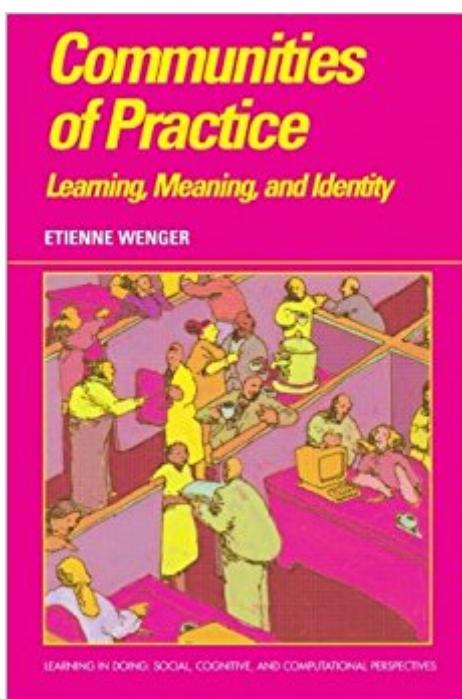The book was found

Communities Of Practice: Learning, Meaning, And Identity (Learning In Doing: Social, Cognitive And Computational Perspectives)

Synopsis

Learning is becoming an urgent topic. Nations worry about the learning of their citizens, companies about the learning of their workers, schools about the learning of their students. But it is not always easy to think about how to foster learning in innovative ways. This book presents a framework for doing that, with a social theory of learning that is ground-breaking yet accessible, with profound implications not only for research, but also for all those who have to foster learning as part of their responsibilites at work, at home, at school.

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Customer Reviews

"The terms of debate about 'knowledge management' and 'learning organizations' are slowly, and finally turning from issues of information and technology to those of human capabilities and the sources of motivation, creativity, and problem-solving skills that create real value in the new economy. Wenger is light years ahead in understanding those sources, and the critical importance of informal communities and 'social learning' in fostering them." Phillip Brook Manville, Partner, McKinsey & Co.

Learning is becoming an urgent topic. Nations worry about the learning of their citizens, companies about the learning of their workers, schools about the learning of their students. But it is not always easy to think about how to foster learning in innovative ways. This book presents a framework for

doing that, with a social theory of learning that is ground-breaking yet accessible, with profound implications not only for research, but also for all those who have to foster learning as part of their responsibilites at work, at home, at school.

This is a really good read on one of the core elements of a situated perspective on learning. It's incredibly accessible (Wenger is so good at making the thing readable and he's a fabulous writer) and super thorough and comprehensive. As someone who's still just exploring this (I only ever read one book on situated learning and I've never taken a graduate course in anything), it's really eye-opening and provocative.My gripe is that there's a lot in this book. A lot. There could be whole books written on boundary, identities, organizational/education design, etc. I'm compelled to re-read this because I fear I missed a lot since it's just got a lot in it.I really wish I had read this book before I started undergrad. Could've changed the way I think about how I learn.

This book was a slow, arduous read, but well worth the effort.I teach at a school that is part of the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) movement. Wenger's book has shed light on why "top-down" implementation of school improvement has failed. The guru of the PLC movement, Richard Dufour (2004), claims that the three big ideas of PLC's are ensuring that students learn, a culture of collaboration and a focus on results. It is in this context that I found Wenger's book valuable in understanding the poverty of the PLC movement.Wenger claims that communities of practice are learning communities. Are Professional Learning Communities true learning communities as described by Wenger? The answer is no. In a learning community there is interplay between reification and participation. Reification is the artifacts and procedures of previous practice. Participation is the activity engaged in by the practitioner for the organization that results in reification. It is not an either/or model, but dualism. It is within this interplay that learning about practice and the ownership of meaning and identity formation takes place.Teachers directed by their employer to become PLCs are required to make such large changes in their teaching practices that they become overwhelmed and lost in establishing new practices. The reason for this is that the PLC regime does not consider the requisite identity work and the time required for teachers to own the meaning of new practices. PLCs are not true learning communities.What about schools? Wenger claims a community of practice emerges when an organization sets forth a structure to accomplish its goal: "... the existence of a community of practice is a response to an institutional mandate, it is not the mandate that produces the practice, it is the community" (p. 244). The practices in which teachers are engaged are developed over time in the process of reification and

participation.Schools represent an effort to manage learning and the acquisition of knowledge regardless of public policy statements. PLCs represent an extreme example of knowledge management by viewing students as disembodied intellects. There is no consideration given to the identity formation of students. According to the PLC mantra, teachers should lead the learning process so that students learn more. Under the PLC regime students can repeat information given and are deemed to have acquired essential learning. However, according to Wenger, unless the student owns the meaning of what is learned, it is not true learning (p. 265).Wenger rightly judges that "Learning and teaching are not inherently linked. Much learning takes place without teaching, and indeed much teaching takes place without learning" (p. 266). Because teaching cannot control its own effects, Wenger advocates that teachers must be opportunistic and work at recognizing the "...emergent character of learning" (p. 267).Wenger advocates developing architecture for learning. This architecture will afford for the three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination and alignment. The interplay and trade-offs allow for identity formation and the acquisition of meaningful knowledge. He further describes the dimensions for learning architecture. These dimensions are found in the dualities of participation/reification, designed/emergent, local global and identification/negotiability (p. 231-236).The reader will find some of Wenger's theory (along with other theorists) reflected in Gherardi'sÃ Â Organizational Knowledge: The Texture of Workplace Learning (Organization and Strategy)Ã Â and Mitchell and Sackney'sÃ Â Sustainable Improvement. Wenger's book is well worth reading for those in public education who want to better understand the phantom of learning in school.Dr. John MerksTeacherRiverview High SchoolRiverviewNew Brunswick

This is a read that got better with time.

Great book to understand how learning, meaning, and identity work within our social learning environments. Again, bought this for my PhD literature review and it helped immensely.

Very easy to read, great book.

Very useful content and a pleasant read

Delivery was prompt and the book was as expected.

Great book delivered fast!

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