NRI Nomura Research Institute Singapore Pte. Ltd - Manila Branch

SELF-DETERMINED LEARNING

NRI's 2021 Research on Global Trends in Talent Development - Part 2

Self-Determined Learning

Move over, Andragogy. Welcome, Heutagogy.

From the 1970s and until now, Andragody or Adult Learning is a standard staple for training new trainers. Since Malcolm Knowles pioneered Andragogy or Adult Learning Principles in the 1970s, it has become a byword in the corporate training industry as opposed to Pedagogy which is more prevalent in the academe sector for child learning.

However, during the last few years, the practice of Heutagogy or Self-Determined Learning started to gain ground after Hase and Kenyon pioneered it in 2000. With the influx of Always-On Learning technologies and the rise of Millennials and Gen Z learners, Heutagogy or Self-Determined Learning has become another fuel for the democratization of learning.

As our study showed, more and more learners want to take control of what they want to learn and how they want to learn.

What is Self-Determined Learning About?

The influx of Always-On Learning technologies has provided greater access and opportunities for people to create their own learning pathways and learn at their own pace. This has given impetus to the rise of Heutagogy or Self-Determined Learning.

Self-Determined Learning is an agile learner-centered approach that enables learners to determine what they need to learn and how to learn it. With heutagogical learning, learners become more of Consumer-Learners - those who can decide what learning products and services to "purchase" and consume.

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The need for learners to determine their own learning path has been supported by the 2019 Workplace Learning Report from Linkedin. The substantial percentage of learners across generational types who want fully self-directed learning and independent learning and the 74% of respondents who want to learn during their spare time is a clear indication that workers want greater independence and autonomy for their own learning.

Implications of Self-Determined Learning

While there are similarities of Self-Determined Learning to what Malcolm Knowles introduced in the 1970s as Self-Directed Learning, there is a fundamental difference in their assumption of the innate ability of people to determine their learning. Knowle's Andragogy or Adult Learning assumes that learners can develop their ability for self-directedness in their learning as they enter adulthood. On the other hand, Stewart Hayes and Lisa Marie Blaschke- the two leading thought leaders on heutagogy, are explicit in their Humanistic view of human agency (that of our capacity to make choices and decisions and act on them) as a universal characteristic occurring prior to adulthood. They both believe that we are born heutagogical learners.

With Heutagogy, the focus is more on the learning process to get learners to understand how they learn. Here, the *Process* of learning will be a Double-Loop "*where own beliefs and actions will be questioned and tested*." Emphasis is placed more on developing *Capability* "*where learners' skills and knowledge can be reproduced in unfamiliar situations to solve real problems*." To achieve this, the design dynamics become more heuristic. Based on the pioneering works of Nobel Laureates Herbert A. Simon and Daniel Kahneman, *heuristics* are "*mental shortcuts (or rules of thumb) that aid our decision-making, judgments and problem-solving in everyday life*." Thus, the goal of heutagogical design is to enable the capability of learners to make decisions and solve their problems. In this context, the role of Talent Development professionals has shifted from being Teachers and Facilitators to being Enablers. As Enablers, the fundamental role of Talent Development professionals and leaders is to create and promote a heuristic learning environment where learners are empowered to determine their learning and develop their capability to make intelligent decisions and solve their problems in ways that contribute to organizational goals.

Comparison of Different Learning Approaches

	PEDAGOGY (Instructor-Directed)	ANDRAGOGY (Self-Directed)	HEUTAGOGY (Self-Determined)
FOCUS	Knowledge	Content	Process
LEARNING	Single-Loop	Single-Loop	Double-Loop
DESIGN	Linear	Linear with Feedback	Heuristic
DEVELOPMENT	Knowledge	Competence	Capability
POWER-CONTROL	Instructor	Instructor-Learner Coordinated	Learner-Directed

Source: Blaschke, M. L., (2012), 'Heutagogy and Lifelong Learning: A review of Heutagogical Practice and Self-Determined Learning'

Best Practices

- The **Johnson and Johnson** Leadership Development Program is nothing new. Current practices involve providing leadership development to potential successors and incumbent leaders. However, Johnson and Johnson goes beyond that. It provides a leadership program to its employees at all levels, based on its belief that "every employee at Johnson & Johnson is a leader, and our goal is to help employees realize this potential".

- According to **Pixar** President Ed Catmull, "Pixar University helps reinforce the mindset that we're all learning and it's fun to learn together". Pixar empowers its directors to decide and be more independent not just in directing but also in their own development. Directors take accountability for their own development by asking for help from a "creative brain trust" of filmmakers, a pillar of their peer-based process.

- **Google** believes that organizations that embrace a culture of learning create an environment that encourages curiosity and knowledge sharing, which in turn leads to better business outcomes. They believe that, through the learning culture, organizations can be equipped with necessary skills anytime and employees start to think and act more like owners when it comes to their own development needs. Google has succeeded in creating this culture through g2g (Googler-to-Googler). Below is the summary of the program:

Googler to Googler Program Summary

ELEMENTS	DESCRIPTION
PURPOSE	• Promote a learning culture through an employee-to-employee learning program. • This is not to save learning costs. • Employees develop and grow by teaching others, and the people in the organization learn from peers with first-hand knowledge of the business.
METHODOLOGY	• Employees who are willing to volunteer help their peers learn and grow • At Google, 80% of all tracked trainings are run through g2g • There are more than 6,000 volunteers in Google
CONTENTS	• Many of the classes focus on general professional skills, like negotiations and leadership, and role-related skills, like sales training and Python coding.
MODALITY	• Volunteers can contribute in a variety of ways such as teaching courses, providing 1:1 mentoring, and designing learning materials.
KEY POINTS	• Strong leadership sponsorship: leaders advocate the importance of learning. • Connection to core values: Tie the learning into the company's organizational mission or core values. • Start early: Clarify from day one that learning is expected and part of everyone's job. Google has emphasized the importance of learning even in the new-hire orientation program.

Source: re:Work (https://rework.withgoogle.com/guides/learning-development-employee-to-employee/steps/introduction/)

Conclusion

Together, Always-On Learning and Self-Determined Learning continue to enable the rapid democratization of learning. People now have greater opportunities to determine what they can learn, when they want to learn, and how they want to learn.

The critical role now of leaders and Talent Development professionals is to promote an environment where learning is more democratized and where people can create and manage their own learning pathways aligned to organizational goals.

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Jun's expertise is in HR and Talent Development, Agile Practices, Design Thinking, Quality Management, and Corporate Performance Management. Jun also has extensive hands-on leadership experience in diverse disciplines which include HR, OD, Quality Management, Risk Management, Strategy, and Corporate Performance Management, which he gained from his 28+ years of working in various companies locally and abroad.

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