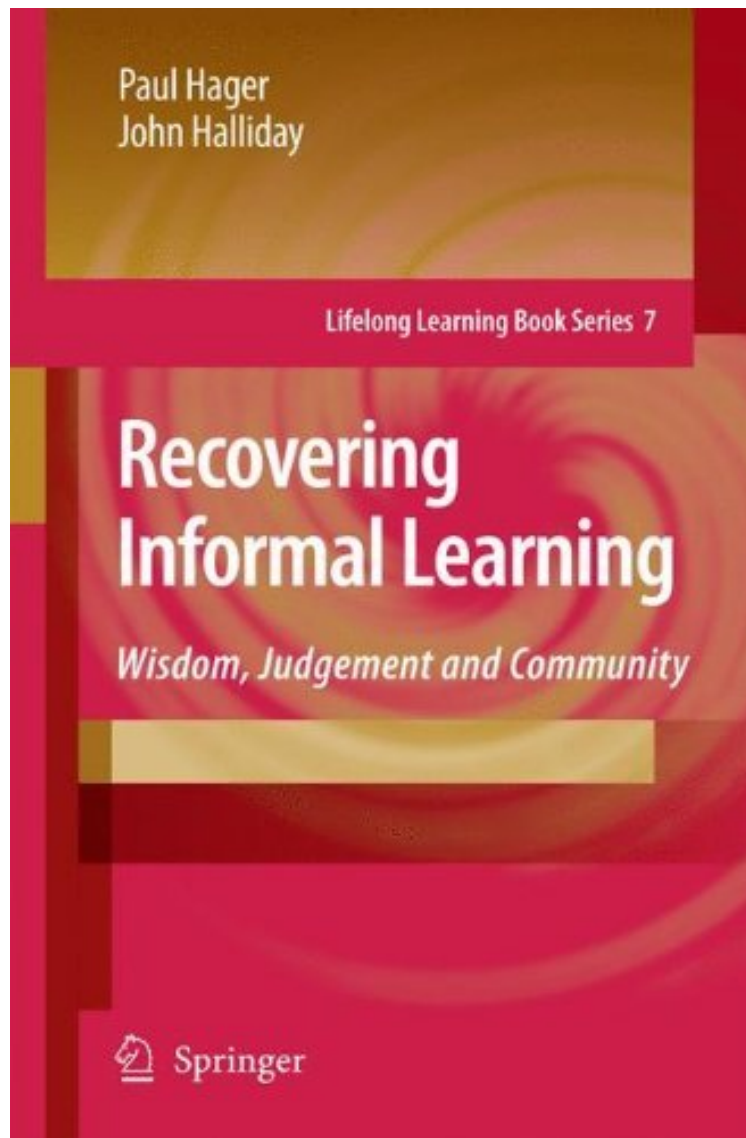


(Mobile ebook) Recovering Informal Learning: Wisdom, Judgement and Community: 7 (Lifelong Learning Book Series)

Recovering Informal Learning: Wisdom, Judgement and Community: 7 (Lifelong Learning Book Series)

Paul Hager, John Halliday

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Paul Hager, John Halliday : Recovering Informal Learning: Wisdom, Judgement and Community: 7 (Lifelong Learning Book Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Recovering Informal Learning: Wisdom, Judgement and Community: 7 (Lifelong Learning Book Series):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. An argument in support of reconceptualizing the learning-living

relationship

By Robert Morris

The title of Paul Hager and John Halliday's book immediately raises a question: "Recovering informal learning from what?" The answer is provided in their Introduction: "Our central thesis is that currently the balance within both policies and practices of lifelong learning has shifted too far towards formal learning. That imbalance should be corrected...In summary, we argue that too much is spent on the provision of formal learning opportunities and not enough on the provision of opportunities for informal learning...For us, formal learning is that which takes place as intended within formally constituted educational institutions such as schools, universities, training centres and so on. Typically it follows a prescribed framework whether or not actual attendance at the institution as necessary...Informal learning covers all of the other situations in which people learn including those occasions when in the course of living they learn without sometimes intending to learn. It also includes those situations within formal educational institutions when some things are learnt which are not directly intended by those employed by the institution." This composite excerpt raises another question; "What about corporate training and development programs?" According to Bersin Associates' just-published 2008 Corporate Learning Factbookreg,, based on data collected by an August 2007 survey conducted in partnership with Training Magazine, "The U.S. corporate learning market grew slightly from 2006 to 2007, increasing from \$55.8B to \$58.5. Spending on products and services grew from \$15.8B in 2006 to \$16.38B in 2007." As for E-learning, it has grown dramatically. The use of self-study e-learning now accounts for 20% of student hours, up from last year's figure of 15%. This growth is driven largely by an increase in online training among small organizations (100-999 employees), which are acquiring the skills and technology to make online training a reality...The younger generation of learners is driving changes in learning strategies. This year's study shows a sharp increase in new web-based and collaborative learning resources, such as podcasts, communities of practice, blogs, and wikis." In *The Training Measurement Book*, Josh Bersin explains that the material in his book is based on the results of surveys that he and his associates conducted among more than 600 C-level executives in 2005-2007. One of the most important revelations is that more than 90% identified performance measurement as being either most important or next most important on their list of what to improve. In 2007, they conducted research among more than 700 HR and learning executives indicating that only 4% rated their learning programs were "fully aligned" with talent needs, and, only 15% rated them "well-aligned." Clearly, as both Cross and Bersin assert, there is substantial room for improvement in formal corporate training and development programs. Consider these comments by Jay Cross: "Workers learn more in the coffee room than in the classroom. They discover how to do their jobs through informal learning: asking the person in the next cubicle, trial and error, calling the help desk, working with people in the know, and joining the conversation. This is natural learning - learning from others when you feel the need to do so." So far, no pyrotechnics. Cross continues: "Training programs, workshops, and schools get the lion's share of the corporate budget for developing talent, despite the fact that..." and then, "this formal learning has almost no impact on job performance. And informal learning, the major source of knowledge transfer and innovation, is left to chance." In their book, Hager and Halliday view learning in more general terms than do advocates of allocating more resources to informal learning in the workplace. They critique and reject several common assumptions about current principles of learning "that have been shown to narrow the scope of our conceptions of learning, thus causing outcomes that are harmful to society and its ongoing development." Also, as indicated previously, they argue that learning is something that is much richer than our common conceptual attempts to capture it would suggest. There are dimensions of learning that elude our present formulas and common misunderstandings. Practices of all kinds involve learning, some aspects of which are tacit." They reject the notion of lifelong learning as "growing formalisation of learning across the lifespan," proposing instead what they characterize as "a fresh understanding of learning," one that offers a better balance of the formal and informal, "will lead to much more viable and attractive notions of lifelong learning." The "better balance of the formal and the informal" to which Hager and Halliday refer has a context that includes but is by no means limited to the workplace. "The view that learning is acquisition of products, and its associated metaphors, leads us toward a panopticon society. As liberal humanists, we do not want such a society." My Five Star rating indicates how well I think Hager and Halliday present and develop their argument that, for too long, theories and practices of learning have been dominated by the requirements of formal learning. (Their book is Volume 7 of the Lifelong Learning Series published by Springer.) Questions can and should be raised about the value of formal education (i.e. provided by schools, colleges, and universities) to the learning-living relationship in one's life just as Cross, Bersin, and others have questioned the value of formal corporate training and development programs to one's job performance, when indeed substantial evidence suggests that workers learn more from on-the-job training and frequent interaction with associates, especially with a supervisor. I agree with all four of them that imbalances must be corrected, not only between formal and informal learning but also between one's career and one's personal life. That said, the challenge remains to achieve and then sustain proper balances to varying degree in relationships with one's teachers, other elders, family members, business associates, and other sources of information, expertise, and (yes) wisdom.

Educational theory and practice have long been dominated by the requirements of formal learning. This book seeks to persuade readers through philosophical argument and empirical examples that the balance should shift back towards

the informal. The arguments and examples derive from informal learning in diverse situations, such as leisure activities, as a preparation for and as part of work, and as a means of surviving undesirable circumstances like dead-end jobs and incarceration.

From the Back Cover For too long, theories and practices of learning have been dominated by the requirements of formal learning. Quite simply this book seeks to persuade readers through philosophical argument and empirically grounded examples that the balance should be shifted back towards the informal. These arguments and examples are taken from informal learning in very diverse situations, such as in leisure activities, as a preparation for and as part of work, and as a means of surviving undesirable circumstances like dead-end jobs and incarceration. Informal learning can be fruitfully thought of as developing the capacity to make context sensitive judgments during ongoing practical involvements of a variety of kinds. Such involvements are necessarily indeterminate and opportunistic. Hence there is a major challenge to policy makers in shifting the balance towards informal learning without destroying the very things that are desirable about informal learning and indeed learning in general. The book has implications therefore for formal learning too and the way that teaching might proceed within formally constituted educational institutions such as schools and colleges.