Chapter 17

What's Next?

Abstract In this chapter we present a few reflections about heutagogy practice and study. Some of our conclusions are already being implemented while others are planned for the future.

Heutagogy means a change in the teaching–learning paradigm in higher education. This change can be revolutionary. However, it can also be implemented gradually, as a step-by-step progression in which various elements of heutagogy can be realized in a given course in different settings.

As we defined in the introduction (Chap. 1), heutagogy is a teaching–learning approach in which the learners, facilitated by a mentor/teacher, determine their own learning. They decide what, how, with whom, when, and in which environment to learn. They also choose how to evaluate their learning and how to present the knowledge they had learnt about the subject-matter and about themselves as learners. Thus, the lecturers can decide “how much” of the heutagogy elements they want to include in their course.

In this book we justify heutagogy’s general outlook and present how it can be exercised in different designs for different academic settings, aims, contents, and students. The unique and innovative approach of our concept of heutagogy is its wandering aspect. Following Serres (see Chap. 6), we also believe that learning is a mesh-based nomadic process.

Possible Perspectives of Heutagogy

Following our general perspective on teaching (Chap. 2):

1. Heutagogy can be regarded as a method of teaching and learning so that the teacher is an enlightenment individual whose main aim is that the students will become knowledgeable. Hence, for him/her the content learned is the focus of the student’s activity.
2. Heutagogy can be regarded as an art, and the teacher, being a romantic individual, is an authentic creator who loves his students and enhances their capability to

self-fulfill themselves. Hence, for him/her the student's self-determined process is the focus of the teachers' activity.

Hence, heutagogy can be viewed either as a viable and effective teaching method in which to deliver some definite content, or as a holistic pedagogical approach in which the process of *Bildung* stands at the core of the educational enterprise. We prefer to see heutagogy as a learner-centered approach.

As we stated in Chap. 1 and demonstrated throughout the book, heutagogy is called for if one wants:

- To empower the learner as a human being and enable him to be an autonomous agent;
- To educate a citizen who knows what democracy is and feels a moral responsibility to struggle for a better world;
- To motivate the students' learning process and make it meaningful for them.

However, heutagogy cannot be a dogmatic paradigm that the teacher has to blindly follow. This is a very easy trap to fall into, but it might prevent wandering, critical thinking, open mindedness, and deter genuine dialogue with students and colleagues. Even for the teacher "whose obligation is to ascertain that the new generation will share his faith" (Back, 2012, p. 20) it is possible to practice some of heutagogy's ingredients as we saw in the first example of Chap. 7 (The *Talmud* and the *Havruta*).

This book calls for a revolution in the teaching–learning paradigm in higher education, as we mentioned in the preface. However, we did not investigate the issue of ICT in the teaching–learning processes beyond mentioning the students' use of the internet and the power-point application for wandering and presenting of knowledge. The reason is that we do not propose a technologically oriented modification of the academic tradition. Yet, heutagogy can contribute to long distance learning (e-heutagogy) as can be exemplified by the works of Blaschke (2013), Kerry (2013), Gerstein (2014), and Belt (2014). As noted in the book's Preface, e-heutagogy is a feasible way to deal with worldwide crises like the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). It enables the students to continue to learn in a way that promote their self-determined learning.

Heutagogy's Future: Opportunities and Challenges

Along with our experience in higher education courses, we would like to examine the long-term effects of experiencing heutagogy, especially its impact on the students' senses of agency, competence and autonomy. One of the major challenges we face is whether and how to use heutagogy to promote democratic, liberal, and humanistic approaches.

The possibility to develop an entire program in which all the courses are heutagogic ones present another challenge that can be exercised and explored. Such a

possibility to create a holistic learning environment might have a great impact on the students' way of life.

In addition, we began to advance heutagogy in K-12 school systems. For example, in one elementary school, some subjects are taught according to students' decisions of what to learn, how to learn, and how to conduct self-evaluation. Both the teachers and the students' express enthusiasm about this experience. Teachers report the students' joy of learning, and the students report developing interest and curiosity and feeling of autonomy. We intend to expand the circle of heutagogy learning to middle and high school systems.

Epilogue

Heutagogy goes against the current. It challenges the common wisdom of what it means to be a lecturer/student in the academia. Does it have a chance to be more than an isolated and peripheral phenomenon in higher education?

Shklovsky (1917) claims that the role of art is to restore the sensation of life, which mean to refresh, create, and expand the meaning of the familiar reality. People become less aware to their reality, an idea illustrated by Shklovsky who described a group of people living by the sea who turned to be deaf to the sound of the waves. He suggests calling the role of the art defamiliarization and offers the metaphor of "to make a stone stony", which means to realize the essence of things. Defamiliarization encourages people to create an open and ongoing dialogue with what they are already familiar with, such as nature, people, texts, phenomena, and theories, in order to expand their meaning.

One of our students wrote in her reflection that for her, the heutagogy course was a kind of defamiliarization of her concept of learning. It is possible that heutagogy learning may adopt the idea of defamiliarization by encouraging students to create open and ongoing dialogues with their studied subjects, noticing their different perspectives. Defamiliarization invites learning through a journey, which also demonstrates the ideas of learning by wandering and learning for its own sake.

Such a journey presupposes the ideal of trust. O'Neil distinguishes between two institutional cultures: One is based on suspicion, the other on trust. Our postmodern culture suffers from a "crisis of trust". The price is high for it leads to tough regulation policies. To ensure that students will learn, we impose more requirements and quality assurance procedures. We forget that "trust breeds trust" (2002). Heutagogy advances the idea that we trust the students and their desire to learn. We trust that they know what they want, and that they want to improve the quality of their life. Some of them need to learn how to do it. And we believe that to this end, heutagogy might be a promising starting point.

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