

Re-empowering Ourselves as Educators to Help Adults Learn

Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference, October 4-6, 2006
<http://www.umsl.edu/teachers/mwr2p06>

Roxanne Miller

Hi! I'm Roxanne Miller, Civic Communications Specialist with University of Missouri Extension and Co-Chair of the 2006 Midwest Research-to-Practice conference. You will be listening to Dr. John Henschke, Extension Continuing Education Specialist and Associate Professor, University of Missouri-St. Louis and Dr. Joe Levine, Professor Emeritus of Michigan State University.

John Henschke



This is John Henschke, University of Missouri-St. Louis. I'm looking forward to welcoming you when you come to the Midwest Research-to-Practice conference in October of 2006 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Now, to further enhance and to interest you in coming and peaking your curiosity, Joe Levine is going to talk with you.

Joe Levine

John, thank you very much. You know, first of all, let me just say at the beginning I'm hoping that people who are listening are also joining into our online dialog <http://www.dialogtime.com> where we've got a discussion board and we can share and exchange ideas prior to the conference. A whole innovation that has been brought to our conference this year by the University of Missouri-St. Louis. I am hoping it will get us in the mood and interactive substantively before we see each other in person.



But let me just share a couple of thoughts that I am hoping to build on during my keynote opportunity there. And, it related to some reflecting I had about the distance we have moved in technology as educators. And, I said to myself, boy, I remember it wasn't too long ago when I was so impressed with my ability to use the mimeograph machine. John, I suspect you also remembered those days.

John Henschke

Oh yes, I sure do!

Joe Levine

How about the ditto machine? The ditto had that purple ink that got all over your hands.



John Henschke

Right!

Joe Levine

And, smelled terrible. I remembered those days because I felt so empowered by being able to use this equipment to duplicate printed materials so I could relax a bit. I could make sure that in my teaching I could hand something out to my learners. At least, they would go home with it. Hopefully, they would also read it.

But as I look at our use of technology today, especially with the Internet, I worry sometimes that the concern that excited me so much about the mimeograph machine is no longer the concern that we have for our technology. And, let me see if I can clarify it because I think the thing that excited us with the mimeograph was a concern for the learner – ways to help the learner learn. My fear is that, today with the Internet, some of the concern that drives us is a concern for teaching rather than a concern for helping learning. And, although



those terms always seem so similar to me, they are tremendously distant from each other. To help someone learn is not necessarily the same as teaching someone. And, I worry. I see people using technology today, educators that use technology today, that don't have any control over the technology. I had control over that mimeograph. I knew how I wanted to use those handouts and I knew them very well that way. But I fear that today's technology has left a lot of

educators behind because they don't have that control; and because they have lost the control, their ability to help people learn has become compromised.

I think there has got to be some ways that we as educators - especially educators of adults – some ways that we can **re-empower ourselves through technology to help our learners learn.** I think it can be done. I worry that we let too much to go on around us where we give up that power. And, I think it's time that we somehow re-establish the power. And, I see, for instance, some of the things that we are doing this year at the conference as an attempt to bring back some of the power of the technology to help people learn. That really excites me. And, John, I hope to say some more about that, in a much more organized way with wonderful little graphics or something, during the keynote address at the conference in October.

John Henschke

Sounds exciting. And, we're looking forward to it.

Joe Levine

I am too, John.

Visit our online dialog site at <http://www.dialogtime.com>