In 2009, UNESCO estimated that there were 150 million post-secondary learners in the world, with 20 million enrolled in “open” universities—that ultimate expression of flexible learning. UNESCO further estimated that in order to reach a reasonable number of learners around the globe, another 150 million places would be required in the next decade, largely in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This will mean a true revolution in the global learning map. It is clear that such a goal will only be achieved through an aggressive implementation of flexible learning. Indeed, such a revolution will have to redefine the term flexible, which, while radical in its day, is too timid for a future of learning abundance. What advocates of flexible learning are attempting to do is to turn knowledge from a commodity of scarcity into one of abundance. The journey will be difficult, and it will revolutionize the world we know. And, as with any revolution, there will be considerable resistance.

It would be enormously instructive for UNESCO officials and world post-secondary leaders to reflect carefully on the essays in this volume, which acknowledge that the world-transforming task will not be easy. Colin Latchem and Insung Jung, for example, outline with some despair the barriers that Asian societies will have to overcome, or at least recognize, if they are going to increase post-secondary participation. They clearly outline the cultural features of some Asian communities that will make change difficult. For example, in those countries where the Confucian model of learning predominates and teacher-led instruction is considered “quality,” the massification of learning without an accompanying increase in faculty will likely preclude real change. At the same time, as the authors point out, in societies such as Korea, where there is a questioning of the norm, change is happening at an extraordinary pace. Their essay, along with those by Mary Simpson and Bill Anderson on New Zealand and by Milly Daweti and Jean Mitchell on South Africa, provide interesting juxtapositions. It is clear that global change can only be realized locally and will be uneven. Yet those countries that can sort out the
cultural, political, economic, and institutional realities of flexible learning will be the leaders in the new knowledge economies.

What also becomes clear in the essays by, for example, Darcy Hardy (“Before the Fall: Breaking Rules and Changing Minds”) and Andrew Higgins and Mark Northover (“Implementing an Online System: Voices of Experience”) is that resistance, whether covert or open, continues on the part of both traditional institutions and faculty members within all institutions. A number of essays suggest responses to this resistance. The collegial environment within post-secondary learning dictates that no radical change will occur rapidly, and perhaps this is appropriate. As Yoni Ryan points out, we need the patience of Job. However, it is also clear that those who can manage the “right” change rapidly and publicly will be the winners in determining the course of post-secondary learning for many in the next generation, particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Unfortunately, as Terry Evans and Peter Smith note in “The Fog of Flexibility,” flexible learning in the 1980s became the hallmark of the conservative agenda, which sought to transform education from a social right into a marketplace commodity. In some traditional residential universities, there was a persistent belief that flexible learning was cheaper and could be turned into a revenue opportunity to support the more valid residential experience. Greville Rumble’s “Flexing Costs and Reflecting on Methods” brings some focus to the costing debate. Perhaps the early reluctance to understand or reveal the true costs of the best of flexible learning led to some of the first failures. However, a new ability to control costs has now pushed corporate-controlled learning back into the foreground. What remains clear is that “open universities” and the flexible-learning movement must seize the initiative again to ensure that flexible learning becomes the hallmark of the public movement to remove all barriers to learning—the barriers of time, geography, income, and ethnicity. The quest for equity should not become an opportunity for profit!

And progress is being made. Andy Lane deals with the potential of the open educational resources movement, which still holds more promise than accomplishment. Non Scantlebury and Gill Needham suggest how librarians can move flexible-learning agendas forward, perhaps more readily than teaching and research faculty might. Denise Kirkpatrick’s essay on Web 2.0 is a brilliant reflection on this new technology, and
Ryan's plea that we examine and learn from the list of failures in the flexible learning closet full of skeletons is a particularly wise observation. Indeed, those of us who have been in the post-secondary environment for several decades are beginning to observe the resurrection of past failures ready for a repeat or perhaps, in some cases, for success.

What is obvious from all of the essays gathered in this book is that if the world is to achieve a level of post-secondary achievement such that all have the potential of participating in the new knowledge economies, both an examination and a reform of the post-secondary value chain—indeed, a revolution—are a must. *Flexible Pedagogy, Flexible Practice* will prod us all into rethinking how we might learn and how we manage post-secondary learning institutions. If humankind is to reach its potential within one or even two decades, there must be change—and that change will be rooted in flexible learning options.

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