

Foreword

All three of us have worked with John Self. Lewis Johnson collaborated with John in the management of the International AI-Ed Society, first as a member of the IAIED Executive Committee, and then as President of the Society. Helen Pain worked with John on the important AIED'93 conference, the first organized by the International Artificial Intelligence in Education Society in its present form. Paul Brna, as well as working with Helen Pain, John Self, and Stellan Ohlsson on AIED'93 and being a member of the IAIED Executive Committee, worked together with John Self first at Lancaster University and then from 1996 at the Computer Based Learning Unit at Leeds University until John Self's retirement. We are all proud to be associated with John Self and we are the richer for our contact with him. We each owe him a debt of gratitude for the support that he has given to our professional careers over the years. Whatever he does next in his life we are sure he will apply the same level of care, intellect and precision to his activities.

John Self's lifetime work cannot easily be summarised as it is very extensive. He has made many theoretical contributions, helped many PhD students to understand and develop their own ideas and helped people around the world through his work in founding and developing the IAIED Society and in running the Society's Journal from its beginning until 2001. Some of his other contributions are mentioned and discussed within the papers of this special issue of 'his' Journal. He has been immensely helpful to many individuals within our community, and citations alone do not do justice to this contribution. Yet he is extremely modest about achievements, and has always discouraged the accolades that his colleagues persistently try to heap at his feet. Indeed it is rare to meet a researcher so selfless, so creative and also able to analyse research so effectively.

The contributions in the special issue include four rigorously reviewed papers selected from eighteen submissions and three special contributions that are commentaries on these four papers as well as seeking to add a special note to the analysis based on John Self's notion of systems that care. In the call we pointed out that in recent years there has been an increase in attention to the role of empathy in teaching and learning, but perhaps sometimes the care is 'designed in' in a rather informal way. Bridget Cooper offers her analysis of how to move to a more precise notion of care rooted in educational research as well as drawing on neurophysiological work. Judy Kay and Gordon McCalla provide a review of the four papers from the standpoint of subject experts who have been in the field for many years and know John Self's work well. Finally, Pierre Dillenbourg makes a personal contribution as to why for him John is to be thanked. We agree with his sentiment - thank you, John Self. Your integrity, courage, honesty, care, enthusiasm, interest, intellectual abilities are an example to us all.

Now, we leave it to the papers in this special issue to 'speak to' the issue of "Caring for Learners," and may the next thirty or so years be as fruitful as the last. John Self has provided a hugely significant foundation for the work to progress, and we are grateful for it.

Paul Brna, Lewis Johnson, and Helen Pain