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**Who gives a hoot about heutagogy, and can it be incorporated into distance education?**

*“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge”*

*(Albert Einstein)*

The term “life-long learning” is often interpreted as an imperative expected of all professionals who have completed their formalized training (e.g., post-college). However, a World Bank Report (2003, p. xiii) proposes that lifelong learning is more of a cradle-to-grave expectation in today’s economy, or minimally from early childhood to retirement. The World Bank Report acknowledges that lifelong learning may encompass a variety of learning environments including formal, informal and nonformal (p. xiii). However, this report makes a critical distinction that it is far less important that learning opportunities be formal than it is to meet the learner’s needs (p. xiii). It has become increasingly clearer in recent years that traditional educational methods are unlikely to fully prepare individuals for their roles as lifelong learners (Blaschke, 2012, p. 57). The purpose of this paper is to explore both traditional and newer proposed educational methods, and whether a newer model may be operationalized in a distance education model.

**Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy and Beyond**

The concept of pedagogy refers to “the art and science of teaching or leading (*agogy*) the child (*pedi*)” (Palaiologos, 2011, p. 1). This model is very teacher-focused with the teacher deciding what, how and when content will be learned (Connor, 2006, para. 2). This implies that the learner is incapable of learning on their own, and that teacher knows best.

Malcolm Knowles (1970) is responsible for recognizing the children and adults learn differently. Knowles coined the term “andragogy” which “is derived from the Greek word *andras* that means man and *agogy* again” (Palaiologos, 2011, p. 1). Knowles’ andragogical model posits five issues that are central to adult education: 1. Explaining to learners why a concept is important to learn; 2. Guiding learners as they direct themselves through new information; 3. Relating new content to the learners’ experiences; 4. Acknowledging that people will learn only when they are motivated and ready to learn; and 5. Adult learners may require help overcoming poor behaviors and beliefs about learning (Connor, 2006, para. 13). In the andragogical model the learner has more control and responsibility for acquiring learning than seen in the pedagogical model. An important element of andragogy is the concept of *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 (Knowles, 1975, p. 18).

Unfortunately neither the pedagogical nor andragogical models fully prepare individuals to function as life-long learners, where skills even beyond self-direction are required (Blaschke, 2012, p. 57). Hase & Kenyon (2000, p. 2) argue that given the rate of societal change, and the “information explosion” (p. 2) (e.g., an affordance of the internet), “we should now be looking at an educational approach where it is the learner himself who determines *what* and *how* learning should take place” (p. 2). Not only self-directed, but Hanes & Kenyon refer to this as *self-*

*determined* learning. They termed this “heutagogy” – the study of self-determined learning (p. 2). Given the rapidly changing world in which we live, Hanes & Kenyon argue that the heutagogical approach will result in people knowing *how* to learn (p. 3).

### **Approaches to learning that support heutagogy**

The concept that people can determine and direct their own learning is not an entirely new concept. Rather, this concept of heutagogy is an amalgamation of a variety of techniques that go beyond the simple receipt of new knowledge and skills from a teacher. Hase & Kenyon (2000, pp. 2-3) reference several including phenomenology, systems thinking, androgogy, learner managed learning, action learning, work-based learning, double loop learning and capability.

Whereas single-loop learning is the recognition of a problem, followed by an action, and some outcome, double-loop learning is a spontaneous, non-linear process where learners reflect on the process and form more questions as they progress (Eberle, para. 8). This process of self-reflection allows learners to question previously held beliefs, values and assumptions (Hase & Kenyon, 2000, p. 4). This self-reflection is inherent to self-determined learning.

Blaschke (2012) contrasts the concepts of competency and capability (p. 59). A competent individual possesses the knowledge and skills to accomplish a task, while capability is “characterized by learner confidence in his or her competency” (p. 59). Blaschke further summarizes traits seen in capable individuals including self efficacy, communication and teamwork skills, creativity and positive values (p. 59).

Last, Blaschke (2012) suggests that teaching and learning can progress from pedagogy where there is greater instructor control and less learner autonomy, to andragogy, culminating in

heutagogy where there is greater learner autonomy and less instructor control (p. 60). Blaschke provides illustration of how heutagogy is a natural progression from andragogy with the following table (p. 61):

<b>Andragogy (Self-directed)</b>	<b>→</b>	<b>Heutagogy (Self-determined)</b>
Single-loop learning	→	Double-loop learning
Competency development	→	Capability development
Linear design and learning approach	→	Non-linear design and learning approach
Instructor-learner directed	→	Learner-directed
Getting students to learn (content)	→	Getting students to understand how they learn (process)

### **Heutagogy and Distance Education**

Can heutagogical principles find a home in distance education? Moore & Kearsley (2012) define distance education as “teaching and planned learning in which teaching normally occurs in a different place from learning, requiring communication through technologies as well as special institutional organization” (p. 2). There are several characteristics of distance education that extend beyond the definition by Moore & Kearsley that are common themes with heutagogy. These include learner autonomy, self-directedness and self-determined learning, and the tendency toward more mature adult learners (Blaschke, 2012, p. 61). Typical distance education students generally have life experiences that permit them to self-determine their learning needs and plan for learning (Attri, 2013, p. 462). A third critically important element of distance education today is the explosive use of technology. Web 2.0 is a dynamic environment that allows a high degree of interactivity between web users and sites, with examples such as youtube, Wiki, Flickr, Facebook, Instagram and more.

Anderson (2010) defines heutagogy as a net-centric theory whose “emphasis on self-direction and capacity of heutagogy focuses on the development of efficacy in utilizing the tools and information sources available on the Net” (p. 33). Anderson describes three affordances of the Web including powerful, low-cost communication, content abundance, and the ability to aggregate data easily (pp. 30-31). Notably, Anderson pointed out the communications capacity of Web 2.0 “creates opportunities for many forms of collaborative informal and lifelong learning” (p. 31, as cited in Koper & Tattersall, 2004).

Canter (2012) makes a case for “E-heutagogy” for lifelong e-learning. Her position is that numerous (and growing numbers of) learners are e-learners, and since most of life’s learning will occur without the benefit of a “teacher”, a heutagogical approach to e-learning is reasonable (p. 130). Professor William Pelz, a Professor and Internet Academy Coordinator at Herkimer County Community College has coined the term “technoheutagogy” and defines this term as “learner-directed study within a technology-enhanced context, most typically in relation to adult engagement with online courses” (Pelz, W., 2012).

Hollinderbäumer and colleagues (2013) evaluated how social media and Web 2.0 have been incorporated into medical school education and its impact on self-determined learning. Studies included in their analysis assessed the inclusion of blogs (e.g., Blogger, Typepad), Twitter, instant messaging, podcasting, wikis, media sharing (e.g., Flickr, YouTube), and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook) in medical school curricula. Their conclusions were that social media and Web 2.0 are increasingly incorporated into these curricula, and represent self-

determined learning (a key principle of heutagogy). The authors also stated that additional research is needed in this area.

Blaschke (2012) also included several examples of how Web 2.0 and social media are increasingly included in, and support self-determined learning. These include mobile learning, use of an asynchronous learning tool (Virtual Philosopher), Twitter, and learner-generated content (p. 63). Blaschke's conclusion was that characteristics of social media are consistent with heutagogy such as active engagement, reflection throughout learning, and learner-generated content (p. 63).

Hase and Kenyon (2000) conclude their landmark paper on heutagogy by reaffirming that "flexible learning" generally refers to the flexible timing and location associated with distance education (p. 9). However, it is clear that the positive attributes of heutagogy and distance education coincide and in fact, are complimentary. These data suggest that incorporation of heutagogical principles into distance education, or even blended learning, will well-position learners to become capable life-long learners.

### **Conclusion**

The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy is one of the finest schools of pharmacy in the world. Every spring over 150 bright practitioners graduate with a doctoral degree, and the vast majority are scared to death about next steps. They are fearful that they don't know everything there is to know about drug therapy! Faculty reassure graduates that they may not know "everything" but they've been taught how to find out the things they don't know. It seems that faculty should more strongly consider making this expectation an explicit process, and

embrace a heutagogical approach to crafting brilliant, *capable* practitioners who are just beginning their educational journey upon graduation, which will last the rest of their lives.

*“The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to adapt and change, the man who has realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security. Changingness, reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world.”*

*Carl Rogers (1902-1987), p. 104*

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