

A heutagogical approach to learning in an online master of science degree in palliative care

Research Proposal

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October 2, 2016

Working title for the research project:

A heutagogical approach to learning in an online master of science degree in palliative care.

Research Topic:

Explaining what heutagogy is, and how it can be implemented in an online graduate degree.

Research Question:

What are the opportunities to maximize a heutagogical approach to learning in an online graduate degree, and specifically, how can the instructional designer implement these opportunities through learning activities and assessments?

Audience:

The reading audience is distance educators, palliative care educators, instructional designers, curriculum designers, administrators. I would like to write this paper first targeting an education readership, and then repurpose it in a second paper for palliative care practitioners.

Purpose and Goals:

Educational research clearly describes the principles of pedagogy and andragogy. Heutagogy goes beyond pedagogy or andragogy, and even beyond self-directed learning (where learners identify their own learning needs, set their own learning goals and identify learning resources and methods of learning and reflect on the outcomes of the learning process). Heutagogy is the study of self-determined learning, which results in people knowing HOW to learning. Knowing how to learning and charting one's own course in learning sets the foundation for successful lifelong learning.

The purpose of this research paper is to fully characterize the concept of heutagogy and if and how it can be used as a foundation for distance (online) education, specifically an online

graduate degree (Master of Science in Palliative Care). Distance education is built on the concepts of learner autonomy, self-directedness and self-determined learning. Many educators argue that learners are increasingly “e-learners” and that much of our lifelong learning is completed independently of a “teacher” – these facts dovetail nicely with the concept of heutagogy and the development of lifelong learning skills. Using expert opinion and evidence from the literature, this research paper will describe the development of Master of Science degree in Palliative Care from the University of Maryland Baltimore, and illustrate how it explicitly incorporates a heutagogical approach to learning.

Specific goals of this research paper are to: 1. Define and differentiate between pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy; 2. Describe approaches to learning (including online learning) that support heutagogy; and 3. Provide an illustrative example of heutagogy in action, in the developing of an online advanced degree (MS in Palliative Care).

Relevance to the Field:

In my mind, heutagogy (self-determined learning) puts people on the path to lifelong learning. In the medical field, if you aren’t learning constantly, you are stagnant and of diminishing worth. Therefore educators need to teach people HOW to learn and how to self-determine their educational needs and how to fulfill those needs.

This research paper will appeal to educators, particularly those who are developing a new course or curriculum, and wish to take a heutagogical approach.

Data Gathering:

I will gather resources and data using the UMUC library, other databases and internet searches to find scholarly articles, books, and other information as appropriate. I will also be considering different journals for the first article and I will obtain author guidelines from the targeted journal(s).

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