

## HITTING THE BULL'S EYE: DESIGNING THE PROCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF HEUTAGOGY TO EMPOWER THE ADULT LEARNERS

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### Abstract

Heutagogy, a form of self-determined learning that provides high learner autonomy and control on learning, is potentially capable of transforming adult learners into lifelong learners by fostering self-learning skills among them. Actually, heutagogy empowers learners through developing self-learning skills and developing capability among learners to adapt in any unfamiliar learning environment. Hence, it is quite interesting to know that how heutagogy may be implemented replacing the traditional learning and especially where the teacher has 'not much to do', rather just serving the role of a guide only. The present article focuses on designing the process of implementation of heutagogy, highlighting the major principles for the purpose of its implementation and its primary design elements. The article also highlights on some of the benefits and plausible challenges towards the implementation process. The discussion on the process of implementing heutagogical learning in practice contributes to the innovativeness of the present article.

Key words: Heutagogy, self-determined learning, implementation, learner autonomy, design elements

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### I. Introduction:

The concept of heutagogy was first introduced by Stewart Hase and Chris Kenyon in 2000. According to them heutagogy is a form of self-determined learning that deals with a holistic approach in order to develop capability among learners with learners contributing as the major agent in their own learning that occurs as a personal experience. However, the concept of heutagogy is not so new, the ideas are not new neither the theories behind heutagogy are not new. But, the way how we shape those theories to apply in the teaching-learning process, especially, in new learning environments is quite innovative. We are moving towards innovative learning environments which are driven by advanced technologies. Hence, we need some kind of framework and guidelines in order to approach that how the students will learn by themselves. The prime focus will be on the learner agency to empower the learners making them active participants and reflective practitioners.

Heutagogy is at the one extreme of the P-A-H (Pedagogy-Andragogy-Heutagogy) continuum where learners are in the pivotal position and serve the role of dictator of the whole learning process (Fig. 1). In pedagogy, the teaching-learning process highly structured, pre-planned and learning takes place on a single loop. Here teachers decide and plan what to learn and how to learn (teaching methods) giving nearly no scope for learner agency i.e. learner autonomy to make any decision on learning. Whereas, andragogical learning gives freedom to the learners in order to make decision about learning experiences, what and how they will learn. The students play the role of 'problem solvers', whereas teacher is the mentor. Finally, heutagogy allows learners to take full control over learning, full autonomy to the learners and the learners take the initiatives in learning and play the role of 'problem-finders' with teachers remain as guide only.

Figure: The P-A-H Continuum of Learning



Figure 1: Pedagogy, Andragogy and Heutagogy are the different forms of learning applicable at different age group depending upon maturity of learners. Those only differ in degree of learner autonomy, learner control and learners' decision making on the learning process.

However, Stewart Hase (Hase & Kenyon, 2013) argues the P-A-H continuum. He believes that all the learners are self-directed from the beginning. A child always has hundreds of questions. It conveys the message that human being naturally possesses a curious, active and inquisitive mind. But, it is quite surprising how the habit of asking questions relinquishes with our maturity! Hase (Hase & Kenyon, 2013) explains that the tradition schooling system is the main reason behind this. This system provides us with 'this is what you have to learn and this is

how you have to learn'. So, the point is that we can not only apply heutagogic practices on the adults rather we may apply on children also, provided the degree should be according to their level of maturity.

Existing system does not encourage self-determined learning. In order to implement heutagogy into action, the teachers should give it to the learners instead of 'hand holding' and insisting on what and how to learn. If the students get the freedom, they may come up with ideas. We can sense a paradigm shift in education as the learners will change their role from passive listeners to active participants and reflective practitioners. They will critically think before accepting things. This is the spirit of heutagogy – adapting to the new learning environment through creative and innovative learning approaches. It is doubtless to say that technology is advancing day by day and highly influencing education. Naturally, the learning environment is changing quickly rather continuously improving. If we do not adapt, definitely we will fall behind.

## **II. Objectives of the study:**

The present article focuses on the following objectives:

1. To discuss major principles for designing heutagogical learning
2. To point out the major design elements for implementing heutagogy
3. To elaborate the process of implementation of heutagogy in traditional system of education
4. To address plausible challenges towards implementation of heutagogy
5. To discuss the benefits of heutagogical learning

## **III. Method of study:**

The article is one the review of related literature which served as the secondary sources.

## **IV. Designing Principles of Heutagogical Learning:**

### **4.1 Learning is learner-determined:**

In heutagogical learning process, learner agency occurs i.e. the learners determine and takes the responsibility to investigate whether real learning occurred, they insight into how they learned, how far they learned. They also have the luxury to make decision about how to assess i.e. to gauge the learning experiences and whether the journey of was at all beneficial to them and also to frame the strategies for further improvement. Hence, the inputs, process and outcomes of learning is totally under control of the learner only.

### **4.2 Learning is development of self-efficacy and development of capability:**

Learning through heutagogy encourages self-efficacy among learners as the learner-driven and learner-determined. It allows learners to frame their own path of

learning, independently as per their convenience. Again, heutagogy also catalyse capability development among students. Capability is actually the ability to adapt according to the changing learning environment, learning context and nature of content. Sometimes it is seen that a student performs well in front teachers but the same student is unable to carry the consistency in examinations. It is not the reason that the learner is not competent rather the learner is not capable of transforming the performance in examinations. So, the development of capability not the development of competency is the prime focus of heutagogy that empowers learners to cope with and adapt the changing learning environment.

#### 4.3 Learning involves reflection and meta-cognition of the learners on their own learning process:

Heutagogy attempts to foster reflective practices among the learners in order to transform them into reflective practitioners. This enables learners to insight into their personal learning experiences. They use their meta-cognitive skills to reflect on how to learn, how to synchronize their competencies with new situations and environments, how the learning affects their existing ideas, knowledge, viewpoints and thinking about the world, how to integrate understandings of their learning environments.

#### 4.4 Non-linearity of learning:

Traditional system of education encourages linearity of teaching-learning process, where teachers decide what to learn, how to learn, what to achieve and how to assess the learning outcomes (Fig. 2).

Figure: Linearity of learning process

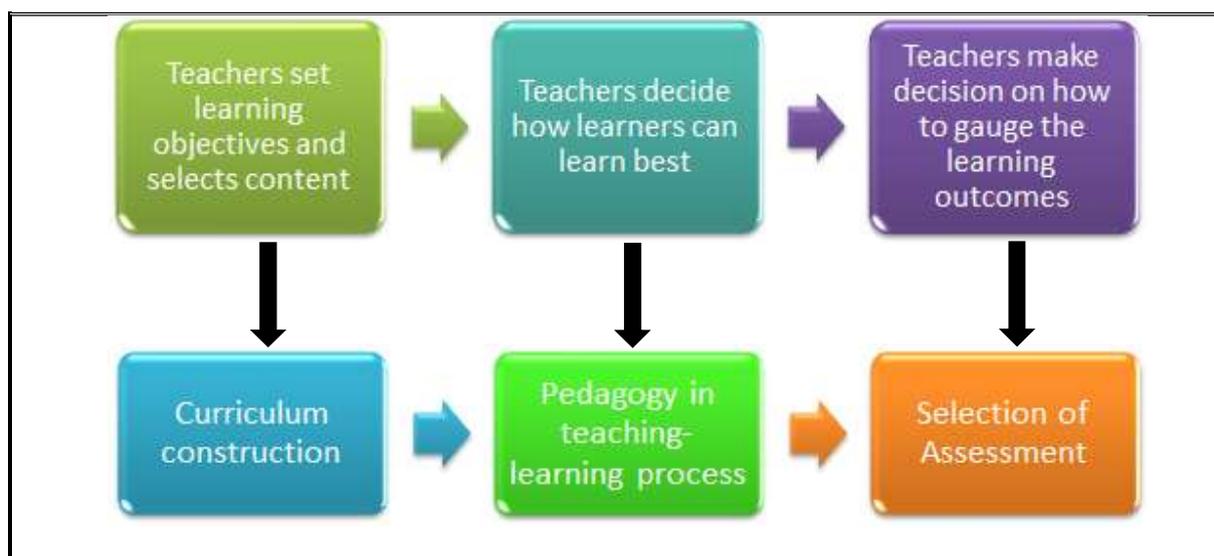


Figure 2: Teachers decide the whole path of learning providing no scope for learner agency

In heutagogical learning, learning occurs in a non-linear way. Here learners decide what to learn, how to learn and how to assess the learning outcomes as shown in Fig. 3. Suppose, at the beginning of a semester, students have to set the learning goals, what to achieve, how to map the learning path, and how to assess whether learning has occurred. In the mean process teachers serve as guide.

Figure: Non-linearity of learning in Heutagogy

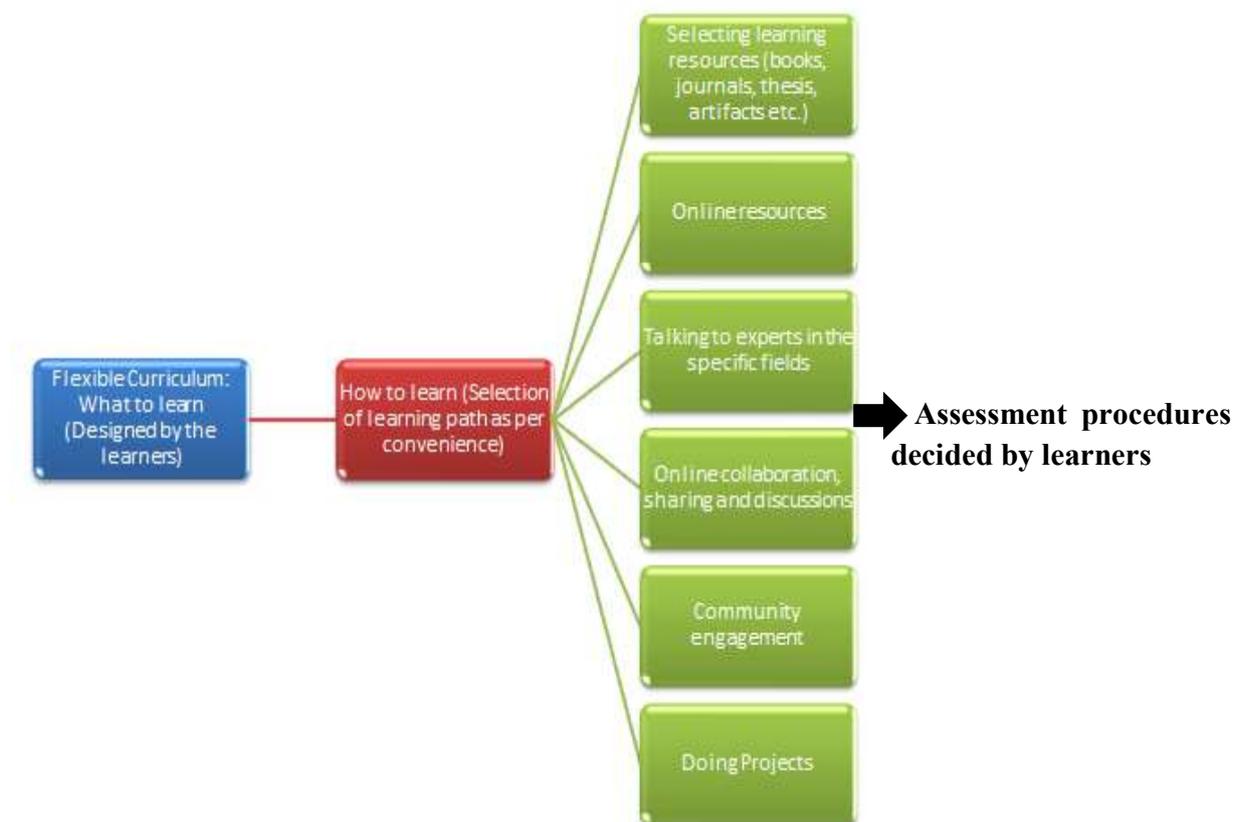


Figure 3: Active involvement of learners in deciding what to learn, how to learn and how to ensure the success of learning process i.e. selection of appropriate assessment procedures.

**V. Design Elements for implementation of Heutagogy:**

The following elements must be taken into account while designing the process of implementation of heutagogical practices in tradition teaching-learning process:

1. Explore: Learners explore new ideas in own way from different knowledge resources, online and social networks.

2. Create: Learners are not passive listeners as they do not merely accumulate information. Instead they are involved and engaged in the learning process to create new knowledge.
3. Interaction, Collaboration and Sharing of knowledge: Heutagogy provides the opportunity and urgency to connect with the world.
4. Reflection of the learners: Heutagogy opens the space for the learners to reflect on how learning influences their existing knowledge, ideas, beliefs and thoughts.
5. Learner Autonomy: The learners enjoy full autonomy for making decision in each step of learning from choosing what to learn, determining the learning path i.e. how to learn and the methods and procedures of assessment of learning outcomes.

## VI. The Process Implementation: Heutagogic Design Process:

Self-determined learning does not underestimate or ignore the existing systems of education, rather it offers the desired learners form it suits the best, and those who wish to employ and accept it as an opportunity to learn in the most fulfilling and satisfying way. In order to implement heutagogy, self-determined learning environment must be created. The instructors need to alter their traditional approach of teaching by placing value on learners' self-direction towards the learning process (Blaschke, 2012). The institutions and the teachers have only to provide the contact and continuous support to the learners. This will contribute in establishing 'Heutagogical Environment'. The following process must be executed systematically to implement heutagogy in practice:

- 6.1 **Generating learning contracts and Flexible Curriculum:** Learning contracts may be regarded as a blue print or a conceptual framework what the students want to do in the next academic session. Students are asked to prepare their learning contract before starting of any course. In heutagogy, the learners create the learning map, and instructors serve as the compass (Hase & Kenyon, 2007; Hase, 2009 as cited in Thakur, 2013). Students chalk out their thoughts, plan and decide what they will do during the upcoming academic sessions according to their need and interest. They employ their full autonomy in making decisions and use their self-motivation. They decide what motivate them, what drive interest, what to learn, what to achieve, what activities are to be included and how to assess learning (Kenyon & Hase, 2010; Gilbert, 1975; Cristiano, 1993 as cited in Thakur, 2013).
- 6.2 **Creating flux towards Open Learning Environment:** Teacher as a guide should drive learners and create thrust among learners for exploiting open learning resources. The learners may find themselves beneficial to use open educational resources, to use open networks and participating in MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses).
- 6.3 **Encouraging Reflection:** Students must be encouraged to adopt inquiry-based activities, project-based activities so that the ability of investigation, critical thinking and the ability of asking questions may develop. The teachers should discourage the tendencies of learners in reporting things rather they should scaffold them in applying their insight on how they learned and how those influenced their existing thoughts and beliefs. Teachers

should always try not to ‘handhold’ but to push them to go out from their comfort zone and do something new.

**6.4 Empowering Collaboration:** In order to make meaningful knowledge collaboration, the learners must have the knowledge of social media and networks. The technology has a major impact on education. If technology is the ‘beats’ and Heutagogy is the ‘dance’ then this collaboration make an outstanding ‘orchestra’ in education. Through collaboration, the learners share, create new knowledge and perform group works. In this social media may trigger the discussions on various topics with transform into critical thinking in classrooms.

**6.5 Planning for the ‘Negotiated Assessment’:** Learning outcomes must be assessed through appropriate procedures and methods in order to know whether took place successfully. In the context of heutagogy, we need to move from the ‘one size fits all’ approach that the traditional examinations provide, to an approach of ‘what is the best fit for each learner at individual level?’ As the assessment is controlled by learners it is called as ‘negotiated assessment’. The learners are free to select the assessment procedures to confirm how much they have accomplished, what they have not achieved yet and whether the learning path was effective. For this purpose, formative assessment techniques, presentation of the learning experiences, preparation of project report and so on may be suggested.

Figure: The Heutagogic Design Process

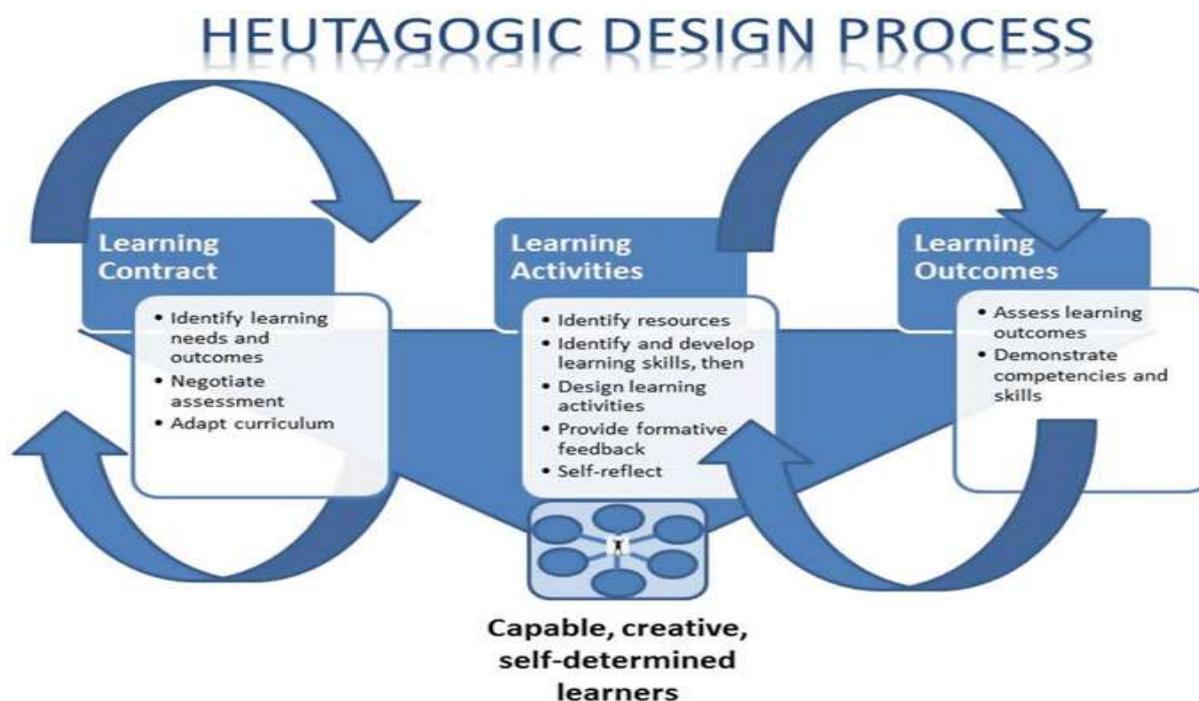


Figure 4: Heutagogy involves learners’ decision on the whole learning process starting from the preparation of the learning contract, designing learning path by selecting appropriate learning

activities and finally by determining the methods and procedures of assessing the learning outcomes (Blaschke & Hase, 2015).

### **VII. Benefits of Heutagogy:**

Apparently, it seems that heutagogy may distract learners from learning, but actually what happens, learners define learning path themselves, feeds their needs and interests using their self-motivation, they engage themselves in finding learning resources, sharing and collaborating information instead of being just passive listeners. The benefits of Heutagogy are discussed below:

1. Learners become self-motivated and highly engaged with learning as the content is according to their choice opposite to what is dictated by a pre-decided structured curriculum.
2. Learners develop the ability to investigate, questioning things and critically think before accepting anything.
3. Ability to adapt in different changing learning situation i.e. capability development occurs through heutagogic practices.
4. Heutagogy also help learners to develop lifelong learning skills in order to create sustainable learning environment.
5. Heutagogy encourages personal development through development of independent thinking and self-confidence and developing self-learning skills.
6. Heutagogy provides the scope for social justice in education. This make the democratization of learning opportunities by making learning personalized at individual level.
7. Learners become so fascinated and absorbed by their learning as they go through according to their area of interest and they invest more and more time on learning. The learning is no longer seen in terms of a 'burden' or 'requirement' but becomes a pleasurable and inherently rewarding experience (Hase & Kenyon, 2013).
8. A heutagogical learning environment facilitates development of capable learners and emphasizes both the development of learner competencies as well as development of the learner's capability and capacity to learn (Ashton & Newman, 2006; Bhoryrub, Hurley, Neilson, Ramsay, & Smith, 2010; Hase & Kenyon, 2000 as cited in Thakur, 2013).

### **VIII. Challenges towards Implementation of Heutagogy:**

Although, heutagogy has a number of benefits on learner and learning, the process of its' implementation has certain challenges to face. Some of those are discussed below:

1. Generally, students like to consume teaching as their path of learning. They are conditioned by the existing concept of teaching and learning. So, they do not easily accept such self-determined approach. They become reluctant to come out from their comfort zone and to accept learning in a self-determined way.

2. As discussed earlier, Stewart Hase believes that heutagogy does not only mean for adult learners, it is applicable for young learners also. But, always there is a question whether heutagogy can be applied for school children? Will it work for them? So, some small scale experiments may be carried out in order to find this.
3. In formal education system, the concerned institutions have the authority to make decision about giving certificates and degrees. From this perspective, it is difficult to cope with the issue of self-assessment of learning by the students in heutagogical learning process.
4. Success of heutagogy depends solely upon the individual personality characteristics of the learners. Learners with lack of self-motivation and self-confidence may feel self-determined learning as a great challenge. Consequently, they may not be able to come out from their comfort zone and they may feel better to sit and learn in the traditional way (Hase & Kenyon, 2013).

### IX. Discussion and Conclusions:

Heutagogy being a form of self-determined learning, allows learners to enjoy full autonomy to learn according to their individual needs and interests. Heutagogy also catalyses learners towards growing as lifelong learners by fostering self-learning skills, increasing capacity to learn and developing capability to learn in new situations. However, there are many hurdles towards implementation of heutagogy in formal education system. In order to reap the benefits, we need to accept that the role of teachers in a heutagogical model would deploy scaffolding in which they support learners' progression towards competencies and provide opportunities for them to accomplish capabilities (Eachempati, Kiran, Komattil, & Ismail, 2017).

The policy makers, teachers and the learners need to be prepared to use this innovative approach of learning and need to adjust their thinking about learning in the context of technology-driven learning in twenty-first century. Heutagogy pushes them to think about learning in a revolutionary way (Hase, 2016). However, there is a need for small scale experimentation in order to examine the effect of heutagogical practices on achievements of the learners. It is also to examine whether heutagogy is able to go beyond competency development towards capability development among learners.

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