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# THE JOURNEY FROM PEDAGOGY TO PEERAGOGY

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***Abstract***

*The concept of Peeragogy—peer-driven collaborative learning—is increasingly relevant in today's educational landscape, especially within digital and informal learning environments. Rooted in earlier educational theories like Pedagogy (teacher-led learning), Andragogy (adult-centered learning), and Heutagogy (self-directed learning), Peeragogy marks a shift toward decentralized, participatory learning models. It emphasizes mutual knowledge creation and reflective thinking among learners of similar capabilities, drawing from Vygotsky's social constructivist theory. Peeragogy can manifest in both structured classroom settings and informal group discussions, promoting meta-learning through peer feedback and interaction. The present article discusses how the teaching and learning process has shifted from Pedagogy to Heutagogy and finally highlights the role of Peeragogy to cater to the needs of the 21st century learners.*

***Keywords:*** *Collaborative and Cooperative Learning, Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy, Peeragogy*

## Introduction:

One of the common sights we see in any University library or even on the campus is a group of students sitting together discussing a topic learnt in the class. Some of them can also be seen jotting things down as others speak. This is a common example of 'Peeragogy'. Even when we ask for directions from total strangers on the road, we are engaging in Peeragogy. Though the term 'Peeragogy' may be new to some of us, this approach to learning is as old as mankind. Our education has undergone a paradigm shift from Pedagogy to Andragogy to Heutagogy to the latest approach, Peeragogy. To understand the term Peeragogy, one needs to revisit its predecessors, i.e., Pedagogy, Andragogy and Heutagogy.

**Pedagogy:**

Pedagogy involves how teachers teach, highlighting the role of teachers in learning rather than the learner. In this approach learners depend on the teachers, who is responsible for what is taught and how it is taught. Pedagogy may be commonly defined as the art and science and may be even craft of teaching. At the end of the 19th century, the development of scientific fields as sociology and psychology is accompanied by the emergence of pedagogy as an applied science (Shah, 2021).

The etymological meaning of the term pedagogy is derived from the Greek word "paidagōgeō" in which "país, genitive, paidos" means child and ágō means lead; so, it literally means "to lead the child". In English the term pedagogy is used to refer to instructive theory; trainee teachers learn their subject and the pedagogy appropriate for teaching that subject. The word pedagogy has its roots in Ancient Greece.

Pedagogy is more about the methods and not only the subject or content. Thus, Pedagogy seeks answers to three important teaching and learning questions. 1) What do we want the students to learn? 2) How will we help them learn it? 3) How will we know when or if they learned it? (Patel, 2019)

The concept of pedagogy is regarded as a complex phenomenon comprising of different approaches and strategies. Pedagogy is the encompassing term that is concerned with what the instructors do to influence the learning of students. Bringing about improvements in pedagogy is regarded as significant in achieving academic goals and in leading to enrichment of the overall system of education (Kapur, 2020). It is clear that Pedagogy is more related to the education of children rather than adults as learners.

**Andragogy:**

Dugan (1995) defines andragogy more to its origin, andragogy comes from Greek. "Andra" means mature human, not children. So andragogy means science that studies how parents learn. According to Sudjana (2005), andragogy comes from the Greek "andra" and "agogos". Andra means adults and Agogos means to lead or guide, so that andragogy can be interpreted by the science of how to guide adults in the learning process (Syaifar, 2017).

Andragogy is applicable in multiple contexts. The andragogical approach has changed the teaching philosophy of educators around the world. Given the current educational needs, the pedagogical approach has become less effective in teaching adult learners. Adult learners need more than passive transfer of knowledge from one person. Instead, they need to be involved actively in the learning process to construct their own knowledge, to make sense of

the learning, and to apply what is learned. Educators as well as the educational systems world-wide should provide all learners, both children and adults, with the opportunities to be actively engaged in learner-centred educational experiences (Chan, 2010).

**Heutagogy:**

While andragogy is student-cantered or student-directed learning, heutagogy is self-directed learning. Thus, Heutagogy is the study of self-determined learning. Word heutagogy merges from the Greek word 'Heauto' that means 'self' and 'agogy' meaning 'again'. As we are aware that andragogy grew out of the term pedagogy, heutagogy is an offshoot of andragogy. Heutagogy maintains the andragogical student centred emphasis, but takes it a step further by highlighting the importance of developing the skills necessary to learn on one's own, so it is often described as the study of self-determined or self-directed learning. It is not just about learning content but also learning how to learn. It is particularly a relevant approach in the digital age given the enormous content and resources available to anyone with a technological device and internet access (Patel, 2019).

While higher education is more accepting of pedagogical and andragogical approaches within the institutional framework it views heutagogy with more caution as heutagogy places full control of all aspects of learning into the hands of the student from curriculum development and instructional format to assessment. Human beings have an inborn behaviour of self-determination to accomplish their goals in life. Higher education educators should recognize and nurture this behaviour by providing relevant learning opportunities that support learner autonomy and demand teacher's role as facilitators of learning (Patel, 2019).

**Peeragogy:**

Peeragogy has been explained by Alexander et al. (2012) that it is about "peers learning together and helping each other learn". Each person is allowed to contribute to the group in their own way. (Chan, Embi, & Hashim, 2019). These changes over the past three decades have made the learner's role more active as compared to the teacher's role.

So, what is Peeragogy? Peer means a person of the same age or abilities. Peeragogy is a flexible framework of techniques for peer learning and peer knowledge production. Whereas pedagogy deals with the transmission of knowledge from teachers to students, peeragogy is what people use to produce and apply knowledge together. The strength of peeragogy is its flexibility and scalability (Rheingold, 2016). Peeragogy is founded in Malcolm Knowle's principles of andragogy, the art and science of how adults learn. It has its roots in the deeper reflection that occurs when peers exchange ideas, thoughts and insights on specific topics

(Hurt, 2012). In simple terms, peeragogy refers to peers learning together and also teaching one another.

The basis of peeragogy can be seen in the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky, where the concept of "proximal zone of development" is related to the difficulty that the learner can overcome with the help of a peer (Ouhrir, Lotfi, Talbi, 2019). Peeragogy too emphasises the role of peer learning in order to bring about reflective thinking and production of knowledge. If the learners are experienced and have the expertise then definitely the quality of the knowledge produced will be enhanced.

The context of Peeragogy is decentralized learning. It is no longer dependent only on the teacher, but the onus of learning is more on the learner. It encourages Meta-learning requiring the use of higher mental processes rather than rote learning. Peers provide valuable feedback that helps in the production of knowledge. The feedback obtained from peers has now gone beyond the classroom setting due to online platforms. Now one can get peer feedback from different Universities or even countries as participants in a Massive Open Online Course or MOOC. Thus, Peeragogy encourages learning that is distributed and non-linear.

**Application of Peeragogy:**

Since peeragogy is flexible in nature it can be used in different learning environments. Following are some examples of the application of peeragogy in different onsite learning environments:

- Peeragogy in face-to-face onsite learning: The simplest form of peeragogy can be done by having teachers conduct a short 10 minutes discussion in pairs of students after a delivering a 15 minutes lecture on a small content (Hurt, 2012). In a more structured form, teachers can implement Peeragogy while conducting various co-operative learning teaching strategies during their classroom teaching. These teaching strategies can be conducted in pairs, triads (three learners), or in groups (four to six learners). The teachers can prepare the groups, assign the roles to each student in the respective groups and give tasks. Each of these groups are given a common goal or task and they collaborate and share their ideas to achieve the goal. All this is done under the supervision of the teacher. These strategies need to be selected based on the nature of the content, time during the class and the age of the learners.
- Peeragogy in informal and unstructured onsite learning: The earlier example of students sitting together in the library and studying as a group is an illustration of informal onsite peeragogy. The students are engaging in collaborative learning, where the teacher does not

assign tasks or roles. The students themselves come together and learn by sharing their ideas and creating knowledge.

**Peeragogy in Digital Learning Environment:**

Providing Digital Learning Environment in the context of Andragogy, Heutagogy and Peeragogy is getting a lot of importance. This is more so due to the development and application of technologies in higher education. Learning in digital learning environments is characterized by the provision of learning materials that are independent of time and location, and by broad access to learning materials. Moreover, digital learning environments also support educational opportunities for all types of learners and provide digitally-enhanced instruction (Kümmel, Moskaliuk, Cress & Kimmerle, 2020). Peeragogy can be applied in Digital learning and it does not need to be very complicated.

- Peeragogy in synchronous online learning: Since 2020, due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, education has adopted technology enabled online learning at a large scale. Synchronous learning where the teachers and the students are online at the same time can be done using various online platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Webex etc. Some of these platforms give the facility of dividing the whole class into small groups. For example, on Zoom learners can be divided into small peer groups using 'Break out rooms.' Learners can discuss and create knowledge within these groups and later share their ideas with the whole class.
- Peeragogy in asynchronous online learning: Using the asynchronous mode, learners can collaborate with each other and learn effectively. Teachers can use online tools like Padlet, Google docs etc. for encouraging learners to share their ideas and contribute to knowledge construction. Social networking apps like WhatsApp, Face book can also be used where learners can collaborate, share information using chat about various topics and create knowledge.
- MOOCs use discussion forums where a large number of learners enrolling in an online course can collaborate and discuss on various topics. This has all the components of digital learning as it is not restricted in time, space and pace of the learners. Thus, peeragogy can be used in various learning environments in the field of education.

There is a lot of scope for research and development using the Peeragogic approach to education as it is a recent concept. Peeragogy has opened up a huge opportunity for learners to collaborate, co-operate and create knowledge. Digital platforms like SWAYAM, e-PG

Pathshala, Vidwan, Vidya Mitra, One India One Digital Platform, Sakshat, GIAN, Virtual Lab, e- Acharya etc. have started providing digital learning environments for implementing peeragogy in India. However, there is still a lot of scope for development. While a number of Open Educational Resources (OER) are being launched by educators, where peeragogy can be properly implemented, care should be taken to check and maintain the standards of these learning resources.

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