



OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: AN ADVOCACY TOOL TO ENHANCE ANDRAGOGY LEARNING.

Mohd Talib Ather Ansari (Assistant Professor)

Maulana Azad National Urdu University

Abstract

In this paper we are delighted to be able to advocate the open and distance learning as a tool, which we are sure will provide open and distance learner with a means and an opportunity to highlight the contribution they make, through working with professionals and leaders, The open and distance learning is worldwide service and the heart of andragogy as open and distance learning motivated adults to learn cause of internal factors, such as self esteem, desire for recognition, natural curiosity, innate love learning, better quality of life, greater self confidence and the opportunity to self actualize which itself is learning at its core and empower the learners. The resources in open and distance learning can allow our needs, imaginations and facilitate to learn needful. It introduces us new experiences and promotes access to knowledge and enjoyment. It is important for ODL learner to become independent user of information and disseminate information to attain professional excellence, open and distance learning can motivate pupils and stimulate learning by providing the means to freely pursue subjects which fully engage them. To do these things a distance learner must strive to improve the standard of learning and get excellence and use it into community of practices.

Keywords: ODL, Andragogy, Heutagogy, disseminate information, learning community.

Introduction

For more than forty years, innovative learners have been optimistic about open and distance learning for the promotion of individual knowledge and excellence. Their vision to attain personal goal is quite clear; today's technology and improvement in techniques are essential tools for open and distance learners, to use these tools in distance learning are essential, learner need vision for these technologies, create opportunities and to apply it into learning experiences and to train with immediate support and feed-back from learning experiments, then only open and distance learners are informed and confident about the use of new technologies and manage own learning structure to build learning communities. These learning experiments and experiences are called andragogy.

Andragogy: is the way of open and distance learning and learning practices for adults, the groups of people with a common interest those are focused on collaboration and sharing information related to their common interest are called a group of communities and this group of communities are willing to get learning excellence, this situation called 'community of practice'. **Wenger** describes the structure of a community of practices with consisting of three interrelated terms: mutual engagement, joint enterprises and shared repertoire. Open and distance learning communities may be categorized with their orientations as knowledge-based, practice-based and task-based, where online social learning activities via technology based conversations, social media and the learning via web 2.0 technologies are called the Community of practices and this learning situations convert andragogy to heutagogy.

From Androgogy to Heutagogy: In the past thirty years there has been a revolution through researches in education to know, how people learn ? and resulting from that, further work done on, how teaching could and should be provide. In this relation **Knowles** (1970) made distinction between how adults and children learn, was an important landmark in teaching and learning practices in vocational education and in higher education. While according to **Knowles**, (1970) andragogy provided many useful approaches for improving educational methodology, and indeed has been accepted almost universally, it still has connotations of a teacher-taught relationship. There is a rapid rate of change in society, and so-called information explosion, so it is necessary to be looking at an educational approach, where learner himself determine what and how learning should take place. This situation introduces a new concept called, **Heutagogy**, the study of self-determined learning, computer and internet based synchronous and asynchronous situations of

learning, may be viewed as a natural progression and paradigm shift in open and distance learning from earlier educational methodologies, in particular from capability development, and may well provide the optimal approach to learning in the twenty-first century.

Objectives:

Present article “Open and Distance Learning: An Advocacy Tool to Enhance Andragogy Learning.” Here we discuss the problems and prospects under following objectives.

- To understand the open and distance education with respect to build learning community.
- To accept and prepare community of practice through non-formal professional education.
- To make a vision of learning community for the potentials of opportunities and technologies.
- To analyze the learning social communities with reference to present techno-learning.

Concept of Learning Communities through ODL:

Learning communities is the concept of a group those are excellent in their I.Q. This concept of learning communities is converted into community of practice; ‘Wenger’ described and abandoned the concept of legitimate peripheral participation and used the idea of an inherent tension in a duality, instead he identifies four dualities that exist in communities of practices-participation-reification, designed-emergent, identification-negotiability and local-global. He describes the structure of a community of practice as consisting of three interrelated terms: ‘mutual engagement’, ‘joint enterprise’ and ‘shared repertoire’ (Wenger 1998, pp. 72–73).

- **First: Mutual Engagement:-** Members of the community establishes norms and build collaborative relations. These relationships are the ties that bind the members of the community together as a social entity.
- **Second: Joint Enterprise:-** Secondly, they create a shared understanding of what binds them together; this is termed the joint enterprise. The joint enterprise is negotiated by its members and is sometimes referred to as the domain of the community.
- **Third: Shared Repertoire:-** Finally, the community produces a set of communal resources, which is termed their shared repertoire; this is used in the pursuit of their joint enterprise and can include both literal and symbolic meanings.

In open and distance learning learner need to learn capacity building and use it in social, professional and vocational terms, it is called the community of practice. In these contexts

Wenger, described learning is central to human identity. A primary focus upon community of practices, Wenger introduces his more recent work is, learning as social participation – the individual as an active participation in the practices of social communities, and in the construction of his/her identity through these communities. In this context, a community of practice is a group of individuals participating in communal activity, and continuously creating their shared identity through engaging and contributing to the practices of their communities. The structural characteristics of a community of practice are again redefined to a domain of knowledge, a notion of community and a practice (Wenger *et.al.* 2004 pp 27 - 29). So that building of learning community through opens and distance learning is very vital and has some domain:-

1. **Acquaint Knowledge through ODL:** This knowledge domain creates common ground, inspires learners to participate, guides their learning and gives meaning to their actions towards learning communities or community of practices.
 - 1.1 **Build Learning Community:** The notion of a community creates the social fabric for learning. A strong community fosters interactions and encourages a willingness to share ideas. The attainments of this quality coming through open and distance learning.
 - 1.2 **Practices or Skills:** Open and distance learning provides the general area of interest for the learning communities, the practices are the specific focus on the ideas which creates the demands generated by community originates, shares and maintains its core of knowledge It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice.

These learning communities take on knowledge stewarding tasks that were formerly covered by formal organizational structures. There is a great deal of interest within organizations of open and distance learning is to encourage, support, and sponsor communities in order to benefit from shared knowledge that may lead to higher productivity. An important aspect and function of communities of practice is increasing organization performance. **Lesser and Storck** (2001, p. 836) identify four areas of organizational performance that can be affected by communities of learning through open and distance learning are:-

- Decreasing the learning curve of the learners.
- Responding more rapidly to the learner's needs and inquiries.
- Reducing rework load and ability to creation.
- Spawning new ideas for learning and community services.

Learning communities develop their practices through open and distance learning with a variety of challenges. The following table provides a few typical examples of these challenges:

S.No	Domain	Statement
1.	Problem solving	“Can we work on this design and brainstorm some ideas; I stuck.”
2.	Requests for information	“Where can I find the code to connect to the people?”
3.	Seeking experience	“Have I dealt with an expert in this situation?”
4.	Reusing assets	“I have a vocational idia for a local area. Can it be useful for the social and professional enhancement?”
5.	Coordination and synergy	“Can we combine our knowledge of solvent to achieve the goal?”
6.	Discussing developments	“What do I think of the new system? Does it really help?”
7.	Documentation projects	“We have faced this problem many times now. Let us write it down once again and for all.”
8.	Open and distance learner	“Can we come and see your after-school program? We need to establish one in our society.”
9.	Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps	What other groups should we connect with?”

Actions to Cultivate the Learning Community through ODL: Wenger identified seven action points that could be taken in order to cultivate communities of practice with ODL, thus the open and distance learning take the responsibilities to attain the goal and fulfill the requirement of the andragogic learning to Heutagogic learning communities with appropriate use of new technologies:

1. **Design the community to evolve naturally:-** The nature of a learning Community organizations are based on group dynamics, common interests, common goals and members of learning Community are subject to change with learning impacts, so that learning communities should be designed to support shifts in focus.
2. **Create opportunities, within and outside perspectives:-** While the members of learning communities evaluate their knowledge and application of knowledge are the most valuable resource for beneficial to look outside of the learning communities to understand the different possibilities to achieve their learning goals.
3. **Develop the leadership quality and participation:-** Open and distance learners emphases on the core group of learning communities who participate intensely in the learning activities through discussions and applications of knowledge as to lead the group.

4. **Think upward social change:-** While learning communities are typically operate in public spaces where all members discuss and explore ideas, they should also offer private exchanges, coordinate relationships among members and resources in an individualized approach based on specific needs.
5. **Focus on the value of knowledge:-** open and distance learner should create opportunities for participants to explicitly discuss the value and productivity of their participation in the society.
6. **Combine familiarity and excitement towards the goal:-** open and distance learning should offer the expected learning opportunities as part of their structure, and opportunities for learners to shape their learning experience together.
7. **Find and nurture a regular rhythm for quality assurance:-** open and distance learning should coordinate a cycle of activities and events that allow to the members to regularly meet, reflect, and evolve the activities.

Major benefits of ODL in Social capital:

Social capital is said to be a multi-dimensional concept, with both public and private facets (Putnam 2001). That is, acquiring social capital gives value to both the individual and the group as a whole. Through informal connections open and distance learner learn and use it in formal process of sharing their expertise, and participate in the social groups, especially to those learners who demonstrate expertise and experiences.

Organizations of knowledge:

Open and distance learning adopted most readily by the working peoples because of the recognition of knowledge as it is a critical asset that needs to be managed. Initial efforts at managing knowledge had focused on information systems with disappointing results. Open and distance learning provide a new approach, which focused on people and on the social structures that enable them to learn with and from each other. Nowadays there is hardly any organization of ODL has a reasonable size that does not have some form of learning community initiatives. A number of characteristics explain this rush of interest in open and distance learning as a vehicle for developing strategic capabilities in different organizations of knowledge.

Teaching Learning through ODL:

The first applications of open and distance learning should be training and providing isolated learners with access to the society. There is a wave of interest in these peer-to-peer professional

development activities. But in the education sector, learning is not only a means to an end: it is the end of products. The perspective of learning communities is therefore also relevant to this level. In open and distance learning change the learning theory is a much deeper transformation. This will inevitably take longer. The perspectives of teach communities that affects educational practices along three dimension of an individual:

- **Internally:** organization of educational experiences that practice of learning through participation in practical activities around subject matters.
- **Externally:** connection and the experiences of the open and distance learner to implicate actual practices through participation in broader walls of the school.
- **Over the lifetime of students:** To serve the lifelong learning needs of an open and distance learner by organizing learning activities focused on topics of continuing interest to students beyond the initial schooling period. From this perspective, the school is not the privileged locus of learning. It is not a self-contained, closed world in which students acquire knowledge to be applied outside, but a part of a broader learning system. It is life itself that is the main learning event. Schools, classrooms, and training sessions still have a role to play in this vision, but they have to be in the service of the learning that happens in the world.

Professional Associations through ODL:

A vast number of learning association fields, professionals are seeking ways to focus on learning through reflection on practices. Their members are restless and their allegiance is fragile. They need to offer high-value learning activities. The peer-to-peer learning activities offer a complementary alternative to more traditional course offerings and publications.

ODL in Civic Sector: In the civic domain, there is an emergent interest in building communities among practitioners. In the non- profit world, foundations are recognizing that philanthropy needs focus on learning systems in order to fully leverage funded projects. But practitioners are seeking peer-to-peer connections and learning opportunities with or without the support of institutions. This includes regional economic development, with intra-regional communities as well as inter-regional learning with communities gathering practitioners from various regions.

ODL through online: New technologies such as the Internet and intranet have extended the reach of open and distance learner interactions beyond the geographical limitations of traditional communities and technologies are the source of increase flow information obviate the need for

distance learners. In fact, it expands the possibilities for learning communities and calls for new kinds of expert communities through the use of new on line open and distance learning:-

Principles of Online Learning - The three principles are:

1. Online ODL learning communities are grown not built.
2. Online ODL learning communities need leaders.
3. Personal narrative of ODL is vital for these communities.

Open and distance learning through online include e-learning and blended learning creates learning communities (groups utilize face-to-face meetings as well as online meetings). Intentional online learning communities may be categorized as knowledge-based, practice-based, and task-based. Online learning communities may focus on personal aspects, process, or technology. They may use technology and tools in following categories:

- Synchronous (e.g. instant messaging)
- Asynchronous (e.g. message boards and Internet forums)

Online Social Interaction:

Social Learning is the learning by observing, conversing, or questioning. This can take place in an informal or formal setting and sometimes may even occur without the learner realizing that learning is taking place or without making a conscious decision to learn. It's organic and usually unorganized. It's learning via conversations, social media and the learning web 2.0 technologies. Three simple protocols are suggested as an aid to the development of social interaction and community in the online environment through open and distance learning.

1. **Use of synchronous communication:-** The implementation and operation of synchronous communication via the use of software tools is likely to enhance social interaction within the online course. Synchronous communication can be an effective method of ensuring that all students are familiarized with assignments and tutorial topics, and questions and answers can be almost simultaneous, and can avoid repetition for the educator. Chat-rooms and other such forums are an excellent way for students to socialize and to learn as part of collaborative teams. The intensity of interaction within these groups is likely to vary as the term progresses, assignments and other factors intervene.

2. **Introduction of a forming stage:-** The forming stage is a warm up period, designed to assist the formation of a sense of community. Synchronous chat rooms provide an ideal environment whereby students and educators can meet for initial contact and the beginning of social interaction. Here all participants can be educated about the guidelines under which the room will operate, and assisted in understanding and utilizing the processes and resources to be used during the course.

3. **Adherence to effective communication guidelines:-** Foremost among these guidelines is the need for clear instructions and communications from the educator to the students involved in the course. To this end instructions regarding both course requirements and communication protocols should be placed on the course web site. They need to be reiterated at the beginning of term in a message sent to all students emphasizing their importance. The implementations of these are educationally beneficial, but expensive in terms of time and resources.

The extent of their implementation may therefore depend to a significant extent upon the level of commitment of the college or university to the provision of the best-possible learning environment.

Effects of Social Networking with ODL:

The most effective pedagogical approach using new technology is social constructivism, as it builds on social interaction which is at the heart of Web 2.0 technology. The rise in social networking is due to the younger generations who are actually changing how instruction is delivered and evaluated based on their high level of social engagement using technology in various aspects of their lives. In general, social networking provides new ways to connect and share information and create networks of interest. So, while in more traditional learning environments much of this must be planned by the instructor and organized through the grouping of students, when using a social networking tool this level of connection can happen immediately. Research has shown that most newly developed learning and administrative systems for higher institutions are built on a new pedagogical model, which argues a personalized and social approach while incorporating Web 2.0 tools.

Conclusion:

In a nutshell we can say that the strengths of recent open and distance learning lies in the emergence of technology, however, in an attempt to effectively use it in building learning

community from social networking support to create community of practices, should be comprehensive in the sense that it should represent the entire university system to the students in such a way that they can access learning resources as well as other services that are crucial to their performance. It is necessary to create social networking system from open and distance learning that is enhanced by merging learning resources with other aiding resources and also emphasizing the use of collaboration in the learning process.

References:

- 1) Alexander, B. (2006). "Web 2.0: A new wave of innovation for teaching and learning?" Indian Educational Review, NCERT, New Delhi. 41(2): 32–44.
- 2) Arora, G.L., Panda, Pranati. (2000). "Fifty Years of Teacher Education in India: Post Independence Developments", NCERT, New Delhi, PP-323.
- 3) Barton, T. & Tursting, K. (2005). "Beyond Communities of Practice: Language Power and Social Context." Cambridge University Press 2005.
- 4) Bower, M. (2008). "Affordance analysis - matching learning tasks with learning technologies". Educational Media International, 45(1):3-15.
- 5) Bruckman, Amy. (1992). "Identity workshop: Emergent social and psychological phenomena in text-based virtual reality." MIT Media Laboratory, April 1992.
- 6) Cereijo, M.V.P., Young, J. and Wilhelm, R.W. (2001). "Factors Facilitating Student Participation in Asynchronous Web-Based Courses." The Journal of Computing in Teacher Education, 18(1):32-39.
- 7) Clifton, R.A. (1999). "The education of university students: A social capital perspective." College Teaching, Journal of Distance Education, 47 (3): 114-118.
- 8) Conrad, D. (2002). "Deep in the Hearts of Learners: Insights into the Nature of Online Community". Journal of Distance Education, 17(1):1-19.
- 9) Daugherty, M. and Funke, B.L. (1998). "University faculty and student perceptions of Web-based instruction." Journal of Distance Education, 13(1):21-39.
- 10) Economist debates: Social networking (2008). "Economist.com" Retrieved Aug.5,2011, from <http://www.economist.com/debate/overview/123>
- 11) Fyfe, S. (2000). "Collaborative learning at a distance: The Human Biology experience." Paper presented at the 9th Annual Teaching Learning Forum, February 2-4, 2000, Perth, Australia, Retrieved July, 19:2011, from <http://lsn.curtin.edu.au/tlf/tlf2000/fyfes.html>
- 12) Galien. Patricia and L. Wendy, and Bowcher: "Professional Teaching Articles", Vol. 42.PP-192-195, February 2010 Asian EFL Journal.
- 13) http://cvc.cervantes.es/literatura/cauce/pdf/cauce30/cauce30_04.pdf ,retrieve on 21st Nov-2011
- 14) http://innovateonline.info/pdf/vol1_issue5/What_Can_You_Learn_from_a_Cell_Phone_Almost_Anything!.pdf retrieve on 26th dec.2011.
- 15) Knowles, M. (1970). "The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy", Associated Press, New York.

- 16) Lesser, L.E. and Storck, J. (2001). *“Communities of Practice and organizational performance.”* IBM Systems Journal. Long, D. 1990 Learner Managed Learning: The Key to Life Long Learning and Development, Kogan Page, New York.
 - 17) NCTE (2010) *“National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education: Towards Preparing Professional and Humane Teacher”*, Author, New Delhi. PP-15&18.
 - 18) Putnam, Robert, (2001). *“Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences”*. ISUMA (spring): 41-51.
 - 19) Sharma P. Shashi, (2003), *“Teacher Education: Principles, Theories and Practices”*, Kanishka Publisher, New Delhi. PP-67.
 - 20) UK TDA (2007) *“Professional Standards for Teachers in England from September 2007”*. http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/s/standards_a4.pdf Retrieved on 4th Oct, 2010
 - 21) US:NRC (2010) Summary: *“Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy “Study of Teacher Preparation Programs in the United States”*, National Research Council, Washington DC. Retrieved from 04th march, 2010, <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12882.html>.
 - 22) Wegerif, R. (1998). *“The Social Dimension of Asynchronous Learning Networks.”* Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 2 (1), Retrieved on Jan 19, 2011 from: http://www.sloan-c.org/publications/jaln/v2n1/v2n1_wegerif.asp
 - 23) Wenger, Etienne, (2004). *“Community of practice: Learning meaning and Identity”*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press.
 - 24) Wenger, Etienne; McDermott, Richard; Snyder, William M. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice (Hardcover)*. Harvard Business Press; 1 edition. ISBN 978-1-57851-330-7. Retrieved on 29/01/2013 <http://books.google.com/?id=m1xZuNq9RygC&dq=cultivating+communities+of+practice&printsec=frontcover&q=>
- Delores, J. (1996), *“Learning: The Treasure Within”*, Report of UNESCO of the International Commission on Education, for 21st Century, France