

## PPT Slide 1

### **Balancing the Inner and Outer Self: The Role for Self-Directed Learning Roger (Rog) Hiemstra Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University**

#### Introduction

It is my real pleasure and honor to be the keynote speaker for the 34<sup>th</sup> Symposium. Many of you may have read the publicity email about the symposium that Lucy sent out on October 15 in which she said, and I quote, “We are very fortunate to have **Roger Hiemstra** [←in bold lettering, mind you], a legend in SDL research, present the keynote address.” When I read it and hollered out to my wife, Janet, what Lucy had written, she immediately said, “**yes, you are a legend, in your own mind.**” That put it all into perspective immediately for me. However, Lucy, I will attempt to live up to your confidence in me.

**PPT Slide 2** So, Lucy, I guess, I might be a legend. Here is how to become one: Be a

**L – LUCKY**  
**E – EDUCATOR (who)**  
**G – GAINED**  
**E – EXPERIENCE/EXPERTISE (in a)**  
**N – NOTEWORTHY (research)**  
**D – DIRECTION**

In essence, if you are relatively new as a teacher and/or researcher, I do suggest finding that area of interest around which you can build much of your future and perhaps even lifelong scholarship. Ralph Brockett and I (raise your hand Ralph) during the last general session in this symposium will suggest some possibilities in that regard.

I really don't know about the “legend” moniker, but I have been involved with SDL research, publications, and presentations for a long time. In preparation for this time with you today I analyzed my more than 600 solo and co-authored journal articles, books, other publications, and conference presentations during my 60-year adult education career. I have had varied interests and focal points during this time period such as aging, church history, community education, distance education, genealogy, lifelong learning, teaching adults, and technology. However, my greatest love has **long** been self-directed learning and nearly half of my publications and presentations have been associated in some way with this area of study. In fact my first academic presentation related to self-directed learning was 46 years ago in 1974 and my first publication related to SDL was in 1976. (Hiemstra, 1976) You should know that within this speech I have embedded many references, each of which shows up in the bibliography you have.

**PPT Slide 3** I was very honored to have been an inaugural presenter (Hiemstra, 1988) for the first Self-Directed Learning symposium in 1986 at the University of Georgia in Athens The slide shows the cover from the book representing that first symposium – it was published in 1988 (Long & Associates, 1988). I was fortunate to be there along with scholars such as our beloved Huey Long, who initiated the symposia (Huey, unfortunately is too ill to be here this time), Lucy and Paul Guglielmino, Rosemary Caffarella, and Carol Kasworm (all Malcolm Knowles Self-Directed Learning award winners, by the way – on our web site you can find the list, with photos, of all our past Malcolm Knowles award winners). Many other prominent scholars in SDL, and some frequent presenters at this symposium, also were involved in that inaugural meeting.

**PPT Slide 4** Here is a screen shot that honors Huey from a video created during that inaugural meeting and [note the link at the bottom](#) for more photos from that first symposium.

My interest in what would become my main contribution to self-directed learning came about almost 50 years ago. I was a relatively young assistant professor of adult education at the University of Nebraska. Although I had completed my Ph.D. in 1970, I really had no experience or training associated with teaching graduate students. In essence, I struggled with my teaching in 1970 and 71, as all but one of the 25-30 students I typically had in my classes were older than me and I felt unprepared for success as a teacher. Then in 1972, two extraordinary things happened that initiated what would become changes in my approaches to working with adult learners and provide a primary focus for my long term research and scholarship. I was influenced by the work of both Allen Tough and Malcolm Knowles. Thus, what began as efforts to improve my teaching, resulted in my embarking upon research, experimentation, and scholarship that ended up taking over a big part of my professional life.

**PPT Slide 5** I first heard Allen Tough when he presented at a 1971 adult education conference on his work related to adults' learning projects and what initially became known as self-planned learning. (Tough, 1971). If you are not familiar with Allen's work ask me or many others who have participated in these symposia many times for more information. (Incidentally, Allen is the 2006 winner of the Knowles SDL award). I found his ideas interesting but had no idea of the impact his work would soon have on me and on my teaching. I purchased his book and admit to only skimming through it without really understanding the profound implications of the research. Then Allen came to the University of Nebraska campus and presented to our faculty and graduate students. Allen's interviews with adult learners led to a discovery that the majority of such learners planned their own learning (Donaghy, 2005). In your handout you will see a citation for Donaghy, 2005) That citation refers to Bob Donaghy who is at this symposium. (Bob, please raise your hand or stand up.) If you have the opportunity, talk to Bob about the very interesting work he did in 2003 and 2004 as part of his doctoral dissertation and program completion, including a fascinating interview of Allen.

That same year Malcolm Knowles, considered by many the father of SDL, also came to our campus. He talked about his work with andragogy (Knowles, 1970). Fortunately I had read his book but, again, did not fully appreciate the implications for me as a teacher until he spent several hours with our faculty and students. The next day I helped create a corresponding television program featuring Malcolm and his discussion of andragogy that ran for many years on the Nebraska Public Television Network (Hiemstra & Knowles, 1972). If you are interested, you can click on the link associated with that video and see a very early view of Malcolm and of me (I had hair then). I subsequently utilized both of these books and the impact each person had on me. Their work facilitated my moving to an andragogical learner-based approach as an instructor. This also initiated what has now been a 46 year focus on SDL in much of my scholarship.

Subsequent to that 1972 period I began experimenting with my teaching during which various epiphanies began arriving. The students (I prefer to think of them as learners) began to respond positively when I used my growing understanding of andragogy and self-directed learning to give them more control of their own learning. My curiosity, knowledge, and skill as a teacher seemed to grow throughout the next couple of years and it finally felt like I had a good handle on what worked for me as a teacher.

**PPT Slide 6** Then in 1974 I decided to launch a large study in Nebraska of 256 older adult learners, those 55 and older, using Allen Tough's research protocol. Several graduate students joined me in this project and we were excited about our findings that, in essence, affirmed what Allen and his students had found

(Hiemstra, 1975, 1976). I began realizing that understanding yourself as a learner, especially for older learners, was critical to success in any learning situation (Hiemstra, 1978). If you are interested in that study you can follow some of the links I have provided.

**PPT Slide 7** Thus, I began to think of a concept that eventually became my mantra, “Helping learners take increased responsibility for their own learning.” [Notice that it is all in a larger font representing to me its importance.] Perhaps the first time I started referring to adults directing their own learning, before it morphed into my mantra, was in a background paper I was requested to develop by the ERIC system in 1980 (Hiemstra, 1980). I also remember using the mantra as a signature at the bottom of my emails when this option of adding a signature became more prevalent in the early 80s. Of course by the 1986 speech (Hiemstra, 1988) at the first SDL symposium, and in my two co-authored books on the topic (Hiemstra & Sisco, 1990; Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991) in the early 90s, that term was solidified. If you have not already noticed, Ralph my co-author in many publications, Ralph, please stand up or raise your hand. That mantra has been my guiding force as a teacher and researcher now for many years.

Now to transition to what I hope is the “new” meat of this presentation, The fact, too, that I am in the latter part of my career, [this is another way of saying my older more “mature” years, actually my 70s and now my 80s,] I can look back on what I have accomplished and, Lucy, try to find what there might be about me that could be referred to as a legend. I do find myself doing more self-reflection. Thus, allow me to be somewhat reflective from here on out as I work to set a scene for what you might accomplish in this symposium. What I am going to suggest will be natural for some and harder for others, and no doubt, some of you are probably way ahead of me. Thus, now to the title of this keynote address, the self-reflection I have been doing, and the processes and procedures I have been undertaking the past several years.

**The Inner and Outer Self PPT Slide 8** (I need to note that the people I am referencing from here on out are noted in the bibliography). Each of us has what Marshall (2018) has referred to as a private side and a public side. Our public side is the visible one, what others see, hear, and experience about us. Our private side, an inner dimension, relates to our values, ideals, and inner strength. Marshall says that this can often be called the “soul ... the essence of a person.” (p. 206). I loved his book and gained much from it, especially as it was written for people in their later years, but such terms may be a bit too esoteric or even private for some people.

In thinking about self-directed learning as the framework for this presentation, I like better what was described by Cunic (2019, ¶1) in a wonderful website called the *Very Well Mind*, as the inner and outer self. He says there is often considerable tension between “the inner self and outer self ... in the modern world. Each of us is tugged multiple directions every day and our actions and behaviors do not always align with our core values as a result.” The outer self is how we present ourselves to others, the groups we join, and how we cope with the demands of daily living. Cunic notes that this external environment “can be demanding, leaving little time for you to consider whether what is taking place on the outside of your life matches what you ultimately desire on the inside.” (¶4).

Thus, there is often conflict between your inner and your outer self. When they are out of balance or even a mismatch, you can find yourself thinking one thing but doing another. One big example for me revolves around food and eating. My inner self is often saying to me eat healthy, watch out for all those carbs, and cut back on the desserts. However, when I am socializing with friends, as I will be during this symposium, and desiring to fit in with the group, I am likely to indulge, eat or drink more than I should, and have that decadent dessert. Another example relates to how I engage with my close friends (I have

two groups of close friends, one group consists of three other guys and me who go out for breakfast once a month and we simply enjoy each other's company, solve most of the world's problems, and try to outdo each other with puns and instant repartee [pronounced reh-pr-tee]. We are all fairly similar in terms of religion, political persuasions, and education. The other group consists of three other guys and me who go out for lunch once a month. Generally, we all could not be much different from each other in terms of religion, political persuasion, and conservative-vs-liberal beliefs. However, we all share the same love for vocal music. We discuss just about everything but stay away from religion and politics. I very much enjoy being with each group and would really miss these convivial opportunities. My example with these two groups is that with the first group my inner self is front and center during our conversations. However, with the second group I simply refuse to let my inner self "bump" into the outer self. In essence, I now realize that I am intuitively keeping a balance between my outer and inner self, but in different ways each time.

I surmise that conflicts or the lack of balance often can come from spending too little time thinking about your inner self, especially during your working years. How you present yourself to others, how you find success on the job, and even how you try to cope as a parent, must involve spending lots of time and energy on your outer self. Some of you are probably more successful than I was in my younger adult years in finding that balance, but I can honestly say that I did not give much time and energy to finding or even think about my inner self. However, I believe I have come to an "ah-ha" moment the past several years, especially since my retirement in 1997, and this has led to my increased self-reflection. In just a few moments I will describe what has been some of my actions in this regard.

There actually has been much said about this inner self and the value of understanding if not engaging with it more. Deepak Chopra notes that by not judging our internal dialogues and truly listening to our inner voices, "this opens ... the doorway to creativity." (2020) Hodge in his delightful 2009 book *From Within I Rise*, says that within "there is something profoundly known, not consciously, but subconsciously. A quiet truth, that is not a version of something, but an original knowing ... it is there, guiding us along the path of greater becoming, a true awareness."

Suggs (2000) goes a bit further in urging us to know our inner selves better: "I find it sad that too many do not understand themselves, or their potential. They don't even take the time to get to know their unconsciousness. You can truly learn so much, by simply getting to know the 'you' that is behind the reality of yourself."

**PPT Slide 9** This slide reveals a thought that is probably self-evident, know yourself. However, this action takes some conscious efforts, especially given the many urgent needs, demands, and pressures we and others place on our outer self. For me, and in all honesty, this has really only been possible the past couple of decades. Others have talked about the inner self in various ways such inner glow, inner strength, voices from within, and self-awareness. All seem to converge on the personal value, **potential as Suggs put it**, in knowing yourself better. I mention several of these ways or approaches in the bulleted points on the slide, with action words like listening, trusting, knowing, being honest with yourself, and understanding yourself. I suspect that most of you could come up with additional actions and/or may practice them now regularly. It is these last two bulleted points, and I have placed them in bold, that can serve as a foundation for balancing your inner and outer self in terms of self-directed learning and as focal points for the remainder of my presentation.

What then, does this have to do with self-directed learning? For me, as I get older and take the time to be more reflective, I listen more to my inner voices, trust more my natural instincts, and embrace my

preferred ways of self-directed learning. I am sure it does not have to be tied to the aging process and some of you may listen or have been listening to your inner voices and seeking the balance I am suggesting for some time. I have been doing some of the processes and procedures I will describe next for many years, but I do recognize that they have become more meaningful in just the past decade or so.

For example, I became the Hiemstra family genealogist back in the early 70s when I took an adult education class on how to carry out genealogical research. This started my interest in gathering family history (Hiemstra, 2014). I realize now that way back then I was speaking to my inner self as I could work on this “hobby” when I wasn’t banging away on my professional life, i.e, my outer self. I have not only maintained that interest since then, but have visited the Netherlands on four occasions, taught for a semester at the University of Twente in Enschede, Netherlands, and worked with a relative there who also is a genealogist to do extensive research on my family ancestors. Thus, during the past twenty years I have worked to record my family’s history and lineage and have some information on nearly 3000 people in the Netherlands, the United States, and beyond.

**PPT Slide 10** Thus, I can now trace my Hiemstra lineage back to a man named Thomas, who was born around 1500, most likely in a village in the NNW part of the Netherlands now called Oostermeer (this is the Dutch name, or Eastermar in the local Frisian dialect or language). Thomas (a last name is not known but a written church record showed the name Thomas) most likely was a farmer and perhaps even a Peat farmer or a person who worked to drain boggy land so it could eventually be tilled. This slide is a screen shot from one of my genealogy software (Brother’s Keeper) printouts. I give you all this background information to suggest that being an overworked and harried professional that is always driven by work demands, those next deadlines, and will to succeed, you can actually be enhanced by letting your inner self have a role in your life and, **perhaps**, don’t wait until you are retired.

**PPT Slide 11** As another example of how I have massaged my inner self, soon after I retired I decided to analyze my own life more deeply by gathering everything I could via my own record keeping but also by soliciting information from my siblings and parents (including interviewing each of my parents extensively) about their memories and any documentation (letters, photos, memorabilia, etc.) pertaining to me they might possess. I scanned and recorded all the important information, maintain a database of material, sorted chronologically, and it all is stored digitally in my computer and/or in file folders within large banker boxes. In essence, I utilized my self-directed learning skills related to data gathering, listening, oral communication, and technology in gathering and analyzing all this information. I also begun my writing process. My long-term goal is to create personal stories (such as this example: Hiemstra, 2019a), and even a memoir that can be shared with others.

**PPT Slide 12** I also maintain a daily journal with each entry typically beginning with the day, date, and weather, followed by two to five paragraphs representing my recollection of daily activities, people with whom I interacted, and special thoughts or impressions that come to mind. In essence, I believe that journaling is very important and believe it draws from and contributes to my inner self (Hiemstra, 2001). Malcolm Knowles (1975) introduced readers to notions of personal reflection through activities such as self-assessment and proactive reading of materials. Another useful source is Christensen (1981), in which she describes how a diary can be used as a learning tool for adults. Brookfield (1987, 1995) provides various ideas pertaining to critically reflective writing through such tools as an autobiography, critical incident citing, and seeing ourselves as others see us. Unfortunately, I did not start my own personal journaling until 1991, but enjoy reading about my daily life, activities, and even those introspective thoughts I may have written since then. In reality, my nightly ritual helps me reflect on myself. In addition, by going through the material that I have stored chronologically, pouring over daily calendars

that I have maintained, and reading past correspondence going back to the early 80s, I have been able to fill in information and remember my activities during numerous time periods for which I don't have daily entries.

Another part of my life that I know relates to the enhancement of my inner self is my love of and involvement with music. I have sung in high school and college choirs, and even in a military choir during my two-year naval reserve service period. However, my greatest musical love has been barbershop acapella four-part harmony. I sang in my first barbershop quartet in 1952 as a high school freshman. Over the subsequent years I have sung in a barbershop chorus in Iowa and four different choruses in New York. **PPT Slide 13** I also had the extreme pleasure of singing in three barbershop quartets. This slide shows two groups I sang with, one group in the 1990s and one more recently (perhaps you can surmise why this latter group was called Off the Top).

Although I don't have a corresponding slide, I want to mention the personal satisfaction I receive and the enhancement of my inner self that comes from considerable volunteer work with my church, doing research for an aging center, helping the local public library, raising money for the local food banks through my singing, working with my local Fire Department, and carrying out virtual support for the American Red Cross.

I have given you perhaps too much about me and how I have worked to enhance my inner self. You will have an opportunity in a few minutes to engage in some dialogue on what this all might mean for you and share how you try to balance your inner and outer self. So what does this all have to do with self-directed learning? **PPT Slide 14** I contend that better knowing yourself and working to balance your inner and outer self, can enhance your learning skills, provide personal growth opportunities, and even bring unexpected outcomes.

For example, I know that my research skills (such as using the Internet to find almost anything), my inquisitive nature, and my love of writing have come in very handy in my genealogical research efforts and my efforts to write about myself. My preferred SDL learning approach, auditory, is perfect for learning new barbershop quartet music as learning tracks for each of the four musical parts (tenor, lead, baritone, and bass) are typically available. My love of reading builds from my visual learning skill and enables me to find, process, and interpret family history information. My tactile learning skills enable me to do the work necessary in figuring out how new technology works, and experimenting with technology enhances my musical learning and performance, provides expertise of value in my volunteer activities, and facilitates the continual building my web page (Hiemstra, 2020). I also have built a web site that describes various techniques, tools, and resources for the self-directed learner (Hiemstra, 2019b). I invite all of you to contribute to this web site in any way you can.

Remember that at the start of my talk I mentioned that a keynote speaker might motivate, educate, entertain, help you think about some existing concepts in a new way, even lead you somewhere you have not been before. I don't know if I have done that but hope that I might have for some of you. So here is what I recommend you work to accomplish in this symposium: **PPT 15**

- Think about the self-directed learning skills you already have and employ them through your listening, questioning, and dialoguing.
- Make new friends, begin to develop collegial relationships, and even contemplate working together with someone on a project that will enhance your SDL knowledge
- Engage with presenters as they invite dialogue

- Contribute your knowledge, energy, and ideas whenever you can
- Work to identify any conflicts between your inner and outer selves and develop strategies for ameliorating such conflicts
- Where you can, begin to quiet your outer self (obviously easier said than done) with a goal of connecting more with your inner self
- If there remain many conflicts between your outer and inner self, over time you might need to make life changes that will address such issues

I do realize that this last slide and my associated comments may sound too preachy and may step outside my responsibilities as a keynote speaker. I hope that you will take them as coming from the heart of an octogenarian who has been involved with SDL for nearly five decades. Perhaps, in some ways, Lucy, I have lived up to the LEGEND moniker you hung around my neck. I wish all of you a wonderful symposium. **PPT 16**

Finally, before we take some time for dialogue, as promised, I will close my remarks with a little music. Will all the people in this room who have had or will have a birthday in February please stand up. Stay standing, smile, and turn to your colleagues in the room as we sing happy birthday to all of you. We will call you “everybody” in the song as I lead you. [Lead them in happy birthday.]

After that – We now will enter into a time of dialogue.

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