



WORLD YEARBOOK  
OF EDUCATION 2007

EDUCATING  
THE GLOBAL  
WORKFORCE

KNOWLEDGE, KNOWLEDGE WORK  
AND KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

EDITED BY  
LESLEY FARRELL AND TARA FENWICK

# World Yearbook of Education 2007

This 2007 volume of the *World Yearbook of Education* considers the challenges of understanding and providing work-related education arising from the rapid expansion of the global economy. It looks at the impact of these challenges on both workers and labour markets and considers the current global context from a wide variety of theoretical, political and cultural perspectives.

*Educating the Global Workforce* brings together debates on what knowledge means and how it is enacted in different work spaces of the global knowledge economy with issues that are prominent in vocational education, organizational studies and business/management debates. Contributors with perspectives from Africa, Asia, South America and the Middle East as well as the most exciting thinkers in western industrialized countries look at:

- how multiple meanings of knowledge, work, workers and learning are emerging in challenging new configurations in global arrangements of production
- how workers and work-related education are shaped by the intersections of the global/local, and how they shape global/local relations
- how different social and cultural groups have differential access, and differential benefits, from work-related education
- how different communities confront the challenge of educating the global workforce.

This volume addresses a wide variety of work contexts ranging from industrial to professional to self-employment. With an emphasis on the interdependence of elements of the global economy and particularly the mediation of new technologies, it provides exciting, provocative and timely perspectives on work-related education in the globally networked, knowledge-based economy.

**Lesley Farrell** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Victoria, Australia.

**Tara Fenwick** is a Professor of Education at the University of British Columbia, Canada.

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## Contributors

**Farizah Ahmad** is currently pursuing her PhD programme at the Department of Professional and Continuing Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). She has worked as a Principal Assistant Secretary at the Prime Minister's Department, and Assistant Secretary at the Ministry of Information, and Ministry of Home Affairs, Malaysia. Her keen interests are in lifelong learning, transformative learning and spirituality.

**Stephen Billett** has worked within the Australian vocational education system and more recently as a teacher and researcher at Griffith University, Australia. His research interests include the social and cultural construction of vocational knowledge, and learning in and through working life, particularly how vocational practice can be developed in workplace settings. Publications include *Learning Through Work: Strategies for Effective Practice* (Allen & Unwin 2001) and *Work, Change and Workers* (Springer 2006).

**Shauna Butterwick** is an Associate Professor in Adult Education in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Her research projects have focused generally on women's learning and more particularly on women's learning experiences in relation to paid work as well as women's learning in feminist social movements.

**Clive Chappell** is Associate Dean Research and Development in the Faculty of Education, University of Technology Sydney, Australia and former Director of OVAL Research, a key university research centre investigating issues of organizational, vocational and adult learning. He is co-author of the book *Reconstructing the Lifelong Learner: Pedagogies on Individual, Organizational and Social Change* (Routledge 2003).

**Anita Devos** teaches in adult and workplace learning in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. In her research, Anita applies feminist and Foucauldian analyses to a consideration of the

relationship between work, learning and identity. She is the editor of a collection entitled *Shifting the Boundaries: Feminist Practices in Adult Education* (Posst Pressed 1999), and is currently working on a project exploring the role of workplace mentoring in shaping identity.

**Marianne Döös** is Associate Professor of Education at Stockholm University, Sweden. Her research deals with the processes of experiential learning in contemporary settings, on individual, collective and organizational levels. Recent projects concern shared leadership, conditions for competence in work-life, and organizational development, the aims of which are to generate theory within organization pedagogies and to subject outcomes to empirical investigation. Her recent publications include 'Functioning at the edge of knowledge', *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 17(8) (2005).

**Richard Edwards** is Professor of Education at the University of Stirling, UK. He has researched and written extensively of lifelong learning, adult education and workplace learning, drawing upon conceptual framing from post-structuralism. His most recent book is *Signs of Learning*, with Robin Usher (Springer 2007).

**Lesley Farrell** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. Her research is concerned with language and social change in work-related educational contexts, especially the construction of knowledge and learning in globally networked communities. Her recent publications include *Making Knowledge Common: Literacy and Knowledge at Work* (Peter Lang 2006).

**Tara Fenwick** is Professor of Education and Head of the Education Studies Department at the University of British Columbia. Her research focuses on learning and education in workplaces. Her most recent books include *Learning through Experience* (Kreiger 2003) and *Work, Subjectivity and Learning* (co-editors S. Billett and M. Somerville, Springer 2006).

**Maria Clara Bueno Fischer** is a Brazilian researcher in adult, popular and vocational education. She works at the University of UNISINOS (Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos/Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil where she teaches and researches in the postgraduate programme on issues related to education, work and social exclusion. She has worked with social movements and workers' cooperatives to support them in the process of legitimizing their learning from experience and has published several articles about these issues.

**Keith Forrester** works in the Lifelong Learning Institute in the School of Education, University of Leeds, UK. He has a long-standing interest in conceptions and practices of workplace learning and in particular, to issues relating to labour learning.

**Ram Ashish Giri**, a Reader in the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University, Nepal, has been involved in English language education (ELE) in Nepal for the last 15 years. He has completed a number of projects in the field and has published research reports and articles in Nepali and international journals. His notable works include establishment of the first ELT resource centre in Nepal, and the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association. For his doctoral project at Monash University, he is exploring Nepali ELE policy.

**Bernard Holkner** is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia and Director of the Centre for Educational Multimedia. He has research and teaching interests in the areas of telecommunications, multimedia and information technology. In a career which has encompassed teaching and researching at all educational levels, Bernard has initiated a range of significant applications of technology into learning settings. Recently, he has been researching ethical issues in information technology and the social impacts of information technologies in global settings. He has published in the areas of values and moral perspectives on ICT and is known for research on socio-technical networks and the global workforce.

**Glynda A. Hull** is Professor of Education at the University of California, Berkeley, CA. Her research examines adult literacy and changing contexts and requirements for work; writing, digital technologies and students at-risk; and urban education. Her books include *Changing Work, Changing Workers: Critical Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Skill* (SUNY Press 1997) and *The New Work Order: Education and Literacy in the New Capitalism* (Westview 1996)

**Knud Illeris** holds a PhD in Psychology and is Professor of Lifelong Learning at Learning Lab Denmark, the Danish University of Education, and Adjunct Professor of Adult Learning and Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. Three of his books have been published in English: *The Three Dimensions of Learning* (Krieger 2004), *Adult Education and Adult Learning* (Krieger 2004) and *Learning in Working Life* (Roskilde University Press 2004).

**Kaela Jubas** is a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada. In addition to her research and teaching on work and learning, her doctoral project explores shopping as a site and process of learning about the links between consumption, citizenship, globalization and resistance.

**Zane Ma Rhea** is an experienced organizational development consultant to the corporate, government and education sectors in Australia, specializing in the leadership and management of diversity. She has developed an innovative teaching tool, *The Diversity Game*. She is

a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia.

**Srabani Maitra** is a doctoral student in the Department of Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Her research interests are on home-based work, immigrant women and contingent work. She has also published and presented on adult learning, contingent work and transnational telework.

**André Elias Mazawi** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, Canada. He is also associate researcher at the UBC Centre for Policy Studies in Higher Education and Training (CHET). A sociologist of education, he is interested in higher education policies and the stratification of the academic workplace. Currently, he is editing a special issue on globalization and knowledge policies in the Arab states. He serves as French editor and associate editor of the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* and as member of the International Board of Editors of the *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*.

**Kiran Mirchandani** is an Associate Professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada. She has published on home-based work, telework, contingent work, entrepreneurship, transnational service work and self-employment. She teaches in the Adult Education and Community Development Program, and offers courses on gendered and racialized processes in the workplace; critical perspectives on organizational development and learning; and technology, globalization and economic restructuring.

**Mazanah Muhamad** is a Professor of Adult Education and Chair of Cancer Education and Outreach Services at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). Her research focuses on adult education and lifelong learning. Her most recent books are *Adult and Continuing Education in Malaysia* (UPM Press and UNESCO Institute for Education 2001) and *Designing and Facilitating Adults Learning* (co-author with G.L. Carter, UPM Press 2002).

**Kathy Nicoll** is a Senior Lecturer in Education at the University of Stirling, UK. She has worked in a number of universities in Australia and the UK and researches in the fields of professional development and policy. Her most recent book is *Flexibility and Lifelong Learning: Policy, Discourse, Politics* (Routledge 2006).

**Othman Omar** is a Project Manager, UPM-Cornell University Cancer Education and Research Project. He has diversified experience at various levels during separate careers in government, private and civil society sectors, including executive and academic leadership roles in private

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higher education. His ongoing interest is on continuing education and lifelong learning.

**Fazal Rizvi** is a Professor in the Department of Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois, USA, where he directs its Global Studies in Education program. His current research interests include theories of globalization and culture, postcolonialism and education, internationalization of higher education and student mobility. His next book, *Globalizing Educational Policy*, will be published by Routledge in late 2007.

**Peter Rule** is a Senior Lecturer in the Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He recently completed his doctorate in adult education with a thesis on the history of adult education projects in and around Johannesburg. He has experience of working with NGOs in KwaZulu-Natal in the fields of adult literacy, disability, gender, early childhood development and HIV/AIDS. His research interests are in the history of adult education in South Africa, adult education and disability, and dialogue in adult education.

**Peter H. Sawchuk** teaches and carries out research in the areas of work, learning, technology and labour movement development. He is currently cross-appointed to the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, and the Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources (University of Toronto, Canada). His latest works include *Adult Learning and Technology in Working-class Life* (Cambridge University Press 2003) and *Critical Perspectives on Activity* (co-edited with Newton Duarte and Mohamed Elhammoumi, Cambridge University Press 2006).

**Hermine Scheeres** leads the Changing Practices Research Cluster in the Faculty of Education, University of Technology Sydney, Australia. Hermine uses ethnographic and discourse analytic approaches to research culture, communication, identity and learning, particularly in post-bureaucratic workplaces and organizations. She publishes across disciplinary areas and fields of practice in journals including *Studies in Continuing Education*, *Organisation Studies* and *Applied Linguistics*.

**Nicky Solomon** is a Professor and Head of Education and Lifelong Learning at City University, London. Her research interests focus on knowledge construction and identity work in contemporary workplaces. Her recent publications include *Persuasive Texts? Rhetoric and Educational Discourse* (co-authored with R. Edwards, K. Nicoll and R. Usher, Routledge 2004) and *Reconstructing the Life-long Learner: Pedagogies of Individual, Social and Organisational Change* (co-authored with C. Chappell, C. Rhodes, M. Tennant and L. Yates, Routledge 2003).

**Makere Stewart-Harawira** is an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada. She writes on globalization, global order and indigenous peoples. Makere is the author of the recently published *The New Imperial Order: Indigenous Responses to Globalization* (Zed Books/Huia Books 2005). Her recent research focuses on the intersection of the revitalization of traditional languages and culture, global citizenship and postmodern imperialism.

**Jeffery Taylor** is Professor of Labour Studies at Athabasca University, Alberta, Canada. He is a labour historian and his publications include *Union Learning: Canadian Labour Education in the Twentieth Century* (Thompson 2001) and *Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890–1925* (Canadian Plains Research Center 1994).

**Özlem Ünlühisarçıklı** is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Boğaziçi University, Turkey. She holds an MA from that university and a PhD from the University of Manchester, UK. Her research interests are education and development, adult continuing education, teacher training and vocational skills acquisition.

**Rui Yang** is a Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia. He has taught and researched at the universities of Shantou, Sydney, Western Australia, Hong Kong and Monash. He is particularly interested in cross-culturalism in education policy, higher education, and sociology of education, and has written extensively in these fields.

**Wuhu Yao** works at the International Office at Northcote High School in Melbourne, Australia. His educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts in English from Hunan Normal University in China and a Master of Education from Monash University in Australia. He has worked in China, the United States and Australia.

**Jessica C. Zacher** is an Assistant Professor of Teacher Education and Liberal Studies at the California State University, Long Beach, CA. Her research involves issues of multiculturalism and identity in and out of classrooms. Her current project investigates the ways second-language learners experience highly structured language arts curricula in urban schools.

**Hong Zhu** has a PhD in Second Language Education from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, Canada, with a focus on recent immigrants from the People's Republic of China to Canada. Her research interests include language, education, citizenship and multiculturalism in Canada.

**Clair Ribeiro Ziebell** is a Brazilian teacher working at the University of UNISINOS (Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos/Rio Grande do Sul), Brazil where she teaches in the undergraduate social work course. She has also developed extramural activities with the local womens' movement and undertaken research projects related to it.

## Series editors' introduction

This 2007 volume of the *World Yearbook of Education* takes up the question of *Educating the global workforce*. It extends the work begun in the 2005 and 2006 volumes, which interrogated the effects and implications of globalisation and education in relation to nationalism and education research and policy, by considering knowledge in the context of changing relationships between work, education and work-related learning.

The volume editors, Lesley Farrell and Tara Fenwick, centre the volume by drawing attention to the way knowledge in work is being redefined alongside the changes in economies, work and working-lives which underpin the sense that, today, we live in a globalised knowledge economy. These widely held understandings, relayed through global policy discourses and the practical experiences of changing work-learning places, problematise accepted and established relationships between work and education. These changes drive a preoccupation with knowledge as a key factor in economic development and puts a premium on developing workers for the new economy. They privilege work-related learning over other educational purposes – what the editors define as the ‘spaces and activities intentionally planned to mobilise particular practices, behaviours and ideas related to paid work’ (p. 14). Yet, the editors argue, this commonsense narrative of contemporary global economic development begs questions about what counts as ‘knowledge’ in the ‘the knowledge economy’. Who are the ‘knowledge workers’ in this new global economy? What is the ‘working knowledge’ that workers must enact? And how might education and educators respond to this drive towards work-related learning?

The editors open up these questions by considering the way the idea of the global knowledge economy, and its associated practical effects in work and learning, have challenged established education and training arrangements and encouraged alternative ways of doing learning. Yet in explaining these developments and their effects, the editors caution us against a too-uncritical acceptance of the knowledge economy discourse and an overemphasis on globalisation from above. They argue, instead, that it is necessary to look beyond deterministic notions of globalisation,



which emphasise worldwide standardising and homogenising processes and consider the way global processes inflect local spaces in which actors retain a capacity for agency. This focus on 'globalisation from below' reveals ways in which ordinary people work together to develop localised ways of responding to, dealing with, and re-directing processes of learning and patterns of work that accompany everyday reconfigurations of work practices, work organisations and cultures, and working knowledges and identities. Their message is that this orientation to globalisation not only highlights the diversity of practice and effects, and the tensions and contradictions that are entailed in what global policy discourse calls 'the knowledge economy', it also reveals the way large-scale economic, social and cultural processes and transformations generate practical politics that operate across scales and spatialities.

The chapters collected together in this volume provide windows into these themes related to changes in knowledge, knowledge work and knowledge workers. The authors are drawn from around the world, making this a truly global collection framed by a global sensibility. The detailed analyses presented through the chapters are organised thematically. The first three parts address: 'What counts as working knowledge?'; 'Knowing and working the global economy'; 'Work, working life and working identities'. The final part looks back towards work-related learning because, as the editors argue, this is a volume in a *World Yearbook of Education* that has been written by education researchers not economists. This part presents chapters that consider 'Challenges for work-related education'. And again, this shift in nomenclature is significant. Just as educators and education researchers have framed this volume, it is written in order to speak to educators about education and the 'vital' contribution that education makes to 'worker and knowledge development' (p. 9). In this the volume speaks clearly, asserting the need for education and educators to find (better) ways of engaging with contemporary economic reform and the work-related learning trajectory, now and for the future.

As series editors of the *World Yearbook of Education*, we are delighted that scholars with the insight and imagination of Lesley Farrell and Tara Fenwick have taken up the challenge of preparing the 2007 volume. They have brought their distinctive expertise in language and social change (framed from Australia) and work and learning (framed from Canada), and their different academic networks, together in productive ways to produce this collection across time-spaces and research orientations. In this work they have enacted the ambition of the *World Yearbook of Education* series, which is not just to document worldwide developments in education but to map a significant and emerging educational issue with a view to framing up a serious research agenda at the cutting edge of the field. Moreover, they have achieved this in a special way that makes a significant contribution to knowledge and debate about contemporary education. Importantly, they have offered a framework for thinking about

contemporary changes in education and their interfaces with work and the economy. This framework brings the question of knowledge in work into the frame of education research. The collection reminds us that in all the hype and racy talk of knowledge economy, learning society, and lifelong learning, it is important to continue working on old questions – like ‘what counts as knowledge?’, ‘whose knowledge is it?’, ‘how is it defined?’ and ‘who?’ – that have long informed educational debates and mobilised the practical politics of education. The volume challenges us as educators, policy makers and education researchers to think, all over again, about what counts as ‘really useful knowledge’ for worker-learners and how it can be enacted through work-related *education*. As the volume editors note:

What educators and policy makers at national, regional and international levels need to do now is to cast a critical eye over the past and to consider, with far greater clarity than we have managed in the past, what role work-related education should play in the future. As part of those deliberations we need to consider who work-related education is intended to benefit and what kinds of knowledge-based economies it should be helping to build (p. 24).

Terri Seddon, Jenny Ozga and Evie Zambeta  
Melbourne, Edinburgh and Athens, 2006



# Introduction

*Lesley Farrell and Tara Fenwick*

[K]nowledge is now the driver of productivity and economic growth  
(OECD, *The Knowledge-Based Economy*, 1996: 4)

A knowledge-based economy relies primarily on the use of ideas rather than physical abilities and on the application of technology rather than the transformation of raw materials or the exploitation of cheap labour.

(World Bank, *Lifelong Learning for the Global Knowledge Economy*, 2003: 1)

We live in a time when the popular belief – reinforced in boardrooms, newspapers and policy pronouncements alike – is that any region's long-term growth is fundamentally linked with knowledge. This belief is nurturing a gnawing anxiety that we may not be producing enough knowledge or the right kind of knowledge to survive in this global economy. In the West, the labour force is ageing and shrinking rapidly in numbers while younger workers sustain relatively high levels of unemployment. Severe trades-skill shortages erupt annually alongside massive job layoffs in different sectors depending on commodity supplies, fast-shifting labour sites, and emerging industries in global markets. Peter Sawchuk (this volume) shows that while some argue that existing workers need to be 'upskilled' in technological competencies needed for a knowledge economy, others claim that technologies have deskilled existing work beyond the point of recognition. Debates rage about what knowledge, exactly, is most valuable in different groups of the global workforce.

Meanwhile, dramatic global imbalances persist around the world in trading capacity, trained workers and knowledge production. So, while the so-called West worries about what forms of university education are likely to improve the employability of their young people, many developing countries struggle to provide primary education and increase literacy to provide the literate workforce that global industries demand. But such binaries – developed/developing – prove misleading when considering issues like literacy, where sites of low literacy flourish in wealthy regions,

## 2 *Lesley Farrell and Tara Fenwick*

and demands increase for new literacy practices particularly in tandem with new technologies. In this volume, Glynda Hull and Jessica Zacher offer case studies showing the struggles of low literate workers in the US, and the ways that new literacies recruit powerful new worker identities.

Given the generally accepted proposition that education systems are the key levers for knowledge production and thus for ensuring survival of individuals, firms and nations in a global economy, it is not surprising that a highly critical gaze has turned to educational provision at all levels, in most regions around the world. Major challenges have been issued to the compulsory K-12 schooling system for not providing the appropriate experiences that will prepare young people to enter a fast-moving technologised and mobile global labour market. Vocational systems of apprenticeships and training have been found woefully inadequate in preparing sufficient numbers of tradesworkers to meet fast-shifting industry demands, or for preparing workers to navigate complex practices and always-emerging technologies. Higher education institutions have been attacked for their disconnection from labour market needs, their unimaginative discipline-bound theories and their lack of innovative initiative focused on the here-and-now. Both the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank have been issuing key policy documents calling for the redesign of education for human capital formation in a rapidly changing economy, albeit purporting different visions for this educational reform (in contrast to the World Bank's focus on market and individualism, the OECD focuses more on social inclusion, social cohesion and knowledge distribution through sharing).

This book addresses central questions around this intersection of education with the multiple meanings of knowledge in a global economy. For starters, the preceding paragraphs embed assumptions that appear commonly in policy documents about the knowledge economy, assumptions that need to be picked apart. What does 'knowledge' mean, and what does it mean when it is understood as a commodity of, and an enactment constituting, a 'global knowledge economy'? What precisely are the changing enactments of 'knowledge' in different work sectors, activities and geo-political areas of the economy? How does knowledge become legitimated in these different spaces of work, and by whom? For that matter, what is 'work' in a global economy, and who are the workers? And how can we think about education, in all its forms and provisions, in relation to these questions? The authors in this collection each take up these questions in relation to specific issues and regions of work. But before we say more about the authors and the actual development of the book, we want to pause and address these foundational issues of knowledge, economy, work and education. We have our own peculiar understandings of these concepts and their relationships. In the following paragraphs we endeavour to locate our perspectives and definitions, which may help

illuminate our reasons for stitching this book together in the way that we have.

### **What is work in a global economy, and who are the (knowledge) workers?**

Without entering the complex debates about how to understand globalisation or the extent to which nation-states and other borderings have dissolved or transformed amidst the global shifts in movements of capital, labour and culture, we venture some modest assertions about how work is changing in a globally networked economy. Here we tread carefully among physical characteristics of work activity variously observed and recorded, the images and meanings attributed to contemporary work in the collective imaginary of different societies, and the interaction between the material and the ideational. In the studies and examples presented by authors in this collection, we see work organisations becoming more fluid and distributed. Work sites in some cases are nodes of complex activity, people and technical practice that are far removed from the organisations they serve. Transient work units such as those described by Shauna Butterwick, Kaela Jubas and Hong Zhu are technology-based and bounded by digital communication. Standardisation across these units is critical. In the call centres described by Kiran Mirchandani and Srabani Maitra, the distributed work sites are compelled to articulate culturally with those they serve, through accent, network-building and identity modification. In all, there is primary emphasis on building networks and maintaining continuous, sometimes relentless 24/7, communication, largely through ICT-enabled fields of interaction. In all of these contexts, education is recruited, sometimes explicitly, often implicitly, to the task of creating the global networks that generate and sustain global economic activity. Tumultuous flows and speed of information in new modalities (video conferencing, podcasts, text messaging) described by Bernard Holkner are demanding new literacies and reducing the value of information, but also opening opportunities for new alliances and sites for producing knowledge.

Yet within all the global patterns of distributed networking, standardisation, digital communication and general accelerations in work, we believe it is vital to retain a clear focus on the actual experiences of actual workers. People are not patterns: they are idiosyncratic actors. They work in particular places, at particular moments, using tools and practices that have meanings in those places, interacting with other people who have evolved ways of being together that are unique and local, within the possibilities and constraints inscribed in those places. These material workplaces can be distinguished from the broader networks of work sites across which ideas and texts flow, but as Kathy Nicoll and Richard Edwards show, both are connected and animated through globalising

processes. Farrell (2006) calls these broader networks in which workplaces are encompassed 'workspaces'. Both embed and produce the dynamics of the global economy, and both must be examined to understand how knowledge is understood and where education is/might be positioned.

And among these workplaces and spaces, who are considered to be the knowledge(able) workers? For some commentators like Robert Reich (former US Secretary of Labor), knowledge workers form the ranks of the professional-technical middle class: the accountants, lawyers, journalists and engineers (2003). Those knowledge workers occupying the top tiers of status and income are the global dealmakers: transnational CEOs and executives of global investment banks. All others are, for Reich, 'left behind' through increasing gaps of income, opportunity and symbolic-analytic knowledge. Certainly some individuals and groups are particularly vulnerable in a global economy, and their struggles deserve special support, as Knud Illeris argues. However the blurrings among workers' knowledge advantage and capacity to negotiate their work and worth is far more complex than Reich portrays, as Ram Giri and Peter Rule illustrate in their case studies showing how English language shapes work and workers in Nepal and how HIV/AIDS is woven through work education in South Africa respectively.

A strong emphasis on 'skill' development continues to label workers as categorically 'skilled' or 'unskilled', based on assumptions that the ability to perform certain activities can be standardised, measured and added where missing. The politics of who knows what is 'skill' becomes buried in such practices. This affects most profoundly not only those moving from one vocation to another as employment opportunities shift, but also the vast groups of migrant professional workers seeking credentialisation in host countries. In the West, a panoply of invisible barriers typically prevent these immigrants from being recognised as appropriately 'skilled' to take jobs that, in some cases, the host countries are desperate to fill. A further irony is that the entire codification of skills, worked out in extensive detail for assessment and educational delivery in most OECD countries, is based on what has passed for knowledge in the past – in structures of limited relevance for the fast-changing fluid workplaces/workspaces and jobs that are continually emerging. Fazal Rizvi argues that the much-celebrated networks that putatively permit migrant workers to negotiate these knowledge spaces and places are in fact highly circumscribed and problematic, reinforcing multiple barriers and prejudices determining what constitutes skill and who wields it.

All of these influences fundamentally affect workers' identities, and their efforts in performing identity create knowledge that also deserves recognition, as Clive Chappell, Hermine Scheeres and Nicky Solomon explain. How workers negotiate a sense of self amidst globally-induced work pressures that is not disempowered or dehumanised is the focus of Stephen Billett's chapter. Statements from organisations and governments

stress the need for flexible, resilient, innovative workers, throwing responsibility onto individuals to manage their own survival and create pegs for their own identities as knowledge workers. As people take up this compulsion, 'the' worker in 'the' global economy increasingly becomes characterised as enterprising, autonomous and mobile, marketing an image and angling a knowledge, learning continuously and urgently while scanning all surroundings for clues, trends and warnings. Workers' desires, including desires to know, to transgress or to fly free, become assembled into these expectations – and the economic project of self-improvement turns into a lifelong obsession or a line of flight, or both (Fenwick, 2002). A corollary decline in organised labour in developed countries, as Jeff Taylor shows, has eroded both workers' collective affiliations and the resulting critical voice that historically has exposed the politics of work knowledge and fought the naturalisation of unfettered markets.

### **What does knowledge mean, and how is it part of a 'global knowledge economy'?**

Robert Reich has argued that the global economy depends upon elite symbolic-analytic knowledge – the capacity to generate, design, manipulate and translate ideas, moving them across languages and audiences. The OECD also emphasises the need for mediation and management of knowledge (1996). As work groups become split apart and distributed in time and place, the central need is to somehow ensure that they remain linked, that information moves efficiently among them, and that they work within consistent standards and processes. But more, organisations now compete through 'value-adding' – unique goods, new solutions or resources enhanced with new information, design or service. Further, with the decline in manufacturing jobs in wealthy industrialised countries through technologisation, governments are looking to knowledge-based, Research and Development industries as the way to diversify their economies. Therefore it is no surprise that innovative knowledge above all, particularly techno-scientific innovation, is promoted through government incentives. Governments are also promoting knowledge mobilisation or 'transfer', fostering knowledge networks, multi-sector knowledge partnerships and international collaborations in an effort to increase their knowledge advantage through sharing.

But knowledge-connecting and knowledge-making occurs in varying levels of work activity. While, say, the R&D labs of a multinational pharmaceutical firm innovate new products to be implemented through software innovated by their university partner, at the level of a local worksite the workers must find a way to make this new procedure work. They must problem-solve the software glitches, translate product specifications and improvise ways to organise their own groups and processes to adapt the corporate directives to local culture and resources. They also must



develop multiple modes and networks of communication – across diverse regions and communities within and without the organisation, across levels of knowledge abstraction, across company hierarchies and across new textual forms ranging from ISO 9000 reports to email and cell phone transmissions.

This is the important ‘common knowledge’ of improvisation and connection (Farrell, 2006) that unfolds in the microprocesses of workers’ everyday activities. This knowledge is *enacted* and not necessarily codified or even recognised – it is embodied, situated in action, and mediated by local preferences, tools and values. In fact this knowledge is so provisional and pragmatic that everyone who participates in it tends to simply accept it as mundane everyday activity. And yet this knowledge, existing alongside formally codified professional knowledge, certifiable vocational skill, and bodies of innovative, technical and scientific knowledge, could be viewed as a central animator of much work activity in the global economy.

So, recognition of knowledge emerges as a clear problem in determining exactly what knowledge is required in the workplaces of a global economy. And relations of power within workplaces, across regions and globally are worked through in terms of what counts as knowledge and who can say so. For developing countries seeking integration in the global economy to fight poverty and survive, as Andre Mazawi shows, double binds await. The Western hegemony of knowledge and meanings of ‘knowledge economy’ become the yardstick measuring all other regions, challenging their own knowledge and traditions of vocational education along with their foundations in religion and historical culture. A ‘structural leap’ into West-dominated knowledges profoundly affects cultural practices and policies in education: Makere Stewart-Harawira explains the dramatic conflicts sustained by indigenous peoples caught in globalising, colonising knowledge webs. Overall, the understanding of how knowledge is produced and circulated in the global knowledge economy is highly ambiguous, and the notion of what forms of knowledge are most valuable in various exchange relationships are far more nuanced than present policy declarations would imply.

### **How can we think about education in a global knowledge economy?**

Education is never innocent, for it is always embedded in particular spaces and cultural practices at every level – policy, social structures, institutional norms and regulations, curriculum, and local interactions. In this way education has been, as Simon Marginson (1999) put it, ‘a primary medium of globalisation, and an incubator of its agents’ (p. 4).

The relationship between education, employment and labour markets is changing. Whereas vocational education and training (VET) in the past has been treated as a supplier of skilled labour to industry, the perception

now is that this locked relationship cannot meet the fast-changing patterns of a global knowledge economy. According to Keith Forrester, vocational education in Europe and the UK must shift more to develop entrepreneurship, autonomy, citizenship and sustainability: fostering critical capacity in new workers. But here again, different regions interpret differently the dilemma of just what to make of the 'knowledge economy', and how to position vocational education accordingly. In Malaysia, argue Farizah Ahmad, Othman Omar and Maznah Muhamad, VET has played a key role serving rapidly changing social reform policies, from eradicating poverty in the 1960s, to creating national unity and fuelling heavy industrial export in the 1970s–80s. Now, in trying to maintain its position as a serious player in global trade, Malaysia accepts the knowledge economy discourse unproblematically and focuses VET on generating 'creativity and cognitive skills', managerial capacity, entrepreneurship and the value of lifelong learning. By contrast in Turkey, as Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı explains, VET is firmly rooted in a historical apprenticeship system. While recent changes have enabled greater flexibility, there is still strong emphasis on systematic progression through particular training levels, matching individual to job and standardising all through a national qualifications framework driven by European Union priorities.

A growing distrust that compulsory school systems or even vocational training institutions can prepare the right knowledge workers for unpredictable production needs has helped fuel an emphasis on 'lifelong learning' for work. This has spawned a slew of work-related education providers among NGOs and non-profit organisations, private agencies, government-funded initiatives, occupation-specific networks, self-styled consultants, blogs, industry spinoffs, or just about anyone who has learned to pitch learning. In some iterations, the responsibility for wading through these billboards to find appropriate work education is awarded entirely to individuals. They must choose carefully to ensure their own, their organisation's and their nation's economic growth, and they shall choose regardless of income, location, prior educational opportunity, access to or awareness of their so-called choices. With the growing expectation that individuals will seek and self-fund their own knowledge development for work purposes, these providers have bent their programmes to offer flexible, accelerated learning opportunities – often with very little external evaluation beyond industry and individual consumers' satisfaction. Providers can capitalise upon fashionable issues or promise to fix those surface ripples that mask deeper currents and contradictions. One example are the popular cross-cultural training programmes in workplaces which, as Zane Ma Rhea points out, manage to essentialise culture, reduce it to individual behaviours and assert Western norms, all under the flag of inclusion. It is little wonder that some commentators regard the individualised re-scripting of education in these movements as deeply problematic.

Education as learning outside institutions is increasingly apparent, according to authors in this volume: in the emphasis on knowledge networks and mentoring (Anita Devos), relational knowledge connections (Marianne Döös) and community-based coalitions (Maria Clara Bueno Fischer and Clair Ribeiro Ziebell). Questions are raised about the conflict between such informal knowledge development and a system based on credentialism, as well as the contradictions of expecting collaborative knowledge-sharing in organisations and open markets where knowledge-exchange determines competitive position.

Globally, education is re-shaping patterns of knowledge development. Migrating students and educational programmes marketed to developing countries by the wealthy West continue to create a small knowledge elite in poorer nations, with networks cutting across borders. Rui Yang and Wuhu Yao show the resulting complex negotiations in a case of higher education based in China. The problem for Mazawi, writing about Saudi Arabia, is the resulting homogenisation/cultural standardisation, colonisation, cultural dependence of developing countries on the West, and a general acceptance of the global knowledge economy as current reality that education needs to address by remedying the country's deficit. Tikly (2001) shows how in regions as poor as sub-Saharan Africa, a 'crippling brain drain' of potential knowledge workers is pervasive. Education capacity is so far from being able to provide skills required by business and the public sector, that enrolments are declining and drop-outs increasing. At this rate, shows Tikly, 50 per cent in low-income countries can expect to be permanently excluded from employment with another 20 per cent in low-income, insecure employment within nations with low literacy rates.

These issues and global power imbalances are almost overwhelming to contemplate. But for educators, education in its various forms is not (only) about legitimising a particular global order by helping workers to accommodate to its demands and find employability, but also about challenging it, fostering thoughtful participation in it and fuelling resistance to its excesses – while building the knowledge recognition, social capital and social inclusion that can begin to address the many inequities generated by the current emergences of the global knowledge economy.

### **About this book**

Within all of these issues, the focus of this book is on education and learning rather than economics, and on workers rather than employers, organisations and states. Authors have been selected who maintain a critical position on issues of the 'global economy' as well as assumptions about knowledge and the economy's needs for knowledgeable human capital. Overall, our belief is that education in various forms is a vital dynamic

in worker and knowledge development, alongside sharp questions about who defines knowledge and development, and for what purposes.

The book is intended to be an international collection, and we are fortunate to have authors writing from contexts of work and education in regions characterised by wide diversity in income, historical culture, colonial inheritances, political constraints and regulatory frameworks: including Indigenous Peoples, South America, Southeast Asia, Africa and China as well as North America, Australia, the UK and various regions of Europe. However, given the complexity and diversity of issues and perspectives in any region, these voices will at best gesture towards contextual variation being experienced globally, and cannot be understood to 'represent' these regions. Further, we have chosen to limit contributions to English. And like any language, English grammar shapes one particular perspective and entirely prevents others. So, while authors have endeavoured to be sensitive to the hegemony of Western perspectives on education and globalisation, this volume in many ways re-enacts this hegemony.

Amidst such wide-ranging issues as knowledge, work and education in a global economy, the book does not attempt to be comprehensive, nor to fully represent this historical moment. We have gathered together leading authors, all university-based researchers who have been studying and thinking about work-related issues for some time and have something to say. We did not attempt to represent the extensive research on work and education occurring in popular education, human resource and management development, or the college system involvement in VET: these complex areas each have accumulated their own large volumes of literature. Issues of ecology/sustainability, racism, gender, youth workers, migrant and precarious labour are all important and have been addressed in various chapters as layers and dynamics within complex systems. That is, these issues and groups are not treated as natural, bounded categories that are allowed to define the terms of the debate while denying questions as to their own constitution. Overall, most authors here work against such boundaries, to unsettle established categories and notions about what is knowledge in work, how it is produced and circulated, and what this might mean for education and educators.

This volume is typical of global knowledge production in that it has involved a close collaboration between Lesley and Tara, as well as between the authors and the editors, to painstakingly construct shared knowledge over space and time. As editors we brought our distinct disciplinary and cultural backgrounds (Tara in work and learning, from Canada, Lesley in language and social change in globalising contexts, from Australia) to bear on questions about knowledge, knowledge work and knowledge workers. With the generous help of Miriam Faine, our editorial assistant, we worked mostly on Skype and email to conceptualise the volume, contact potential authors all over the world, negotiate with authors and publishers, and

shape our own arguments and writing. Our meetings collapsed our time-spaces in ways that often felt bizarre: a summer holiday Monday evening for Tara in Vancouver was a wintry Tuesday morning in the middle of a busy term for Lesley in Melbourne. The challenges and the potential of the global workspace we inhabited were always in the foreground of our thinking – it could not be otherwise. For us this volume represents a true and entirely equal collaboration that instantiates the very best of what the global knowledge economy has to offer.

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