

ABSTRACT

Literacy at Work and in School A Descriptive Study

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This study was designed to generate an insightful description of in-school and on-the-job literacy processes with a view to assessing the degree of congruence between them.

Much of the thinking behind education reform in St. Lucia is based on the assumption that skills learned in school will transfer automatically to real world situations and in particular, the world of work. A growing body of research, however, seems to challenge this assumption. If this assertion is correct, then implications for school to work transition are profound. This study is an attempt to clarify the nature of the relationship between the two contexts.

Two case study vocational classrooms and two corresponding jobs constituted the sample for this study. Data was collected through a literacy task analysis in both contexts, which included 10 hours of on-site observations, subsequent interviews, and document analyses. Content analysis was used to analyze the data.

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A qualitative discussion of the results reveals a considerable gap between the two foci. Implications for policy makers, teachers, educators and those responsible for shaping educational reform for bridging schooling with working are discussed.

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