

[BOOKS]

Formal training out the window

Workplace training is becoming learner-defined, and we should embrace it. Ken Batty, executive director of HR, Lenovo Group, Asia Pacific, says for L&D professionals the concept is a no-brainer

Informal Learning at Work

Author Paul Matthews

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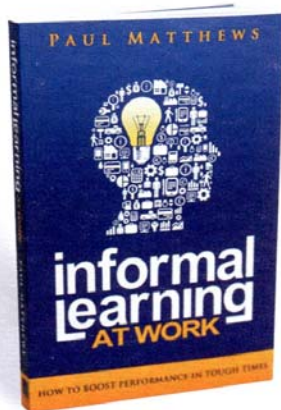
Cost £16.99

★★★

Paul Matthews' book is aimed at learning and development professionals. As such, it is full of information on how people learn, how L&D can respond and the benefits of a

learning environment. The amount of research is stunning—every observation has references to multiple surveys that illuminate his point.

The book is practical. As well as a chapter on things to do, there is a second one on 'more tools and ideas you can use'. The section 'Know it – Find it' is useful, as is the one on the practical



provides a set of simple definitions in a table: formal learning has a structured curriculum, whereas informal learning does not. So informal learning is when the learner decides what he will and won't learn. The chapter ends with a précis of research by Saul Carliner – employees must become more productive more

application of the Centre for Creative Leadership's 70:20:10 concept, a training model that says development comes 70% from on-the-job experience, 20% from feedback and 10% from courses and reading.

Remarkably, though, one thing remains unresolved; the question 'what is informal learning?' is never fully answered. Matthews simply

quickly, they need to develop knowledge and skills as fast as possible, L&D can't always create programmes and "this ushers in the need for informal learning programmes".

But if informal means the curriculum is learner-defined, what if the learner does not select the things that will increase the relevant knowledge and skills? Carliner's definition is surely more that informal learning is learning not developed by L&D people? I am left to conclude that informal learning is like the famous quote about pornography: "I cannot define it but I know it when I see it."

Overall, this is a book L&D professionals will find useful. If I were building a business case for L&D, I would surely find one that played to my situation. Many suggestions are not suitable for a generalist but an L&D practitioner would find many that hit the mark. As such, the book is highly recommended for L&D professionals.