

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Effectiveness of Competency-Based Education in Preparing Individuals for Job Market Requirements in Clerical and Related Occupations**

**Enid A. Clarke**

This dissertation examines the effectiveness of Competency-Based Education (CBE) in preparing individuals for clerical and related occupations in Jamaica. The multi-methods approach that was used for this investigation, took the form of a job market survey, an experiment and a students' evaluation of CBE. The survey entailed 250 questionnaires administered to fifty firms seeking information on requirements for entry-level personnel, for skills, duties and tasks, for levels of proficiency and for psycho-social qualities. The survey results showed that Jamaican employers had direct preference for entry-level employees with passes in GCE/CXC, specific as well as core skills, together with appropriate psycho-social attributes which will enable them to perform at high levels of proficiency. For the experiment, three curriculum areas contained in instructional packages were taught to the experimental group by CBE. Simultaneously, the control group was taught the related topics by lecture. The results of the experiment revealed the potential of CBE to better deliver the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employers, than lecture. Statistical tests found the overall differences in achievement scores significant. While for the disaggregated results, by school and by instructional packages, and for two-way interactions, the differences in scores were all in favour of CBE, the difference was not significant in all cases. In the evaluation phase of the study, students in the experimental group responded favourably to being taught by CBE. On a Likert-type scale spanning strongly agree to strongly disagree, they showed a high level of agreement that CBE was an effective means of knowledge/skill acquisition and attitude formation. Their overall perception of CBE was also high. The research report includes tabular as well as graphic presentations. Appendices are included. The implications for the study are stated and several recommendations made, relating to the design and implementation of Competency-Based Education programmes in Jamaica.

**Keywords:** Enid A. Clarke; Competency-Based Education; Effective Teaching/Learning Technique; Employers' Expectation for Clerical & Related Personnel, Skills and Attitudes.