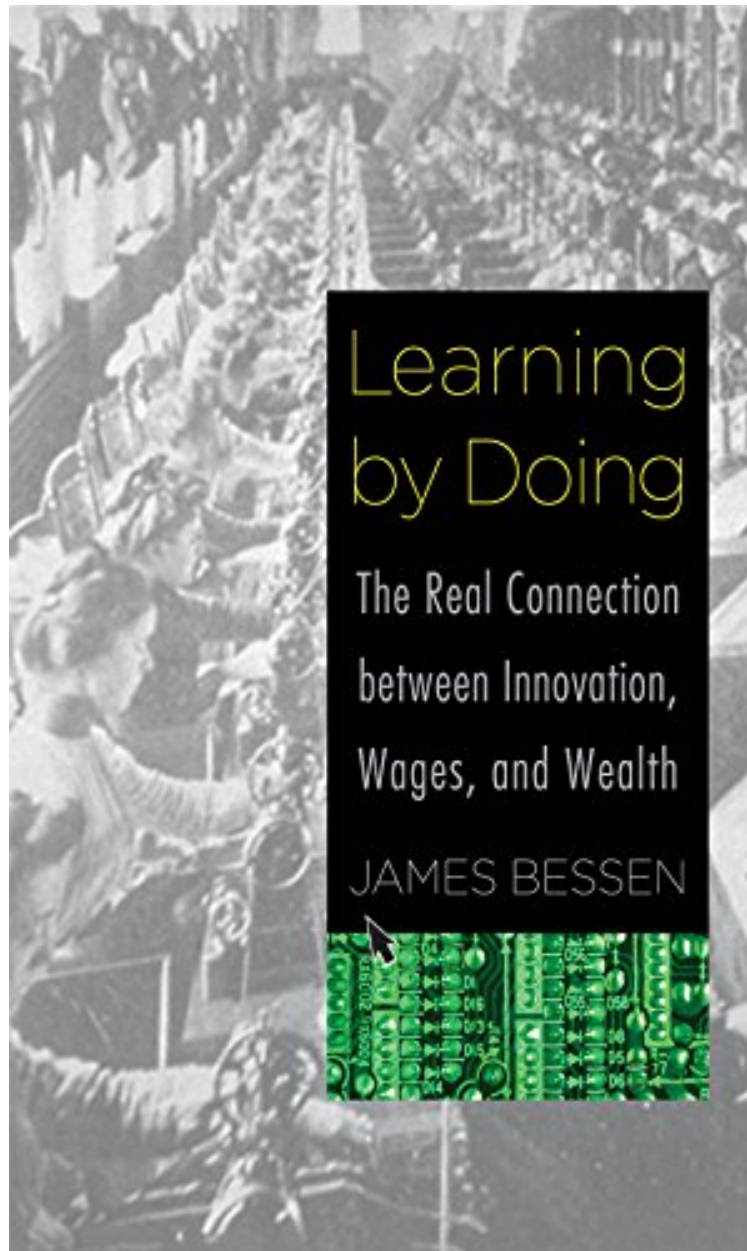


[FREE] Learning by Doing: The Real Connection between Innovation, Wages, and Wealth

# Learning by Doing: The Real Connection between Innovation, Wages, and Wealth

*James Bessen*

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**James Bessen : Learning by Doing: The Real Connection between Innovation, Wages, and Wealth** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Learning by Doing: The Real Connection between Innovation, Wages, and Wealth:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An important "read"By smitkaA very good book, which reflects a sophisticated view of technology [not "blueprints"]. Because technology and innovation are realized, in productivity terms, by groups of people adapting organizations, and because "technology" is embedded in people's ability to do things (including making and improving products and services), learning-by-doing is central. Lots of examples, the ones new to me drawing from the author's work on the history of textile manufacturing. One central theme is whether formal education in the US, in its various streams, enables learning by doing. Unlike Germany, where local employers are on the equivalent of Boards of Education, our schools value the college prep track. He also documents a decline in apprenticeship programs with the weakening of trade unions and other historic routes to getting skills linked closely to work. Thoughtful throughout.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Money in politics is slowly choking innovationBy KJListen to Jim's interview on the EconTalk podcast at [...] but then buy the book to get the details such as the huge productivity disparity among mills using the same weaving machines in different countries due the difference in skills and abilities of workers and managers. The book also healthily questions the typical historical cult of personality (and individuality) view of innovation. Most importantly, Jim shows how, compared to the more distant past, innovation policy has gradually moved in the "wrong direction over the last decades." He convincingly ties this shift to the pernicious impact of money in politics, which influences policy to the detriment of voters, but that's hidden from them.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. with a lot of very useful insights and historical dataBy RexDAn interesting view of how technology propagates, with a lot of very useful insights and historical data. A couple of unexpected takeaways are that there are greater lags than one might expect; often capital benefits more than labor at the beginning, but that once the technology becomes common labor gains back its share. And finally that many key developments involved a lot of idea sharing at the beginning, rather than patent exploitation. A very useful check on some of the ideas floating around now about how labor is doomed.

Technology is constantly changing our world, leading to more efficient production. In the past, technological advancements dramatically increased wages, but during the last three decades, the median wage has remained stagnant. Many of today's machines have taken over the work of humans, destroying old jobs while increasing profits for business owners and raising the possibility of ever-widening economic inequality. Author James Bessen argues that avoiding this fate will require unique policies to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to implement the rapidly evolving technologies. At present this technical knowledge is mostly unstandardized and difficult to acquire, learned through job experience rather than in classrooms. Nor do current labor markets generally provide strong incentives for learning on the job. Basing his analysis on intensive research into economic history as well as today's labor markets, the author explores why the benefits of technology take years, sometimes decades, to emerge. Although the right policies can hasten this process, policy has moved in the wrong direction in recent decades, protecting politically influential interests to the detriment of emerging technologies and broadly shared prosperity.

"Mr. Bessen sets out to refute the arguments of . . . techno-pessimists, relying on economic analysis and on a fresh reading of history."mdash;Tamar Jacoby, The Wall Street Journal