

13.5: What is Heutagogy?

What is “Heutagogy”?

The foundation of my educational philosophy (and therefore the basis of my instructional design decisions for this course) is “Heutagogy”. Simply stated, it means that adults learn best when they have a lot of control over what they learn and how they learn it. In addition, heutagogy asserts that the assessment of adult learning should focus on what the learner believes she/he has learned and on the various ways that learning has impacted, or will impact her/his values, ideals, and behavior.

(See this link for an excellent synopsis of heutagogy: <http://www.nssa.us/journals/2007-28-1/2007-28-1-04.htm> . Additional resources relevant to the theoretical basis of heutagogy are available at <http://www.technoheutagogy.com> .)

The learning objectives implicit in the heutagological approach are different than those of traditional pedagogy and contemporary andragogy. I have designed this course to create a learner directed learning environment that will expose each student to the generally accepted concepts, ideas, research methods and research findings which comprise the discipline of Psychology. In addition, the design of this course will provide the opportunity for each student to identify and explore the discipline-specific topics and ideas from the textbook and from the World Wide Web that she/he finds most important and relevant.

I recognize that not all students have the same interests and motivations for taking this course. Hence, there are no content-specific learning goals that I have set. In contrast, each student decides which specific content topics to focus on and discuss. A desired outcome of this learner-directed learning environment is that each student will increase her/his capability to identify discipline-salient issues that are personally interesting and relevant and then orchestrate learning activities that result in cognitive growth and behavioral change.

In short – each learner sets her/his own content-specific learning objectives. This is the essence of a heutagological design.

My role in the course...

The written assignments and discussion posts that you submit in this class are not for my benefit – they are for the benefit of you and the other students in the class. All of the course rules, policies, and requirements are designed to maximize the teaching / learning value of your coursework.

My role in the course begins with the instructional design process – to create a sequence of learning activities that:

- **engages each learner in a meaningful way with the course content and the other learners in the class.**
- **requires each learner to also be a teacher – to add quality learning opportunities for the other students to benefit from.**
- **allows maximum freedom for self-direction – so that each learner has the responsibility to forge her/his own learning path.**

The extent to which I am successful in achieving these three goals is the measure of my success in this course.

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