Chapter 14
Online Knowledge Dictator or Learning Facilitator
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INTRODUCTION
Learning takes place anywhere, any time. To say that individuals learn 24/7 is not an exaggeration. As people live and breathe, they learn. Three reasons people learn are that they want to manipulate and control the environment, predict observable physical and social events, and take appropriate actions (Cranton, 2010, p. 5). There are many ways to view learning. Some scholars view learning in terms of behavioral changes. As long as learners have changed their behaviors, they have learned. If learners have changed their attitudes, they have learned. Likewise, if learners can think differently, they have learned. Yet, to some other scholars, learning is also a social activity. Learners learn when they engage with knowledge in social contexts (Jarvis, Holford, & Griffin, 1998). In fact, learning as a social activity is nothing new. Consider this anonymous Chinese saying advocated 2000 years ago: “If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher” [emphasis mine]. Individuals also

ABSTRACT
While online knowledge dictators are determined by certain teaching/learning situations, Rogers’ (1969) five well-accepted hypotheses suggest that teachers be learning facilitators to focus on what is happening in the learners. To help teachers become learning facilitators, this chapter specifies what exactly teachers can do in both the traditional classroom and online teaching/learning settings. The chapter also examines what other factors may contribute to this dichotomy of online knowledge dictators and learning facilitators. To compare and contrast this dichotomy, cultural backgrounds in relation to learning are also discussed to increase the readers’ background in order to better understand the argument made in this chapter.

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learn when they engage with things or with other people’s beliefs. No one questions that people acquire knowledge through the sense of sight, the sense of hearing, the sense of touch, the sense of smell, the sense of taste. The more senses people use, the better they learn. Constructivist scholars believe that individuals learn by making sense of experiences or by giving meaning to the world in which we live and work. People learn informally and through formal education or training. People also learn in many other ways: watching television, reading newspapers, conducting research, family emergencies and play tennis. What matters is the learning experience and how people learn. People do learn differently.

Very broadly, some learners are visual learners, some learners are auditory learners, and others may be tactile learners (Dunn, 1984; Friedman, 1984). In addition, some learners are global, meaning that they must take in the whole picture first before going into the details regarding learning of any kind. There are also field dependent learners and field independent learners. Field dependent learners want to depend on others for their expertise before engaging in learning anything. At the turn of the 20th century, American researchers such as Watson studied animals and successfully advanced behaviorism. Based on behaviorism, researchers know more about how children learn. According to Piaget’s (1967) research, researchers know more specifically about the education of children. It was not until the 1970s that researchers began to pay more attention to how adults learn. Knowles (1970, 1984) made the distinction between the education of adults and the education of children in the early 1970s. At the time, how many scholars believed in this dichotomy? The debate over this dichotomy slowly advanced into the 21st century, which is characterized as the “electronic education.” The other name for electronic education could be called online education or online learning in the new century. As scholars continue to debate over the dichotomy, researchers have realized that children and adults do learn differently. Learners, young or old, do acquire knowledge through the same senses, although children may possess more sharper senses given their ages. However, the context in which adults learn is drastically different from the context in which children learn (Wang, 2007/2008).

Why do adults require online learning? Is such a context better than the traditional four-walled classroom setting where they have more interaction with their course instructors? The primary reason is that adults are capable of teaching themselves in the virtual environment given their prior experience, which can be served as the best resources for learning. Is this to say that children cannot learn online? Children are more technology savvy. Many of them can multitask, which means they can do many things while learning online. All the aforementioned information or knowledge about learners’ learning styles, ways of approaching knowledge, or learning contexts is vitally important to those who educate children or help adults learn. Based on learners’ ways of acquiring knowledge, educators must prescribe their appropriate teaching styles. It is commonly argued that educators’ teaching may facilitate or inhibit learning. Positively used, one’s teaching will surely facilitate learning. Negatively used, teaching online will stifle learning. More importantly, according to Rogers (1951, 1961, 1969), educators cannot teach another person directly. Learning must instead be facilitated. This hypothesis has proven to be true in the realm of teaching and learning. When applied to teaching online, Rogers’ hypothesis has great educational implications to educators. If applied appropriately, educators become online learning facilitators. If applied negatively, educators become online knowledge dictators.

The objective of this chapter is to discuss whether online knowledge dictator will stifle learning or learning facilitators will facilitate learning. What led to this dichotomy? Why is it so important to educators who are engaged in teaching online? These are two of the questions...