

International Journal of Lifelong Education

Audio Interview with Peter Jarvis, Co-editor

Interview Transcript

- 1. The forces of globalisation today seem to be overwhelming the traditional mission of adult education, with courses and programmes being increasingly asked - and even expected - to contribute directly to productivity and competitiveness in the global market rather than develop the individual person. Do you see this 'preoccupation with productivity' as a problem for adult educators in the 21st Century?**

Oh phenomenally, phenomenally, and I think it's easy for us to sell out and I think, I hesitate to sort of say my colleagues have sold out but if it's easy to get money for research if it's learning in the workplace, right, you're going to do learning in the workplace research because the money's there. You're not going to do, coming back to ethics, you're not going to look at profound ethical issues and policy issues if the money isn't there to do it in a world where everything is sort of bound on global capitalism.

Now, you know, I wrote a book that got the Houle Award last year in America on global capitalism. And I actually feel that we're at the end of this age; we may actually be seeing some interesting changes. I guess even this credit crunch is caught up with the same set of problems: produce, produce, produce and greed, greed, greed. So in a sense, it's not the whole person it's how education has gone in fact, always to build the so-called 'learning society' which is going to be a society that produces more.

Now in my last book but one I talked about getting off the merry-go-round. If you look at our society today we spend hours every week watching the television exposed to advertising so we learn what we need to buy. Then we go to work to produce all these goods and we have vocational education to learn what to produce.

So we've got a merry-go-round which says you learn what you want to desire through one then you learn how to produce it through the other. And I think we've just got to get off this merry-go-round of learning and say that learning is much more than a very restricted merry-go-round.

And so, in a sense, we've had globalisation for a long time but we haven't had the type of globalisation that we've had since the Second World War. I think it was the decline of the Bretton Woods agreement amongst anything else that really led to this growth. With it came information technology. So *power* lay with those people who controlled the capital, the information technology, especially things like advertising, and for the last 50 years that core, that global core, was the same for every country of the West and for most of the other countries of the world apart from the Arabic countries and the Islamic countries. And most of those countries and most of this sort of global capitalism was supported by the political and the military might of America.

So we've actually had a core which has been: capital, information technology, market (supported by America) and that has ruled the world. Now, the greed of the American bankers and the British bankers has now caused us a number of problems. So in fact

the core of the world is actually in an interesting situation at the moment. It's not being supported and people are suddenly beginning to realise that perhaps global capitalism isn't the whole answer any longer. So perhaps the flaws of modernity which many of us have talked about for a long time are coming home to roost.

I don't think capitalism is wrong in itself. I think capitalism is a very, very efficient way of distributing goods and services. However, I think global capitalism of the type that gave the unlimited power to few people was the problem and that was part of the globalisation debate.

So what happened from the time, especially from Mrs Thatcher and Reagan's time, was the minimal state. The state was downplayed as the market was played up, as it were. Now, look what's happened to the market. So, suddenly in the last few months the state's being played up again. We're talking about regulation for the first time for 30 or so years. Regulation's becoming respectable.

Now I welcome this, I think some of these bankers actually perhaps do need prosecuting because I think they actually went beyond, as *The Observer* said yesterday, the 'realms of natural justice'. And I think that this is because we haven't got the *ethics*, the *living together*.

In the superb report, the Delors report, which is called *Learning: the Treasure Within*, Jacques Delors' team suggested that there are four pillars to learning: learning to know; learning to do; learning to be and learning to live together. Very profound; we haven't ever done very much about the learning to live together. We haven't done that much about learning to be. But then he missed one out: learning to care for the planet, the fifth one. That we don't do much about either. We've concentrated on the two: to know and to do, but only to know certain things and only to do certain things. We have restricted lifelong learning, we have restricted learning because those who have power have wanted it that way because they would benefit at the expense of the rest.

2. Education can have a profound effect on adult lives in many ways: developing families, communities and community cohesion; reducing prejudice and inequality in society; creating fairer and more ethical individuals; developing an individual's creativity and imagination; and the formal development of vocational skills that enable people to get better jobs. What do you see as the most important goals for adult education today?

Yes, I think here I have to go back to the type of thing I mentioned in my last book a little bit. Because you see, there can be no conscious life without learning. There can be no conscious living at all without learning.

And so I think sometimes when we isolate this and say learning can do this and learning can do that, we cannot exist without learning so I think sometimes we have to put it around the other way and say that, "If I can't exist without learning, then yes, learning is almost synonymous with living."

There can be no consciousness without being conscious of something. There can be no experience without experiencing something. In my own work I have tried to do this very much. I don't teach sociology and I don't teach education: I teach *people*. Now this is *fundamental*, right? If I teach *people* then learning is people, individuals learning. So then once I say well people are learning, therefore learning is about

living, then every single academic discipline that relates to human life, I can have a discipline of learning about human life from it. Hence I've talked about biology, brain science and all these things. I suspect we can even have an anatomy of learning but I still haven't seen enough material yet to say that.

So when you say what are the most important goals, I think, in a very real sense, the most important goal of all is that we get people to understand the connection between living and learning. *Really* understand that connection. And that's, in a sense, what I've tried to do in this book I've just written and I'm just signing a contract for a new one basically on the philosophy of learning, which is going to try to argue these points even further. Because, the book I've just written is called *Learning to be a Person in Society* and the heart of it is the person, you see.

So in a sense you see, when we come back to what I think is so important about our journal, it is about *life*. It is about *lifelong*. And I think that's so crucial to what we're doing. But I think, as yet, we're still playing: there are more depths to plumb and I think that there's a sense in which we still have an artificial discipline up here and a reality a little bit further down. And what I hope in my work I've been trying to do is to get below the surface. Because I've never defined learning other than in terms of the person and the person being changed.

You see, we've seen in vocational education and things like the theory of practice debate that used to assume that you teach somebody some theory, they go out in practice and without thinking about it they put it into practice. Well that assumes that the practitioner's a moron, basically. Right? But the practice is a site of new learning and there's no connection whatsoever between knowing how and being able to. There's no logical connection at all. They're different learning situations. They're both about living though and it's the fact that once we see the different situations are all about living then we can talk much more about lifelong. And I think we've got deeper furrows to plough than the ones we've been ploughing so far and I think that the theories that can emerge in the next generation or two with things like neuroscience and biology as learning, as well as the social sciences, when they come together we might see some very, very interesting work.

So, what are the most important goals? I think the goal of relating learning properly to living.

3. What do you see as the main challenges facing adult and lifelong education in the 21st century?

Reductionism, I think, troubles me a great deal and we're going to see more of that. We have reductionism in biology at the moment. I think we're going to have reductionism into brain science.

In the same way, if you go back a few years we had reductionism (in learning terms) into behaviour. You see we had this very inaccurate definition of learning being change of behaviour as a result of experience. Well, I mean, that was rubbish in many ways because learning is a present situation, the result of experience is past so you have a confusion of present and past tenses in your definition.

But then we've reduced everything to learning as behaviour. And this is the trouble, you see, once we do this we say well we can test learning because we can test the behaviour. But do we really test their learning or do we just test a little bit of it? I suspect we only test a little bit of it and a very little bit of it.

And this has meant we've got whole areas of the curriculum caught up in very, very small bits of knowledge. There are some science subjects now that we say well you have to learn this to be competent or that to be competent and you have to conform and be a player in the situation. Well, if you're an ethicist you say you don't have to conform always, you don't have to be a player, you have to stand outside of the situation. But we don't teach ethics very much, we don't get people to practice ethics. We reduce learning to things, we forget that the values are also part of the learning and we just reduce it and say well that's what learning is, that's competence but we forget there are other bits of learning that we don't actually test and we don't use very often.

So what worries me, has worried me all my life I think, is the fact that we want to be too reductionist, we want to restrict things far, far too much because we don't teach *people*, we teach *subjects* and we teach *skills* and I think that's just phenomenally, fundamentally *wrong*.

4. What new issues in adult, lifelong and continuing education concern or trouble you today?

We're going to be faced with a pharmacology of lifelong learning and education. I think there's no doubt whatsoever about that. I mean if you think that you can take drugs to aid memory then why can't you prescribe drugs to aid memory? Then we're going to have all the ethics of that: if we can do that for students why can't we do it for athletes? So we are getting into a very, very interesting area.

And then we're going to have more stuff on the biology of learning. You know, Richard Dawkins stuff. I've read quite a bit of Dawkins. In *The Selfish Gene* he talks about the *meme*. Now, I don't find any evidence for the *meme* and when I look at great early child psychologists like Tomasello he talks about imitation and he talks about babies as being imitation machines. Now this fits in with my understanding of things like pre-conscious learning of the significance of culture but I think there's going to be a very interesting debate between what Tomasello talks about (mimetics) and what Dawkins talks about (memetics), as it were. And I actually think he was reading the next editorial in the journal on this simply because this is the 200th anniversary of Darwin and we need to talk about the relationship between evolution and learning, you see. Dawkins is a great genetic biologist don't get me wrong. I think he's wrong about his theology because I think *The God Delusion* is a lazy book and I don't like it because it is a lazy book. I don't think he did his homework, period.

But having said that, you see I think that he's opened, by talking about memetics and the meme, he's opened a big issue because we were certainly 'hardwired' in our evolution and that's certainly the basis of many of our emotions and our predispositions to learn. And certainly we know that we're 'softwired' as a result of our cultural learning but the relationship and the debate between softwiring and hardwiring, I think, is going to be another interesting area in the future.

And of course this is going to have a tremendous effect on things like, coming back to gerontology, then if we know that the softwiring can be kept alive by physical exercise, mental exercise and we can talk about mental fitness, then we may actually see a curtailment in some way or a greater understanding of things like Alzheimer's simply because there's a tremendous interrelationship here.

You know, we published an article in our journal about 10 years ago now by Sandra Cusack of Simon Fraser University (*Mental fitness: developing a vital aging society: Mens sana in corpore sano*, Volume 17, Issue 5, September 1998). Now Sandra did a super piece of work when she and her colleagues examined a group of elderly people. She gave them an IQ test, then gave them some PE (Physical Education) lessons. Then they took their IQ tests again and their IQ had gone up, every one of them. And, you know, it wasn't just insignificant, it stayed up for a few weeks.

Now, just recently, brain research is showing that if you put blood through the brain rapidly you activate the brain cells. So what Sandra was doing 10 years ago, you see, now this is *important*. These are very important elements. So I think that one of the things we're going to see is that lifelong learning is going to take off in different ways with different questions, and I think some of these are going to be very important questions.

So I list biology, pharmacology, neuroscience as areas that I think are going to be important but I don't think we must let these subjects, because they are so-called pure science, predominate over what we already know and the social sciences.

5. Can I ask you to define what you mean by the 'pharmacology of education'?

Well, there was an article in *The Times Higher Education* supplement about six weeks ago about prescribing drugs for students. Now I was teaching in Canada last summer at the University of Calgary and one of my students in the summer school was in fact the pharmacological representative on the state board of pharmacology.

Now, when I got her thinking about the significance of her job to education (because she'd come to do a straight adult education masters degree thinking I can be a lecturer in pharmacology) I got her to see that she actually had much more knowledge than that and a different *form* of knowledge. So, then, if we started doing experiments where I give you certain drugs and your memory increases by x and y and z, or I give you drugs and I can speed up your mind, *and this is all possible*. They're actually already in existence; it's not as if we're looking for new drugs, you see.

So this pharmacological area opens itself up into... In fact I'm about to edit a new book, I've just done this big handbook for Routledge and I'm now about to sign a contract to do *The International Handbook of Learning*, not of lifelong learning but of learning as a whole, and there's going to be a pharmacology chapter. You see, because I just think we want to get pharmacologists to recognise this and the debates of it because the debates are terrific.

We're on the verge of some very interesting things and I think these are *learning*, not *education* but in fact, like drugs they can be used to give you better marks in your learning. So what about the gold medal in Beijing as it were, you know? And I think some nice interesting debates are going to emerge here. And I think we can't run away from them because if students can go and get these drugs now, these memory drugs now, as they *can*, then we are in an interesting debate.

But if *they* can get these drugs what about old people who, potentially, with Alzheimer's or dementia, can we find drugs that will keep their brains active? And perhaps the answer's yes. So I think that it's an interesting world we're moving into, I shan't see much of it but I do think it's very, very exciting but it's also dangerous I

think. The danger is that, you know, once we begin to manipulate ourselves in that way I think, again, we may lose something of the natural processes and I think that would be sad.

6. How significant a problem is equality of access to adult education around the world?

Oh fantastically significant, fantastically significant. In the West the feminists have taught us how important it has been to have equality of gender perspectives if I may put it that way. We haven't got it, yet; we're getting closer towards it.

But I've got in my study at home a request to referee for a lady, a woman, for her full professorship. Her request has been into her university (and I won't say which country but it's not Britain) her request has been into her university for 18 months and it's been blocked by males for a year who ask her to find other referees to the ones she wanted; anything to delay the process.

So we haven't got gender equality yet, and this is a European university, right? It's not a British one but then let's look at equality in Eastern Europe and then let's look at us. I mean in our Editorial Board meetings we talk with Ian, we don't sell in Nigeria because they can't afford it, we don't sell in sub-Saharan Africa a great deal because they can't afford it but it's people like that, it's literacy in the first instance. There is a decade of literacy on at the moment, it will not be realised, we will not be successful by 2015 to have a literate world. There's no way that we will be successful by 2015. And then just think of those people in poor countries who become literate. Unless they're organised they can't do much about it anyway.

In the book that I have just published on democracy, lifelong learning and a learning society I say we need three groups of people in education. We need prophets, prophets like Paulo Freire, people who will condemn the inequalities in the world and then announce a better world. We need genuine teachers, not teachers who just conform to the curriculum. We need the great teacher who *inspires*, who can help people see a vision beyond what they're in. And we need leaders to lead us out. Where are they going to lead us? Who knows, because if the world has a very simple meaning then it is working out ways forward.

But we need educated people, committed people, people who can understand, who can play their role in a literate society to make this a better world. I think that without some form of education it's going to be hard for those leaders to emerge. But having said that, if they are caught up in the formal education in many societies it's still going to be hard for them to emerge because I'm not sure that they always have the opportunities. And this is a problem because I think we need a revolution in learning; I don't think we need a political revolution. I don't think there is a utopia up there that we're going to reach next year. In my last book I talked about utopia being deferred indefinitely but I do think that in the present we can find those types of things that enrich life. But we need the wisdom to do it and we need the people who help us to see those things and to do them.

So, yes, I think that equality of access to education is vitally important but I think equality of access to education, generally, is important. And when all the people in Darfur have the opportunity of going to education classes then it might be a better world.

7. You are Professor of Continuing Education, University of Surrey, a former head of the Department of Educational Studies, University of Georgia, you hold visiting professorships at City University (UK) and Pecs University (Hungary), you're a Special Professor at the University of Nottingham, you have been President of the British Association of International and Comparative Education, you were the first non-North American to be elected to the International Hall of Fame of Adult and Continuing Education in the USA, you have written and edited well over 30 books and 200 papers and book chapters on adult education and learning, you serve on the editorial boards of a number of academic journals and you are the founding editor of *The International Journal of Lifelong Education* which you have edited for nearly 30 years. My question is this: to what do you attribute this longevity in the field of adult education?

I'm often asked that and I think that, in the first instance, I'd probably say because I was a failure at school and I've been trying to prove myself ever since.

I left school with five O-levels, failed all my A-levels, join the Air Force and went into the ranks because I had nothing else to do, no other career, and then picked it up later as it were! So, I've always been trying to prove myself, and prove to myself, since then, that I can do it. But in my own mind I still have this thing that, yes, I was a dropout, you know, I was someone who failed my A-levels and so you can say it's part of the issue of being in this game. I do believe in second chances, and I do not believe, put it the other way around, that people are born intelligent or born thick. I think Confucius was much more right when he said, "I work with people who will work," rather than talking about ability. I just think it is totally wrong to talk about people not having the ability; I think that people do have the ability. I face the fact that brain research will begin to show us the areas of the brain that are not well-developed but that may be an accident of birth. I think that many, many more people could get degrees and get doctorates. I mean we're seeing it: look at the vast number of doctorates in the last few years. As the whole thing has grown more and more people are doing doctorates but 25 years ago those people probably would not have been accepted for a masters degree many of them. It's just that universities have had to open their base to get more students in and so the whole thing changes.

But from my angle, yes, it's a great honour to be given honorary professorships and honorary doctorates. But I now actually say to universities that give me these I don't want it unless I can continue to work with you afterwards because the honour, if it's just an honour, is, you know, fleeting. And what I like to do is to, like with Hungary where I have both an honorary doctorate and I am an honorary professor at the university in Pecs. Now I like to go every year and give two or three lectures, partly because it enables me to see what's going on and I learn a little bit more about Hungary but also because if that university did me the honour of giving me an award, then if they feel they want to use me thereafter I think that that's their right. And so there is a reciprocal arrangement.

8. As a researcher and academic what first attracted you to the field of adult, continuing and lifelong education?

Well, when I failed at school and went into the Air Force, well then I went into the Methodist ministry because I wanted to be a 'helper', as it were, to help people. The Church gave me the opportunity to study in the sense that in my first year training as

a theological student I did a diploma in Theology and did a couple of A-levels in my spare time. When I got the A-levels and the diploma in Theology they let me transfer the first year of the diploma in Theology to the Bachelor of Divinity degree. And I got a BD.

Then I went out as a pastoral minister for six years and in those six years I realised the Bachelor of Divinity didn't really equip me to be a pastor in inner city Sheffield and inner city Wakefield so I went and did a Sociology and Politics degree which I did full-time whilst I was a full-time minister.

So actually, when people talk about all these poor hard-done-by students, well, I had four churches, nearly 500 members and I was a full-time student and I got a 2:1!

So, in a sense, you can do it if you've got the perseverance to do it. But having got a reasonably good Sociology degree and a Theology degree I found the theology of the Church something that, as a social scientist, is very difficult. But I wouldn't resign from the ministry because the Church had given me all the opportunities to get onto the academic ladder. So I've retained, the whole of my life, I am still a reverend, but most of my life I don't go around wearing it on my sleeve simply because it's a tremendous debt I owe the Church. I am a Christian but I do not believe in revelation so much as inspiration.

So, when I decided that I would leave the pastoral ministry I had to find, as it were, a job that offered the same type of opportunity to serve people. And, in a sense, education was the way of being of service to people and I'm much more than just education; I didn't go into teaching schools I actually went into a college of education to train school teachers. And from there I completed a masters degree, started a doctorate and realised that, actually, all the time since I first started talking about being a preacher I was an educator. And so I found it very easy, then, to move from being a college of education lecturer to move into adult education.

And I look back now and realise my first lecture in adult education I actually gave 54 years ago. I preached my first sermon 54 years ago, 55 is coming up this year! And I've always been, therefore, involved in working with adults from the time I was a teenager and always wanting to be of service. And if you look at my books, many of the prefaces of my books finish with, "If this book is useful, use it," because I don't want to write a book just for my gratification. It's there for, hopefully, for somebody to use it.

So what keeps me in it is still, as long as people think I can be useful, as long as the journal is useful, then I want to be involved.

9. When you look back on your career in lifelong education what are you most proud of?

This might sound strange to you but I think starting this journal. I can remember the day the first issue came out and I can remember, you know, getting the first issue. Now I think that was probably a greater thrill than my first book. And as I look back, yes, there have been a lot of people published in this journal, some of them publishing their first articles, and if we can give people an opportunity to develop themselves through a journal that, for me, is terrific.

And I've been accused, on occasions, as an Editor, of not wanting to reject papers and so when we have these surveys about what your rejection rate is, I find that very

hard to answer because I will send back - and I have sent back - papers three times because I've wanted to see that author publish it, you know! So, what's your rejection rate? Is that three rejections and one acceptance if you accept it the fourth time? Or is it one acceptance because it's one author come in with one paper?

And so I have never ever countenanced the idea of seeing the Editor's role as just the gatekeeper. I'm the gate-opener as well and, in a sense, if we can encourage people to publish and we can give people the confidence, and I actually say to people when they say, "What about rejections?" I say, "Well I still get rejections!" It's part of the game. But if they feel that I'm still getting rejections then I hope that helps them to say well if he still gets them then if I get a rejection so what?

I also encourage students, you know, to write critiques of my work; my students to write critiques of my work. And there's one coming out in America this year, a critique of my work by one of my young students. There was one in *Studies* a few years ago that was a critique of my work and I encouraged them to write it. You're here to help people. And education is a very moral process of trying to help people and for me, therefore, what's my greatest thrill? Well, it is, I think, the journal, simply. I mean, if I write a book you don't know how many people you're going to help. You might have a lot who might like what you write. If you edit a journal, there's five or six people who've published in it every issue, there's four, five, six issues a year, that's a lot of people publishing and there's a lot of people reading it. And the spectrum, the field, is far greater than I could write as an individual writer. So, yes, it's a great thrill for me to run the journal.

10. For researchers, students and professionals who have never encountered the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, what is the journal about in a nutshell?

Well if I say lifelong and life-wide that might begin, but then I sort of say yes it's easy to say lifelong but if I say now that learning begins prenatally (and we know it begins roughly 20 weeks before gestation, before birth) then we really know that learning is a very complex process that begins before we're born and doesn't really end until such time as we die. So it literally is *more* than lifelong in that sense.

There is a legitimate point to say any aspect of it can be covered by our journal but we've fought very shy of that simply because we could be inundated with school material and that would rule out lots of the other areas of lifelong learning. So we have deliberately not accepted material that's school-based and, to some extent, we feel that that was a wise decision given the current climate.

To some extent, the same would be true of higher education but because with the way higher education has changed in the last 20 years (you know, we've got continuing education and then what have you) higher education became lifelong education in that sense, although in a very strange way. The European Commission never actually related lifelong education with higher education and always kept two separate commissions. And I think that they recognised the weakness of that position when in their last policy document they went back to adult learning for the third sector. And so, in a sense, we are primarily adult learning and from 18 onwards really.

The focus really is on all aspects of lifelong learning. We haven't sort of said this journal is for education at work or anything else and it's to cover the whole span of lifelong education. Now it was quite easy, I think, 30 years ago, to talk about that as a

very single and clear field but in the last 30 years things have grown to such a tremendous extent that now we're talking about, well, I did this *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning* (Routledge) last year and we had 45 different chapters in it so the coverage was very broad and so it's getting wider and wider.

11. What do you think are the most contentious issues in contemporary debate and research in adult education which your journal seeks to address?

In the editorials, certainly, we've had a go at present government in the sense that it cut 1.5 million non-vocational places and funded vocational education in its place. Now, that's fine given a situation in which you say, well, "Vocational education is the be-all and end-all of education," but I don't think it is. If you think that there are now more people over 60 in Britain than there are under 16 and if we're going to look at further age education there's more people in that age group than there are in the compulsory schooling sector.

So, it's not a matter of numbers and I think that the debate has got to straighten out a little bit more. Take that one stage further: if we think that peoples' health is better if they're continuing to learn in old age then that'll cut down the health bill, that'll cut down the medical bills. So there's a sense in which there's interesting policy debates beginning to emerge, I think, at this stage that we'll see in the future.

I think the other debate that's going to emerge in the near future is brain research. Now brain research doesn't prove anything, or put it the other way around, brain research can only reinforce the type of research that we've been doing in learning for many years but until we had the scanner you couldn't scan the brain to see how the brain was operating. For instance, I wrote about pre-conscious learning back in the 80s but we didn't have the scanner to scan the brain until 20 years after I started writing about it. But now we know that learning takes place in a pre-conscious way because we can see the brain operating.

So, in a sense, what brain research is doing, I think, is reinforcing a great deal of the research that's being going on in the social sciences for a long time. But these are big issues that are going to grow. With the growth in brain research the growth of things like our recognition of pharmacology and the way that diet can affect our learning, we're going to see a science of learning emerge and I think it will be called the science of learning. But then there's a danger. Once we call things science it will take precedence over social science. And so I think there's going to be interesting policy debates here in the near future as well.

12. As an international journal who do you feel are your readership, your core audience, and which countries are most active in the area of lifelong education?

Basically we went for libraries; I think libraries are our key. We've never aimed at individual academics as such and many of them obviously read the journal through the libraries and recommend the journal in that way. So I know in my own travels I meet many people who take the journal and I listen very carefully to their comments and we try to build things in as a result of the comments we get and with more and more emails people are feeding back lots of ideas to us.

If something hits somebody and you happen to know that person or they know you, they sort of say, have you thought about... and that happens quite a bit when I'm

travelling. People who take the journal will say I like such-and-such an article. One or two regular people will email me and say that was a good article but I found an awful lot of typos in such-and-such an article or something like that!

So you get that type of feedback, which is nice, and clearly for things like typos because we've got an international audience and it would take a long time to proof-read everything when we're getting scripts in third and fourth languages as we frequently are, while we do try to tidy the English up I'm not going to say that everything is the Queen's English and I'm not saying I *want* it to be the Queen's English because more people in this world speak English as a second language everyday than speak English as a first language. So consequently, you know, why should we expect the first language to be the more accurate one all the time? So I'm not that concerned with it.

I am concerned that the meaning is what's transmitted and if our reviewers, or when I read the text, I don't feel the meaning is right then that's a different matter. If the English is not quite right I don't worry as much.

America, clearly, is the largest single country. Japan is a very big one and that's always surprised us a little bit because we haven't had as many papers from Japan as we would like, considering the sales there. But Scandinavia, clearly, has always been focused on lifelong learning and we get a good number of papers and a good number of readers from there. We try on our editorial readers' board to have a spread across the world and we do ask the people who act as readers for us if they will encourage people from their countries to submit to us. So, hopefully, that type of two-way contact is useful.

13. What do you look for when considering articles and submissions?

I think obviously the subject's got to be lifelong learning and, as I said, you know, we will take a school-based article if it's orientated to lifelong learning but not if it's orientated towards school. So the first issue is it's got to be on lifelong learning.

I think that we're not too concerned whether it's a qualitative or quantitative research. I would say we are primarily a qualitative research based journal but we don't turn down quantitative research because it's quantitative, as it were. But once we get into the issue of qualitative research then our major concerns must be that the argument is good, the method is sound and the writing is up-to-date.

Now for an international journal this creates its own problem as well. I mean its problem is, very simply, that when I travel the world and go to, especially Third World countries, libraries are not up-to-date. Many Third World universities hardly have libraries and so there's almost a sense there must be a variation in quality between papers coming out of, say, Africa, and papers coming out of Scandinavia or North America. And I think one tries to recognise this a little bit in the way one keeps a balance in the publications: that as often as we can we're going to carry one or two papers that if we were just saying they're all from North America or all from Scandinavia then one or two of those papers we might not have published but because they are from countries where the resources are poor and we know so little about those countries, then we will welcome them as well.

So it's not saying that the standard is lower, what we are saying is that the standard's different because the resources are different. The fact of the resources is the biggest issue.

14. What are the most common mistakes made by authors submitting papers to the journal?

I think some of the biggest mistakes in this field is very, very frequently people sort of cite that the people who founded lifelong education did so after the Second World War when in fact in 1929 there was a book published by Cassell's in London on the problems of adult education. The Americans often claim to have the first doctorate in Adult Education in the 1930s, but in fact in 1925 there was a big two-volume PhD in London.

So I think the thing that irritates me, in this sense, is not doing their homework properly. You know, I'm not concerned about the nationalist issue; I'm really concerned about the homework issue. It's like the Europeans will say, well, the first universities were in Italy in the 10th and 11th Century. They forget that in the 9th Century there were Arabic universities in Spain.

So it's the imprecision of people who don't take, I think, their homework seriously.

15. What advice would you give researchers who would like to be published in your journal?

I think that, fundamentally, our concern is that it's topical, in a really genuine sense of the word. That it is prepared to face the academic argument and not to worry about the discipline because if you say education is not a discipline, and I don't think it is, you can have a sociology of adult education or lifelong learning, you can have a philosophy of it, a history of it, a psychology of it, an economics of it but you can't have an education of sociology.

So, in a sense you see, we've got a field, a practice, which can be studied by lots of different disciplines, and we welcome all the disciplines who will tackle the field. But if you're going to tackle the field from the disciplines then, again, we must be accurate about the level of work in the discipline. Know that, if you're writing a sociological piece that your sociology is pretty good, or if you're writing a philosophical piece that your philosophy is pretty well up-to-date. So I think that what I'm basically saying is, yes, we will look at anything that is seriously looking at lifelong learning from any of the disciplines but it has got to be seriously looking at a good academic argument.

16. Have you identified any longer-term trends in the subject of lifelong education since the journal started in 1982?

When the journal first started the major trend was adult education *per se*. There were few papers that really used the term lifelong education. But through the period of the growth of continuing education we saw this orientation towards continuing education and, of course, for a great deal it was continuing professional education.

So there was a battle going on, not literally, but in a sense, between the type of material that was coming out of traditional adult education and the type of material that was coming out of the new learning and work material. And I think that that also led us into things like policy.

Now, as the policy issues have grown and adult education in Britain has declined (but it hasn't declined in other countries in the world and this is quite an important factor) because I remember in one of the books I did, in the first two editions we called it

adult and continuing education theory and practice. Now the third edition we called it adult education and lifelong learning theory and practice because 'continuing' had disappeared and 'lifelong' had become more prevalent. But you see it wasn't lifelong education that became more prevalent it was lifelong learning. And so, now, we get many articles, say from the States, that are still using the terms like adult education but the States have never actually used lifelong learning in the way that we do, or vocational education in the way that we do: for them, adult education is both.

So, we've had a lot of traditional adult education papers from the States and from many other countries in the world but we've clearly got many others which are vocationally-based and most of those are called lifelong. And I think that that's the interesting point.

Now, we're beginning to see a few papers on retired people and educational gerontology emerge because this is a big issue. I mean, to give a plug to another Routledge journal the American journal *Educational Gerontology* is published *monthly*. Now that's very frequently for an academic journal. So it shows there's an awful lot of readers and an awful lot of people who want to write about it in the States. And I think we are quite a long way behind America when it comes to this.

So, one of the trends I would anticipate is seeing more papers in educational gerontology in the near future because there's more concern now in government for older people. After all, they're the biggest voting force and they're beginning to realise that old people cost money and have got to be made use of in a better way and in that sense I think that we're going to see more policy. There is a government report coming out later this year on these types of issues and it's going to be quite important I think.

And then, from the other side of the older people, for instance, we get very little, say, on the University of the Third Age. Now the University of the Third Age is very big in Britain. There are 700 Universities of the Third Age and 300,000 members. So I would anticipate in the near future more academics will start studying the Universities of the Third Age and we'll begin to get more papers from this type of area.

So, yes, because we deliberately kept the term 'lifelong education' as very broad, we do manage to get many different branches or parts of the spectrum and you can see that the flavour of the month does catch on, in a sense, in the journal.

17. What are your aspirations for the future of the journal?

I think that's a very difficult one in the sense that we have gone online in the last few years and I think quite successfully in the sense that lots of people are taking the journal online. People are, as far as I understand it, buying articles and downloading articles in quite good numbers. So, from that angle, yes.

I think one of the biggest things I'd like to see is that we get a really good spread. Now, if you take the massive size of China, for instance, the massive number of universities and institutions there, we hardly make any inroad into China. Now, in one sense, that's not surprising at the moment because China is still very pragmatic and most of the stuff that comes out from scholars in China at the moment are about good practice but they're not theorising enough because I think that's the next stage and I would love to see us in at that stage of theorising. And we have tried, recently, to have a few more articles from China. We did a special issue on the Far East

recently, so the hope is that this will catch on, that we will try to bring together East and West a little bit more.

In Korea, for instance, last year there was a major conference on 'East Meets West' and one of the things that we can't do as much as, say, the journals in the Far East is we can say we're trying to do East meets West but it's the people in the Far East who've got an English-American education who are working in the Far East who can do that job far better than we can and I think that's a major problem. But at the same time I would love us to be happy to bridge that gap even if we can't do it as well as, say, the journal coming out of Hong Kong can do it because we don't have those same types of contacts. But I do think we can help them by keeping the level of theory high and the level of argument high.