

# CANTA/COL Launch of Online Platform to Host CVQ Courses



**20 April 2021**

CANTA/COL Launch of Online CVQ Programmes for Assessors, Verifiers and Instructors

Professor Asha Kanwar  
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL)

Honourable Jeffrey Lloyd, Dr Laurette Bristol, Mr Henderson Eastmond, Dr Martin Baptiste, Ms Frances Ruffin, Colleagues and Friends

It is a pleasure to be part of this official launch of the COL-CANTA Moodle platform.

It is now more than 30 years since the CARICOM Heads of Government agreed to establish the Caribbean Single Market and Economy as a response to the challenges and opportunities presented by global developments. A key element within this single market is the need for regional qualifications that enable skilled workers to move and work freely within the Market. National Training Authorities or NTAs, have a crucial role in certifying workers to agreed standards. They, in turn, rely on trained assessors, verifiers and instructors to assure quality and consistency across the region.

In 2015, you shared your concern with COL regarding the variation in content and methodology used for training people for these crucial roles. In addition, the costs of travel could be a barrier to offering face to face training, particularly for NTAs within CARICOM countries that were not yet approved to award Caribbean Vocational Qualifications and had to rely on in-country consultancies from NTAs that had already been approved. Things have changed today and because of the technology in place, Grenada is able to virtually train assessors in Antigua and Barbuda, without the need to travel.

Together, we have worked to develop digital resources for all three Caribbean Vocational Qualifications for assessors, verifiers and instructors and piloted the online model, with several cohorts of assessors. I want to particularly acknowledge the contribution of the team from the three NTAs in Barbados, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago, who worked closely with COL's consultant, often beyond the call of duty, to design and develop digital resources and pilot and consolidate the delivery model. They have continued to work with our specialist in skills development Ms Terry Neal, whose passion and commitment have expedited the process. It is because of this close collaboration and constant engagement that the barriers have been overcome and we are here today.

After our promising start, there was another challenge—which was the lack of a sustainable option for Moodle hosting which meant that it was no longer possible to take on new cohorts for training. I am pleased to say that COL stepped in and addressed this, which was opportune as in these days of COVID 19, in-person training is no longer an option.

Globally, educators and trainers agree that online and blended learning are the future of education and training. For TVET, the question is always 'how do we do practical training online?'. And assessment, verification and instruction are practical skills. They need to be done with real people showing evidence

of real skills. But even before the crisis, COL and CANTA were working together on how to develop such practical skills online, blending training at a distance with mentored practice in workplace settings and the collection of digital evidence to demonstrate competence. Appropriate technologies can be harnessed to develop innovative solutions that work for everyone.

As we know, the pandemic has also affected economies everywhere including in the CARICOM. The International Labour Organisation's 2020 Labour Overview for Latin America and the Caribbean, published at the end of last year, noted that due to the pandemic, labour markets in Latin America and the Caribbean had regressed at least 10 years and that the crisis was far from over. As the Regional Director, ILO stated "We are entering 2021 with employment in intensive care "and "This is the largest crisis that this report has ever recorded in its entire existence." which covers three decades. He suggested that the countries of the region now face the challenge of "laying the foundations for a new and better normal" to achieve economic growth with employment. And as I always say, crisis generates creativity, and I'm sure our people's ingenuity will turn this crisis into an opportunity for all.

COL is delighted to be working with you to support a new normal for assessor, verifier and instructor training. We hope that this will in turn inspire new models of blended skills development across the region for achieving scale and sustainability.

The Commonwealth of Learning promotes learning for sustainable development through the use of technologies. COL is your organisation and it works for you. Please make full use of our expertise and resources. We are just a call or email away!