

# Preface

This book was born out of many conversations with colleagues around the world about the importance of mapping an agenda for technology education moving forwards. One seed was planted about 10 years ago at a conference in Australia where John Williams and Kay Stables had a discussion about the merits of facilitating a symposium of technology educators who could discuss and debate future directions of technology education. More grounded thinking was done when working on the *International Handbook of Research and Development in Technology Education*, published in 2009. This book highlighted some of the significant advances that have occurred in technology education as a curriculum area with its own identity and value. For example, there is now much stronger alignment between technology education as a field and the history and philosophy of technology more generally, and an increasing focus on research in teacher development and student learning. However, the book also pointed out the necessity of continued political engagement as well as meaningful classroom-based research if the field is to continue to move forward.

Reflecting on the process of developing the Handbook in a paper published by the *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* ('The developing field of technology education: A review to look forward'), Alister Jones, Cathy Bunting and Marc de Vries proposed that an international meeting be held to articulate an agenda for ongoing research and development.

This book—*The Future of Technology Education*—is a result of these developments. Technology education researchers, many of whom are internationally renowned for their contributions to the field, were invited to contribute to the project. In order to create a cohesive contribution to the literature, while still enabling authors to assert their own voices, we first met together at a workshop in Stockholm in June 2012 to review chapter summaries and engage in formative discussions about each of the chapters. A subsequent meeting of all authors took place in March 2013 at Teachers College Columbia in New York to critique the full chapter drafts, which were subsequently updated to reflect the group's conversations at the workshop.

The significance of meeting at the place where John Dewey spent over two decades as Professor of Philosophy was not lost on any of us, and in Chap. 9 of this book David Spendlove reminds us of Dewey's (1916) caution:

Nothing has brought pedagogical theory into greater disrepute than the belief that it is identified with handing out to teachers recipes and models in teaching.

This book is neither a recipe, nor a model. Rather, it brings together the informed musings of academics grappling with issues that we believe are likely to be of key importance in the future of technology education as a school subject. While as individuals or a collective we obviously do not propose to be foretelling the future, what we offer is a synthesis of issues that we believe should not be ignored.

It has been a privilege to work on this project with colleagues who are each committed to the ongoing development of the field of technology education. We trust that our collective thinking will contribute meaningfully to future directions.

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