



TVET - Key To A WorldClass Workforce

# INSIDE TVET

## CVQs – closing gap between work and school

“IN GENERAL, I believe that the CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification) 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.”

This view was expressed by Henderson Wiltshire, a secondary school teacher of some 23 years experience, who was one of a group of educators/trainers to complete the Assessor training and certification programme conducted by the **Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council**, in collaboration with sister agency the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), Jamaica, in 2007.

Assessors, together with verifiers, form the foundation of a reliable system of quality assurance for the **National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs)** 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.

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 regional equivalent of NVQs.

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.

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

**Q:** Please give some background on your teaching experience?

**A:** I have been teaching for 23 years. I taught for one year at St Giles Senior School and then on to St Lucy Secondary school until present. I teach Technical Drawing, Woodwork, Building Construction, Carpentry and Technology Education.

I am a trained teacher. I completed the Technical Teachers Training Course at Erdiston College from 1989-91, and have a Bachelor of Education (Technical and Vocational Education).

**Q:** Please describe the NVQJ in Assessment training and certification process that you underwent.

**A:** I completed the NVQJ in Assessment training Level 4 in 2007

### PART 1

in Barbados. The course was coordinated by the TVET Council in association with the Ministry of Education and NCTVET of Jamaica. The training included very intense two-week training courses that included training in Competency Based Assessment, Interpreting Competency Standards as well as Item Writing.

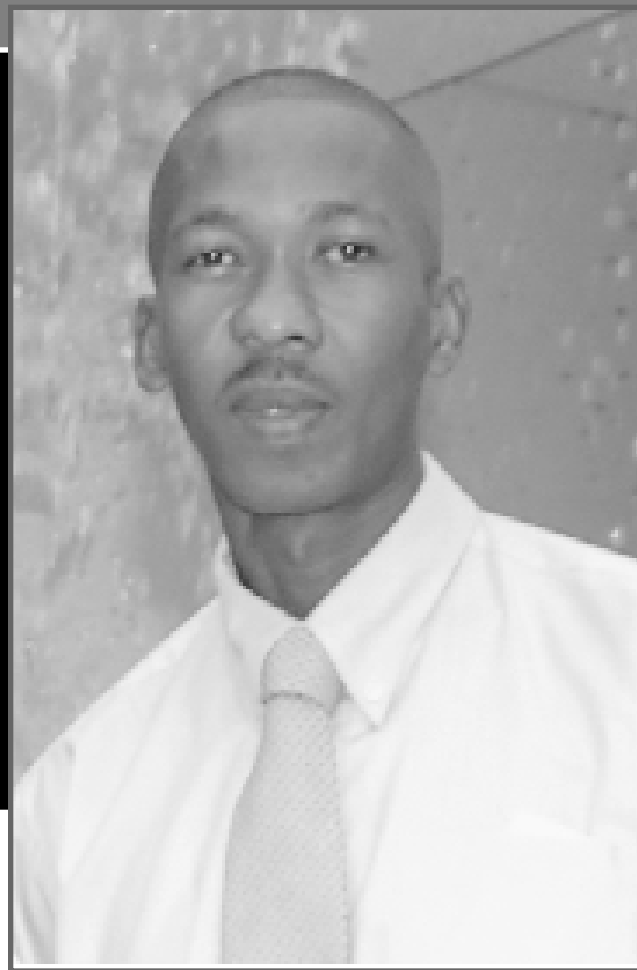
Each candidate then prepared a portfolio after the initial training, which involved all aspects of the training programme. This portfolio was then presented before a panel comprising TVET Council and NCTVET personnel.

**Q:** Was that the first time you had been introduced to Competence-Based Assessment (CBA) or did you have any prior experience (i.e. training or work-based)?

**A:** Yes. CBA was a course covered in my degree programme in 2001; I completed a practicum using Competency Base.

**Q:** Please state if and how the Assessment training and certification that you underwent with the TVET Council has enhanced your performance as a teacher.

**A:** The Assessment training has greatly enhanced my performance as a teacher. Having been exposed to



HENDERSON WILTSHIRE

interpreting building standards in more detail, I am now better able to prepare students for the world of work.

Additionally, students are assessed using a method that reflects their work especially the non-CXC groups.

**Q:** Can you explain the difference between how you taught and assessed before the Assessment training and certification and how you teach/assess now.

**A:** In my teaching now, I pay more attention to what industry expects in terms of standards and ensures that my students are taught to meet such standards.

Before the Assessment training and certification I mainly assessed students in the non-CXC groups with paper tests and some practical where they would receive grades or scores. Now, these students are assessed only in terms of competence of particular tasks. No grades are assigned to these students only competent or not yet competent.

Also, I now apply the concept of standards in all the subject areas that I teach. These include Technical Drawing and Technology Education.