BOOK REVIEW

Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies

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Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies
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Stakeholders of the teaching and learning domain are facing with swift changes and radical transformations in terms of both acquiring and conveying the knowledge. Increasing diversity in learner profiles and dissolving conventional borders in educational contexts are two issues for educational researchers to be dealt with meticulously. The Pedagogical and Andragogical Teaching and Learning with Information Communication Technologies by Wang, V.C.X., Parker, J. and Golubski, P.M. (IGI Global, 2012, 242 pages, ISBN 13: 9781609607913) aims to anatomize different learner profiles of the contemporary age under two headings: Children and adults. The book offers a variety of strong pedagogical and andragogical solutions to provide educators with enriched learning opportunities for individuals through information technologies. It offers engaging, well-balanced, and informative discussions on how to blend the traditional methods of teaching and learning with online learning activities. The competence and mastery of the authors in terms of pedagogy and andragogy are easily inferred from the text since they demonstrate the very components of such areas with great ease. The source can be appreciated by senior scholars as well as young researchers who are in pursuit of new research horizons in online teaching and learning.
The book consists of 16 chapters addressing online learning of adults and children from different perspectives and through different variables. Each chapter is organized to form coherence in its entirety rather than linking the chapters in a linear and monotonous pattern. Therefore, it is possible for readers to cover the book chapters in a random order. It can be observed that each chapter follows a similar flow of organization while conveying its message to the audience. Chapters generally start with clearly written and felicitous literature reviews and end with future directions on the topic, which is a convenience for the novice researchers to the field.

Chapter 1 starts with demonstrating the historical roots of pedagogical teaching followed by its present effects on learning environments and valuable uses in learning activities. The chapter puts forward several useful arguments and further maintains that it is possible and practical to adopt a pedagogical model into virtual learning environments even there are several criticisms to the current model due to its behaviorist origin. The chapter ends with discussing the need for extending and transferring the current pedagogical teaching in online learning environments to andragogical teaching practices.

Chapter 2 discusses the use of several interactive tools to support the social engagement and integration of college students to diminish retention (i.e., drop out). Theoretical foundations of retention and main motives for college students to depart or remain at a college are presented comprehensively. Based on the demonstrated theories, the chapter suggests the use of virtual tools while assisting students on socializing and collaborating in college. Two virtual tools: Google Wave and Wimba Collaboration Suite are specifically introduced and explained throughout the chapter.

Chapter 3 starts with presenting the essential elements of a communication cycle. These elements are discussed in detail. Furthermore, the methods to use the technology at each stage of the communication cycle are described in a way to provide a healthy interaction between the learner and the e-learning environment. The basic tenets of the collaborative learning and the ways of providing collaborative e-learning experiences are presented meticulously.

Chapter 4 formulates the evaluation of pedagogical and andragogical teaching in online learning environments. A variety of well-known assessment methods used in learning settings are mentioned in the chapter. It is questioned why adult learners are assessed with pedagogical methods rather than andragogical methods. Chapter 4 further draws attention to use appropriate evaluation methods for both youngsters and adults in online learning environments through the help of Bloom’s revised taxonomy.

Chapter 5 focuses on the use of virtual environments for academic advising. Two different approaches to academic advising have been prominent in advising on college campuses: Prescriptive and Developmental advising. Their contrasts are also demonstrated with an eloquent language. The utilization of various virtual mediums such as Facebook, Instant Messaging, Skype and Twitter while carrying on advising activities are discussed. The chapter ends with addressing legal issues in virtual advising followed by future research directions.

Chapter 6 immerses readers to the topic of mentoring college students with the use of technology. Historical roots and the definitions of the mentoring concept are presented. As an alternative to the well-known face to face mentoring, the e-mentoring approach is proposed addressing both benefits and challenges. The chapter presents a clear and concise roadmap to develop an e-mentoring program which can be empowered through several virtual and Web 2.0 technologies from the very beginning to the end.

Chapter 7 is concerned with the curriculum development for online learners. The author addresses social forces, knowledge, human development, learning process, technology, and management issues as foundational forces in the curriculum development. Each issue is
discussed in detail with its relation to the curriculum development in the context of online learning. Moreover, a model is presented with its main steps to develop a curriculum for online education.

Chapter 8 exhibits the issue of gender differences in online learning as a reflection of the biological-based learning. The chapter starts with describing several biological differences between men and women that have direct effect on their learning styles. Societal changes; the relation between gender, developmental issues and technology use are other interesting topics addressed in the chapter. After elaborating such differences among men and women, a model to design gender-sensitive online learning environments is offered to curriculum developers.

In regard to the essentials of effective instructional design, a variety of instructional methods for online learners are examined in Chapter 9. The methods addressed in the chapter are lecturing, discussion, action-learning, experiential learning, and active learning. At the beginning, the instructional methods are demonstrated according to their use in traditional learning environments. Then, the application of each method in online learning environments is proposed. Future research directions within the scope of adult learning theory are presented at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 10 addresses the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on teaching and learning environments. The chapter starts with a brief history of Web 2.0 technologies followed by a general overview of both traditional and andragogical teaching methods. Several examples are presented including student's reflections about how to use Web 2.0 tools with these teaching methods.

Chapter 11 takes the developmental/biological and cultural/social perspectives into consideration; and focuses on the impact of age on online learning. Four groups of individuals addressed in the developmental perspective are children, adolescents, millennials and adults learners. Generational differences, attitudes toward technology, social aspects of technology and ready to use prescriptions for online learning of different age groups are also presented.

Chapter 12 provides an in-depth understanding about the engagement issues in traditional and adult learning via information technologies. After demonstrating several understandings on how people learn, attention is directed to student-teacher relationships in traditional and adult learning environments. Several methods that may help to engage students in different learning activities in a variety of contexts are described thoroughly.

Chapter 13 examines the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to be considered in distance education. The chapter provides readers with a wide perspective on several models and theories about essential components of adult motivation. Motivational factors for distance learners in academic and corporate settings are discussed through survey results and case studies. The role of the instructor in motivating learners is another interesting topic presented in the chapter.

Teacher-centered and student-centered approaches in online learning can be regarded as the gist of Chapter 14. The chapter synthesizes the views of Rogers and Knowles (i.e., the pioneers who stated basic characteristics of student-centered education) who accept teachers’ role as the facilitator of knowledge acquisition. Then, a comparison of this approach is made with teacher-centered approach in which the teacher is accepted as the dictator of the knowledge to students.

Chapter 15 puts forward the multiculturalism issue in online learning environments. A brief explanation of culture and its main components is made. Furthermore, the ways of facilitating student learning in online learning environments are discussed through exemplifying different cultural backgrounds including
the African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. A culture-sensitive instructional design approach is also introduced in the chapter.

The last chapter of the book summarizes and compares teaching approaches for both the traditional classroom and virtual environments. The lecture method and the nominal group techniques are the methods that are examined in detail. The chapter ends with potential future trends and research directions.

The book is quite likely to guide professionals to extend, transfer and reflect their pedagogical skills to andragogical learning environments, particularly to online learning settings. The prescriptive suggestions provide comprehensive frameworks for instructors regarding the use of information technologies in online classrooms. The book is also a fine text for undergraduate students who are planning to pursue their career in e-learning field.

In brief, although constructivism and similar epistemologies are rising in the domain of learning and teaching, pedagogical methods are still offering reliable opportunities for both traditional and non-traditional learning environments. With its deep roots in the human history and current standardization paradigm in educational atmosphere, it is possible to have a foresight that pedagogical approaches will continue their influence in education. This book is a clear, impressive and helpful contribution to the pedagogical and andragogical teaching, since it engages the application of these approaches in online learning environments.

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