Stripped of most academic writing conventions, it is also eminently readable.

Although not the author’s intention, the book provides an interesting looking-glass into the world of contemporary higher education and how the learning offered there links, or fails to link, to workplace learning. The book provides a refreshing insight into the ‘knowing-doing gap’, whereby knowing is not the same as doing and what happens in the classroom (whether at a university or an industry training department) is often worlds apart from what occurs in the workplace. As the author observes wryly in the first chapter, university academics spend their time ‘researching and arguing over the definitions of informal learning’ while industry learning and development professionals concentrate on introducing ever more formalised workplace learning schemes. Meanwhile, very significant economic and technological changes are impacting on the way learning actually occurs in the workplace. This in turn is impacting on the conditions, content and context of work.

Although essentially offering little that is new, the book nevertheless encourages us to re-think what we actually mean by learning and how we know that learning has actually occurred. The book provides a useful reminder of the concept of learning as a multidimensional activity placed on a continuum from the formal to the informal. Synergies with shifts in higher education pedagogies are interesting, as the author considers workplace learning in terms of being naturally occurring, task conscious, acquisition, and push and pull. He positions these alongside such support mechanisms as flash mentoring and action learning groups within the context of an agile learning organisation. The roles and uses of new technologies are also considered within this, with an interesting section on the sharing of knowledge through the use of social network analysis (SNA).

While fully accepting that this is a not a book written to rigid academic conventions, the exclusion of complete references at some key points is occasionally irksome. The writing style of interspersing extremely short paragraphs into the text (presumably intended for emphasis) was also frustrating at times, especially where these did not permit the adequate development of an interesting point. On the positive side, the book is well illustrated throughout by thumbnail sketches and statistics drawn from a wide variety of organisations, which provides useful insights into areas such as skills shortages and development needs.

As universities are increasingly focussed on enhancing graduate employability, ever more attempts are made to incorporate different types of work-related learning into the higher education curriculum. These need to include consideration of the changing ways of informal workplace learning. This well-timed volume therefore supplies a valuable insight into the types of learning that occur naturally in the workplace and although not the

**Informal Learning at Work**
Paul Matthews
Three Faces Publishing (2013)
Review by Helen Corkill

*Informal Learning at Work* is an interesting and timely book for a variety of reasons. It is not primarily intended or presented as an academic book. The fact that it is written by a workplace learning and development professional with a wealth of practical experience provides the first compelling reason why the book offers engaging reading for those working in higher education.
The prime intention of the book provokes thought as to how some of these could be translated usefully into higher education learning activities.