



TVET - Key To A WorldClass Workforce

INSIDE TVET

CVQs - closing gap between work and school

PART 2

IN PART ONE of this interview, published in the **DAILY NATION** of April 6, 2009, Henderson Wiltshire, a secondary school teacher of some 23 years' experience, described the Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) training, assessment and certification programme as a welcomed addition to the education system in Barbados.

Wiltshire was one of a group of educators/trainers to complete the Assessor training and certification programme conducted by the TVET Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, and Jamaica's National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), in 2007.

Assessors, together with verifiers, form the foundation of a reliable system of quality assurance for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) programme. NVQs are competence-based certification geared towards training and assessment that rests on employer specified standards of occupational competence.

NVQs are awarded once individuals have demonstrated that they meet the knowledge, skills and attitude required by the occupational standards in a real or realistic work environment. The CARICOM-approved CVQs are the regional equivalent of NVQs.

In Part Two of this interview, Henderson continues to share with readers his views and experiences of the N/CVQ programme and its benefits to the local education and training system.

Q: What you have learned from the NVQ Assessment training and certification?

A: From the NVQ Assessment training I have learnt a lot more of the NVQ system and the benefits it can have for technical students, and employers in general. Additionally, the training has made me more knowledgeable about standards such as how they are made up. I have also learnt what stakeholders such as companies and educational institutions throughout the Caribbean expect, through interpretation of the standards produced.

The training has also afforded me the opportunity to learn how to plan, conduct, and review assessments in various subject areas.

Q: What will be some of the benefits to the Vocational Education and Training (VET) and General Education systems?

A: There would be a common programme for all schools with students who are not writing CXC. Students who study technical subjects would be better equipped for the job market as they would be trained based on what industry requires and to a specific standard.

Non CXC students now being certified would have tangible evidence of their time spent in the respective Technical Vocational programmes. This would make them more marketable in Barbados, the

Caribbean and beyond.

Q: What will be some of the benefits to Barbados' overall education system?

A: Some of the pressure on the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic would be relieved as schools/centres would competently train students for the job market and higher learning in technical and vocational programmes.

The NVQ (assessment and training model) would give students, both on the CXC and non-CXC streams, another method of training, assessment and certification. Students in this programme would no longer have to worry about ending a course with a failing grade. This programme would therefore remove the fear of failing among students as it is not time-based and students can work at their own pace.

I (also) believe this form of training would help reduce absenteeism and

lateness among students in the non-CXC stream.

Q: Please share any final thoughts.

A: In general, I believe that the CVQ training, assessment and certification programme will be a welcomed product in the education system in Barbados. There will be significant benefits for students, teachers, workers and employers.

The workforce I believe would be better trained; hence the quality of work produced would be greatly enhanced. This also helps to ensure that Barbados remains competitive in the global market.



HENDERSON WILTSHIRE

CARICOM has officially adopted the workforce development model of competence-based training, assessment and certification and has mandated that national training agencies (NTAs) in the region, such as the TVET Council, work together to put systems in place for the award of CVQs.

The NTAs have been authorised to award NVQs and CVQs, Levels 1 to 5, to members of the workforce who have been assessed and deemed competent, while the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) will be responsible for the award of the CVQ Level 1 in secondary schools.