

Flexibility Delivery and learners as knowledge creators

- Create small digital learning objects of approximately 10 – 15 minutes long – this allows the learner to focus on the content they need. Produce it in a variety of modes, audio, video and written
- Develop small short digital learning objects with case study of the application in practice
- Ask learners to develop resources of how they have applied their learning in practice
- Ask learners to construct collaborative wikis on future developments in a particular area and implications this has for practice

Case study: Using technology to apply Heutagogical principles

Collaboration

- Using e-moderating models Communities of inquiry/questioning asking the learners to discuss concepts (Canning and Callan, 2010)
- Web 2.0 – portfolios, google docs (Blaschke, 2014)

Reflection

- Twitter (Blaschke, 2014)
- Learning journals

Focus on process and product (assessment)

- Competency based frameworks that allow learners to choose how they demonstrate their expertise. Self assessment tools are becoming more prominent in this area particularly in VLEs
- UDL – multimodal assessment whereby learners choose their preferred mode. Technology facilitates multimodal assessment
- Rubrics – self assessment.....peer assessment

Authentic learning

- PBL

Supporting heutagogy: starting the discussion

For students

- Unstructured learning is difficult for remote/online learners.
- However learner participation and engagement can be more visible than in face to face models as, analytics can identify potential at risk students
- Supporting learner choice
- Rewarding process and product

For educators

- Traditional academic systems favor a prescribed definitive approach incorporating flexibility can be difficult.
- Flexibility is time consuming to incorporate particularly if developing multiple resources for students
- Accreditation and quality – aligning to curriculum design
- Rewarding process and product

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