Massachusetts Workplace Education Recommended Readings


Belfiore, M.E. and Burnaby, B. 1995. Teaching English in the Workplace. Toronto: OISE Press. Describes the process of developing a workplace literacy program, including needs analysis, curriculum development, oversight committees and program evaluation. Based on the Canadian experience, but very relevant and useful for any context.


Field Notes. Volume 15, Number 1, fall 2005. Boston: System for Adult Education Support (SABES). This entire issue focuses on workplace education in Massachusetts. Articles cover how to build employer / provider partnerships, conduct a needs analysis, develop curriculum, navigate the current workforce development system, and address job readiness with adult learners. Authors include C. Polk, A. Perrault, R. Goldberg, L. Sheridan, J. L. Utech and others.

Focus on Basics: Connecting Research and Practice. Volume 7, Issue B, November 2004. This issue focuses entirely on workplace education. Articles offer insights and approaches to key workplace education challenges like balancing stakeholder agendas and expectations, developing contextualized curriculum, benefitting as a provider, and continuing workplace education programs once funding ends. Authors include T. Defoe S. Folinsbee, P. Jurmo, C. Nelson and other leaders in the field.


Gowan, S.G. 1992. The Politics of Workforce Literacy: A Case Study. New York: Teachers College Press. This study of a functional context program for hospital workers shows that the workers, in many cases, found the curriculum to be unmotivating and irrelevant. Questions the assumptions underlying the functional context approach.

Hull, G. Hearing Other Voices: A Critical Assessment of Popular Views on Literacy and Work. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. Argues that, if Workplace Education is to prepare workers to take initiative, solve problems, and work in teams on the job, it needs to involve participants in shaping program goals and running the education program itself.


Sarmiento, T. and Schurman, S. April 1992. A Job-Linked Literacy Program for SPC: Are We Talking about Worker Training, Work Reorganization, or More Equitable Workplaces? A paper prepared for the Work in America Institute. Analyzes Workplace Education programs that focus on narrow job-related skills and do not deal with other factors that inhibit worker productivity.


Waugh, S. (Folinsbee). 1992. An Organizational Approach to Workplace Basic Skills: A Guidebook for Literacy Practitioners. Ottawa: YMCA-YWCA Employment Initiatives. Argues that worker productivity can be shaped by many factors other than their basic skills. Shows how an organization can analyze those factors and develop a systematic strategy for addressing them through education, training, and other organizational development activities.