

TO EXPLORE DIFFERENT LEARNING BEHAVIOR PATTERNS IN POST GRADUATE STUDENTS WHILE LEARNING COMMUNICATION SKILLS USING ANDRAGOGY TECHNIQUES

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***Abstract:** This Article explores feasibility of Andragogy techniques for Post Graduate Students in our Education System especially in the field of Communication. The growing interest in the field of Andragogy and E-learning Systems has made way as a potential solution to address many of the issues we are currently facing in the field of Communication. The impact of a system that can act as a tutor can be foreseen having a tremendous impact in this era. Analyzing student behavior in the absence of an instructor but in the presence of a guide is what this study aims at. This Article proposes Andragogy as one of the feasible ways to go for adaptive e-learning environment, where we can utilize the instructor's aid as well as student's experience as an implementation strategy where the students will not only learn but also share their knowledge and experiences with their peers. Here, the teacher merely acts as a guide or mentor who helps the student, whereas the actual learning is totally student centric.*

Keywords

Education System, EDM, E-Learning, Andragogy, Pedagogy, Student Centric Learning, Communication

INTRODUCTION

The term communication has been defined at many levels. It comes from Latin word 'communicare' means 'to share, to impart or to commune'. Its literal meaning is giving or sharing information. Communication is a dynamic interactive process that involves the effective transmission of facts, ideas, thoughts, feelings and values. One may communicate to others through spoken word and silence, body postures, gestures and facial expressions; written word and graphics; music, painting and other creative forms of expressions.

Communication mode between the instructor and the students needs to be analyzed. We need to check if the new modes of communication are feasible in the current education system

PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

The process of communication involves two persons or two parties at two ends. One is the sender and other is the receiver. The communicator translates the message or information into symbolic form and sends it to the receiver or the other party. It can be send through any channel or medium. The receiver receives and tries to understand it with his intelligence. Further sender wants this receiver to react or respond which is intended by him which is called feedback.

So communication has two basic goals.

1. To ensure that the receiver understands the communication exactly as the sender intends it to be.
2. To generate response i.e. some action or change in the behaviour of receiver

The Communications Process

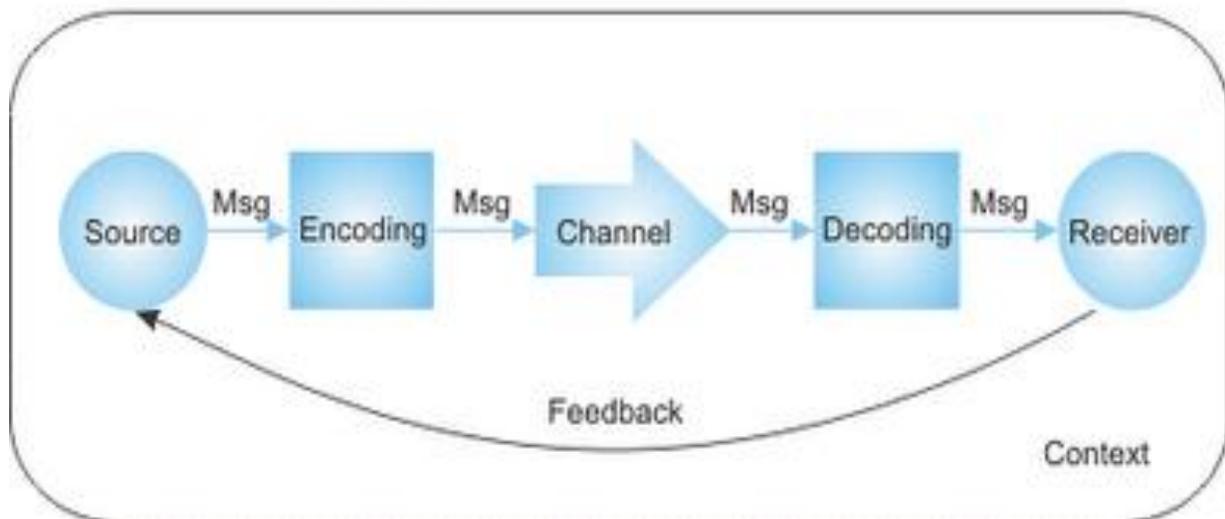


Fig 1

Communication in Classroom

Class room teaching is supposed to be a two way communication. But do we really achieve two way communication where the teacher is the sender who sends the message to the students and the student is the receiver who receives the message and sends feedback as an acknowledgement back to the teacher.

As technology is becoming an integral part of our lives, it is very important for instructors to include them in their mundane curriculum. Some instructors use online media to communicate with their students. Social media like face book and twitter can be used to propose topics that the student needs to prepare before attending the class. Groups can be created on online social media where the instructor and students can communicate with each other regarding any topic from their syllabus. Online polls can be created by instructor to find out various results and reviews of students regarding different topics. Online quiz can be organized by the instructor and the students can participate on the go. They do not have to assemble in a classroom for participating in the quiz anymore. Assignment questions can be mailed to the students on their email addresses and the student can respond back with the results to the teacher by sending a mail. Student interviews can be conducted through video teleconferencing like skype where the instructor and student both have to be logged in to their skype account using their respective usernames and passwords. Students can also write blogs on topics of their interest and the teacher can give feedback on those blogs. Different methods can be used in and out of classroom by means of technology and communication between the instructor and the student has been made very easy and effective. An open forum can be created on an online space using social media or blog posts where the instructor can specify a topic and the students can analyze, discuss and debate the importance of the topic and in that way they can understand what their peers think of a particular topic. The instructor can also make educational podcasts and get them delivered to the students. Personalized reviews and feedback on student's assignments and reports can also be made through podcasts. A student and an instructor can interact with each other irrespective of the time and place and the need to meet in a classroom structure has almost become obsolete with the advent of technology. The instructor can record audio lectures or video lectures and send it across to the students. The students can listen to them while they are travelling or watch them wherever they are and in that way save a lot of time on both sides. The student can attend the

video or audio sessions whenever they want to and need not adhere to a time table set up by the instructor or the organization where they are enrolled for taking the courses.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Su Tseng, Lin and Chen¹ in their paper 'A personalized learning content adaptation mechanism to meet diverse user needs in mobile learning environments' have proposed personalized learning content adaptation mechanism and how to manage learners request and deliver personalized delivery content. This study employs data mining techniques, including clustering and decision tree approaches, to efficiently manage a large number of historical learners' requests.

Kock and Paramythis² used Modeling of learner's problem solving activity sequences in ITS and suggested discovery of new information of learners as well as improved adaptively in personalized learning. Many studies have also been conducted in the field of E-learning. There have been significant contributions by research scholars in this field to validate the feasibility of a virtual classroom's existence in Education.

Keefe(1991)³, in his paper 'Learning style: Cognitive and Thinking Skills' has experimented on the Learning Style in Student Characteristics. He stated that, 'Learning style could be instructional strategy informing cognition, context and content of learning.'

Reefe (1992)⁴, in his paper 'Learning Styles' proposed that Learning style influences how students learn, how instructors teach and how they interact. Tseng, Chu, Hwang and Tsai, (2008)⁴⁴ have proposed a system keeping in mind student's learning style and difficulty of the learning content.

Raluca Ecaterina Brandabur⁵ in their paper 'Perceptions of e-learning among university teachers used qualitative marketing research techniques to identify involved efforts, demands, reactions, perceptions, gaps, motivations of Romanian teachers and other relevant aspects of pedagogical work into e-learning process. They concluded that there is a lack of personal contact between teacher and students, poor e-content capacity when teacher works alone, lack of technical support, lack of confidence in the outcome of e-educational process, need for change in students and teacher's minds, long duration and hard process of building e-content, lack of experience in

e-education, modest offer of e-contents and relatively small market for e-educational content due to Romanian language, is perceived only a source of profit for universities.

Aura Codreanu, Cezar Vasilescu⁶ in their paper E learning behaviours and their impact in Andragogy focused on delineating the basic concepts that is used: traditional learning, e-learning, learning behavior, e-learning behavior, andragogy, andragogic principles. It also focuses on the basic andragogic principles employed in traditional learning contexts and on their relationship with adult learning behavior. Comparison and contrast between traditional environments and methods of teaching and learning on one hand and online environments for learning is made in this paper.

John A Henschke⁷ in his paper 'Considerations regarding the Future of Andragogy' established Andragogy as a scientific academic discipline. Moore, Michael G.; Kearsley, Greg in their book 'Distance Education: A Systems View of Online Learning' studied the role of Instructors and learners in distance education. They concluded that when organizations adopt a systems approach to distance education, there will be an impact on teachers, learners, administrators, and policy makers.

Damjan Vavpotic, Bostjan Zvanut, Irena Trobec⁸ designed a model to compare e- learning and elements of pedagogical processes with the consideration of the student's and teacher's perspectives who are part of the research in their paper 'A Comparative Evaluation of E-Learning and Traditional Pedagogical Process Elements'. Two questionnaires were designed one for students and the other for teachers . Pilot testing was done with 21 students and 4 teachers. Observation of pedagogical process was done where they detected less suitable e-learning and traditional practices and focus was on creating improvement measures for suitable learning techniques.

Muzafer Saracevic,, Esad Mededovic, Jasmin Ahmeti, Faruk Mustafic⁹ performed Analysis of the actual success of students of Informatics at the Department of natural and technical sciences University of Novi Pazar, which are a part of teaching listening through the internet (50% students) and the traditional way in their paper 'Comparative analysis of the success studying students attending traditional learning or e-learning'. A study program was conducted for all the four years where 50 % students followed traditional teaching practices an 50% students followed online teaching. Continuous evaluation of new models in online education needs to be

formulated for different courses and the consequences of online learning should also be analysed. Teachers should play an active role in creating and improving models for online education Maryamyarandi, Dr. Hossein Jahankhani, Dr. Abdel-Rahman H. Tawil¹⁰ in their paper 'Semantic Rule-based Approach' explored an innovative semantic rule-based approach to dynamically generate personalised learning content utilising reusable pieces of learning content. It describes an ontology-based engine that composes, at runtime, adapted learning experiences according to learner's interaction with the system and learner's characteristics for Supporting Personalised Adaptive E-Learning. Data of learners pre and post test scores, result of questionnaire, interview with teachers, course authors and instructional designers were carried out. A central Adaptive Engine is designed along with four models to access the information about learners, learning contents, assessments and adaptation respectively, as well as a graphical user interface in order to facilitate the communication to the learner in a friendly manner. They concluded clearly that students were able to learn better when they worked with this system Kinshong, Hong Hong and Ashok Patel¹¹ worked towards the Improvement in adaptability in Web based learning environment in their paper 'Adaptivity through the use of Mobile agents in web based student modeling'. They divided the student model into three parts: local, central and individual student models and applied mobile agents technology as the communication channel between client and server instead of traditional client server approaches. Two step modeling approach studies the student even in offline mode and enables the system to adapt accordingly.

ABOUT LANGUAGE LAB

The researcher has used iTell Orell Digital Language Lab to promote andragogy teaching methods in her classroom. iTell is a user friendly language learning software power packed with 5000 hours of study material and exercises that not only enhances teaching efficiency of the instructor but also makes the learning process quick, enjoyable and has made leaning languages (majorly English) an interesting task.

LSRW – Learning, speaking, reading and writing are the four aspects for learning a language. It is very important that we follow the same order when we are teaching a student. This is the unconscious methodology for learning and communicating in our mother tongue. But when it comes to teaching English formally in a classroom setting, the instructor always adopts the

method of reading first, where we teach a student to read the alphabet, then we gradually move to writing and then to learning and speaking – which is not the order in which a language should be taught to the student. iTell focuses on teaching the student from a basic grade in the write format LSRW. Since, the older students are already aware of the language and have learnt it in a different order, the instructor has to motivate the student to unlearn whatever he has learnt till now and learn it in a new fresh way adopting the right methodology. Since students these days are extremely tech savvy, they enjoy this new process of learning online. This way familiarity of technology and the joy of learning something new can be integrated in students. Itell consists of two consoles. A teacher console which is handled by the instructor and a number of student consoles depending upon the number of students present for the session.

The instructor can monitor progress of each student individually and can assign lessons according to their needs. Lessons can be assigned to individual student or a group as a whole. Apart from the lessons that are available on the software, the instructor can also create unlimited number of text, audio and video lessons and customize the lessons according to the syllabus requirement and the student efficiency in that particular topic. The instructor can also modify the preloaded lessons to suit student or class needs. Feedbacks from the students in text, audio or video formats are recorded automatically and sent to the instructor. The instructor can then make necessary changes in the teaching pattern that will suit any particular student or the class as a whole. User friendly interfaces make learning easy and enjoyable and also save lot of time.

iTell is also beneficial to students in a number of ways. Listen, Speak, Read and Write activities (LSRW) are the most effective methodology for learning languages. Comparing, Evaluating and Repeating with original and native accents deliver improved result on learning languages, especially English. Quick learning is facilitated by reviewing lessons in text, audio and video format. 'Alert' option which allows students to share their doubts with the teacher in private helps introvert students to communicate with teacher easily. Students are not totally dependent on the instructor but learn on their own and only expect guidance from the teacher.

OBSERVATION:

There has been a general observation in post graduate courses where students are seen to give more importance to technical and management subjects and seem to avoid subjects like Communication Skills, Grooming and Personality Development. They seem to be good at giving written exams but when it comes to class participation and interaction within the class, they appear to be hesitant. There is a common resistance that can be perceived in their behavior when they are made to participate in activities out of their comfort zone. Throughout their academic life, they have always been the receivers and they are comfortable to sit and listen to the instructor speaking for hours. But when they are asked to interact and contribute to the session, they lose interest. This is the way they have been trained throughout their school and college life and they themselves fail to understand that they need to participate and learn as adults at the post graduate stage. With the introduction of Language Lab, the students are separated from the classroom format. As we have seen, here the tutor system interacts with the student system. The instructor just plays the role of a guide or mentor throughout this program. The students learn from the material on their own and try to figure out their problem areas on their own rather than being pointed by someone else. They can spend more time on their respective areas of problems and every student has a chance to improve their own weaknesses even though they are very much a part a single class program. Thus individual attention can be given and the students are seen to take additional efforts to improve their skills on their own with minimal assistance from the instructor. Students are definitely seen to be motivated on their own and not just external but also internally motivated. They are seen to be more responsible and the learner's self concept seems to be at work in this form of training. They also apply experiences that they already possess to enhance their learning activity. They have eagerness to learn on their own without being pushed by the instructor. It is also observed that they are relating their learning experience to real life application such as how to give a good presentation or how to be an effective public speaker etc. Many andragogy learning characteristics are observed in students when they are introduced to the Language Lab sessions.

Same topics were taught to two different sets of students using pedagogy and andragogy techniques respectively. The students were graded for forty marks and the marks so obtained were compared using t-test. Paired T- test has been used to statistically check whether our

hypothesis is valid or not. A statistically significant t-test result is one in which a difference between two groups is unlikely to have occurred because the sample happened to be atypical. Statistical significance is determined by the size of the difference between the group averages, the sample size, and the standard deviations of the groups. A paired t-test is used to compare two population means where you have two samples in which observations in one sample can be paired with observations in the other sample. First set of students were assessed first for a portion that was taught to them using the principles of pedagogy and then the second set on a portion which was taught using andragogy principles. Seventy students from the MMS course were studied and their grades for respective andragogy and pedagogy applications were compared.

A dependent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the grades of students. The grades of students were obtained by implementing Andragogy techniques on a set of students and Pedagogy on the remaining set. There was a significant difference in the scores for Andragogy grades ($M= 25.8$, $SD=4.3$) and Pedagogy grades ($M= 22.3$, $SD=5.4$) conditions; $t(\text{stat})= -2.96$, $t(\text{critical}) = 1.99$. “These results suggest that we reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference and we can draw a conclusion that that there definitely is a significant difference between both the type of implementations. Specifically our results suggest that grades obtained by the set of students who studied using principles of Andragogy were greater than those obtained with students using pedagogy principles. Since the students came from similar backgrounds, their demographics were very similar to each other. Hence, studying the differences between them based on their demographic details was not possible with this sample. Implementation of EDM will be done further in this research to find other interesting patterns that motivated the student to get educated using the principles of Andragogy.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the benefits of incorporating Andragogy while teaching Communication Skills. The skills that can be developed by implementing Andragogy is far more effective and creates a greater impact than the routine pedagogy classroom teaching methods. It definitely provides us with the opportunity to groom our students to become responsible adults who add value to the society. The approaches and techniques described in this paper can contribute for further research in the field of E-learning using Andragogy. This paper only deals with

comparison of pedagogy and andragogy techniques at post graduation level for the subject Communication Skills. This is a study to analyze student behavior in a virtual classroom environment where there is no direct involvement between the student and instructor. Further studies can be done to research for different subjects in the post graduate education system.

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