
Using a heutagogical approach in teaching at higher education courses: A self-study

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Abstract

This paper presents a self-study which aims to test some higher-education courses the author taught using heutagogy (self-determined learning) approach. The study tested the teaching rationale and its impact on the learning experience of the students. Heutagogy is a radical approach which asks the learners to choose what and how they will learn within the frame of the course general subject. During fourteen years of teaching courses in teacher education colleges and universities, I changed the way I teach from lecturer to PBL (Project Based Learning) guide and to heutagogy mentor. I designed my heutagogy course on two main stages. Before the self-learning stage, I tried to present the subject of the course in a way that increase the students' curiosity to learn about it. During the self-learning stage the students studied in small groups (3-6 in a group), which each of them were asked to choose: (a) a sub-subject or question or issue they wish to learn more about from the general subject of the course; (b) the goal of their learning (e.g. to research, to initiate theoretical or practical project); (c) criteria to evaluate the learning process and its outcomes in self-formative evaluation; (d) the sources of learning (from whom and from what we will learn?); (e) the way they will present the process and its outcome before others (e.g. their class mates, experts) at the end of the course. In on-going meetings I tried to help the groups to think how to cope with the challenges they were tackled during their learning process. Their individuals' on-going and final reflections indicate that the autonomy and the team work they experienced, increased the sense of involvement and interest of most of students in the learning process and the course subject. Some of them reported about their difficulties to cope with vagueness and uncertainty atmosphere (without clear instructions about what and how to

learn), although they understood that such environment gave them a great opportunity to develop themselves as self-determined learners.

Key words: active learning, heutagogy, high education, self-formative evaluation.

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