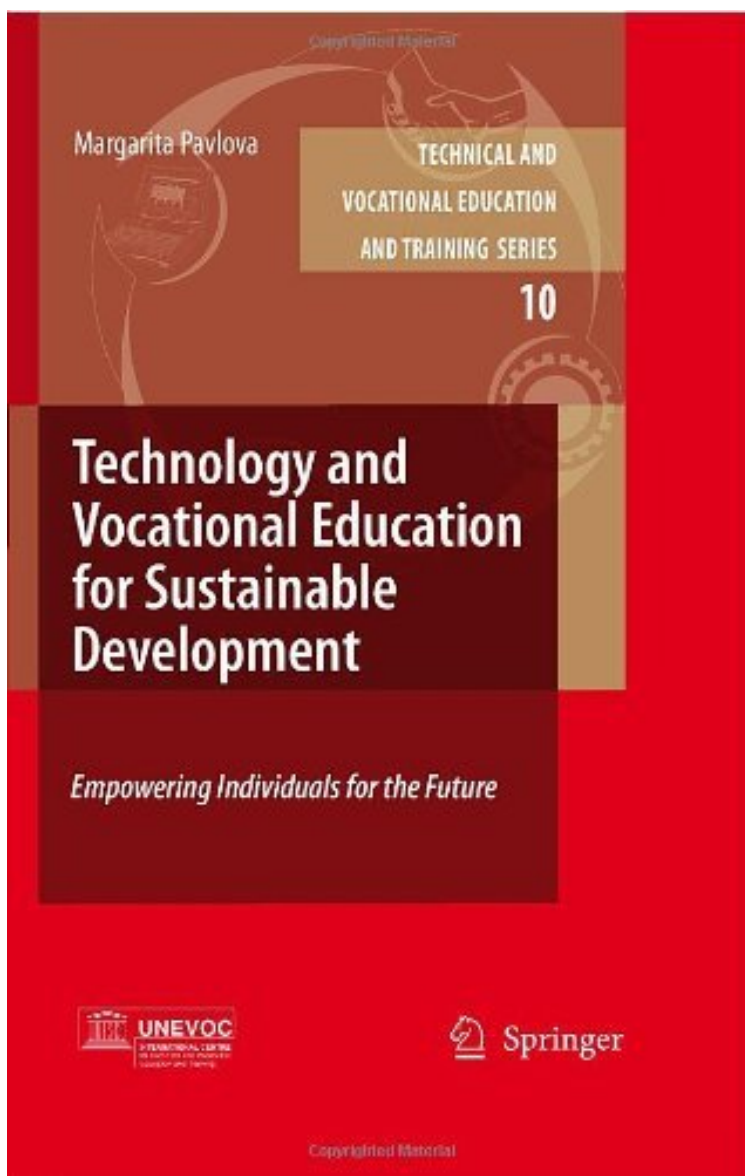


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Margarita Pavlova

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Technology and Vocational Education for Sustainable Development: Empowering Individuals for the Future: 10* (Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects):

Empowerment is the overarching idea used in this book. The term has a variety of meanings in different sociocultural and political contexts, including 'self-strength, control, self-power, self-reliance, own choice, life of dignity in accordance with one's values, capable of fighting for one's rights, independence, own decision making, being free, awakening, and capability' (The World Bank, 2002, p. 10). However, the World Bank report observed that most definitions focus on issues of 'gaining power and control over decisions and resources that determine the quality of one's life' (p. 10). This interpretation of empowerment provides a useful starting point for the development of the series of interconnected arguments explored here. Establishment of the basis for understanding, identifying and developing strategies through education necessary for individuals to be able to make choices that influence the quality of their lives is the main aim of this book. There are a number of assumptions and boundaries that frame this analysis. First, the book focuses on 'agents'; however, empowerment is often conceptualised in terms of relationships between agency and structure (e. g. , Alsop, Bertelsen, Holland, 2006). Agency could be defined as 'an actor's or group's ability to make purposeful choices' – that is, the actor is able to envisage and purposively choose options' (p. 11).

From the Back Cover The ways education for sustainable development can be addressed in teaching and learning are among the most urgent challenges for modern educational theory and practice. This book explores the unique contribution technology and vocational education can provide to meet these urgent needs. Part 1 examines various concepts from different areas of knowledge that are used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ways sustainable development, education for sustainable development and empowerment are related and can be conceptualised. Practical strategies are suggested and a model for pre-service teacher training programs is developed. Part 2 explores how general issues are reflected in local norms, values and behaviours within the Russian context. The case study illustrates the importance of understanding the political and sociocultural context of a country in order to develop empowerment strategies that work for that particular society as they reflect specific local histories, values and traditions.