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Before moving to UBC, he was Executive Director, Research, Strategic Planning, and Information Technology at the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia, where he worked from 1990 to 1995. Prior to that, he was Professor of Educational Media Research at the British Open University, where he worked for 20 years as one of the founding members of staff. As well as conducting research, he taught on several programs, was a course designer for several courses, and produced educational radio and television programs.

He took his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Sheffield, and his Ph.D. in educational administration from the University of London. He also taught in the public school system for three years in England. In 1995 he was awarded the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Open University of Portugal, and of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa, from Laurentian University, Canada, in 2001.

He has worked as a consultant in over 30 countries, and for several U.S. state higher education commissions on educational technology planning. His research groups at the UKOU, OLA and UBC have published over 350 papers in the area of distance education and the use of technology for teaching. He is the author of seven books, including 'Technology, Open Learning and Distance Education', published by Routledge in June, 1995. This won a UCEA award for the best book on distance education in 1995. Jossey Bass published 'Managing Technological Change: Strategies for College and University Leaders', in 2000, and 'National Strategies for E-Learning' was published by the International Institute for Educational Planning in 2002. His latest book, co-authored with Gary Poole, is 'Effective Teaching with Technology in Higher Education: Foundations for Success', to be published by Jossey Bass in 2002 or 2003.

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