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Introduction

Most people when they hear the term pedagogy immediately think of education and often educators themselves think about and discuss pedagogical principles as if the two terms were transposable. Pedagogy, literally, the art and science of educating children (Learnativity, 2001) actually refers to the teaching of children and makes a number of assumptions about the learner-teacher relationship. Historically, teachers have generally designed learning opportunities for students in order to provide the students with skills for the future that they are lacking and the teacher can provide.

That the teacher teaches and the learner learns is a traditional discipline-based doctrine. When the decision-making is centered on the concerns of the teacher, often used with negative objectives, more often than not it is because the teacher has been trained to teach in a particular method rather than because it is appropriate to the learners' needs or to the situation of the teacher. Thus it is referred to as Teacher-centered instruction.

Much of the pre-tertiary learning that took place during the early 1800's and up until the late 1980's was based on this style. Although teaching has changed with the times, many teachers, with limited resources available to them, especially those in third world countries, may still rely on this methodology.

However as pedagogical methodologies and learning styles diversify, education has seen the emergence of Independent Learning, sometimes also known as self-directed learning or student autonomy. Independent learning refers specifically to the development of patterns of self-directed learning and of the methodology of self-access, as well as implying some degree of learner training. Crabbe (1993) also usefully identifies a 'psychological' argument in favour of independent learning and suggests that learning is more efficient and motivating to the degree that it matches a learner's own style and strategies. However, independent learning has taken on a new role as we enter the twenty-first century. With the advent of the Internet, greater use of television, satellite, computers and computer networks, video, radio, broadband, and other forms of multi-media, the roles of teacher and learner have changed dramatically. There are more than a few educators claiming now about how independent learning will change the face of education within the next few years. Independent learning is a very exhilarating prospect for both educators and students alike, however, the enhancement of learner independence, through what Simonson & Simonson (2000) call *synchronous learning*, that is same time but possibly different place learning, and *asynchronous learning*, that is different time learning, present a myriad of new and changing roles for organizations, teachers, and learners correspondingly. Learners and educators alike, adopt roles that are often expressed as a behaviour within the classroom situation. The kinds of attitudes and relationships that would usually appear in the classroom situation, for example, seating positions, work patterns etc, now take on new shape predetermined by the method of study chosen by the learner and by the teaching methods employed by the teacher. What this paper is principally concerned with are these new roles and how they affect the responsibilities of the teacher and learner, and we will attempt to critically evaluate the implications within the framework of teaching.

Independent Learning-Modes of Learning

Incorporated within the context of 'Independent Learning', there are a number of methods that the learner can choose from, to complete their chosen course of study. The more familiar kind is traditional:

1. Correspondence uses some kind of mailing system, either regular post or electronic mail, to deliver lessons, studies, readings, assignments etc., and on successful completion, the student receives a grade.
2. Audio and video systems take on a number of forms. One-way, two-way, audio, video, audio-video, multimedia, cameras, satellite etc., provides both the instructor and learner with a more personal form of interaction.
3. Networks, high-speed networks, satellite, etc., facilitating are all involved with real-time learning over distance.

With such diversity to deliver and receive selected courses of study, a new set of skills for not only educators, but also their students too is required. Teaching of technology to learners who are not physically located in the same site where instruction is taking place requires a different set of skills and competencies than traditional education. In addition, these tools need to be mastered to be effective.

However, even if this is more the structural component of independent learning, these components affect and influence the roles of both learner and educator correspondingly.

Role of the Teacher

While the limitations placed upon teachers within the traditional classroom setting are few, for independent learning (otherwise known as distance learning or correspondence), the teacher is now responsible for setting guidelines for the programme of study that the student chooses. Whether the learner studies in the confines of their own room, sits in the school or public library, or even outside, given the fact that the student is enrolled in a course of study at an educational establishment, the instructor has an obligation to provide assistance to the learner by first setting legible, easy to understand guidelines. It must be clear to the student what their instructor is asking of them. Often we assume that others will understand exactly what we are asking of them, when in fact they spend more time attempting to understand the message. Borge Holmberg (1989) remarks about the clarity of instructions that, "some schools....found it practical to work with a battery of carefully prepared explanatory comments that teachers can use...." (p111).

In the past, the teacher was viewed as possessing knowledge that the students required (and in some countries still is). Based on the works of Carl Rogers and his Client Centered Therapy and the developmental theories of Abraham Maslow, Malcolm Knowles introduced a new philosophy to educational thinking into America. From the introduction of a set of assumptions contrary to or complementary to pedagogy, he proposed that the teacher become a facilitator. Instead of teaching in the traditional teacher-centered method, he or she would provide opportunities for learning as a facilitator of learning, which he named andragogy.

In the individual pursuit of learning, another aim of the instructor is to help students, whether they are studying on their own or with a group, to plan, execute, and assess their own learning. For example, an instructor might provide assistance to learners by locating resources or instructing them in the mastery of alternative learning strategies.

Brocket & Hiemstra (1991) comment on the personal responsibility of the student that "human nature is basically good....that individuals possess virtually unlimited potential for growth...." They go on to say "that only by accepting responsibility for one's own learning is it possible to take a proactive approach to the learning process." (pp.26-27). Therefore, even though the learner may be outside of the traditional learning environment,

the instructor is yet still responsible in part for the student's ultimate success.

The Role of the Student

According to Knowles, Holton & Swanson (1998) pedagogy holds the teacher fully responsible for every facet of the learning processes. The teacher assigns the material, when it is to be completed, how it is to be done, where it is to be done, how it will be evaluated, etc., and the students are responsible totally to the teacher. This is rather like the parent-child relationship, especially of young children. The student is dependant on the teacher for everything about his or her learning. Knowles felt that this was not how best to approach the instruction of students and he describes how he learned this new technique from a Rogerian psychologist-facilitator in his book (Knowles, et al., 1998. pp. 198-201). Unlike pedagogy, based on the parent-child model, andragogy defines the teacher and students as equal partners in the learning process. While pedagogy assumes the student is dependent on the teacher, andragogy, the term that is used to describe the provision of opportunities for learning, assumes that:

1. Individuals move from dependence to self-directing behaviour.
2. Independent learners acquire experience useful to learning.
3. Readiness to learn is related to the social role of the learner.
4. Independent learners are more problem oriented.
5. Internal factors motivate individuals to learn. (Adapted from Wiley, 2001).

Imagine an early 'Victorian' method of instruction: students sitting in a classroom in neat straight rows. No talking, no knuckles showing on your hands when you are writing with your slate board. In some countries around the world, this was still the preferred method of teaching until the late 1940s. This does not promote learner independence. Another imperative role of the teacher, tantamount to the success of the independent learner, is for the educator to learn and understand as much as possible about the students. Borge Homberg (1989, pp107) stresses the importance of 'Communication' i.e. the communication between instructor and learner and that it is synonymous with the success of independent learning.

Students who decide to learn independently of others i.e., those who take correspondence or some other form of learning, tend to be more highly motivated than any other students who chose traditional means or methods of education. In the case of the instructor responsible for any students who chose to learn independently, they must be fully aware of the student in all respects. One consequence of offering programmes of study for independent learning is the instructor must contend with the fact that some learners will ask questions, while others refrain. This may be because of a number of reasons. The learner may have a quiet and reserved character or their culture may not make allowances for the custom of asking questions of the instructor. Other students may feel that they are not 'worthy' to ask the instructor and are reluctant to take up their instructor's time.

One of the hallmark fundamentals of learner independence is that the learner is ultimately responsible for their own learning. Brookfield (1993, p.227) argues that letting learners exercise control over all educational decisions needs to be a consistent element of self-directed learning. As a result, learning organizations need to be aware and to shift as much of the learning process as possible back to the learner.

Critical Evaluation

Preparing students for instruction is important in any mode of teaching. This allows for maximum learning and class participation. However, it is especially important to prepare the students for situations where classroom and student are separated across distances. Students need to understand their responsibility to ensure

a successful learning experience. Teaching independent learners is a challenge. The instructor needs to be innovative, creative, and imaginative. As a general rule of thumb, learner experiences show that successful, traditional classroom activities are adaptable for the independent learner no matter what environment.

Distance education shows great potential not only for independent study, but also for adult and mass education for highly individualized study and personal approaches with a great deal of rapport between the teaching and learning parties. Although independent learning is a wonderful opportunity for the learner to realize their goal, it also introduces something of impracticality. Independent learning stimulates learner activity and allows them to be responsible for their own success and achievements; however, it also places an unnecessary load on the instructor responsible for advising the student on the most appropriate method of study. The more individualized the instruction becomes, the more time each instructor spends advising the students. Proportionally, the constant worry and pressure of handing in assignments on time, completing course work, or even just entry of small notes onto a cooperatively used chat site also bears a great weight on the learner.

Conclusions

Watching the growth and development of any independent learner is an extraordinary experience for any instructor. Keeping it interesting and motivating enough for the learners to remain interested and active can make it a valuable learning experience for both instructor and learner. There are assumptions in this shift in ideology from pedagogy to independent learning. The uses of independent learning principles in all levels of education belie this assertion. As humans mature, they naturally acquire knowledge that is applied to future learning. When we begin our formal education, we are first taught how to read and write because these skills will allow us to learn faster and more accurately. Experience allows us to learn and understand more about the environment and ourselves and so we become more capable of taking on personal responsibility for our education as we become more interested in what we learn and experience.

As the individual develops, educators need to try to encourage more independent learning behaviours in their students. In times of great maturity and experience an individual may still have to resort to total dependence on the teacher. For example, when learning a new skill that has never been done before, such as using some new technology, perhaps the teacher will have to begin with a pedagogical model and then as the student progresses, move toward a more student-centered andragogical approach.

This paper has attempted to overview the changing roles of both instructor and learner. Independent learning will continue to interest researchers and educators and that we will amass a great deal more knowledge on this subject over the next 10 years. As more and more people choose to study through alternative means, alternative being used in the broadest sense, the learners themselves will provide a major source of understanding for Independent learning. Independent learning, may give rise to a friction of sorts, for both student and instructor, although independent learners probably have the only real one-to-one relationship with learning that can be found in education.

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