

Personal Benefits and Graduate Student Benefits from Past Conferences

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<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. Trenton Ferro, Retired Professor of Adult Education, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

John Henschke



We want to reflect on benefits that we have personally derived and what has been some of the important aspects of that for us personally. Having been the longest attendees of this conference – this is our 24th year – so you want to talk about that.

Trenton Ferro

What I referred to early on, the business of networking, of collegiality, I found just extremely attractive. Those who were already professors in the field seemed not to be concerned at all about whether you were a beginning doctoral student or another person who was a full professor. And, that was one of the attractions.



John Henschke

One of the things for me, this was an excellent experience, is the entrance that I found in publication through the Midwest Research-to-Practice, because I tested myself out. After I went to a few conferences, I got to do one of the **presentations**, one of the **publications** in the proceeding. From there, I published in various sources and found myself coming back continuously to Midwest periodically. This year, I've got a paper that will be presented. It's the same rigorous process that we have done in terms of our reviews. It's great to come back to this group of people to see how it has changed over the years. But there has been a number of us that has stayed the same over the years. That to me has been one of the great benefits there has been for this particular conference.



Trenton Ferro

First, as just an observation that strikes me, John, since you got involved with this conference almost at the beginning of your tenure there at St. Louis, that it certainly had to be helpful also establishing for yourself a network with colleagues much more quickly than what would have happened without the conference.

John Henschke

Very definitely.

Trenton Ferro

My own experience, I would have to say the same is true. After going to the conference a couple of years, I put in some proposals for the conference at Michigan, hoping that one would be accepted, and three were. That was my first conference of presentations, and I had three of them. I would have to agree with that wholeheartedly that it's a wonderful entrée for both the presentation experience as well as the publication experience. That the process is a rigorous one so that one can be quite proud of the work that has been accomplished in those settings.

John Henschke

It's also been advantageous – I'm thinking not only just personally but for some of our students – because in 1999 when the conference was here (St. Louis) the last time, we had just initiated our PhD program, a doctor of philosophy degree, doctor of education, doctor of philosophy, and we had a research internship that I had about fourteen students sign up for. I said one of the requirements of this particular class for research internship is to submit a proposal to the Midwest Research-to-Practice. You don't have to have it accepted but we don't know whether it will be accepted or not. But there were four of them out of that group that got accepted that particular time and that was an exceptionally surprising and delightful experience for those students. And, they were heavily involved in carrying that forward. So, it's not only been personally beneficial but also for our students.

We are looking forward to having some of the senior people do an informal session sometime during the conference. We will work that out. It will be a time for reflection, not just reminiscing on the way things used to, but the benefits that have propelled this conference into the position that it is today in celebrating our silver anniversary.

Trenton Ferro

In fact, that last comment is a rather interesting one. Because I don't recall over the time that I have been involved very much reflecting on the way things used to be but always concerned about how we can make sure that this is a viable, meaningful experience for participants. So, I would say that is probably another characteristic or hallmark. It did relate, of course, to the practitioner-theory connection that we want to make sure that we're being helpful to all that are involved in this process.

John Henschke

OK. Thank you very much for talking with us this morning, Trenton, and looking forward to seeing at the conference.

Trenton Ferro

I'm looking forward to it!

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