

## Link Between Research and Practice

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

### John Henschke



The linkage between research and practice – do you want to say anything about what that offers to practitioners and researchers and theoreticians, and whoever else, administrators, who are part of the conference?

### Trenton Ferro

I have always felt that those of us in adult education regardless of the level at which are working, whether it's a higher education program, as you and I have been involved, or people who identify themselves very much with practitioner orientation, are really involved with both. In fact, I find that practitioners that I am most concerned about are those that don't see the theoretical side. Of course, people can get lost in the theory side without more attention to the practice, but ours is a field where that is very hard to do. I've always considered myself a practitioner. That's how I got into the field to start with, back when I was wet behind the ears and teaching adult religious education – religious education to adults is probably the better term. That's not something I ever lost. I just kept doing that. But once I got into the NIU (Northern Illinois University) program, there was a whole lot of *Oh, so that's why, Oh, so that's why* kinds of experiences as I went through the program. I suspect in their own way, I don't know how you would express it. That would be true for just about anyone identified as an academician in the field. At least in the Midwest conference, I don't know anyone who doesn't also have, and hasn't continue to have strong practitioner's ties. On the other side, those who see themselves in the area of practice need to understand what is going on theoretically so that their practice takes on more meaning and depth. That's kind of my view of the whole connection.



There have been any number involved in our conference over a long period of time that have a similar kind of experience, either their tie with Extension such as you, and I know Joe Levine, of course, comes immediately to mind; others who have had roots and long standing connection with the community education movement. And, we can easily go on and name a number of others, but I think that's kind of characteristic of our field.

## **John Henschke**

To me, one of the best aspects of our conference - you know there are a number of best aspects - but one of the best aspects has to do with the fact that practitioners can come. They can hear about practice that's been going on in the field and hear about theory and research that's been going on in the field. They can also take that as an opportunity to reflect on "**What about my practice?**" Am I interested possibly in seeing some more research done and identifying those things. By the same token, I see that it's an opportunity for professors, for researchers or theoreticians to say it's fine for me to do the theory and the **research** but can I take it a step farther and see **how this works out in practice for the benefits of the constituents that we are seeking to serve.**

## **Trenton Ferro**

Right.

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