

# Editorial

The United States is moving toward a learning society, the realities of lifelong learning and lifelong education are emerging in many areas of human endeavor. In such a society learning is a central factor in work, leisure, and personal development.

The concept of lifelong learning seems simple and straightforward, as if one were referring to a natural state of life itself. It appears, however, that when the institution makers and flag wavers take on the improvement of this naturally occurring human endeavor, the discipline of education is in for round after round of academic readjustment whereby those filled with the vision of research, teaching, and service are committed to altering the naturally occurring learning process of individuals.

Critical to the development of the concept of lifelong learning as a basic human endeavor and lifelong education as provided by a variety of institutions, organizations, and programs are the following considerations for individuals in a learning society:

1. **The protection of basic human rights as learners in a rapidly increasing information age.**  
Boshier . . . a society where learning through life is normal and commonplace . . . the inherent right of all citizens . . . young and old
2. **The prevention of control of information and the educative process by power, elite, or commercial interests.**  
Jarvis . . . pluralism of providers through lifelong education will not guarantee pluralism of interpretation or meaning . . . a concern for the development of a pluralist society

3. **The development of a mutually supportive lifelong learning system from which learners may exercise the privilege of independent choice of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned.**

Lindeman . . . individuals being active as their own agents in the learning environment . . . becoming skilled evaluators of their own learning

It is maintained that the most valid concept of lifelong learning is one that is most consistent with the learning and development needs of human beings in and across their life span. Likewise, the organizational side of the educational enterprise which relates to lifelong education, as distinguished from lifelong learning, and the individual learners' relations with providers and facilitators is to provide one of the greatest challenges to the future development of higher education.

This special issue of **Educational Considerations** elaborates on the historical development of the new look in education which focuses on the educative services of many different kinds of organizations and their impact on the growth and development of individuals in a learning society. Perhaps most important to practitioners are the problems and challenges which face the nation's educators as they address the spirit and apply the concept of lifelong learning. The contributors to this issue on lifelong learning have provided insight on the historical antecedents and provided direction to meet the challenges of both present and future educational needs in the spirit of a lifelong learning society. Their ideas and expertise in this endeavor are greatly appreciated.

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