

REPRINTING A CLASSIC

Charles Wedemeyer's Learning at the Back Door

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Once again, thanks to the efforts of Information Age Publishing, an out-of-print classic is available. Charles Wedemeyer's *Learning at the Back Door: Reflections on Non-traditional Learning in the Lifespan* has been reprinted. This book has a special place in my professional mind because, as a young associate professor, I reviewed it for *Educational Technology* in 1982. The book was unforgettable, but I hoped my review was forgotten. I panned Wedemeyer's classic.

Here are two excerpts from that review:

Scholarly writing can be both effective and stifling. *Learning at the Back Door* is definitely scholarly writing. The four sections and 12 chapters of this book contain 344 direct quotes and citations. Almost every idea, concept, and statement is backed up by a reference. Sentences range in length up to 50 words, each. They are mostly well-written, but they are long and difficult to understand.

It is obvious that Professor Wedemeyer did his homework before he wrote this book. Readers of *Learning at the Back Door* will have to do their homework, too. It is not a book to be browsed or scanned.... Wede-

meyer believes that learning is a natural and continuous process, and because society is changing so rapidly, the need for educational opportunities throughout a person's life is important. This message is the basis for his book and for why non-traditional, back-door learning (Wedemeyer's term) is needed. Wedemeyer believes educational institutions must respond to this need or lose their vitality and impact.... Wedemeyer's book is complete, well-researched, and amply documented ... my final recommendation on this book is ... as a reference and research source ... it is excellent.

Recently, I reread *Learning at the Back Door*, as well as my decades-old review. Looking through the prism of experience rather than enthusiasm, I now see what a great and classic book Professor Wedemeyer offered us. I still had a hard time reading much of it. My fault, not his.

REFERENCE

Simonson, M. (1982, May). Ed tech literature reviews. *Educational Technology*, 43-44.

