

Developing Career Guidance Professionals' Capability to Serve Diverse Populations: A Trifocal Heutagological Experiential Learning Approach

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Abstract

This study explores the integration of heutagological principles with experiential learning theory to enhance the capabilities of career guidance professionals in technical and vocational education and training institutions. The proposed trifocal experiential learning approach frames professional development by incorporating the perspectives of administrators, practitioners, and students. Grounded in Kolb's experiential learning theory and the heutagological principles of learner autonomy, reflection, and self-efficacy, this model emphasizes capability development over the acquisition of competencies. The framework promotes adaptability, innovation, and lifelong learning, thereby helping career guidance remain responsive to diverse student needs and evolving labor market realities.

Introduction

Heutagogy, derived from the Greek *heuriskein* ("to discover"), extends beyond andragogy by emphasizing self-determined learning. Developed by Hase and Kenyon, heutagogy prioritizes learner autonomy, reflection, and adaptability in uncertain contexts. Scholars such as Blaschke (2012, 2014) have highlighted its transformative potential in technology-enhanced and professional learning environments. In workplace contexts, heutagogy fosters critical thinking, problem solving, and metacognitive awareness, preparing professionals for lifelong growth and innovation.

Experiential learning complements heutagogy by situating knowledge creation within cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb, 1984). Together, these frameworks provide a robust foundation for developing career guidance professionals who must work with diverse student populations and navigate rapidly shifting employment landscapes.

Theoretical Framework

The trifocal approach to heutagological experiential learning integrates the participation of three stakeholder groups: administrators, who ensure policy alignment and institutional support; practitioners, who

provide counseling and facilitation; and students, who contribute lived experiences, aspirations, and feedback.

Three core pillars underpin the model: authenticity, which grounds activities in real-world contexts; reflection, which fosters critical analysis and double-loop learning; and collaboration, which promotes co-creation and shared ownership.

This trifocal lens ensures holistic capability development while accommodating diverse learning styles and backgrounds.

Methodology: Workshop Flow

The model was operationalized through a 50 min interactive workshop structured around Kolb's experiential learning theory cycle and heutagogical elements:

1. Opening and experiential entry point (concrete experience): In the Career Guidance Reality Check activity, participants reflected on the challenges they faced in diverse contexts.
2. Input session: Conceptual framework (abstract conceptualization): A mini-lecture addressed capability versus competency, heutagogy, and trifocal experiential learning.
3. Small-group activity (reflective observation → active experimentation): Groups designed capability-building interventions from administrator, practitioner, and student perspectives.
4. Sharing and integration (reflective observation): Participants collaboratively mapped needs, strategies, and stakeholder contributions.
5. Synthesis and reflection (new conceptualization): Participants committed to applying actionable insights in professional practice.

Findings and Implications

The trifocal approach highlights that capability development, including adaptability, judgment under uncertainty, and self-efficacy, is more critical than skill acquisition alone. Embedding heutagogical principles enables career guidance professionals to apply knowledge creatively in unpredictable contexts, strengthen collaboration across institutional levels, and align career guidance with labor market realities and student diversity. This model ensures that training programs are relevant, efficient, and sustainable and that they foster innovation and lifelong learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Integrating heutagogy with experiential learning provides a transformative pathway for developing career guidance professionals. The trifocal experiential learning approach not only enhances professional capability but also builds a shared sense of ownership among administrators, practitioners, and students. This framework is recommended for institutions seeking to strengthen their capacity to provide career guidance to diverse populations, ensuring that professionals are equipped to prepare students effectively for the complexities of the modern workforce.

This trifocal heutagogical experiential learning approach positions career guidance professionals not merely as transmitters of skills but also as developers of capability, equipping them to thrive in diverse, unpredictable, and rapidly changing environments. Future research should refine the model, while practitioners should operationalize it to support sustainable, inclusive, and innovative guidance systems

in technical and vocational education and training institutions.

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