



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- We focus on the diversity of our growing community
- We hear from members of our team of volunteers
- We discover how the concept of lifewide education is becoming global, and share reflections from home and abroad
- We feature the first in our new series of interviews by the Editor, as she speaks with Professor Ron Barnett

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## Growing and nurturing a community Greetings from the Editor, Jenny Willis



Dear Readers

Welcome to the first issue of our new Magazine, the launch of which coincides with our campaign to grow a global community of people, from all walks of life, who believe in the value of lifewide learning and education. I would like to extend a special warm welcome to all the people who have joined our community in the last few weeks. We hope that you will gain both value and enjoyment from the conversations and relationships that we believe will grow as we develop and share our experiences and understandings.

Our first and most important task is to establish, grow and support a community of people who care about the holistic forms of learning, personal development and education we promote. Through the community, we aim to:

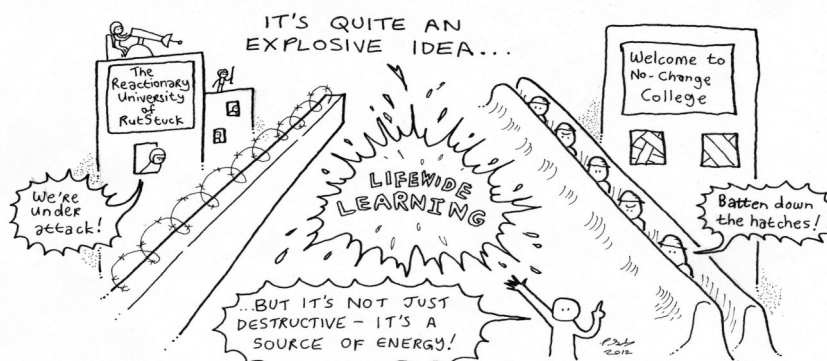
- raise awareness of and champion lifewide learning and education as a means of improving the relevance of a more complete education to a modern society;
- promote and support scholarship and research;
- provide practical support for individuals/schools/colleges/universities that want to develop their own approaches to lifewide education;
- develop and implement, with the help of other organisations, a means of recognising and valuing commitment to learning through all our life experiences.

Our first issue is bursting with interesting articles. We meet our team of volunteers, and have contributions on the theme of lifewide learning from Russ Law and two students - Andra Ilie and Yalda Tomlinson. From the blogosphere we have a provocative article by one of today's most influential management thinkers, Umair Haque, on *'Mastering the Art of Living Meaningfully Well'*. Rob Ward, Director of the Centre for Recording Achievement, shares his views on what it takes to create and support a community of practice whilst Vicky Mann, from the University of Nottingham, reports on a recent conference which debated the state of play with University extra-curricular skills awards. We are delighted to kick off our series of *Reflections on Life* interviews with Professor Ron Barnett, who is one of the world's leading thinkers, writers and commentators on Higher Education. Ron has done much to stimulate our thinking and to support our work. Last, but not least, Patrick Sanders our community artist provides us with some very entertaining and informative cartoons.

The best way to grow a community is by people telling other people that there is value in being part of the community which we hope will welcome people of all ages and from all walks of life. Please tell your friends, colleagues and relatives about us and if they are interested please invite them to join us.

If you would like to make a contribution to future issues of the Magazine or you have any suggestions for improving it please let me know.

Jenny [jenny@lifewideeducation.co.uk](mailto:jenny@lifewideeducation.co.uk)



Lifewide education:

**"Quite an explosive idea if taken seriously."**

Ron Barnett, 2012  
Read more, p.15

Norman Jackson,  
Director of Lifewide  
Education CIC,  
reflects on building a  
community



*"We all need to  
actualise ourselves  
and it is my hope  
that (...) we will  
collectively create  
a destiny of which  
we all want to be  
a part."*

A warm welcome to  
new international  
members



@lifewiders

## The value of conversations and relationships

The year 2012 holds so much promise and opportunity for us as we begin the process of growing a community of interest around the ideas and practices of lifewide learning and education. After a long gestation (!) our community website was finally launched in early January 2012.

Early January also saw the launch of our campaign to raise awareness of our community. We began with 30 Founding Members and at the end of our first two weeks of campaigning we had grown to 100 members which tells us that people can see value in belonging to our community. But more than this we want to foster rich and purposeful interactions, relationships and conversations between the members of the community because that is the way in which ideas will be brought to life and spread.

Michael Fullan, in his book *Change Forces with a Vengeance* (p.23), has a wonderfully simple recipe for bringing about change. I

have drawn upon this on numerous occasions. He says:

- start with the notion of moral purpose, key problems, desirable directions, but don't lock in ;
- create a community of interaction around these ideas;
- ensure that quality information infuses interaction and related deliberations;
- look for and extract promising patterns i.e. consolidate gains and build upon them.

This is exactly what we are trying to do and our measures of success will be how well people feel a part of this, how able they are to interact and participate in conversations that they find meaningful, how strong the relationships are that grow from such interactions and how capable we are individually and collectively in seeing and capitalising on the good ideas and practices that emerge through this

process. Through this process we will establish our sense of belonging not only to a community but to a culture of participation, sharing and involvement.

I have just completed a research study of change in a university. We spent several months interviewing members of the university and listening to their stories and we are now trying to extract the lessons that have been learnt about how change was achieved. The study suggests organisational identity and destiny are intertwined with the identity and destiny of the many individual practitioners as they seek to actualise themselves and overcome organisational barriers through the change processes and relationships they create for themselves. This is profoundly significant to me and I want our lifewide education enterprise to be founded on this fundamental driver of human existence and experience. We all need to actualise ourselves; it is my hope that if we can see the value in the conversations and relationships we have within the lifewide education community, we will collectively create a destiny of which we will all want to be a part.

## Welcome to 3 new international members

We are delighted to announce that some international friends have joined us as founding members of the Lifewide Education Community. They are:



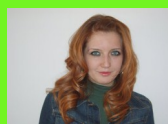
**Professor Marcia Baxter Magolda**

Distinguished Professor, Educational Leadership, Miami University, USA



**Maret Staron**

Senior Consultant at Mindful Creations, Sydney, Australia



**Buket Soylu**

Starting a doctoral programme in lifewide learning at Nigde University, Turkey

## Meet our team of volunteers

**Nathan Clough** is a talented graphic artist and website designer. He is in his final year at the University of the Creative Arts studying Advertising and Brand Communication. Nathan is our graphic designer and marketing advisor. He is responsible for our lively logo and magazine banner. He is passionate about design and he leads a busy life aiming to become a force to be reckoned with in his field. He runs his own company and works freelance for several other companies including our corporate sponsor Chalk Mountain Education and Media Services.



**John Cowan** is an extraordinary teacher whose career spans over 45 years during which he has championed and practised student-centred learning. During that time he has placed an ever increasing emphasis on preparing students to exercise stewardship over their lifewide development while at University, and in lifelong learning thereafter. John worked closely with SCEPTRe to develop and apply the concept of lifewide learning and education and took on the role of 'external auditor' which helped the delivery team check the effectiveness of its support and judgments. In retirement he remains an active teacher in undergraduate and postgraduate studies at Edinburgh Napier University and is Emeritus Professor at Herriot Watt University.

**Yalda Tomlinson** is a final year A level student at Reigate Grammar School. She is a volunteer helper, and does voice-overs for our animations. She is a very good ambassador for Oxfam, helping to raise £450 at our public launch event.



**Norman Jackson** is the founder and Director of the Lifewide Education Community Interest Company. He is also an Emeritus Professor at the University of Surrey and Director of a small 'start-up' media company 'Chalk Mountain Education and Media Services'.

He began his professional life as a geologist before going on to a highly distinguished career in higher education with Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Higher Education Quality Council, Quality Assurance Agency, Learning and Teaching Support Network, and the Higher Education Academy. He was director of the University of Surrey's Centre for Excellence in Professional Training and Education (SCEPTRe) throughout its 5-year period of government funding. It was there that he worked with colleagues on the concept of lifewide learning, which he is now developing in his 'retirement'. Among his many publications, 'Learning to be Professional' and 'Learning for a Complex World' will be of special interest to the lifewide learning community, or as he likes to term them, 'lifewiders.'

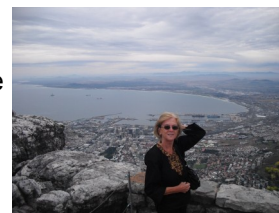
**Russ Law** was head of a large British international school for many years, where part of his work was the training of future teachers. Since returning to the UK, he has been working as an independent consultant and as a trainer/facilitator/assessor and accredited coach in programmes such as Teaching Leaders, Leadership Pathways, and the National Qualification for Headteachers. To date, he has successfully coached more than a hundred individual people for various aims. A former Associate of SCEPTRe at the University of Surrey, he is a keen supporter of those who seek to apply creativity and collaborative enquiry to their own and others' development, and who promote the process of lifewide and lifelong learning.





## Some more of our team of volunteers

**Jenny Willis, Editor of Lifewide.** Jenny's career began as a linguist teaching in Inner London comprehensive schools during the 1970s and 80s, a period of continuous radical change for education. She was Deputy Head of a comprehensive school as the 1988 Education Reform Act brought further important changes for the curriculum and management of schools. She later taught for the Open University, pioneering distance learning for languages. She then undertook a PhD in socio-linguistics at the University of Surrey, where she also worked part-time as an Assistant Registrar. This enabled her to pursue research into professional training, which work led to her gaining a Fellowship in SCEPTRe. Yet another career began for her when funding cuts brought redundancy from the Registry: she became an independent consultant and researcher supporting many of SCEPTRe's projects for its last two years. This work continues as a member of the core team of Lifewide Education. Jenny is a published author and contributor to 'Learning to be Professional' and 'Learning for a Complex World.'



**Patrick Sanders** is our Community Artist. He is a talented illustrator, event cartoonist, graphic facilitator and animator. His still or moving pictures provide interesting interpretations and perspectives on articles, conference presentations, interviews, discussions, forums and blogs. His clients include theatre companies, national agencies, universities, and companies whose business involves visual communication. You can see the value of Patrick's illustrations in this magazine



**Brian Cooper**, is our communications advisor.

After studying for a Natural Sciences degree at Cambridge, majoring in metallurgy, he made a side move and joined Yachting World magazine as Editorial Assistant before becoming the Technical Manager of a small non-ferrous foundry. The attractions of journalism brought him back to business-to-business publishing, working in the metals industry sector for a company of which he ultimately became Editorial Director, responsible for 30 titles in a wide variety of industrial and service sectors. He was a member of the Periodicals Training Council which established the NVQ in periodical journalism. In 2001 he left salaried employment to become a househusband looking after three children and became a founding shareholder and non-executive director of a start-up publishing and media business in the biotechnology sector. Brian has considerable DIY prowess and is an Offshore Yachtmaster. He enjoys sailing, walking, skiing and cycling, when family and voluntary work with the National Trust and Remap allow.



**Ed Sillars** is Technology Director at Chalk Mountain and is providing technical support for our community website. He is a talented musician with his own band and also tours with bands providing technical support at live gigs. He is also a professional photographer and website designer.

**Nicholas Bowskill** is the Managing Director of The Shared Thinking Consultancy. He designed and implemented 'Shared Thinking' a social identity approach to personal development, through his doctoral research at the University of Glasgow. He is also the owner of [ElearningConsultancy.com](http://ElearningConsultancy.com) - an e-learning design and development company. Nick's expertise in using Twitter is helping us spread the lifewide word.





Norman Jackson, Director, at the launch

The Lifewide Education Community Interest Company was launched publicly on 20 November 2011. Nearly 50 people braved the cold, foggy weather and gave their enthusiastic support. The event, which was sponsored by Chalk Mountain was also used to raise money for Oxfam's East African Appeal. A total of £450 was raised. Kai Jansen, our talented community musician generously donated the proceeds of his latest EP - CD.

In presenting the work of the company to assembled guests, Director Norman Jackson set out five ambitions for the company:

1 To establish, grow and support a

community of people who care about the holistic forms of learning, personal development and education that the company promotes.

2 To provide practical support for individuals, schools, colleges and universities that want to develop their own approaches to lifewide education.

3 To raise awareness and champion lifewide learning and education as a means of improving the relevance of a more complete education to a modern society.

4 To promote and support scholarship and research.

5 To develop and implement, with the help of other

organisations, a lifewide learning award.

These ambitions will form the basis of our first strategic plan.

All in all, there was much warmth and good will for the new enterprise we are embarking on and Jenny, Russ and Norman would like to thank everyone who came to support us and a special thanks to Taraneh, Neda and Yalda for the amazing catering and Kai for his wonderful musicianship.

*“there was much warmth and good will for the enterprise”*

Yalda Tomlinson, a 6th Form student from Reigate Grammar School helped organise the event, and gave a lovely introduction to show why we were trying to raise money for Oxfam's East African Appeal. With gift aid we raised £450 and it was a nice surprise to receive a Christmas email from Oxfam thanking us for our donation and telling us how the money was being spent.



Read more from Yalda in this issue's Student Voice, which begins overleaf with an inspirational story from Andra Illie, a final year undergraduate.

## We have a Minstrel! Meet our very own Kai Jansen

In medieval times minstrels would wander from town to town playing, singing and telling poetry.

Through their artful stories they informed, entertained and inspired.

So much can be communicated through music, poetry and song that it makes a great deal of sense to sustain the idea of the minstrel and use the medium of song to communicate important messages.

Lifewide Education CIC is therefore delighted that Kai Jansen, a talented musician and

singer, has kindly agreed to become our very own Minstrel.

**Kai** is a gifted musician who began a learning guitar while at school in Singapore. His career has involved performing in concerts, clubs, TV, in



Kai Jansen performing at our launch

restaurants and bars and private homes and he has recorded four albums. And if you ever went to Covent Garden in the 70's, 80's and 90's you may well have heard Kai playing as he spent 23 years in 'the garden' as a street performer. Kai is passionate about many worthy causes and he readily agreed to help us communicate our ideas.

You can watch Kai perform at the opening event by following the link below.

<http://www.lifewideeducation.co.uk>

## STUDENT VOICE

### What makes a student employable? Andra Illie



Andra is studying for a BSc in Business Management at the University of Surrey

**What defines a university student?** Well, in my view it's a combination of studying to learn a lot about a subject, having a lot of fun and an often overlooked unexpected component which is the wider personal development gained from all the experiences you have while at university. I came to England to study from Romania believing that the experience of living and studying in another country would help me grow as a person. Like many overseas students coming to the UK I initially underwent a culture shock as I encountered such a different and diverse culture for both learning and living. Nonetheless, it is safe to assume that I should have seen it coming.

On my arrival at the University of Surrey in September 2008, I started to adapt slowly by observing how people behaved and then getting involved in a lot of extra-curricular activities in a quest to reinvent myself. I joined two of the university's extra-curricular Academies - the first encouraged me to be enterprising, the second to appreciate, celebrate and be sensitive to the rich multicultural campus I was part of. Although I didn't know it at the time, both of these experiences helped lay the foundations for what was yet to become an employable professional. Not only did I get heavily involved in the Academies, but I was also invited to help facilitate them in my second year. What did I learn from these experiences? Well, if the 'student' experience helped me become more of a team-player, a more effective real world problem solver, and more creative in making things happen (like putting on a big Multicultural Party), the 'teaching' aspect of these experiences boosted my almost nonexistent self-confidence.

**But that's not all!** I also joined the student radio so I could overcome my fear of speaking 'imperfect' English in public, and I joined various other workshop-based activities that taught me a great deal about various aspects of what being employable meant. Furthermore, I went to represent my university at a national competition for young entrepreneurs. With my team we invented an idea for a business then put a business plan together and pitched it Dragon's Den style to ten business people. I can assure you that my adrenalin ran high on that occasion.



Being enterprising . Andra selling burgers and hot dogs on campus during Enterprise Academy.

**But was all this effort to develop myself useful?** Well, I will let you decide by telling you my story. I had decided to spend my third year on a work placement and last spring I went for an interview with one of the big four accountancy firms ([Deloitte LLP](#)). You can imagine that I was really scared with everything I had heard about the interviews. **To be fair, sometimes they are worse than you think and being scared is more about you as an individual than about them as an organisation.** I spent nearly half an hour talking to one of the interviewers about my funny story at the Enterprise Academy debating my idea to sell burgers in order to make a profit. What does this tell you? It told me that it had been one hour and a half since I had entered the room for the interview and the two managers who were interviewing me kept asking me loads and loads of questions about all of my activities as they found it so interesting.

I now realise that they were assessing my potential as an employee through the stories I was telling them about the things I had done. I must have told them what they wanted to hear because I ended up with the job offer. So was it worth getting involved in all those extra-curricular activities? You bet it was. **In the context of at least eight graduates competing for every graduate job in the UK, I would say definitely YES, wouldn't you?**

The moral of my story is that we are much more than mere grades on our transcripts. The way I see it, it is all the little things that we do to make ourselves better people. It is only doing things, learning from mistakes and trying to find solutions to difficult and fuzzy problems that teaches us how to plan and find out the things we need to know to do something. Arguably, this does it better than an academic curriculum although it's also good to have that knowledge.

Think of it like this, at the end of the 3 or 4 years, a considerable number of students will finish with high grades... yet how many will have something else to offer other than their grades on their CV in a world where employers are searching for employability, distinctiveness and individuality? What employers want to know is what makes you different to all the others who are applying for the same job? What are you really interested in and what are you passionate about? What will you bring to their business that the others are not able to bring? Accepting that we study hard and gain a good degree, then answers to these questions are likely to lie in all the other things we have done to develop ourselves as individuals. So going back to my initial question as to what defines a student? **The unexpected and important component is shaped by all the lifewide activities and experiences that will contribute to their development as unique individuals beyond mere book knowledge.**



## STUDENT VOICE

### Writing my UCAS\* personal statement taught me valuable lessons about myself. Yalda Tomlinson



Yalda is a 6th form student at Reigate Grammar School

Like most students in the upper sixth, last October, I completed the ritual of writing my UCAS personal statement. Any student will tell you that writing a personal statement is a gruelling process - gruelling because although it's personal many other people (teachers, parents and friends!) want to read it and give you feedback! **Receiving so much well-intentioned feedback can be painful but I began to see that my statement was much better for accepting some of their advice.** Until eventually I reached a point where I didn't want to see it any more! I reckon I must have spent 20 hours rewriting the same sentence in the hope the word count would magically go down.

However, the one good thing about personal statements is that they force reflection, something that is not taught in the curriculum. Writing my personal statement didn't just show the universities I was applying to that I am the "well rounded individual" I was trying to convince them I was. It brought home to me just how many of my life skills were not learnt at school, and without being conscious I develop and use these skills every day.



Yalda and her fellow DoE Award contenders scaling the heights

For example, it was the Duke of Edinburgh Award that taught me what it means to persevere even when you have been walking for four days and you are cold, wet and tired and your feet and back hurt. This attitude has come in very useful as I persevered all through the Christmas holidays revising for my AS exams! Also I participated in a LAMDA course that has greatly **improved my self-confidence and communication skills** which have changed the way I talk to everyone whether they are an adult, peer or a family member. To the point where in November I was able to campaign confidently in public to raise money for Oxfam's relief work in East Africa.

*"It was the Duke of Edinburgh Award that taught me what it means to persevere.."*

Why did I do this? Well it was partly because I was given the opportunity to speak in public and I have come to realise how important it is to take such opportunities in life as they are few and far between, but it was also because I had spent a year working in our local Oxfam bookshop and I had been inspired by the manager's stories about how Oxfam had

been set up by some graduates who wanted to make a difference to the world. **I want to make a difference and I know I can if I set my mind to it.**

But I have come to realise while writing my personal statement that so much of what I know, I've picked up from those ordinary moments, like talking with my family or learning how to make kebabs with my mum and grandmother. It's also in the things you do that don't work out as I thought they would - **we all make mistakes, all we can do is learn from them.** It's for these reasons that you can't avoid learning through everyday experiences that I believe in lifewide learning. I believe learning is everywhere both in formal and informal structures. I think life experience is the sole reason we mature and that's what the universities look for in our personal statements.

Writing my personal statement is the first time I have ever tried to describe who I am. Grades do matter and you can't get into a good university without them, but a personal statement isn't concerned with grades, **it's our opportunity to show ourself as a complete individual and reflect on our own understanding of what it is that shapes us as a person.** For me the real value of the statement is that it forced me to think about who I am. It forced me to have conversations with people who sometimes saw me differently and it forced me to think about who I am trying to become and why I want to go to university. I think the lessons I've learnt about myself in writing my statement will last me the rest of my life.

*"So much of what I know, I've picked up from those ordinary moments like.. learning how to make kebabs with my mum and grandmother"*



\* *"The personal statement is your opportunity to tell universities and colleges about your suitability for the course(s) that you hope to study. You need to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment, and above all, ensure that you stand out from the crowd."*

<http://www.ucas.com/>

The Lifewide Education Network is a community-based organisation and in establishing ourselves we can learn much from other community-based organisations. Arguably the best example is led by Rob Ward, supported by the Centre for Recording Achievement. Rob has served his community in such a way associate with being a member of a family.

Rob Ward,  
Director  
Centre for Recording  
Achievement



## Nurturing a Community of Practice : the CRA Story

### Rob Ward , Director CRA

It's always nice to be part of something at the start and I am delighted that CRA is the first organisation that Lifewide Education has formed a partnership with. CRA is a membership organisation and over the two decades of our existence we have learnt a lot about serving and working with our community.

When the CRA started life as a two year Project in 1991 it was in no-one's mind at that time that, 21 years later, we'd still be going strong. And, when we were asked to offer a virtual contribution to the Australian national e-portfolio conference in 2009 on the CRA as a 'community of practice' it was, literally, the first time we'd thought of ourselves explicitly in those terms. Lots has been written about communities of practice, of course, but we did not start out with the explicit intention of being one: we became one because of the things we did!

What the virtual contribution helped us do was to benchmark ourselves against what a community of practice was supposed to be; and what this short article brings this thinking up-to-date in a context where cross-institutional collaboration is ever more important and – in the language of the market-place – ever more under challenge. So here we offer one perspective at least on what might make the CRA tick as a 'community of practice.'

Wenger (2006) herself emphasises intentionality and collective learning in such communities, and points up the importance of:

- **a shared domain of interest and commitment** to learning from each other;
- **joint activities and discussions** through which colleagues commit to help and support each other, and share information;
- **the development of a shared set of understandings and resources** that help folk tackle the challenges they experience in implementing.

And these are useful reference points to acknowledge – and celebrate – in our work in terms of our thinking and approach to actions. From my point of view, and others may well see things differently, CRA tries to juggle both pro-active and responsive approaches our needs as an organisation and the needs of our community. We try to spot new opportunities through which to take forward the kinds of agenda in which CRA has an interest whilst also developing responsive approaches to members and their needs. **We endeavour to offer not only a clear practical working focus (primarily practice around PDP and e-portfolio implementation) but also a strong and distinctive working style which seeks to be purposefully inclusive in all that we do.** For me, the

latter is about tone and style of relationship, about the importance of a flat organisation within which it's ok to ask, or offer, about anything that's relevant or requested. Our use of technology reinforces that; our website and newsletter – originally funded but now provided as a community resource – solicits accounts of practice from all; our jiscmail lists provide simple technology to deliver material to members and enable members to ask for help and offer help to each other. It's not rocket science but it seems to work! And our National Residential Seminar is planned by member volunteers. That's not rocket science either, but those involved seem to value it, and the sense of affiliation it provides.

But these are, in a sense – the tip of the iceberg – though an important and tangible one. Over two decades we've worked hard to develop a reputation – based upon hard practice – for reliability and consistency of approach in all that we do. Key to this is our willingness to give our colleagues – particularly CRA members – time – and attention, and courtesy. For me this comes down to values and beliefs about what a network- or community-based organisation exists to do, to serve the needs of its members and the wider community, and to promote and champion the educational practices that it believes will make a positive difference to students' educational experiences. And **because we are connected by our values and beliefs together we are more than the sum of our parts. We are more cohesive and politically stronger, and we can achieve more as a community than as a disconnected group of individuals.** Because our power resides in our community we are respected by important organisations that share our interests such as Association of Graduate Recruiters, Universities UK, Quality Assurance Agency and the Higher Education Academy. And because of these connections and our ability to talk on behalf of our community we have been able to influence policy makers. For example, I like to think that our voice was heard in the Dearing Review of Higher Education that led to the introduction of PDP across higher education.

And as the world has become more connected we have joined the global community of practitioners and formed partnerships and working relationships with a number of organisations across the world.

It makes me smile to look back at our humble beginnings to see what our community has grown into. **Ultimately, we are here for each other, we are like a family.** We support one another but we also respond to new opportunities and we are forever looking for new relationships and partnerships that will benefit our community and help us achieve our goals informed by vision and values. And-if we can have some fun while doing it- that's great too!

**Reference:** Wenger, E. (2006) Communities of Practice a Brief Introduction. <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>



## Vicky Mann reports on Skills Awards from Task Group conference



Vicky Mann, University of Nottingham  
& Chair of AGCAS Skills Award Task Group addresses delegates

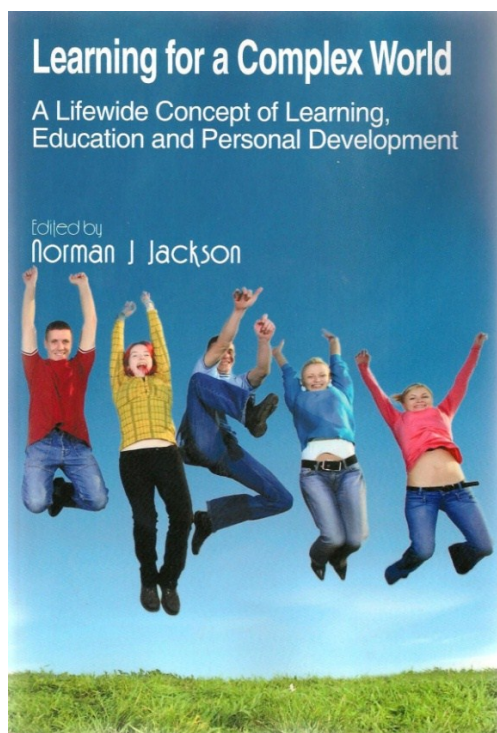
The (AGCAS) [Skills Award Task Group](#) was formed in 2010. Building upon existing research conducted by SCEPTRE and a mapping exercise that identified 50 Awards, the group conducted a survey to identify the landscape of Awards and growth areas. Whilst further evidence indicates that there are now approximately 80 Award programmes, 67 Institutions responded to the survey and identified the top challenges for the future as scalability (52.8%), staff resource (49.1%) and academic buy-in (41.5%).

In response to this, the Task Group organised a conference focused on [Measuring Impact and Adding Value](#) to support colleagues to share practice and ideas for future development. This took place on 12 January 2012. at the University of Leicester.

The conference keynote speaker, Jane Standley, (University of Reading), discussed the importance of evaluation and impact measurement to determine outcomes for students and recommend changes and developments for schemes in the future. (Particularly where findings can support internal priorities, make a business case and generate buy-in from a broader spectrum of colleagues across and beyond the institution). This was followed up by workshops that provided case studies of relevant evaluation projects (York, Birmingham), in which colleagues were provided a useful insight into the importance of approaches, tools and techniques to determine a successful evaluation project.

The conference also encouraged colleagues to consider how to position and develop their own award schemes light of the new NUS Skills Award initiative; emerging recruitment practices that move away from traditional competency approaches (Capp) and employer engagement. An employer panel (chaired by Rob Ward, CRA) and a final keynote from Sonja Stockton (Head of Talent at PwC) touched on the role of awards in transition, workplace experience and development opportunities. There was also discussion on the range of access routes to employment and the importance placed upon the students' ability to identify and articulate a range of attributes, qualities, potential, and values during the recruitment process – where award schemes can broaden in scope they can continue to support this.

Conference slides and programme information plus how to get in touch will be available on the Task Group [web page](#).  
<http://www.agcas.org.uk/>



How we prepare students for the challenges that lie ahead of them as they grapple with a world that is becoming ever more complex, challenging, disruptive and uncertain, is the problem that unites all who are involved in education. This book argues that we can do more to help learners prepare themselves for the challenges that lie ahead by embracing a lifewide concept of learning, personal development and education.

The book provides a rationale, underpinning philosophy, research base and practical examples of learning partnerships that enable lifewide learning to be recognised and valued. While the ideas and practices have been developed in a higher education setting they can be readily adapted to other educational contexts.

*Authors include: Ron Barnett, Marcia Baxter-Magolda, Colin Beard, Charlie Betts, Sarah Campbell, John Cowan, Michael Eraut, Norman Jackson, Novie Johan, Maret Staron and Jenny Willis*

*The Book can be purchased from the Authorhouse Bookstore*  
<http://www.authorhouse.co.uk/Bookstore/>

*Proceeds will support [www.lifewideeducation.co.uk](http://www.lifewideeducation.co.uk)*

# Why Lifewide Education matters

## Reflections from

**Russ Law**, education consultant, author, headteacher trainer  
and

**Umair Haque**, author and Director Havas Media Labs

A number of commentators are calling for a radical change in our formal systems of education system and their voices clearly resonate with many people working in education (see for example Ken Robinson's imaginative talk 'Changing Educational Paradigms', which has received over 6 million YouTube hits. Our education system in the UK seems to be modelled on the needs of a bygone era in which formal education focused on developing people in ways that satisfied the needs of an industrialised society. The demands and challenges of today's society, in which knowledge is developed, accessed, consumed and adapted with technological aids at an unprecedented speed, are quite different.

Fortunately, as Russ Law reminds us, there are some truly inspiring teachers and schools that DO think that formal education is about educating people as whole people. Lifewide Education's awareness raising campaign is all about trying to broaden our concept of education and in the following articles Russ Law and Umair Haque contribute their perspectives on how we might encourage and support a more relevant and more complete educational experience that helps people to develop themselves in a more complete and meaningful way.

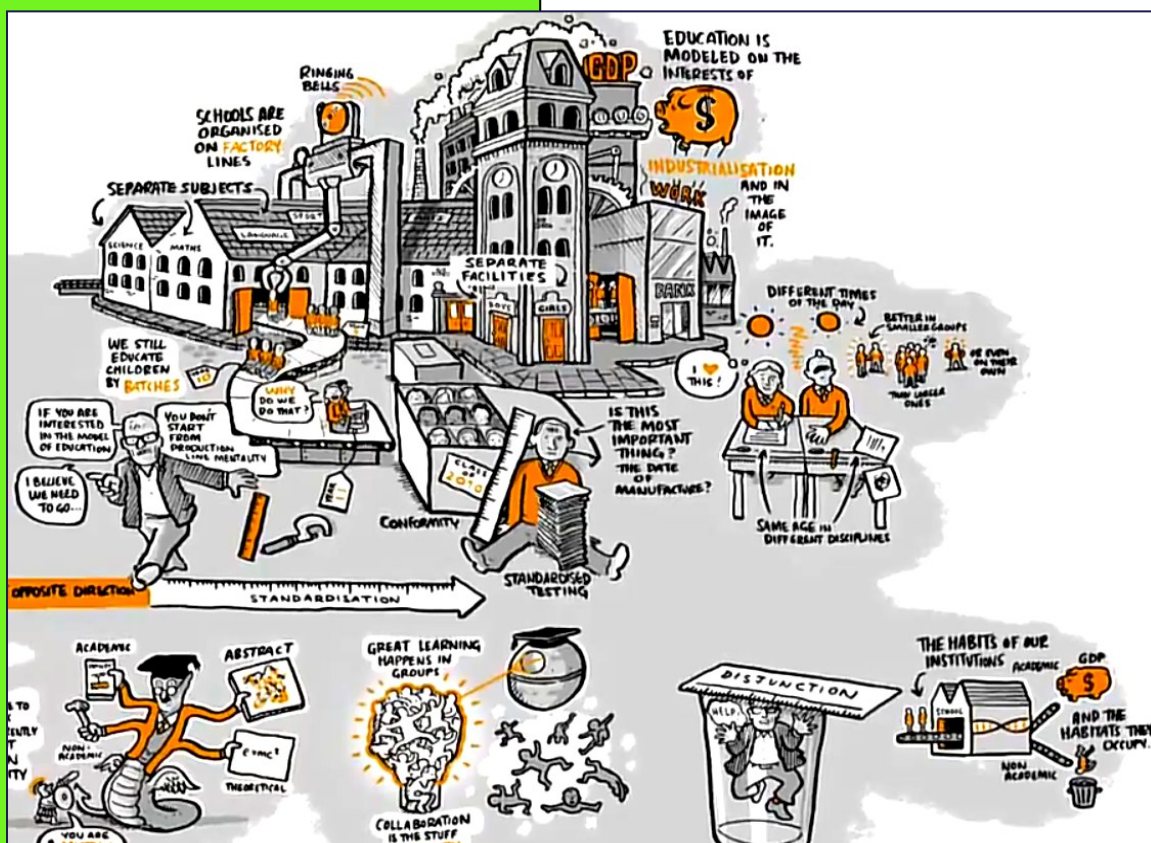
We have already heard some student views, in Andra's and Yalda's thoughtful pieces. The following two pages offer the educators' perspective. Spot the difference!

## SIR KEN ROBINSON CHANGING PARADIGMS

EVERY COUNTRY  
ON EARTH, AT  
THE MOMENT,  
IS REFORMING  
PUBLIC EDUCATION



YouTube



Screenshot from artist Andrew Parke's visualisation of Ken Robinson's imaginative talk 'Changing Educational Paradigms'. RSA Animate  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcdGpL4U>

*"People often say that this or that person has not yet found himself. But the self is not something one finds, it is something one creates."*

**Thomas Szasz**



## Developing minds and attitudes creates conflict and well-rounded learners

### Russ Law

Norman's and Jenny's words remind me that in the contexts of my work in primary and secondary education, in this country and abroad, it has been (and continues to be) an inspiration to support the relevant kinds of learning being developed by many people. A vision of a worthwhile education is shared widely, by ordinary teachers, by principled school leaders, and by respected researchers and academics, even though that vision doesn't always sit comfortably with the agenda of the powers that be. Their work shapes the childhood and adolescence of the lifelong, lifewide journey.

One reason why the formation of a community of passionate and committed people is so important is that, just as the future of an individual is determined by the many experiences they have in the course of their time in and out of school, so the nature of the society and the world that they occupy will also be affected. Many value the power of experiential learning, so how can experiences be positive learning ones? And what sorts of adults will today's young people grow into – with frightening speed?

Brilliant teachers I know foster 'the will to learn' and to keep learning throughout our lives. They nurture self-direction, self-confidence, collaboration, enquiry and reflection, within a broad, interesting and challenging curriculum that is not totally dominated by test statistics or inspection judgements. As Chris Watkins of the Institute of Education, University of London, says in his critique of the latest Ofsted framework:

*"Learning-centred classrooms create an engaging culture and an identity as learners for all participants (teachers too!). Enhanced thinking, challenge and agency can lead to pupils making double the progress in measured performance."*

Ron Barnett conveys a similar vision when he talks not only of what people know, but also of what they do and indeed what they are: their knowledge, skills, dispositions, qualities and 'being-in-the-world'. Guy Claxton (with an increasing number of enlightened schools and authorities) asserts that lifelong learning involves experiential, emotional and imaginative factors, attitudes, values and interests - 'dispositions' that include being empathetic and leading in problem-solving.

*"Gradually it is being recognised, at least by most teachers and top school leaders, that a meaningful education means more than academic scores or impractical qualifications."*

Respected institutions such as the RSA are actively supportive of such approaches, with "Opening Minds", Sixth Forms and programmes like the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the IB Diploma actively recognise lifewide achievements by students, beyond the in-school experience.



Russ at a SCEPTRe lunch-time seminar

And despite the inevitability of pressure to produce 'outstanding' statistics defined by dubious criteria, look out for new schools that have as their stated aim the development of the curriculum of enquiry and the well-rounded learner.

In the difficult world that we already occupy, since the future is already here, how do young people between school and employment face their present and their destiny?

If we fail, many of them will add to the number of the disenchanted, disengaged and destructive. If, however, learners respect and value their own learning, whatever their circumstances, then we can perhaps envisage a more tolerant future peopled by collaborative, creative and constructive citizens of the world.

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New world, new era, new media – Chalk Mountain





# Mastering the art of living meaningfully well

Umair Haque

Illustrated by Patrick Sanders

How can each of us be a wholer, truer person, right now, today? In an era where the prosperity we once took for granted appears to be crumbling around us, when the great challenges of today are nothing less than rebuilding economy, polity, and society — here's what I believe you're going to have to get lethally serious about: your own human potential, and how deeply, authentically, and powerfully, over the course of your life, you're going to fulfil it. So here's my question. What are your three lessons for living a good life? What lessons would you give someone, say, in their twenties, today? Here are mine:

**Cultivate (your better self).** What's the point of "education" anyway? One point of view says: to produce more **STEM** graduates. And to be sure, there's a case to be made for those skills. But I'd say that, by and large, that case is founded on the deterministic assumption that the point of education is greater productivity; you study so you can be a faithful, loyal, unquestioning "employee" with the commoditized, routinized analytical skills to get the (yawn, shrug, eye-roll) neo-Fordist job done. I'd argue the reverse is true: the point of productivity is education — the "output" of authentically greater value and greater social benefit, is a process that culminates in the act of being a wholer person. I'd argue, on reflection, what society really might have is a shortage of living, breathing well-rounded humans; with a moral compass, an ethical core, a cosmopolitan sensibility, and a long view born of historicism. What we've got plenty of are wannabe-bankers whose idea of a good life goes about as far as grabbing for the nearest, biggest bonus — what we've got less of are well-rounded people with the courage, wisdom, and capacities to nurture and sustain a society, polity, and economy that blossom.

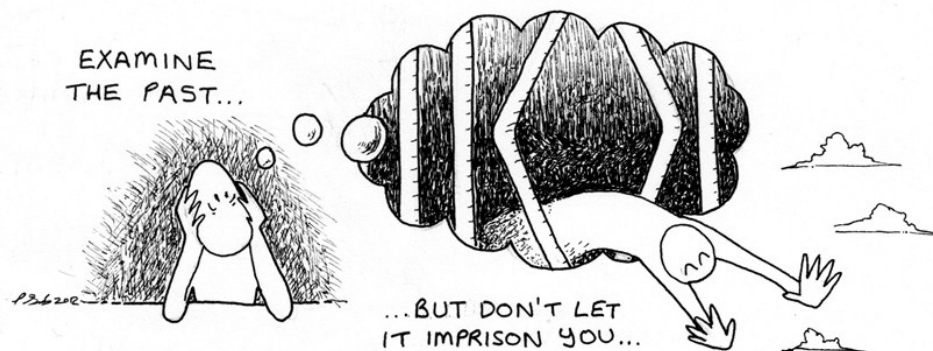


So put immediate gratification to one side and cultivate your higher sensibilities; learn the arts of nuance, subtlety, humility, and grace. I don't mean you have to spend every evening at the opera — but I do mean you probably have to do better than thinking Lil Wayne is the apex of human accomplishment. Let's get real: without a refined, honed, expansive sense of what great accomplishment is, you stand little to no chance of ever pushing past its boundaries yourself.

**Create (something dangerous).** Mediocrity isn't a quest to be pursued — but a derelict deathtrap to be detonated into oblivion. Hence, I'm firmly of the belief that your youth should be spent pursuing your passion — not just slightly, tremulously, haltingly, but unrelentingly, with a vengeance, to the max and then beyond.



So dream laughably big — and then take an absurdly huge risk or two. Bet the farm before it's a ranch, a small town, and an overly comfy place to hang your saddle and your hat. Create something: don't just be an "employee," a "manager," or any other kind of mere mechanic of the present. Be a builder, a creator, an architect of the future. It doesn't matter whether it's a sonata, a book, a startup, a financial instrument, or a new genre of hairstyles — bring into being something not just fundamentally new, but irrepressibly dangerous to the tired, plodding powers that be. Think about it this way: if your quest is mediocrity, then sure, master the skills of shuffling Powerpoint decks, glad-handing beancounters, and making the numbers; but if your quest, on the other hand, is something resembling excellence, then the meta-skills of toppling the status quo — ambition, intention, rebellion, perseverance, humanity, empathy — are going to count for more, and the sooner you get started, the better off you'll be.



**Forgive (and fail).** I hate the slightly dehumanizing, mechanistic words "high achievers." Because the truth is that the mark of someone reaching for the stars isn't "achievement" — but failure, of the kind that makes the hair on the back of your neck snap up. If you're going to live a life that matters, I'd bet that sometimes in your 20s, you're going to fail — spectacularly, in Technicolor. You might launch a successful, disruptive venture — only to see your marriage fall apart. You might meet the perfect life partner — only to discover your career is flaming out. Or you might be on top of the world, financially — only to discover you've never felt emptier. These are all failures, of the "omg" variety — and they're reliable triggers of a mid-to-late-twenties-where-the-hell-is-my-smoking-trainwreck-of-a-life-going anyways quandary [or far that matter mid or later life questioning of the purpose of life]. So consider this: when you fail, and fail big — forgive. Forgive the people around you. Forgive yourself. Examine the past, but don't let it imprison you. You can dwell on your failure for years, and turn a trauma into a crisis. Or you can gently remember that mistakes aren't the end of the world, but the beginning of wisdom — and firmly step forward into possibility.

As the great poet Antonio Machado once wrote: "walker, there is no path; the path is made by walking." Never was this truer than in an era of abject institutional failure, social fracture, and economic meltdown. We know where yesterday's paths lead — not to a shining city we once called prosperity, but to here; dying metropolises, battered exurbs, mass unemployment,

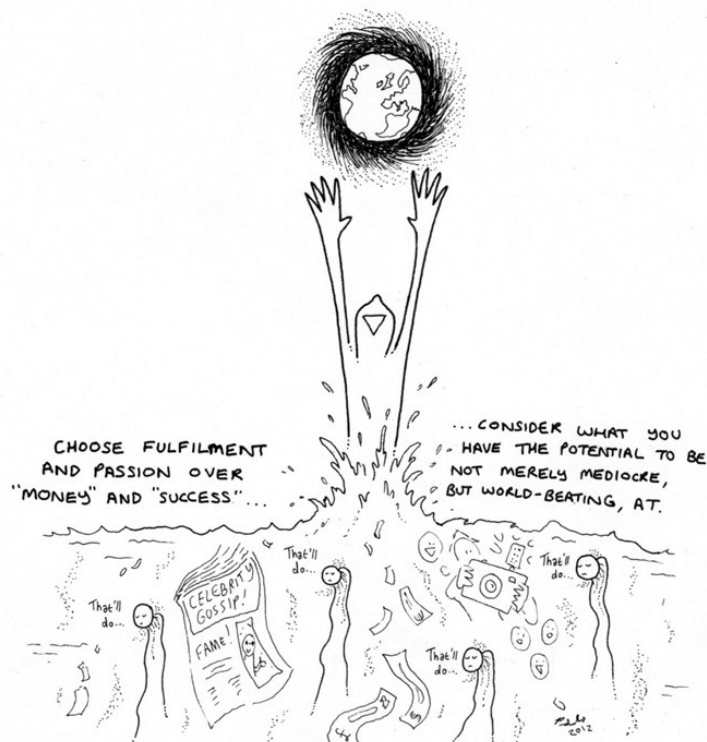
nail-biting fear of the future, plutocracy and protest, the crumbling ruins of empire. So map the horizons of your own journey, and, when the status quo tells you it can't be done, tell the status quo to go to hell.

What's important is that what you're doing matters — to yourself, to the people you love, and to something bigger, whether your community, society, or even humanity. Choose fulfilment and passion over "money" and "success." The latter follow the former — and without the former, the latter are empty. When you're sorting through your passions, consider what you have the potential to be not merely mediocre, but world-beating, at. And as you refine your choices, consider which are going to matter most in the sense of the greatest good for the greatest number — perhaps for the longest time. Because one world-changing accomplishment that knocks the ball out of that park is likely to give you more satisfaction than a lifetime of designer jeans.

Now, these lessons are far from the only ones, or the "best" ones. So rather than discuss my tiny, inconsequential lessons, let me ask again: what three lessons would you give people in their 20s — or anyone, for that matter — about what it takes to live a meaningfully, resonantly good life?

Umair Haque is Director of Havas Media Labs and author of [Bettermess: Economics for Humans](#) and [The New Capitalist Manifesto: Building a Disruptively Better Business](#). He is ranked one of the world's most influential management thinkers by [Thinkers50](#). Follow him on twitter [@umairh](#).

Patrick Sanders is our community artist.

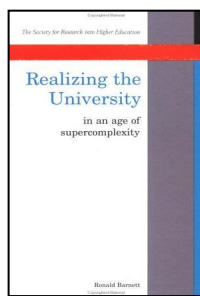
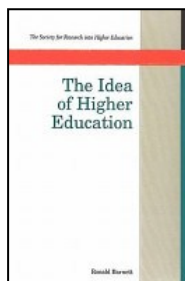
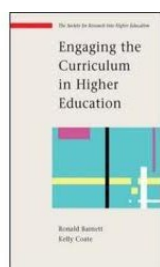
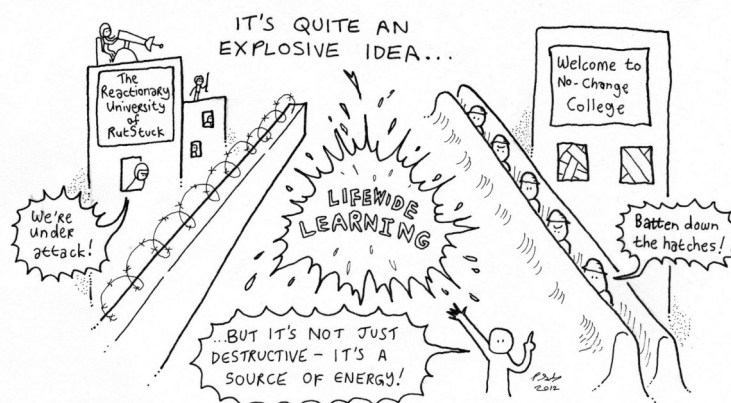




# Lifewide Learning – an explosive idea

## Jenny Willis interviews Professor Ron Barnett

We launch our reflections on life interviews with someone who is well known to most scholars of higher education and one of the founding members of the lifewide education community. Professor Ron Barnett is a world authority on higher education and has written many books and articles which raise profound questions about what a university is, the meaning of a higher education more generally and its possibilities in/for the future. Two of his books, *'Engaging the Curriculum'* with Kelly Coate and *'A Will to Learn'*, influenced SCEPTre's lifewide curriculum and lifewide learning ideas. During the interview, Ron reflects on his life and on his concept of lifewide education and learning.



Ron was born in London in the post-war years. Growing up in the wake of two much older and very gifted brothers, Ron confides: *"You might say they acted as role models, but on the other hand they also acted as almost unreachable goals, unreachable levels of attainment and achievement. I felt perhaps I struggled a bit in terms of understanding who I was. (I had) a struggle to form some kind of identity, some kind of self-worth in a way."*

Surprisingly, given his high-flying career, academic success escaped him at school, and he confesses *"I think my brain is simply not attuned to learning a great deal of factual material and presenting it in examinations and so on and so forth."* He aligns himself with other *"oddballs and people who had rather a chequered career up to that point,"* who, against the odds, found their way into university in the 1960s. Again, he felt he did not fit in: *"the kinds of curricula, the kinds of pedagogy really weren't conducive to helping somebody who was rather reflective and finding it difficult to keep up with a lot of very, very clever people around one."*

It was only after graduating that *"things really started to take off, in my mid 20s, in a sense that it was then I felt free in a way, intellectually free, to do my own thing. I'd had, I suppose you might say, quite a lot of tacit pressure on me to succeed (...) I felt I was for a long time just, as it were, playing out a role and acting according to others' hopes and expectations of me."* An introduction to teaching showed that this was not the career for him. Of his PGCE placement in a Battersea comprehensive school, Ron says *"I survived. I was determined I was going to survive but I reckoned that I wasn't cut out for school teaching."* These qualities of determination and resilience are emerging as characteristics of lifewide learners.

But, as we are also discovering, serendipity plays an important part in learning paths. Ron's choice of Durham University had been on the "flimsy" basis that *"I was seduced by the sheer beauty of the place."* He observes *"It's on that kind of basis that one makes judgements and decisions that can affect one's life."* So, having abandoned the idea of school teaching, he explains, *"After my PGCE in '70-'71 I saw an advertisement in the Times Higher for research assistants wanted for a new research project at the Polytechnic of North London(...). They had over 80 applications and I was one of the three very privileged to become part of that research project."*

Through the research project he *"was plunged straightaway into national debates about the character of higher education."* Although passionate about this work, Ron felt that he needed the security of a permanent post, so moved sideways into administration at the same institution. His enthusiasm is palpable as he recalls: *"that was an incredibly exciting time in my life. It was the time of student radicalism right across the UK higher education and indeed the western world and (...) one was right in the middle of a ferment of debate and literally riot which was a microcosm of what was going on right across the western world at that time - Grosvenor Square, the London School of Economics and all that kind of thing. It was all being played out day by day at the Polytechnic of North London."*

*"I was plunged straightaway into national debates about the character of higher education."*



On top of his day job, he was *"trooping up to the Institute of Education"* as a part-time postgraduate student for fifteen years, to study for an Advance Diploma, an MPhil then a PhD. *"So I see myself as having been a continuing student - and I'm not ashamed to say it - for all my life really,"* he says modestly. When pointed out that this was all formal education, he replies: *"that's true. But it was self-directed, it was part of my life, it was voluntary, it was part of my emerging life plan so it had a lot of*



of the characteristics of what we might call life wide-learning. That's what I was involved in although one didn't have that terminology. In a very broad way it was a very rich set of experiences, going from the Polytechnic of North London in the day time to the Institute of Education, the University of London in the evening - backwards and forwards. It was an extraordinary set of practical and intellectual spaces that one was inhabiting all at once." He continues, "I was getting lots of different kinds of experiences and it's only in retrospect that one can begin to use a concept like 'lifewide' to see some kind of pattern emerging."

After another 5 years, Ron moved on to the Council for National Academic Awards, "again as an administrator, and there again I was incredibly privileged (...) one was right in the thick of debates about higher education and what we mean by standards and what is a degree and what is a course and so on and so forth".

Throughout these experiences, Ron acknowledges "I was also a fairly reflective person and I was reflecting on them as well." In time he would work through his ideas on paper and began to produce academic papers and his first book, while a full-time administrator. He admits, "I'd never conceptualised it in that way until recently, that my writing is a space in which I've been able to play out in public my own personal challenges and even difficulties - personal including professional (it) has been the space in which I could bring all of these experiences together and reflect upon them, but yet in a public way. That's been frightfully important for me because it's as a result of that that I have changed - partly as a result of that, significantly as a result of that, that I have changed and developed as a person." Which leads us back to lifewide learning.

Most people only know Ron through his writings and particularly his books so it might come as a surprise to hear him say, "My books might seem frightfully conceptual and theoretical but actually they're all autobiography, they spring out of my own experience", Ron concludes with habitual modesty. Everyone has the capacity to learn from their experiences since "the world is such, and most people's biographies are such, that they're ducking and diving with the world in all sorts of ways and are being exposed to the world in all sorts of ways. So the question is, to what extent are they actually developing through these experiences and to what extent are they gaining from them? I hesitate to use the word 'learning' here. I think terms like 'development,' 'gain,' 'reflection' and 'experience' and the contemporary concept of 'becoming' are probably more helpful. 'Learning' implies too much I think of something which is formal and conscious."



*My books might seem frightfully conceptual and theoretical but actually they're all autobiography, they spring out of my own experience",*

This demands certain personal qualities, he suggests: "One needs to keep going, one needs to keep facing up to the world, whatever it throws at you, however challenging things seem at times. (...) so those are the dispositions to keep going, the energies to keep going, the will to engage, the will to confront, the will to learn. But then the question is, in that engagement, how is one negotiating the world? And that's a matter of one's own

personality, that will come through as well."

Formal education has its place since "We need to have a sense of education as both laying this foundational ground of dispositions and also having the space in which individuals can come at the world in their own way and develop their own qualities. This connects with lifewide learning because, as I say, learning is going to go on, at least we're going to have lots of experiences. The question is how do you respond to those experiences, what do you make of them? Are you going to keep going when things get tricky or not? (...) The question is what do you make of them? How do you coalesce them into some organic whole so that we come to have a better sense of ourselves? Perhaps this is part of the message now, thinking aloud with you, that lifewide learning actual requires spaces for rehearsing and re-articulating one's experiences back to oneself; and writing is clearly one means of opening such a space."

Ron does not confine writing to the traditional medium: "There are all sorts of ways these days in which people can write in this broader way on the internet and in all sorts of communications of various kinds. So perhaps that's an aspect of lifewide learning that perhaps could be explored even more."

Ron enjoys jogging and runs 2-3 short races each year. Prompted by this, he identifies some more significant dimensions: "Running is quite interesting because again it requires a long term view. To be fit, to have a level of fitness, it needs a certain amount of planning, it needs organisation, it needs persistence, resilience and so on and so forth. So there's a time horizon that comes in to play here", while in classical music, another of his passions, "certainly again issues of time, pacing, of rhythm and seeing oneself against a time horizon and an unfolding project. I think these are all important parts of lifewide learning."

What, then, are the challenges for advocates of lifewide education and learning? "Since children, pupils, students are going to be learning anyway in all sorts of ways, what additional value, if any, do schools, universities and colleges bring to the party? I think we have to invert the very rationale for schools, universities and colleges through this very poignant question (...) Pupils and students are going to be experiencing the world in a variety of ways, so the question is what additional value do our formal educational institutions offer? I'm not at all convinced that that question is being asked enough or seriously."

Finally, Ron's parting thought both cautions and incites: "Very often in life the same term or idea does appear in different places more or less at once, and one has begun to see the term 'lifewide' appearing across the literature. So the time is ripe I think, for the emergence and for the development, for the taking off of this idea of lifewide learning. It's actually quite an explosive idea, if taken seriously. The problem is actually getting educational institutions to take it seriously, because if they were to do so, it might almost undermine or sabotage all their contemporary efforts. It would dislodge their own self-importance since valuable learning is taking place in manifold milieus, but we've got to go on fighting the good fight."

Convincing universities of the value of a lifewide education will not be easy but we can take inspiration from this call to arms.

**Ron Barnett is Emeritus Professor of Education at the Institute of Education, London**

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## Norman Jackson introduces the new website



Welcome to our new website which serves the purpose of a virtual home for anyone who is interested in ideas about lifewide education. It is a community-based site which means that we are all responsible for providing content in the form of ideas, comments, news, think pieces, questions, photos, audio and video files, blog entries, links to interesting things on the internet and many other things.

We urge every reader to join. It's very easy to join just go to the home page and register. You will be sent a confirmatory email and a link to your new account and invited to complete your profile. After that, the world is your oyster. Please add things that you think will be of interest. The website team (Norman, Jenny, Russ, Brian, Yalda and Ed) will search the site for things that we can promote on the front page. You can also set up and join special interest groups. This is just our first step and if you have ideas on how to make the site more useful to community members please let us know. Finally, don't forget to tell anyone you feel might be interested.

*"A virtual home for anyone who is interested in ideas."*

Norman Jackson, Director Lifewide Education

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## LIFEWIDE MAGAZINE, Issue 2

Our contributors have set a very high standard for us to live up to. The quality of our next edition relies on you, our readers. If you have an idea, experience or image that you would like to share with others in the Lifewide Learning community, please get in touch with the Editor: [jenny@lifewideeducation.co.uk](mailto:jenny@lifewideeducation.co.uk)

**Deadline for receipt of submissions of next edition:  
1 April 2012**