

A MODEL TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

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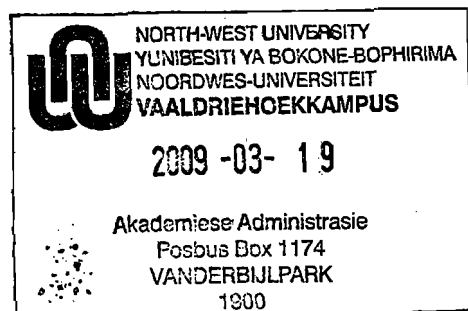
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DECLARATION

I, MATSILISO MARY TLOKOTSI, solemnly declare that this work is original and the result of my own labour. It has never, on any previous occasion, been presented in part or whole to any institution or Board for the award of any Degree.

I further declare that all information used and quoted has been duly acknowledged by complete reference.

Student

Signed 

Date: 13 / 03 / 09

Promoter

Signed 

Date: 13 / 03 / 09

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late grandmother, Mme Lithlare Johanna Moloi, my late mother Lintenne Bellinah Moloi, my late aunt Sesi Masereti Martha Moloi without whom I would not have been able to reach this high level of development, my late father-in-law, Papa Abram Motshele Tlokotsi for his motivation and support and for taking care of my children when I was studying for a Master of Education degree. I also dedicate this work to my husband, Kobuwe, for his support; my two sons, Katleho, who persistently motivated me to keep going and Setjhaba for equipping me with computer skills to type the thesis myself.

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ABSTRACT

In South African classrooms a strong emphasis is placed on assessing learners by means of portfolios. Through the utilisation of portfolios it is envisaged that learner growth and development should be enhanced in order for learners to become expert learners who are strategic, self-regulated and self-reflecting. This study aimed to determine how effective the implementation of portfolio assessment presently is, and if necessary, to develop a model that could improve the implementation of portfolio assessment in the Senior Phase, Grade 9 in particular.

By means of explanatory mixed method research through the completion of questionnaires by 369 learners and 88 educators, and focus group interviews conducted with 36 of the 88 educators from the Sedibeng West District, disconcerting results were revealed. It appeared that educators are not equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment in order to enhance learner growth and development.

Based on the disturbing findings, a model was designed to highlight the processes and components involved in the successful implementation of portfolio assessment.

As no evidence of any other model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment at school level could be located, the contribution of this study lies in the development of a tool that could be utilized by the Department of Education to train educators to become effective implementers of portfolio assessment.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 ORIENTATION

Educational assessment in South African schools is in the process of transformation (Department of Education, 2007:7; Department of Education, 2002:2; Department of Education, 2000:8). With the implementation of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of October 1995, assessment moved away from the traditional examination-driven approach to an alternative approach that is seen to have greater educational value in terms of the kind of teaching and learning it encourages (Grosser & Lombard, 2005:42). Traditional assessment approaches which focus on assessment of learning such as “pen on paper”, are seriously questioned and alternative approaches that focus on assessment for learning are proposed. These include open-ended questions, exhibits, demonstrations, hands-on-experiments, computer simulations and portfolios (Herman, 1992:74; Department of Education, 2000:8). Stiggins (2002a:758) distinguishes between the two types of assessment practices (traditional and alternative) as follows, namely ***assessment of learning*** and ***assessment for learning***. He asserts that assessment of learning has been in existence for decades. In analysing this type of assessment, Stiggins (2002a:762) contends that the processes entailed in this assessment practice do not address the needs of the learners but those of policy makers, education officials and, more specifically it is meant for public accountability and the raising of standards.

According to Stiggins (2002a:759), assessment of learning focuses on the achievements of learners as reflected in test and examinations scores and its main purpose is to inform the stakeholders in education of the extent to which the learners have progressed. The test and examination scores also reveal whether the standards have been met or not and, finally, they provide information which indicates whether the educators have done the work they have been hired to do (Stiggins, 2002a:759-761).

Assessment of learning promotes rote learning and most educators are used to educational practices which promote this type of learning. The teaching, learning and assessment activities taking place within this context are easy to construct, teach and assess, but do not promote meaningful learning. The traditional assessment approach is judgmental and discriminative, does not motivate learners in the same way and is characterized by failure, defeat and hopelessness (Geyser, 2001:3; Mayer, 2002:227-228).

In contrast with assessment of learning, assessment for learning focuses on the outcomes of learning and addresses the individual needs of the learner (Stiggins, 2002a:761-763). Assessment for learning places learners' needs and interest at the centre of teaching and learning. This assessment approach promotes the holistic development of the learner. The assessment processes prevailing within the approach are specifically designed for the development of the learner's total being, namely knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:165,166).

Assessment for learning promotes teaching and learning which is characterized by a variety of assessment strategies and techniques, among others journals, exhibitions and portfolios (Davies & Waverly, 2005:1-2). These assessment techniques and strategies enable learners to develop skills for constructing and transferring knowledge. Mayer (2002:226) contends that assessment for learning goes beyond retention of knowledge to transfer of knowledge and leads to meaningful ways of learning.

Educators who assess for learning use day-to-day classroom assessment activities to involve learners directly in their own learning, thus increasing their confidence and motivation to learn (Willis, 1993:383). Chappius and Stiggins (2002:42) are of the opinion that learners who engage in assessment for learning use assessment feedback to set goals, make learning decisions related to their own improvement, develop an understanding of what quality looks like, self assess and communicate their status and progress towards the established goals.

Although experimenting with alternative assessment approaches is welcomed, it also needs to be established whether these approaches promote the quality of learning and maximize learner achievement (Stiggins, 2002a:765). According to Black and William (1998:3) and Herman (1992:75), one important aspect relating to quality refers to the extent to which assessment promotes the motivation and desire to learn and to continue learning.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The National Curriculum Statement (NCS), which guides teaching, learning and assessment and advocates a learner-centred approach, is based on the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) (Vermeulen, 2002:75). Outcomes-Based Education places a strong emphasis on enhancing learner development and improving the process of learning and teaching through the application of assessment practices underpinned by the principles of assessment for learning (Department of Education, 2007:7).

Furthermore, in support of the assessment for learning approach the NCS places a strong emphasis on assessing the progress of learning by means of portfolios (Department of Education, 2005:4). In the literature, the portfolio is defined in a variety of ways. However, a definition by Martin-Kniep (1993) captures its essence when he states that *"a portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' work that exhibits the students' efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection"*.

According to Klenowski (2002:219), portfolios can be used for learning, assessment, appraisal and promotional purposes. Portfolio assessment informs learners how well they develop their skills, knowledge and dispositions and what they need to do to develop them further (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281; Combrinck, 2003:57). Portfolios give learners a chance to take charge of their own learning, to assume responsibility and ownership of their learning and finally to realize that assessment is an integral part of

learning (Ellery & Sutherland, 2004:100). In addition to this, portfolios provide learners with profiles of their emerging skills to help them to become increasingly independent learners (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281). The above-mentioned discussion clearly indicates that portfolio assessment can be utilized as a tool for promoting assessment for learning.

Based on the importance of portfolio assessment in the NCS, it is reasonable to assume that educators, as the main facilitators of the classroom practice, are entrusted with a serious obligation and responsibility to ensure that portfolio assessment is effectively and efficiently implemented. Educators need to be assisted and given adequate support in order to overcome problems and challenges that they may encounter while implementing portfolio assessment, at the same time assisting learners in compiling their portfolios.

In an attempt to assist educators to implement portfolio assessment effectively, the Department of Education organized and conducted workshops. These workshops exposed educators to short term courses, which (in the opinion of the Department of Education) were designed to equip educators with knowledge, skills and strategies to enable educators to implement portfolio assessment in the classroom. Unfortunately, according to the opinion and experience of the researcher, this raises a point of concern as these short term workshops engaged and exposed educators to courses which only familiarized them with very limited principles related to assessment for learning and the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The above concern is confirmed by Cress (1996:100-101) and Le Grange and Reddy (in Reddy, 2004:37) and Davies and Waverly (2005:1-2) who argue that educators who are already in the practice are not adequately trained and developed to implement assessment for learning through the use of portfolios. This implies that educators are not in a position to implement assessment for learning through the use of portfolios effectively. Furthermore, Cress (1996:101-103) argues that the Department of Education, through these short term workshops, did not disseminate the concepts and information related to

the new assessment approach and process very well. The conception of meaning was presented in a very vague way.

As a result, there are currently handicaps prevailing in the classroom that hamper the effective implementation of assessment for learning through the use of portfolios.

Cress (1996:100-101) mentions the following as factors that hamper the effective implementation of the principles of assessment for learning: strict adherence to prescribed content in the core syllabi and educator reliance on narrowly designed assessment methods and techniques that still keep them trapped in a talk-and-chalk approach. The talk-and-chalk approach influences the retention of and emphasis on assessment practices which promote memorization and reproduction of facts. Cress (1996:100) further contends that other factors which contribute to these handicaps in the classroom are the educators' reluctance to explore creative and innovative ways of assessing. She further argues that problems prevail, due to the many assessment changes which the Department of Education introduces that have to be incorporated. These changes, according to Cress (1996:103), contribute immensely to the drawbacks and confusion regarding changes that are prevailing in the classroom. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for educators to implement educational reforms effectively.

The concerns and views expressed by Cress (1996) are further confirmed by Stiggins (2002a:762). The majority of educators have never been exposed or familiarized with sufficient training related to the implementation of assessment principles and processes entailed in assessment for learning. Educators have not been given an opportunity to learn to apply assessment for learning as a powerful tool for teaching and learning in the classroom, and therefore most educators find it difficult to implement it.

Stiggins (2002a:762) argues that it is important for educators to be familiarized with the principles and processes entailed in assessment for learning as these principles underpin the implementation of portfolio

assessment. He asserts that if educators are familiarized with these principles and guided on how to translate them into practice, educators could transform day to day classroom assessment into a powerful tool that would enable them and learners to do their work effectively and consequently enhance greater learning among all learners.

The importance of the effective implementation of assessment for learning is further corroborated by the ideas of Gwele (2001:92-94). The latter asserts that this new assessment approach represents the possibilities of integrating assessment with instruction and learning. This assessment approach has the possibility of encouraging the development of higher-order thinking skills through collaborative learning which, in essence, will enable educators and learners to interact in the teaching, learning and assessment process. Through these interactions, learners can learn to reflect critically on their learning experiences and consequently develop skills to continue learning. In short, the assessment processes entailed in assessment for learning, will enable learners to become expert learners who are strategic, self-regulated and reflective (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:1).

The concerns raised above imply that there is a need to familiarize educators with the principles entailed in assessment for learning as they underpin the use of portfolios. The introduction of Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) with its strong focus on the use of portfolios (Department of Education, 2005:4) places educators in a position in which they find themselves confronted with a huge challenge. Educators find it difficult to implement and manage the practices entailed in portfolio assessment (Mayer, 2002:226) as they are not clear of what is actually required of them. Furthermore, the approach appears to be an unwelcome challenge in their teaching environment. In addition to this, educators tend to view portfolio assessment as a practice loaded with a lot of administrative work.

As a result, educators who are used to teaching and assessment practices which promote the retention of knowledge, experience difficulties when designing teaching and assessment practices advocated by this new

approach. These difficulties result from the fact that educators are not well acquainted with the principles entailed within the assessment for learning approach (Le Grange & Reddy in Reddy, 2004:37-38; Davies & Waverly, 2005:1-2).

As the researcher could not find any research documenting the effectiveness of portfolio assessment in South African classrooms, the following central problem question is formulated for the study: **How effective is the implementation of portfolio assessment, and if not, how can the implementation of portfolio assessment be improved?** Within this central question the following sub-questions arise:

- What are the criteria for the effective implementation of portfolio assessment?
- Are educators equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment?
- Does the current way of implementing portfolio assessment promote assessment for learning?
- What do educators do in particular to ensure that the implementation of portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning?
- What characteristics should a model yield to enable educators who are already in the practice, to improve their knowledge and skills in order to promote assessment for learning through the use of portfolios?

1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of the study is to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment. For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on Grade 9 educators and learners. The emphasis that is placed on the evidence of assessment tasks in the portfolio for obtaining the General Education and Training Certificate provides the rationale to conduct the research with Grade 9 educators and learners. The overall aim was operationalized as follows:

- by determining the criteria for the effective implementation of portfolio assessment by means of literature review;
- by establishing whether educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment by means of a literature review and an empirical research;
- by determining whether the current way of implementing portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning by means of empirical research;
- by investigating what educators do in particular to ensure that the implementation of portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning by means of empirical research; and
- by determining the characteristics of a model to enable practicing educators to improve their knowledge and skills in order to promote assessment for learning through the use of portfolios.

1.4 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The aims of this research were achieved by means of the following methods:

1.4.1 Literature study

An intensive study of the literature dealing with the traditional assessment of learning and alternative assessment for learning approaches, portfolio assessment and its application in the South African teaching scenario, were reviewed to serve as background knowledge for the study and for the compilation of a questionnaire and the focus group interview schedule. Relevant literature was obtained from the EBSCO host and NEXUS databases. The following key words were used to conduct the literature search: assessment, traditional assessment, alternative assessment, portfolio, self- reflection, self-regulation and Socio Cognitive Theory.

1.4.2 Empirical research

1.4.2.1 Research paradigm

The proposed study focused on a positivist and interpretivist paradigm. It was the researcher's intention to act as an objective observer as well as to be subjectively involved in the research (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:33). Firstly, a quantitative method based on positivism was utilized to evaluate the implementation of portfolio assessment by means of a questionnaire to educators and learners. Secondly, a qualitative method based on interpretivism was utilized to understand how educators construct meaning of the principles involved in the implementation of portfolio assessment by means of focus group interviews with the educators.

1.4.2.2 Research method

As it was the intention of the researcher to construct a rich and meaningful picture of the implementation of portfolio assessment in South African classrooms, a mixed-method approach was utilized in this study to determine to what extent the implementation of portfolio assessment complies with the principles of assessment for learning. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used complementary to each other in order to provide a more elaborate approach to the research problem as well as to produce a deeper understanding (Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:261). In this study, explanatory mixed-method research was utilized. The quantitative data was collected and analysed first. Thereafter, the qualitative data was collected and analysed. The qualitative data helped to explain the quantitative data obtained (Ivankova *et al.*, 2007:264). The quantitative data provided a general picture of the research problem and the qualitative data explained or extended the general picture.

1.4.2.2.1 Quantitative research

Quantitative research was chosen as it was the intention of the researcher to establish or confirm a relationship or an association, namely between the

implementation of portfolios and the criteria for assessment for learning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:95). Furthermore, the researcher wanted to contribute to the theory regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:95; Ivankova *et al.*, 2007:255).

1.4.2.2.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research wants to unravel and reveal multiple perspectives held by different individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:113). Qualitative research was also applicable to this study as it was the researcher's intention to understand the implementation of portfolio assessment from the participants' point of view.

1.4.2.3 Research design

1.4.2.3.1 Quantitative

As part of the quantitative research, a non-experimental, descriptive design was utilized. A descriptive design was suitable for this research as this study entails a first investigation and the researcher simply wanted to provide a summary of a questionnaire used, in order to assess the nature of existing practices related to the implementation of portfolio assessment. No intervention took place (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:24, 215).

1.4.2.3.2 Qualitative

As part of the qualitative research, a phenomenological study was utilized. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:139) define a phenomenological study as a study that attempts to understand peoples' perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation. The phenomenological method relies entirely on interviews. The researcher utilized the qualitative method, in order to establish how individuals make sense of a particular experience or situation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26). In the context of the study, the researcher intended to capture the participants' experiences related to the implementation of portfolio assessment through focus group interviews.

1.4.2.4 Population and sample

The target population for this study comprised all Grade 9 educators and learners. Due to time and logistical constraints a sample was selected. By means of purposive sampling, all Grade 9 learners and educators from the 46 secondary schools (township as well as ex-Model C schools) in the Sedibeng West District (D8) of the Gauteng Department of Education were invited to take part in the research. The researcher was of the opinion that the desired information would be gathered from the sample. As representativeness is an important aspect in sampling, the researcher made sure that the sample contained the same characteristics as the population (Strydom & Venter, 2002:201). The learner sample was multi-cultural in nature and comprised different genders. The educator sample was also multi-cultural in nature, representative of all the different Learning Areas and comprised educators from different genders, age groups, years of experience and qualifications. The sample comprised the following participants: learners ($n = 369$) and educators ($n = 88$). Another reason for utilizing purposive sampling for this research is based on the argumentation of Nieuwenhuis (2007a:90) that purposive sampling is vital to the success of focus group interviews.

For the focus group interviews, only educators who were willing to participate were selected. Of the 88 educators who initially took part in the study only 36 were willing to take part in the focus group interviews. The 36 were randomly assigned to six groups. The researcher conducted the study with six focus groups that each comprised of six participants. Ultimately, only 33 participants presented themselves for the interviews. Two participants never indicated their reasons for not being available. One participant cited personal reasons for not honouring the interview appointment. Focus group 2, 3 and 4 proceeded with the study with only five educators participating in each of the groups.

In summary, 88 educators and 369 learners took part in the quantitative study and 36 of the initial 88 educators took part in the qualitative study.

1.4.2.5 Data collection instrument

1.4.2.5.1 Quantitative study: questionnaire

As the researcher wanted to learn more about the opinions and experiences of a large population, a questionnaire was a suitable instrument to survey a sample of the population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:183).

Information gathered from the literature study was used to develop and design two structured questionnaires with closed questions, for educators and learners respectively, to gather information regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment. Group administration of the questionnaires, by the researcher personally, was applied (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:157). The perceptions and views of the participants were measured by using a Likert scale. This provided an ordinal measure of the participants' viewpoints (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:148,167) (*cf.* Annexure A). The responses obtained from the learner questionnaire were utilized to support or refute the responses received by the educators.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted with groups of educators and learners of the population who were not part of the actual study, in order to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated to determine the reliability of the various sections in the questionnaire, and inter-item correlations were also determined for the various questionnaire items. Validity of the questionnaire was determined by considering face, content and construct validity (*cf.* 4.6.1.3).

1.4.2.5.2 Qualitative study: focus group interviews

Phenomenological researchers depend almost exclusively on interviews with individuals who have direct experience with the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:139). For the purpose of this study, focus group interviews were utilized.

The focus group interviews were used to complement the outcomes obtained from the questionnaire. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007a:90), the use of focus group interviews is based on the assumption that group interaction will be productive in widening the range of responses and produce data rich in detail that is difficult to achieve with other research methods. The researcher was also of the opinion that the focus group interviews would elicit responses that might not have surfaced during the completion of the questionnaire and would enable participants to feel more comfortable talking in a group than in one-on-one interviews (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:146).

The interview schedule was pre-tested with a selected number of respondents (educators, (n=50) and learners (n=50)) from the target population (who were not part of the actual study) regarding its qualities of measurement and appropriateness and to review the questions for clarity (Vermeulen, 1998:88).

Only one focus group interview was conducted with each group. The interviews lasted for one hour and took place after school at a school that was central to all the participants in a particular group.

1.4.2.6 Data analysis

1.4.2.6.1 Quantitative study

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North West University: Vaal Triangle was consulted for assistance in the capturing, analysis and interpretation of the data collected. By means of descriptive statistics, the data analysis for the educators' and learners' responses to the questionnaire were summarized with frequency counts, percentages and means from which conclusions were drawn with regard to the nature of the implementation of portfolio assessment, the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment supports assessment for learning and the knowledge and skills of the educators related to the implementation of portfolio assessment.

By means of inferential statistics, the significance of the differences between the educator and learner questionnaire responses was calculated by means of

t-tests. Cohen's d was utilized to determine the effect of the differences in practice. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire for the actual study, a Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the various sections of the questionnaire (cf. 4.8.1). A MANOVA was run to determine the effect of the independent variables on the implementation of portfolio assessment and an ANOVA was conducted with the independent variables that had a significant impact on the implementation of portfolio assessment (cf. 4.8.1; 5.2.4).

1.4.2.6.2 Qualitative study

The focus group interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed. A content analysis was utilized to analyse the responses for the interviews. A content analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:142). A content analysis is typically performed on forms of human communication and interaction (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:142).

1.4.2.7 Feasibility of the study

The study was feasible as it was conducted in the Sedibeng West District (D8) of the Gauteng Department of Education where the researcher is an employee. The researcher had easy access to the schools for gathering the research data. The district is situated in Vanderbijlpark and comprises the following areas: Bophelong, Boipatong, Sebokeng, Vanderbijlpark and neighbouring farm schools in Rietfontein and Lindequesdrift.

1.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS

Within certain disciplines, among others the social sciences, medicine and education, the use of human subjects in a research is, of course, quite common. Whenever human subjects are the focus of the investigation, the researchers must look closely at the ethical implications of what they are proposing to do. As dictated by principles of ethics, the research participants should be informed about the whole process, they should know what is going to happen and how the process is going to affect them. A number of ethical

aspects which the researcher observed and adhered to were identified (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101).

The research participants were informed of the study to be conducted and given a choice of either participating or not. It was clearly indicated to the participants that their participation would be strictly voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any point in time. Participants were also assured that they would remain anonymous throughout the research. No names were written on questionnaires and during the interviews participants were identified by means of numbers (*cf.* Annexure D).

The researcher obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research, and letters were written to school principals to whom the research was explained and permission asked to conduct the study at the various schools and to involve the Grade 9 learners and educators (*cf.* Annexure C & D). Visits were scheduled with all the school principals to explain the research and to obtain written consent for conducting the research. Educators, who took part in the study, were briefed about the aim and purpose of the study, and they were informed that their participation in the study would be of great value, not only to the researcher, but to teaching staff in general. Parents of all the Grade 9 learners who participated in the study were also given letters asking for permission to involve their children in the research programme. Letters of consent were also completed by the parents, educators and learners. The research only commenced after written consent had been obtained from all parties involved.

During the study, the researcher strove to be honest, respectful and sympathetic to all participants (Hinckley in Maree, 2007:298). The researcher also reported the findings in a complete, accurate and honest fashion without misrepresenting what was done or intellectually misleading others about the findings of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101).

All participants' information and responses were kept private and the results were presented in an anonymous manner to protect the identities of the

participants. All audiocassettes utilized during the focus group interviews were destroyed after the study was completed (Hinckley in Maree, 2007:298).

1.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The ultimate contribution of this study is to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment by developing a model which will equip educators with the essential knowledge and skills which will gradually and in time enable them to implement portfolio assessment in order to support assessment for learning.

1.7 CONCEPTS CENTRAL TO THE STUDY

A number of concepts are central to the study. These concepts will be elucidated in the following chapters. For now, a brief explanation will be provided to contextualize the study.

- **Assessment of learning** refers to the traditional way of testing learners, namely the use of pen-on-paper tests and examinations. The purpose of this form of assessment is aimed at assessing knowledge that the learners have acquired from books. The assessment process focuses on the intellectual development of the learner only and neglects other areas of his being (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:165-166).
- **Assessment for learning** refers to authentic or alternative ways of assessing learners by focusing on knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in context that closely resemble actual situations in which that knowledge and those skills, values and attitudes are used (Van der Horst & McDonald, 2003:165-166; Department of Education, 2007:1).
- **Portfolio assessment** is the systematic and selective collection of student work that shows mastery and growth in a particular subject over a period of time (Jones, 2001:226).

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Orientation and statement of the problem

Chapter 2: Approaches to assessment

Chapter 3: Portfolio assessment

Chapter 4: Empirical research design

Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 6: A model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment

Chapter 7: Summary, findings and recommendations

1.9 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The study reviewed the literature of traditional assessment, which is the assessment approach that has dominated the classroom practice for decades. The assessment principles which underpin this assessment approach and the assessment processes entailed in the approached were highlighted. The researcher argues that while there are disadvantages prevailing in the traditional approach, these do not render the approach useless. There are certain elements of the approach which are still valuable and need to be recognized in the classroom. However, the NCS also advocates for the inclusion of the alternative assessment approach, assessment for learning. Therefore the literature of the new/alternative assessment approach, also referred to as assessment for learning, was reviewed. The assessment principles and processes entailed in the alternative approach were highlighted. Emphasis was placed on the important role which this new approach plays in the development of the learner and the implementation of portfolio assessment. The researcher also reviewed the literature on portfolio assessment and furthermore examined its implementation in the South African scenario.

On the basis of the quantitative and qualitative research findings it appeared that educators do not completely translate the principles of assessment for learning into practice when utilizing portfolio assessment (*cf.* Chapter 5). The researcher therefore developed a model that enhances the principles of assessment for learning to guide educators during the implementation of portfolio assessment (*cf.* Chapter 6).

The diagram in figure 1.1 provides a concise overview of the study with the purpose to indicate the line of argumentation, how the chapters are linked and how theory and practice are integrated.

1.10 SUMMARY

In this chapter the orientation and statement of the problem were defined and briefly discussed. This was followed by a brief overview of the literature, aims of the study and the research methodology. Finally, a provisional division of chapters and overview of the study were presented.

The next section engages in an intensive study of prevailing assessment approaches, namely, the traditional (assessment of learning) and the alternative (assessment for learning) approaches.

Figure 1.1: Overview of the thesis

Introduction and motivation	Theory	Theory	Empirical Research Design	Data analysis and interpretation	Practical Application: Model	Findings and conclusions
Chapter 1 Problem statement and aims To improve the effectiveness of the implementation of portfolio assessment	Assessment approaches Chapter 2 - Traditional (assessment of learning) - Alternative (assessment for learning)	Portfolio assessment Chapter 3 Multi-dimensional tool - Assessment tool - Developmental tool - Diagnostic tool - Instructional tool - Communication tool Guided by the principles of assessment for learning	Chapter 4 Quantitative Questionnaire (Educators and learners) Qualitative: Focus group interviews (Educators)	Chapter 5 Triangulation of data - Portfolios not fully utilized for multidimensional purposes - Principles of assessment for learning not fully applied during the implementation of portfolio assessment - Educators need guidance to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment - Educators challenged with the practical application of assessment policy	Chapter 6 Theoretical framework: Socio Cognitive Theory (main principles): - Self-regulation - Reflection - Holistic development - Social, interactive learning Model Multi-dimensional tool - Assessment tool - Developmental tool - Diagnostic tool - Instructional tool - Communication tool	Chapter 7 - Portfolio assessment underpinned by principles of assessment for learning - Portfolios to be utilized as multidimensional tools - Educators have a vague understanding of the application of the principles of assessment for learning and the use of portfolios as multidimensional tools

CHAPTER TWO

APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section reviews and explores two forms of assessment approaches which are currently adopted and implemented at schools. This chapter will focus on the following aspects:

- The traditional assessment approach
- The alternative assessment approach
- Outcomes-Based Assessment within the National Curriculum Statement framework in the General Education and Training Band.

2.2 TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

The traditional assessment approach on the one hand has, for years, dominated the classroom practice and determined the learners' ultimate success. In implementing the traditional assessment approach, the educators are guided by assessment principles and practices which promote assessment of learning. This approach focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the learners' intellectual ability, leaving other areas of their being undeveloped or underdeveloped (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:28).

According to Van der Horst and McDonald (1997:26-27), the traditional assessment approach does not focus on the development of the learners' learning needs and interests in totality. This impacts negatively on the learners' holistic development, growth, achievement, progress and success, in the sense that the assessment approach leaves no room for educators and learners to interact and discuss their learning process, performance, assessment outcomes and feedback.

In his analysis of assessment practices prevailing within the school context, Stiggins (2002a:759) asserts that the traditional assessment or assessment of learning approach has been in existence for decades. Assessment of learning is primarily content-based and educator-centred and focuses on the achievement of learners as reflected on "*pen on paper*" tests and examinations (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:26-27; Department of Education, 2000:23; Stiggins, 2002a:759; Reddy, 2004:37).

Assessment of learning is behavioural in nature, and is designed and developed on the basis of a behavioural theory of learning (Geyser, 2001:4). The assessment outcomes formulated are synonymous with traditional and content-dominated sections of teaching and learning, and do not relate to real-world demands and real-life experiences. The context in which learning and assessment takes place is bound to the classroom and school and the main aim of learning and assessment is to produce academically competent learners (Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004:12). Assessment of learning promotes learning and assessment based on the transmission model of teaching (Moll, 1990:3-7). The model lends itself to rote learning, and rote learning is consistent with the view of learning as knowledge acquisition, in which learners seek to add new information to their memories (Mayer, 2002:226; Moll, 1990:3-7).

According to Mayer (in Mayer, 2002:226), teaching within this context implies presenting or transmitting information to the learners as recorded in textbooks. Learning implies the accumulation and absorption of facts by the learners and assessing implies testing of knowledge, to see how much of the presented facts learners can remember.

In this view of learning and assessment, educators, on the one hand, are placed at the centre of the whole academic exercise and are viewed and acknowledged as sole possessors of knowledge, keepers of the vision of the learners' success and as designers, assessors and interpreters of learning and assessment, and the final authority to the learners' learning and assessment (Stiggins, 1994:401-402; Glasgow, 1997:29-30). Learners, on the

other hand, are viewed as empty vessels, whose main role is to assimilate and accumulate knowledge passively, memorize and retain facts and accurately recall and reproduce them at a later stage, in much the same way they were presented during instruction (Olivier in Geyser, 1994:204-206; Mayer, 2002:226-228).

To proceed with teaching and learning, the educator is provided with a prescribed and complete curriculum package, which includes a rigid and non-negotiable syllabus, learning programme, assessment and evaluation. The curriculum package is organized and differentiated by rigid time frames, the learning content is graded and broken into subjects in a very strict and inflexible manner, ranging from simple and uncomplicated information to more difficult and intricate concepts and abstractions which build up to higher levels of complexity (Olivier in Geyser, 1994:205; Glasgow, 1997:29-30).

The educators pick resources, decide what learners have to learn, dictate how learning should take place and how content is to be assessed, on what sequence and at what pace the content is to be delivered. On the basis of the guidelines above, educators plan and prepare lessons, and then distribute, interpret and present information to the learners via lectures, assigned readings, demonstrations and other selected activities (Glasgow, 1997:29-30).

Then the testing/assessment process takes place after the completion of a particular lesson unit. The process is facilitated through "*pen on paper*" tests and examinations, which are designed and developed on the basis of an implicit criterium and single, attribute assessment strategies (Geyser, 2001:3-4). These tests and examinations assess isolated packages of knowledge, facts or discrete skills and learners are assessed individually and with much secrecy (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997:28; Geyser, 2001:3-4). The tests and examinations are prescriptive and their implementation is guided by the direct application of rules which are derived from rigid and non-negotiable syllabi or prescribed curriculum programmes (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:28).

The assessment process, within the traditional context, is designed, organized, and arranged in a very fixed and chronological order. The facts to be assessed are derived from the teaching and learning content, but the assessment process and activities are detached from the teaching and learning process (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:28). The main purpose of assessment of learning is the mastery of course content and retention of knowledge. The assessment processes, entailed in the traditional assessment approach, encourage and influence learners to learn when there is a test or examination to be written (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:28).

Glasgow (1997:37) asserts that assessment of learning, which promotes short term mastery of content and knowledge retention, leaves the learners with no insurance for longer term mastery and with no clue of recognizing where and when course content could or should be used and applied in real life situations.

The process of testing entailed in the syllabus or curriculum programme is purely intellectual and creates very few opportunities for the exploration and evaluation of feelings, beliefs, values and attitudes. The learners' attitude format is prescriptive to the detriment of social awareness. The approach does not encourage self development, self management and self discipline on the side of the learners. Consequently, the approach fails to measure and evaluate the true potential of learners (Mayer, 2002:226-228).

According to Malcolm (in Reddy, 2004:40) and Glasgow, (1997:31-32), the testing instructions tend to be linear, narrow, biased and in the direction of the acquisition of memorized knowledge and development, routine skills and single behaviour and responses, which influence learners to establish familiar classroom rhythm or patterns. The assessment processes entailed in the traditional approach promotes conformity and authoritarianism at the expense of creativity and critical thinking (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:29). The instructions contained in the memoranda do not allow learners to deviate from the set or model of answers designed and presented by the educator (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:28-29; Geyser, 2001:4).

As part of this approach, educators are expected to complete the syllabus within a given time. To achieve this, educators adopt the teach-and-test approach. They teach the learning content, test learners' knowledge, mark the tests/examinations, provide feedback based on the course content, record marks and move on with the learning programme. Basically, educators teach and assess learners, focusing their attention on the completion of the syllabus/programme, rather than addressing the needs and interests of learners (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:26-29). Educators proceed to the next learning unit with some learners who have passed the test or examination, leaving the majority of learners who are unsuccessful behind. These are the learners who might not learn at the established pace and within a fixed time frame and who at the end of the day finish low in the rank order (Chappius & Stiggins, 2002:40).

Following from the above, it is evident that assessment of learning leaves no room for educators and learners to interact with one another and discuss the learning and assessment process, the assessment outcomes, feedback and learning challenges faced by the learners (Van der Horst & McDonald 1997:26-27; Stiggins, 2002b:40). The approach offers learners a once-off opportunity to demonstrate what they know, irrespective of whether educators are not happy with the outcomes and suspect that the learners' scores are artificially low or higher and do not reflect the true potential of the learners. The results that the educators arrive at are considered as reflecting the learners' true performance, achievement, development and level of competency (Reddy, 2004:37).

In this regard, Stiggins (2002a:763) argues that it is important to mention that, test or examination results that educators arrive at, are not accurate, valid and reliable, as they are incapable of providing educators with the moment to moment, day to day, week to week information that they need, in order to make crucial instructional decisions. The results leave the learners and educators faced with learning challenges which they seek to manage as the learning process unfolds. These test results also deprive educators of the

privilege to diagnose the learners' needs and interests during teaching and learning. This results in educators not being able to inform learners of which learning tactics are or are not working. At the same time educators fail to keep parents informed about how to support the work of their children. Finally, the approach deprives educators of the privilege to gather or effectively use all the dependable information that they need in order to compile reports with regard to the learners' performance, achievement and level of competency (Chappius & Stiggins, 2002:40).

What is largely absent in assessment of learning, is the use of appropriate and powerful assessment tools and techniques, which enable educators to assess learners not relying on scores, but on descriptive statements, which reflect the true performance and potential of each learner (Stiggins, 2002a:761). According to Shepard (in Stiggins, 2002b:40), the reliance on scores as being the main determinants of the learners' success, affects learners differently. The testing process consigns the minority of learners to success and the majority to failure. This is evident in the views presented by Olivier (in Geyser, 1994:204). The latter argues that the testing process which is based on scores, ranks and grades the promotability among learners. This is further supported by Reddy (2004:37) who contends that the testing process ranks and separates learners in the classroom.

Given the ranking, grading and separation of learners, some of the learners approach the tests and examinations with a strong personal history and expectation of success, while others approach the tests and examinations with a history and expectation of a very painful failure (Stiggins, 2002a:761). This happens because these forms of assessment, according to Chappius and Stiggins, (2002b:40), enhance the learning of some learners, while discouraging the learning of others, causing those subjected to failure, to give up in frustration and hopelessness, believing that success is beyond their reach. Slowly and over time, learners lose confidence in themselves; they stop trying, gradually develop a sense of futility, give up learning and ultimately drop out of school (Stiggins, 1999:195).

Stiggins (2002b:40) contends that the advocates of assessment of learning believe that, in order to motivate the learners to learn, it is necessary to create and increase their anxiety. They assert that, by making learners more anxious, learners will increase their learning and they will want to learn. Then, with time, they will be able to learn better and improve their performance, and consequently, raise the standards. Malcolm (in Reddy, 2004:40) does not agree with this view. He argues that the proponents of this approach tend to forget that learners are unique and respond to tests and examinations differently. He asserts that the learners' performance in doing assessment tasks depends on a mixture of the knowledge being tested, and skills in doing the tests and personality factors, such as risk taking and anxiety.

According to Geyser (2001:8), assessment of learning is episodic in the sense that it monitors learner performance and progress occasionally. Usually the testing and examination process are conducted at the end of a lesson unit, chapter or at the end of the month, term or year, thus encouraging memorization and recall and reproduction of facts. According to Glasgow (1997:31-38), learning which is conducted in this manner and knowledge which is acquired through memorization do not easily and convincingly integrate with information from other disciplines and subject areas. As a result, tests and examinations which are designed, developed and administered in this manner, impact negatively on the learners' development, progress, achievement and ultimate success.

Assessment of learning is norm-referenced. The test and examination outcomes are used to determine how well the learners have performed in comparison with others. The performance of learners is evaluated and measured against the performance of other learners and assessment within the traditional context is mainly intended for preparation of learners' final assessment and evaluation. It is meant for the learner's ultimate and overall achievement based on the learners' completion of the course or programme of studies and finally it is meant for public accountability (Vermeulen, 2000:79; Chappius & Stiggins, 2002:40).

Following from the preceding section, it is evident that the focus of assessment within the traditional context is the achievement of performance goals, which generally influence the learners to complete tasks and obtain good marks and look competent in comparison with their peers. According to Cowie (2005:138), the approach therefore influences the learners to avoid taking risks in learning. Instead, it encourages the learners to learn and develop within a confined context and therefore maintain and retain a fixed view of their intelligence.

Maaka (1999:6) asserts that any educational system is founded on the premise that every individual learner is at the centre of learning, teaching and assessment. Therefore, according to Glasgow (1997:29-38), learners should be acknowledged as the main component of the classroom practice who determine and make possible the existence and functionality of the whole educational practice. The principles guiding the traditional assessment approach seem not to be in agreement with this opinion as learners are not directly involved and responsible for their own learning and development. Instead learners are, according to Glasgow (1997:29-38) and Stiggins (2002a:764), accustomed to being the passive recipients of knowledge and not active learners who are supposed to take care of their own learning and to be in charge of their own development, achievement, progress and success.

Forms of assessment prevailing within the traditional context fail to create opportunities for learners to develop skills which will allow them to engage in self- motivation, self-assessment and self-development (Glasgow, 1997:31-32). The learners rely and depend entirely on the educators to motivate, reward and praise them for their personal efforts and achievement (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:26-27).

This nature of teaching, learning and assessment, according to Little *et al.* (in Reddy, 2004:37), is inhibitive, because it eliminates the learners from the process and enjoyment of learning by restricting their learning to that which is being assessed only. The approach reduces the learners' self-esteem and

self-confidence and restricts their social relations. Furthermore, the approach inhibits equality among the learners and legitimates inequalities of income, status and prestige. This in turn, leads to failure.

2.2.1 Characteristics underpinning assessment of learning

Based on the above discussion, the researcher critically summarizes her viewpoint regarding the characteristics that underpin the traditional assessment approach as follows.

Educator-centred type of learning

The traditional assessment approach places teaching and the educator at the centre of learning and assessment. In fact, teaching within this context precedes learning and assessment. As a result, the type of learning and assessment activities which learners engage in are educator-centred. The traditional assessment approach presents the educator as the main source of information and custodian of knowledge. The main role and function of the educator in the classroom is to direct learning. The educator entrusted with the responsibility to design the curriculum, decides and selects the information that has to be taught and learned (*cf.* 2.2).

Assessment within the traditional context influences learners to learn and master what is offered by the educator and to recall the learned facts when required to do so by the educator. The assessment approach prevailing within this context is characterized by memorization of facts and the reproduction of knowledge, thus influencing learners to engage in rote learning (*cf.* 2.2).

Content-based teaching and learning

The fact that the traditional assessment approach emphasizes teaching and learning, which promote rote learning, causes learners to engage in learning which involves passive assimilation and acquisition of knowledge and the mastery of content bound and confined to the classroom and school context (Mayer, 2002:226). The assessment approach deprives learners of the

privilege to learn and understand what they are learning and demonstrate what they can do with what they have learned (*cf.* 2.2).

The approach is time-driven

The approach is driven by time frames which the educator has to follow to the letter and has to guide learners to follow them to the letter as well. The packages of information that have been designed for learning need to be learned and completed within a specified time. Once they are completed, they are followed by a test or examination which also needs to be written at a specified time (*cf.* 2.2).

Guided by time, the educator moves to the teaching of the next package, irrespective of whether the learners understood or did not understand the content of the previous package. The fact that learning within this assessment context is constrained by time deter learners from engaging in activities which help them to learn. As a result, learners are presented as passive recipients of knowledge (*cf.* 2.2).

The approach is rigid and inflexible

The assessment approach is prescriptive and does not leave room for flexibility. The approach promotes teaching which is linear and learning which is characterized by single and rigid learning styles. This type of learning influences learners to present familiar patterns or rhythms of learning for their entire period of learning and schooling (*cf.* 2.2).

The approach is norm-referenced

The assessment approach advocates for the type of assessment that determines the extent to which learners are performing in comparison to other learners. The problem with norm-referencing is that it does not provide moment-to-moment and day-to-day information about learner achievement (*cf.* 2.2).

Summative assessment forms the basis for the learners' progress

This form of assessment is characterized by pen-on-paper tests and examinations. Summative assessment is done with learners at a specified time and is used as the determining factor of the learner's success or failure. The assessment method does not make provision for verifying how the learner has been performing or progressing over time. The results presented by the learner through the once-off test or examination provide enough evidence for the educator to arrive at the conclusion that the learner has either succeeded or failed to succeed (*cf.* 2.2).

The assessment approach is judgmental

The assessment approach ranks and grades learners, but at the same time also separates them. The approach divides learners, because it creates an impression among the learners that there are learners who are more capable than others when performing their tasks and demonstrating competency, while rendering others incapable of doing anything. This approach impacts negatively on those learners whose grades are low and who are labelled as hopeless by the educator. Such learners lose hope and ultimately give up (*cf.* 2.2).

The assessment approach is not transparent

The traditional assessment approach is not transparent at all. The educators often decide on teaching, learning and assessment programmes without consulting and involving other stakeholders such as learners and parents. The parents and learners rely on the educator, and the only time they interact with the educator is when they are given performance and progress reports which are compiled by the educator. This progress report contains final results and the educator's conclusion indicating whether the learner has passed or failed (*cf.* 2.2).

The approach provides insufficient evidence on learner performance

The nature of feedback presented to learners and parents is insufficient as it is based on test scores. It does not give learners and parents full details in a descriptive manner of how the learner has performed and progressed throughout the year. The assessment approach does not provide detailed information of the developmental stages or processes that the learner has gone through, but at the end of the day determines the compilation of a progress report which serves as sufficient evidence to decide the learner's fate (*cf.* 2.2).

The approach is not relevant to learners' needs and interests

The assessment approach advocates for teaching and learning which is not relevant to the learner's needs and interests. The approach confines the learner's development to the acquisition of knowledge confined to the school context (*cf.* 2.2).

The traditional assessment approach neglects the development of the learner's other capabilities, namely skills, values and attitudes. The type of learning advocated by the traditional assessment approach deprives the learner of the privilege to transform the learned knowledge into ideas and skills that relate to the real world demands and real life experiences (*cf.* 2.2).

2.2.2 Conclusion

In analysing the principles entailed in the traditional assessment, it is evident that the traditional forms of assessment are confined to a particular level of functioning. As a result, the assessment principles entailed in this approach have, to a certain extent, promoted learning and development which place the learners' functioning at a certain minimal level of thinking and reasoning. Through the traditional assessment approach learners acquire knowledge by memorization and also develop skills for remembering which are not coupled with other cognitive processes such as understanding and the application of knowledge.

The problem with the approach is that it does not engage learners in learning activities characterized by creativity and originality, but rely on memorization and regurgitation of facts. Thus, these assessment principles confine the learners' development to the attainment of lower-order thinking and reasoning capabilities.

Although the traditional assessment approach focuses on memorisation of knowledge and neglects the development of higher-order cognitive processes of the learners' being, as stated earlier on, the approach cannot and should not be discarded, since it develops intellectual capabilities and sharpens minds. For the purpose of the study, however, this approach will not be conducive to the effective implementation of portfolio assessment. The implementation of portfolio assessment needs to concur with principles of the alternative assessment approach which will now be elucidated.

2.3 ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

The alternative assessment approach has been phased in gradually into the education system. As a new approach in the classroom, alternative assessment does not necessarily replace the traditional assessment approach, but comes in as a supplement to make the whole classroom assessment practice complete. Alternative assessment is based on principles which place the learners' learning needs and interests at the centre of learning (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:280; Van der Horst & Mc Donald, 2003:165-167). This assessment approach emphasizes the holistic development, growth, achievement and progress of each individual learner. The main focus of alternative assessment is the development of the learners' being in totality. Assessment within this framework is to promote teaching and learning which is aimed at nurturing and enhancing the learners' skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:280; Van der Horst & Mc Donald, 2003:165-167).

This approach, according to Davies and Waverly (2005:1), leaves the door wide open for a range of assessment techniques and strategies, among

others performances, cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, exit cards, journals, exhibitions and portfolios. Le Grange and Reddy (in Reddy, 2004:37) assert that these techniques and strategies test more than is possible with "*pen on paper*" testing. The latter authors identify the following additional assessment techniques: projects, practical tests and portfolios, as possible alternatives to the traditional way of assessment.

Le Grange and Reddy (in Reddy, 2004:37) further assert that these different assessment techniques and strategies assist the assessor to develop a broader picture of the learner from a wider range of sources of evidence, and argue that a greater array of criteria is applied than those that fit the narrow context of examinations and tests (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:26-29). According to Brooks and Brooks (in Davies & Waverly, 2005:2), these assessment strategies and techniques require active involvement in learning, to assist the learners to view themselves as makers rather than receivers of knowledge.

Alternative assessment or assessment for learning involves meaningful learning which is constructive, reflective and self-regulated, and promotes the construction of meaning, reflection and self-monitoring (Herman, 1992:75). Reflection, according to Ross (in Davies & Waverly, 2005:2), refers to thinking about process and product. The focus is not on what the learners know and how knowledge develops, but on how knowledge is constructed by the learners and enhanced by meaningful and challenging tasks that the learner performs in the classroom.

Alternative assessment or assessment for learning is developed and designed on the basis of a constructivist theory of learning (Mayer, 2002:227; Gravett, s.a.:40). The basic premise and principles entailed in the constructivist theoretical framework are that learning is a process of constructing knowledge. If put differently, it is a process of knowledge construction (Gravett, s.a.:40; Mayer, 2002:227). Advocates of social constructivism argue that knowledge is socially constructed as a body of information, ideas and practices which develop and change over time (Mayer, 2002:227-228).

The advocates of social constructivism further assert that the most important features of learning are exciting and interesting activities which are associated with the active life of the classroom (Gravett, s.a.:40). During learning, the learners seek to make sense of their experiences, they engage in active cognitive processing such as paying attention to relevant incoming information and mentally organizing this incoming information with existing knowledge (Gravett, s.a.:40; Mayer, 2002:227).

In the constructivist perspective of learning, learners are not viewed as passive participants that respond to "*stimuli*". Learning, according to them, is not simply a process of acquiring knowledge that is stored in the brain for retrieval at a later stage. Learning is viewed as an active process of constructing meaning and transforming understanding in interaction with the environment (Gravett, s.a.:40). This means that, the learning and assessment activities which the learners engage in, lead to the development of critical thinking, reasoning, problem-solving skills, retrieval, understanding and the use of information, as well as relating knowledge to one's existing beliefs and attitudes and thoughtful reflection on experiences (Mayer, 2002:227-230).

Learning, assessment and development, within the constructivist approach, takes place in a social context as a collaborative activity which emphasizes the involvement of both the learner and the educator. The two are actively involved and engaged in the process of reconstructing and constructing knowledge (Gravett, s.a.:40-45). The learners reconstruct and construct knowledge either individually or collectively under the guidance of the educator. The educator is viewed as an experienced guide who leads travellers into a territory that is either new to them or too demanding to traverse on their own (Gravett, s.a.:43). At the same time educators play a facilitative role, and as facilitators, educators guide, assist, advise and support the learner in tackling the problems, endeavours and challenges that the learners are confronted with (Gravett, s.a.:40-45).

Following from the views above, it is evident that the teaching, learning and assessment process, as well as the learners' process of development depend

entirely on a dialogue between the educators and learners. During teaching and learning, the two parties interact with one another and engage in a meaningful process, which leads to the construction of knowledge through the social negotiation and meaning-making activities (Gravett, s.a.:42-43).

Davies and Waverly (2005:1) contend that within this new assessment framework, teaching, learning and assessment processes are inextricably intertwined. They argue that assessment drives and influences what and how educators should teach learners. Davies and Waverly (2005:1-2) and Wiggins (1992:32) further argue that good teaching is inseparable from good assessing.

Assessment for learning does not only focus on the intellectual development of the learners, but focuses on the learners' other attributes such as motivation, productive and collaborative skills, values, attitudes, self-confidence, self-esteem and emotions. The main purpose of this new assessment approach is to enhance, promote and achieve the complete process of development and functioning of the learners' being (Geyser, 2001:4; Chappius & Stiggins, 2002:40; Mayer, 2002:227-230; Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & Wiliam, 2004:18).

This implies that alternative assessment should be understood as an approach of which the main aim is to promote learning and achievement. This implies a shift from an approach which is judgmental, and disintegrates learning, assessment and development, to an approach which is developmental and incorporates assessment processes and other assessment attributes which emphasize an integrated approach to learning and development. This in turn will ensure learner progress and advancement (Olivier in Geyser, 1994:204; Geyser, 2001:4; Stiggins, 2002a:761-765; Black *et al.*, 2004:10).

Palmer (2004:194) contends that alternative assessment is continuous, formative, credible, motivational and fair to all learners. The assessment approach is open, transparent, predictable and formulated on the basis of

explicit criteria. Feedback is provided timeously, and guides and encourages the learners to engage in genuine learning and attain the expected outcomes. He further asserts that the approach is reliable, unbiased, objective, relevant and appropriate to content, level of development of the learners and focuses on the intended objectives. The assessment processes and practices are changeable, reviewable and create room for learner improvement.

Information gathered from a continuous assessment process is used as assessment evidence and presented as assessment feedback to all the stakeholders, among others learners, parents and officials of the Education District Office. Continuous assessment feedback is essential during the teaching, learning and assessment process, to prevent and avoid any misunderstandings during learning. Secondly, it is essential to learner development as it allows the learners to become actively involved in the process of developing themselves (Stiggins, 2002a:761-765). Thirdly, Glasgow (1997:146-150) indicates that assessment feedback develops in the learner the ability to develop problem-solving frameworks that could be applied in solving specific problems in the future.

According to Stiggins (2002a:762), the learners' active involvement and engagement in this educational process create opportunities for the learners to communicate with educators and parents or family members about their development and achievement and consequently their achievement status. Therefore the presentation of assessment feedback on time further enables the learners to develop and build confidence in what they are learning, and encourages them to continue learning at productive levels and to keep on trying new things.

Following from the preceding section, it is evident that assessment for learning promotes a learner-centred approach. Within this context, the learner is placed at the centre of teaching, learning and assessment, and is actively involved in the learning process (Stiggins, 2002a:761). The main purpose of assessment for learning is to promote meaningful learning (learners can link what they have learned to real life experiences) and to grant educators the

opportunity to assess learners by using classroom assessment and to attain a continuous flow of information which reflects the learners' level of achievement and, consequently, enables them to advance to higher levels of performance. This implies that it is the responsibility of educators as facilitators of learning and assessment to try to understand and articulate in advance of teaching, the achievement targets that learners need to hit (Stiggins, 2002a:761).

As the facilitator of learning and assessment, the educator needs to inform the learners about the intended outcomes at the beginning of the teaching and learning process and these should be presented in terms that the learner understands. The educator guides and assists the learners to understand the intended outcomes in order that the learners assume responsibility and accountability for their own learning and develop a solid foundation for lifelong learning, and lifelong personal growth (Stiggins, 2002a:761; Davies & Waverly, 2005:2).

Maaka (1999:13) argues that to achieve lifelong Learning Outcomes, the educators should ensure that the learners' best interest and progress are paramount and learners are subjected to assessment processes which are planned, implemented and reported in ways that maximize the benefits of learning of each individual learner. Assessment should be emphasized to all participants and educators need to translate classroom assessment outcomes into frequent descriptive feedback and present descriptive statements of what the learners have to achieve. These descriptive statements should be used for identifying and promoting each learner's area of strength and at the same time identify and remedy each of the learner's areas of concern and provide specific insight on how the learners can improve their performance (Maaka, 1999:13-14; Geyser, 2001:4-6).

To ensure effective and improved learner performance, the educators should ensure that the assessment attributes and processes which they employ during learning and assessment influence them as educators and assessors to adapt classroom instruction and practices continually to meet the learning

needs of each individual learner (Olivier in Geyser, 1994:206-209). The assessment process and practices which educators and the learners engage in should include specific assessment criteria. In assessment for learning, educators are not the only assessors and the final authority. This implies that they design the assessment criteria taking into account the individual needs of each learner (Davies & Waverly, 2005:13-16; Maaka, 1999:14-15).

Alternative classroom assessment as an integral part of learning is ongoing, accurate, and as objective as possible, and involves a variety of contexts and is designed in accordance with each learner's needs (Davies & Waverly, 2005:1-2; Maaka, 1999:13-16). Alternative assessment also encourages educators and learners to employ a variety of assessment methods, techniques and tools which are appropriate for assessing knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (Maaka, 1999:15-16). Specifically, the main focus of alternative assessment is the development of higher-order thinking and reasoning skills, namely, investigation, analysis and discussion of complex issues and problems, and application of knowledge and skills to new learning situations (Maaka, 1999:15-16).

When deciding on methods for assessing the learners, the educator may employ, among others, the following assessment methods: self and peer assessment. Self assessment refers to the form of assessment conducted by the learner him/herself, assessing his/her own tasks. Self assessment and the activities based on this method enable the learners to experience growth over time and feel in charge of their own learning and success (Stiggins, 2002a:761-762). Through self assessment activities, the learners learn to manage and control their work at a meta-cognitive level, they develop skills that enable them to think critically about their own work and reflect on their work in terms of a set of goals (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall & William, 2004:9). With time, the learners begin to demonstrate the ability to reason, inquire, formulate problems, solve problems, analyse, make decisions and ultimately apply the skills that they developed in previous activities in new situations requiring the same skills (Black *et al.*, 2004:9).

The alternative assessment approach encourages peer assessment as well. This assessment method creates an opportunity for the learners to assess one another in the classroom. According to Black *et al.* (2004:9-10), the method seems to be of advantage to the learners, because the learners tend to accept with ease the assessment outcomes presented by their fellow peers and accept criticism of their work from one another. The learners understand and accept remarks and interchange presented in the language that they naturally use and understand. Assessment practices and processes entailed in assessment for learning enhance motivation for learning and consequently the learner's self-esteem and self-confidence (Black *et al.*, 2004:18).

Assessment processes and strategies entailed in assessment for learning are not considered in the classic sense, but are viewed as an evaluation tool for problems; process and content-based educational objectives and goals (Glasgow, 1997:150). The assessment processes and strategies create opportunities for the learners to apply knowledge in practical situations, manage and solve problems. In the process of applying knowledge and solving the problems, the learners produce original responses to educational triggers which are productive. This leads to the production of a product which may involve original knowledge or the use and application of new knowledge, which is different from consuming and recalling of information (Glasgow, 1997:149-150).

Glasgow (1997:149-150) describes this approach to assessment as process testing and argues that it may be authentic and allow the learners to demonstrate reasoning, inquiry, problem formation, analysis and interpersonal and decision-making skills within a single-subject area or integrated and interdisciplinary responses, thus allowing learning and assessment to become meaningful. Meaningfulness is attributed to the fact that this will encourage learners to develop a variety of cognitive processes and skills which, in turn, will enable learners to function at a multidimensional (learners are equipped with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) level.

According to Mayer (2002:228-232) the learners develop the skills to remember, but not in the same way in which they were taught. Their remembering of knowledge is coupled with other cognitive processes, namely:

- Understanding: the ability to construct meaning from the instructional message.
- Application: the ability to connect new knowledge with prior knowledge and performing procedures to exercise and solve problems.
- Analysis: the ability to break knowledge into its constituent parts and determine how the parts are related to one another.
- Evaluation: the ability to create judgment based on criteria or standards.
- Creation: the ability to put elements together to form a coherent or functional whole and reorganizing the elements into a new pattern or structure an ultimately.
- Production: the construction of an original product.

Following from the views of Glasgow (1997:146-150) and Mayer (2002:228-232), it is evident that assessment for learning is characterized by originality and creativity and the learners' success is built over time from a wealth of specific prior experiences and skills acquired in previous activities, which the learners may apply to new situations when confronted with unfamiliar problems or situations. Assessment for learning therefore focuses on the assessment of product and process, consequently gives insight into the learners' ongoing reflective practices and integrative thinking to demonstrate their potential (Davies & Waverly, 2005:1-3). In assessment for learning the pace at which the learners develop these skills vary, and their process of development depends entirely on their abilities, engagements, interests and motivation (Glasgow, 1997:149-150).

According to Stiggins (1999:194), the fact that the learners' process of development depends on the learners' interests, abilities, motivation and

engagements, implies that the primary responsibility for academic success of the learners does not reside with educators, principals, parents or any other adult involved in the education system, but rests with the learners themselves. Following from the views above, he argues that the main role of all stakeholders in the whole academic exercise is to find productive ways of motivating all the learners to learn and improve their performance (Stiggins, 1999:194). He further asserts that if learners are motivated to learn, this will enable them to attain high academic standards and become highly competent readers, writers and mathematical problem-solvers (Stiggins, 1999:194).

Assessment for learning, according to Stiggins (1999:194-196), creates a platform and provides alternative tools for learning and development. The assessment tools entailed in assessment for learning may assist and keep the learners from losing confidence in themselves and those whose confidence is destroyed may be assisted to rebuild it. Stiggins (1999:196) identifies three tools which may assist the learners to build their self-confidence and self-esteem. With the tools the learner can tap an unlimited wellspring of motivation that resides within him/her, and can define how educators use assessment to turn the learners on to the power and joy of learning. These assessment tools are the following: student-involved classroom assessment, student-involved record keeping and student-involved communication. The assessment tools will be briefly reviewed below.

Student-involved classroom assessment

This assessment tool plays a role in defining the assessment criteria by which the work will be assessed. The criteria are made explicit to all the participants. Given the criteria, all the learners know and understand the meaning of their own work. They know and understand where they are now in relation to where the educator wants them to be. This tool builds trust and confidence between the educator and the learner.

Student-involved record keeping

This assessment tool brings the learners into the process of monitoring their own performance through reported self assessment over time. It also entails the keeping of a portfolio of learner work.

Student-involved communication

This tool brings the learners into the process of sharing information with other learners about their success, through student-led parent conferences. Stiggins (1999:196) asserts that through these tools the educators can assist the learners to see, understand and appreciate their own journey towards achievement.

Given the discussion of assessment of learning and assessment for learning, Stiggins (2002a:765) argues that to maximize greater learning and student achievement, classroom assessment should be given greater attention. He argues that both assessment **of** learning and assessment **for** learning are essential to ensure that learners are assessed in totality and therefore develop holistically.

Stiggins (2002a:763-765) further argues that, in the process of assessing learners, the assessment priority should ascertain that both assessment **of** learning and **for** learning are implemented. The reconciliation of the two assessment approaches will promote greater learning and achievement, develop the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem and consequently allow learners to be in charge of their own learning, development, achievement, progress, advancement and success (Stiggins, 2002a: 761-763).

Therefore in kick-starting their educational programmes, the educators should subject the learners to a variety of assessment forms/techniques. Maaka (1999:20) and Vermeulen (2000:85) refer to the following:

Formal observations

The educator monitors and assesses each learner's progress during a specified period, using a formal instrument, e.g. an examination of learner's social skills using a standardized observation schedule.

Informal observations

The educator monitors each learner's progress by administering a variety of tests appropriate for particular purposes such as assessment of the learner's ability to interpret and discuss the literary qualities of a text using an essay test format

Conferencing

Each learner monitors his/her progress through ongoing meetings with the educator and both provide feedback to each other. This could involve an assessment of writing accomplishments or difficulties during the publication phase of a writing project.

Portfolios

These are collections of the learner's written tasks, tasks assessed by the educator and learners over time, revealing the learner's development and growth (Cress, 1996:102). In a portfolio, each learner makes a reflective observation about his/her progress throughout the year by selecting and critiquing a representative, ongoing and changing collection of work samples.

2.3.1 Characteristics underpinning assessment for learning

Based on the above discussion, the researcher critically summarizes her viewpoint regarding the characteristics underpinning the alternative assessment approach as follows. Assessment within this framework is interactive and characterized by a collaborative activity between the educator and the learners. Furthermore, this assessment approach promotes the following:

Assessment processes which are learner-centred

Learner-centred implies that learners are placed at the centre of learning and promote learning which is aimed at developing the learners holistically. The assessment principles entailed in this assessment approach focus on nurturing and enhancing the learners' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Within this assessment framework, the learners' development is attained through dialogical processes between the educator and the learners and among the learners themselves (*cf.* 2.3).

During their interaction with one another, the educator and learners engage in active, constructive and meaningful activities and discussions. The educator as the facilitator of learning, mediate and facilitate the learning process while learners exchange information and share ideas. Consequently, the whole process affords the learners the opportunity to have their different capabilities developed and enhanced to higher levels of functioning (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are intertwined and integrated

The teaching and learning processes within this assessment approach are intertwined and integrated with the assessment process. In fact, assessment processes serve as the core process for the implementation, management and maintenance of effective teaching and learning (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are multidimensional

The teaching and learning processes are facilitated by a variety of assessment methods, techniques and tools. Among others, forms or techniques such as tests, examinations, projects, assignments, research and debates can be utilized. This variety enables learners to engage in meaningful learning and addresses a variety of learning styles which, in the process, allow learners to advance and enhance all the cognitive processes and skills they wish to attain (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes characterized by creativity and originality

The learning activities within the alternative assessment approach provoke the learners' thinking and reasoning, and influence them to engage in meaningful learning. In turn, learners learn to create and construct new ideas and to develop thinking and reasoning skills which they may use across different contexts when confronted with unfamiliar situations (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are developmental

The alternative assessment approach promotes teaching and learning which focus on learner development. This assessment approach incorporates assessment processes with other assessment attributes which emphasize an independent approach to learning and development. As a developmental process, it promotes genuine learning which leads to the achievement of desired outcomes. The assessment processes within the alternative assessment approach are designed in such a way that learners emerge as constructive and critical thinkers (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are transparent

The assessment principles underlying the alternative approach emphasize the process of assessment which is open and transparent to the learners and parents. Educators are obligated to give learners and parents' feedback throughout the year. In doing this, educators are guided by specific Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. The provision of feedback on a continuous basis will ensure that parents continually motivate their children to learn further and enhance their development. At the same time this will encourage learners to reflect on their learning, check their weaknesses and try to overcome them (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are relevant to learning

The assessment principles within the alternative approach emphasize teaching and learning which is relevant to the learners' needs and interests.

The assessment process facilitates learning, using content which is appropriate for the learners' level of development. At the same time it focuses specifically on the objectives which the activity or task intends to achieve (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are valid and reliable

The alternative assessment approach facilitates teaching and learning processes, attempts to provide valid and reliable information in relation to the expected outcomes and is characterized by fair and objective practices (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are norm- and criterion-referenced

The assessment principles underpinning the alternative approach guide teaching and learning which both are criterion- and norm-referenced. Criterion referencing ensures that the learners' performance is guided by explicit and clearly defined criteria, which are open, unbiased and objective. The purpose of the assessment task is clearly defined and communicated, and the learners' individual needs and interests are taken into account. This will ensure that the teaching and learning processes accommodate all the learners (*cf.* 2.3).

At the same time, the alternative assessment approach also utilizes norm-referenced assessment. The aim of norm-referenced assessment is to determine how learners are performing and to detect the amount of content that they have acquired (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are flexible

The assessment principles within the context of the alternative assessment approach are characterized by flexibility and take into account the learners' pace of learning. The assessment principles entailed in the alternative assessment approach further provide learners with expanded opportunities to relearn any aspect which they did not learn and perform adequately. This

helps learners to adopt other strategies of learning and consequently improves their learning and performance of tasks (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are conducted with a purpose

The assessment processes entailed in this approach are goal-oriented. Before learners can be engaged in any learning activities, learners are assessed to check their level of competency. The aim of this is to plan teaching and learning activities which will accommodate all the learners' needs and interests. Then the educator, guided by the assessment principles entailed in the assessment approach, intervenes and provides support to ensure that all learners benefit equally from the educational process. The assessment process is continuous and provides continuous feedback to enhance positive learning. At the end of the day, feedback which gives an overall picture of how the learner is progressing is provided (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which are product- and process-oriented

The assessment principles within the alternative assessment approach are characterized by learning which influences learners to reflect on their learning, and think about what they are learning. The principles encourage the learners to review the process of learning in order to improve their performance and demonstrate their potential. The approach encourages learners to engage in learning until the product they want to produce meets the required Assessment Standards. Learning of this nature allows learners to enjoy learning and to keep on learning. At the same time, the approach helps in building the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem (*cf.* 2.3).

Assessment processes which provide sufficient feedback

The assessment processes entailed in the alternative approach provide feedback which is descriptive and presented in terms of themes. The educator presents the stakeholders, parents and learners, in particular, with feedback which explains and reflects in detail all the learning processes that the learners have gone through throughout the year (*cf.* 2.3).

The study and review of the assessment principles which underpin the alternative assessment approach indicate strong links with the Social Cognitive Theory (*cf.* 6.3) which was utilized as the framework for the designed model. The Social Cognitive Theory is based on the notion that people learn, develop and acquire knowledge, a range of skills, rules, strategies, beliefs and emotions by observing others. This process of learning takes place within a social context and is guided and facilitated by the knowledgeable others, namely educators, peer tutors, parents or anyone around the learners in the learning situation who is willing to help them in developing all the positive qualities that they need to advance further (*cf.* 2.3).

2.3.2 Conclusion

In analysing the principles entailed in the alternative assessment approach, it is evident that the principles promote learning which is specifically concerned with the learners' development in totality. All the cognitive processes of the learners are developed to ensure that the learners function optimally and to the best of their ability. As stated in the preceding section, the assessment principles focus on developing the type of learners who will function multidimensionally. This implies learners who will be able to reconstruct and construct knowledge, develop sophisticated thinking and reasoning skills, create ideas for solving problems and confront real life demands and challenges which they may encounter in real life situations. In the context of the study the researcher will advocate for the application of the principles of the alternative assessment approach when utilizing portfolios during assessment.

In the next section, assessment as envisaged in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) will be explored.

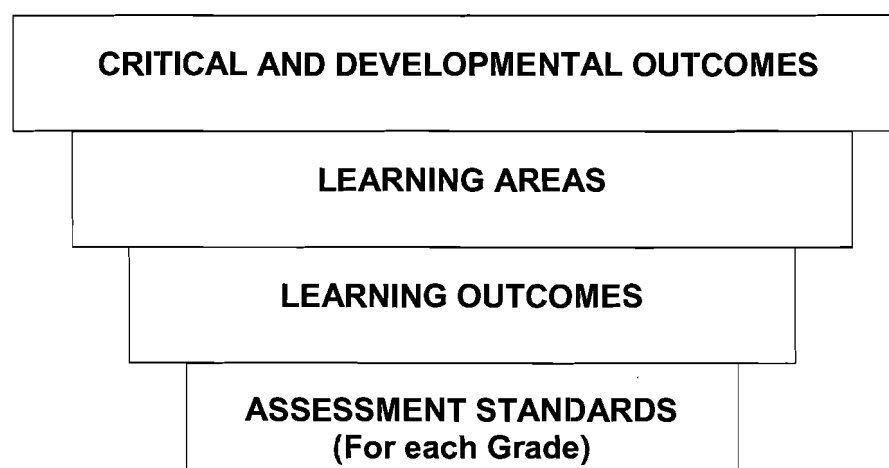
2.4 OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE NCS FRAMEWORK IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BAND

2.4.1 Introduction

As this study focuses on assessment within an Outcomes-Based curriculum, it is necessary to pay attention to policy principles guiding this assessment. The assessment framework of the National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-9 (Schools) is based on the principles of Outcomes-Based Education. According to the principles of Outcomes-Based Education, assessment should provide indications of learner achievement in the most effective and efficient manner, and ensure that learners integrate and apply knowledge and skills (Department of Education, 2007:8).

The National Curriculum Statement sets out the minimum knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that must be achieved in this band. Assessment should also help the learners to make judgments about their own performance, set goals for progress and provoke further learning (Department of Education, 2004:239; Department of Education, 2007:2). The figure below illustrates the main design features of the National Curriculum Statement, including the Assessment Standards:

Figure 2.1: Design features of the National Curriculum



A brief description of each design feature of the National Curriculum Statement will be presented.

- **Critical and Developmental Outcomes** refer to real life roles which are broad, generic and cross-curricular, and are linked to all fields of teaching and learning and are of key importance as a focus for both standard setting and curriculum development (Department of Education, 2004:11; Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004:14).
- **Learning Areas** refer to areas of learning which form the basis of the education curriculum and comprises specific Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards. The General Education and Training Band comprises eight Learning Areas (Department of Education, 2004:12; Geyser, 1994:207).
- **Learning Outcomes** refer to everything that the learner has to learn, including social and personal skills. Guided by the Learning Outcomes, the learner has to learn concepts, knowledge, understanding methodologies, values and attitudes. Basically Learning Outcomes describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners should know, demonstrate and be able to do at the end of a particular learning process (Department of Education, 2004:14-15; Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004:14).
- **Assessment Standards** refer to the level at which learners should demonstrate their level of achievement of Learning Outcomes and the ways (depth and breadth) of demonstrating their achievement (Department of Education, 2004:7; Department of Education, 2007:28).

The design features of the National Curriculum Statement outlined above

- contextualize the Critical and Developmental Outcomes within the Learning Outcomes and Assessment Standards;
- illustrate the interaction between the design features or elements of the National Curriculum Statement and the Assessment Standards; and

- place Assessment Standards at the heart of the assessment process in every grade.

The National Curriculum Statement therefore clearly indicates the kind of learner (in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) who is expected to be produced at the end of the General Education and Training band (Department of Education, 2004:4, 240-243; Department of Education, 2007:8).

2.4.2 Assessment defined

In the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools), assessment is defined as a continuous, planned process of gathering information about the performance of the learners measured against the Assessment Standards of the Learning Outcomes. The process requires clearly defined criteria and a variety of appropriate strategies to enable educators to give constructive feedback to learners and report to parents and other interested parties (Department of Education, 2007:7; Department of Education, 2004:240).

2.4.3 Key elements in assessment

In Outcomes-Based Assessment the educator needs to inform the learners in time and state clearly what they are expected to achieve at the end of a learning experience. The educator's task is to teach in order to help the learners attain and satisfy the requirements of the Assessment Standards in the curriculum. The role of the learner is to learn and do what the Assessment Standards expect.

To help the learners to reach their full potential, assessment should be

- authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced;
- focused on the diverse needs of learners and the context by using various assessment strategies;
- transparent and clearly focused;

- integrated with teaching and learning, meaning that assessment should be used to inform and evaluate teaching and learning;
- mainly criterion-referenced;
- accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient;
- based on predetermined criteria or standards;
- varied in terms of methods and contexts;
- valid, reliable, fair, learner-paced, and flexible enough to allow for expanded opportunities;
- used to support the development of all learners;
- used to make judgments about learners' progress;
- used to maximize learners' access to the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes defined in the national curriculum policy;
- used to report to parents and other stakeholders and role-players on the levels of learner achievement; and
- transparent so that learners and educators have a clear understanding of what the expectations are for any assessment task and what knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are being assessed (Department of Education, 2004:240; Department of Education; 2007:7, 8).

It is clear from the above that assessment in the National Curriculum Statement is built on the principles of assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3.1).

Assessment can be both formal and informal. Formal assessment refers to the evaluation of learners in a systematic way to determine how well they are progressing in a grade. These assessments should be recorded (*cf.* Table 3.1). Informal or daily assessment is the monitoring of learners' progress. This is done through observations, discussions, learner-educator conferences

and informal classroom interactions. Informal assessment should be used to provide feedback to learners and improve teaching, and need not be recorded (Department of Education, 2007:7, 8).

2.4.4 Purpose of assessment

Within the framework of the National Curriculum Statement, the main purpose of assessment is to enhance the individual growth and development of each learner and to monitor the progress of the learners and to facilitate learning on a continuous basis. According to the Department of Education (2002:6, 7) and Kotze (2004:49), effective assessment practices within the National Curriculum Statement are made possible by the following assessment approaches and processes.

Baseline assessment of prior learning

Baseline assessment usually takes place at the beginning of a grade or a phase or prior to any learning experiences to establish what learners know. The main focus is on the learners' previous achievement in relation to their abilities and interests in relation to school work. Baseline assessment serves as a valuable tool to facilitate instructional and planning activities, in the sense that it assists educators to plan their learning programmes and activities and subsequently their assessment procedures to be used in the classroom (Maaka, 1999:19; Department of Education, 2004:240; Kotze, 2004:49).

Diagnostic assessment

Diagnostic assessment is used for finding out about the nature and causes of barriers to learning experienced by specific learners. The learners' learning difficulties are diagnosed during instruction, the aim being to determine the cause of the persistent learning problems. Through the information gathered, the educators guide the learners, and provide appropriate support and intervention strategies (Department of Education, 2004:240; Kotze, 2004:49; Department of Education, 2007:9).

Formative assessment

Formative assessment monitors and supports the teaching and learning process. It informs both the learners and educators about the progress of the learners. The focus is on the learners' success and failures. Formative assessment provides constructive feedback and influences instruction to provide corrective actions and support the learners' progress. The learners, who do not meet the assessment criteria, receive clear feedback and support from the educator in order to achieve the required standard. The main purpose of formative assessment is to enhance learning, improve learner performance and, consequently promote growth and development (Department of Education, 2004:240; Kotze, 2004:49; Department of Education, 2007:7).

Summative assessment

Summative assessment refers to the overall picture of the learners' achievement and progress at a given time. The process is usually conducted at the end of the term or year, or on transfer to another school. Summative assessment enables the educator to compile a record stating how much the learners have achieved at a certain level or stage. The process is used to establish whether the learners have achieved the competency for a specific level or stage (Department of Education, 2004:240; Kotze, 2004:50).

2.4.5 Continuous assessment

Outcomes-Based Assessment is a developmental process mainly intended to support learner performance and progress through feedback on a continuous and ongoing basis (Kotze, 2004:50; Department of Education, 2007:10; Marnewick & Rouhani, 2007:271). According to Vermeulen (2000:78), Geyser (2001:11), Kotze (2004:50) and Marnewick and Rouhani (2007:271) continuous assessment is the chief method by which assessment should take place. The process covers all the Outcomes-Based Assessment principles and ensures that assessment:

- takes place over a period of time and is ongoing: learning takes place regularly and the records of the learners' progress are updated throughout the year;
- supports the growth and development of learners: learners become active participants in learning and assessment and understand the criteria that are used for assessment activities, are involved in self evaluation, set individual targets for themselves, reflect on their learning, and thereby experience raised self-esteem;
- provides feedback from learning and teaching: feedback is a crucial element in formative assessment and methods of feedback focus on the educator's oral and written comments on what was intended to be achieved by the assessment activity, as well as encouragement to a learner;
- allows for integrated assessment: this may include assessing a number of related Learning Outcomes within a single activity, and combining a number of different assessment methods and strategies. Competence in particular Learning Outcomes can be demonstrated in many ways, and thus a variety of assessment methods and opportunities must be provided through which learners can demonstrate their ability;
- uses techniques that cater for a variety of learner needs (language, physical, psychological, emotional and cultural). Continuous assessment allows educators to be sensitive to learners experiencing barriers to learning and to overcome barriers to learning through flexible approaches. As in any group of learners, there are different rates and styles of learning and all learners do not need to be assessed at the same time and in the same way; and
- allows for summative assessment: the accumulation of the results of continuous assessment activities provides an overall picture of a learner's progress at a given time. Summative assessment needs to be planned

carefully from the beginning of the year, to include a variety of assessment strategies, for example, exercises, tasks, projects, school and class tests which will provide learners with a range of opportunities to show what they have learned.

Continuous assessment is school-based and should be managed and designed by schools using the curriculum framework from the national assessment guidelines and the National Curriculum Statement. Continuous assessment should comprise a variety of assessment methods, assessment forms/techniques and assessment tools (*cf.* 2.4.6) to ensure that items included in the final result of a learner provide a fair and representative sampling of the outcomes as outlined in the Learning Area guideline document (Vermeulen, 2000:84; Department of Education, 2004:240-243; Department of Education, 2007:10).

Continuous assessment, according to Reddy (2004:34) is also characterized by criterion-referenced assessment. The latter involves the assessment of learner performance against explicit and clearly defined criteria. The nature of criteria which is directly derived from the Learning Outcomes is observable, transparent and precise and spells out clearly to the learners what they are going to be assessed about, before teaching and learning programmes and processes are put in place. The main focus of this assessment is whether the learner can or cannot demonstrate the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes set out in the criteria (Vermeulen, 2000:78; Geyser, 2001:11; Kotze, 2004:50).

Continuous assessment should, however, also be characterized by being norm-referenced. The main aim of this form of assessment is to determine how well the learners are doing, in comparison to the performance of other learners. Norm-referenced assessment does not say much about what the learners have mastered or understood. The focus is on how much content knowledge the learner knows and has acquired (Vermeulen, 2000:78; Geyser, 2001:11; Kotze, 2004:50).

2.4.6 Assessment in Outcomes Based Education

Guided by the Outcomes-Based Assessment principles, it is argued that the choice of strategies is a subjective one. The choice and decision lie entirely with the educator, grade and the school, and may at the same time depend on the educator's professional judgment as well as the availability of space and resources. Even at schools that may have similar resources, educators may still differ in the way that they make their choices (Department of Education, 2004:240-241). The choice is broad and educators may make their selection from a variety of strategies (Kotze, 2004:47).

In selecting the assessment methods, forms/techniques and tools, the educator needs to ensure that they are appropriate to the Assessment Standards to be assessed and the purpose of assessment must be clearly understood by all the learners and educators involved. Competence can be demonstrated in a number of ways. Thus, the educator can make his/her choice from a variety of assessment methods to enable the learners to demonstrate their abilities more fully (Department of Education, 2004:240-241). According to Vermeulen (2000:85) and Marnewick and Rouhani (2007:272-276), the following assessment methods, tools and forms/techniques can be utilized in the classroom.

2.4.6.1 Assessment methods

Assessment methods refer to the way in which learner performance is assessed (Vermeulen, 2000:80-83).

Assessment methods refer to the following:

Educator assessment: the educator assesses learners by means of a variety of techniques and methods.

Peer assessment: each learner monitors his/her contribution and others' contribution to a particular task, e.g. an assessment of the ability to

understand and accept the ideas of others during the performance of a particular activity.

Self assessment: this is conducted by each learner personally. Learners set personal goals for themselves and monitor their progress, using informal methods of assessment.

Group assessment: this method involves learners working effectively in groups, being assisted to develop and to be assessed on skills needed for working in groups. Group assessment involves assessing the extent to which learners work effectively as a group. This includes looking for evidence that a group of learners cooperates, assists one another, divides work and combines individual contributions into a single product.

2.4.6.2 Assessment tools

An assessment tool is a specific device used by educators to assess learner performance against a set of criteria (Vermeulen, 2000:80-83).

Assessment tools refer to the following examples:

observation forms, worksheets, journals, questionnaires, rubrics, shows, exhibitions, portfolios.

2.4.6.3 Assessment techniques/forms

Assessment techniques/forms are specific and appropriate assessment tasks or activities to assess learner performance (Vermeulen, 2000:80-83).

Assessment techniques/forms refer to the following:

examinations, projects, tests, research projects, assignments, surveys, debates, role play, drama, interviews, panel discussions, demonstrations.

The main purpose of the assessment processes and practices mentioned above is to promote cognitive development and growth through the achievement of outcomes. Thus the main role of the educator is to expose

learners to all these processes and practices, so that the learner can learn and develop all the necessary knowledge and skills which will, in turn, enable him/her to demonstrate his/her ability to convert knowledge into deeper meta-cognitive levels, and progress from knowledge learning targets to reasoning targets of demonstrating skills and presenting products (Kotze, 2004:48).

According to Lindeque (in Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004:21), the learners can achieve their full potential intellectually if the focus is on the development of mental capacity, and they are engaged in processes and practices which involve thinking, reasoning, interpretation, analysis, knowledge acquisition, remembering, organizing information, understanding, and problem-solving.

Johnson (in Du Toit & Du Toit, 2004:21-22) asserts that on an affective level, the assessment processes and practices will enable the learners to develop values such as motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-confidence. These values, among others, include values related to how the learner perceives his/her capacity to learn, self-discipline, acknowledgement of the own competencies as well as caring and sharing. In essence, these values develop the need among the learners to promote cooperation among themselves as individuals in teams and ultimately in their communities.

Outcomes-Based Assessment is broad and comprehensive and is an integral part of teaching and learning. It is facilitated by a variety of assessment methods, techniques/forms and tools. Their utilization promotes effective and efficient learning, and consequently, the holistic development of each individual learner (Vermeulen, 2000:84-85; Kotze, 2004:47; Department of Education, 2007:7-8).

Vermeulen (2000:75-76) gives a clear picture of how these assessment processes, practices, methods, techniques and instruments are integrated in order to assess the learner holistically. He argues that an Outcomes-Based Assessment approach within the South African context is formative with a summative component, criterion-referenced with a place for norm-referenced

assessment, continuous for formative and diagnostic purposes and is an integral part of teaching and learning.

In the preceding sections, it is clearly stated that schools and educators are privileged to make their own selections from a variety of assessment strategies available within the Outcomes-Based Education framework. Thus, in the process of selecting relevant and appropriate assessment strategies for their schools and learners, they should do so keeping in mind the educational aims and goals of assessment within the OBE context, namely the development, growth and support for further learner progress (Department of Education, 2004:3; Department of Education, 2002:13).

The ideas entailed in the National Curriculum Statement regarding assessment are in full agreement with the theoretical principles and views entailed in the alternative assessment approach (assessment for learning). The alternative assessment approach also emphasizes the importance of continuous assessment, comprised of clearly defined criteria with regard to what learners will be doing in particular (*cf.* 2.3). As in the National Curriculum Statement, the assessment for learning approach supports assessment processes which are guided by the achievement of Learning Outcomes. The outcomes direct assessment, teaching and learning.

As in the National Curriculum Statement, the alternative assessment approach places emphasis on continuous assessment and constructive feedback to all the stakeholders, educators and learners in particular (*cf.* 2.3). The aim of continuous assessment is to give progress reports on how learners perform and progress. The alternative assessment approach provides a variety of assessment tools, techniques/forms and methods to achieve effective learning and effective reporting to all the stakeholders.

If one compares the assessment principles entailed in the National Curriculum Statement and the assessment principles entailed in the alternative assessment approach it is evident that both argue for processes which are developmental and focused on learner performance, growth and progress on

a continuous basis. They both take into account the importance and purposes of assessment in learner development and both approaches fully support the implementation of summative and formative assessment.

2.4.7 Summary

The preceding section reviewed and explored the literature of both the traditional and alternative assessment approaches. In reviewing the forms of assessment entailed in the traditional assessment approach the focus was on the “*pen on paper*” tests and examinations. Within the traditional context, these forms of assessment are viewed as the main and only determinants of the learners’ success in terms of their development, achievement and progress within the school context. Their role with regards to learner assessment, which is very narrow, subjective and biased were discussed.

It is evident that, in assessing the learners, these forms of assessment are confined to the development of knowledge and intellectual functioning. This impacts negatively on the learners’ development in general, because this form of assessment neglects other aspects of the learners’ being which also need to be developed. Consequently, this assessment approach fails to address the needs of the learners holistically. This results in the learners not developing, functioning, achieving and progressing competently in whatever challenges they are confronted with.

In addition to the above approach, the alternative assessment approach was introduced at schools, with the view to focus on developing the learners’ needs in totality. This assessment approach addresses all the areas of the learners which need to be developed, namely knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, as well as their feelings and beliefs. The implementation of the alternative approach does not phase out the traditional assessment approach, it comes in as a supplement to make the whole assessment process complete.

Educational theorists argue that the two approaches should be reconciled. The reconciliation of the two approaches will result in forms of assessment

which will develop the learners holistically, allowing the learners to develop, grow, achieve, progress and function competently and ultimately to succeed in the real world.

2.5 CONCLUSION

Following from the literature review of both assessment of learning and assessment for learning, it is clear that assessment approaches are important and essential for achieving the intended educational objectives and goals as envisaged in the National Curriculum Statement.

The assessment processes entailed in the alternative assessment approach complement the traditional assessment approach in the sense that the alternative assessment approach develops and enhances the learners' intellectual skills and other capabilities from a lower level of functioning to a higher and sophisticated level of functioning. Therefore, the ideas discussed above support the view that the two approaches should be reconciled in order to achieve the intended educational objectives and goals, namely the holistic development of the learner.

The next section focuses on portfolio assessment. Portfolio assessment plays a central role in the Outcomes-Based Assessment approach. It is seen as a way of assessing learners, guided by the principles of assessment for learning (Estrem, 2004:125). In the context of the study, the researcher will therefore, in support of Estrem's argument, argue that the principles of assessment for learning should guide the implementation of portfolio assessment in order to be effective.

CHAPTER THREE

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter provided the framework for conducting assessment within the context of the National Curriculum Statement by referring to the role of traditional (assessment of learning) and the alternative (assessment of learning) approaches. This chapter elucidates important aspects related to the utilization of portfolios in assessment and links the principles of assessment for learning elucidated in the previous chapter to the implementation of portfolio assessment. The following aspects will be addressed:

- Portfolio: a concept clarification
- Portfolio assessment as a multidimensional tool
- The importance of implementing portfolio assessment
- The purpose of portfolio assessment
- Types of portfolios
- The implementation of portfolio assessment: the South African scenario
- Evidence to be provided in a portfolio
- Types of formal assessment tasks recommended for inclusion in portfolios across different Learning Areas

3.2 PORTFOLIO: A CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

To achieve the outcomes (Critical, Developmental and Learning Outcomes) envisaged by the National Curriculum Statement, the South African school curriculum places emphasis on assessing learner development, growth and

further progress by means of portfolios (Department of Education, 2002:3). This aim augurs well for the principles underpinning the assessment for learning approach (cf. 2.3).

The concept portfolio is defined in a variety of ways. Anneberg (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:121) defines a portfolio as “*a structured collection of evidence of work that is selective, reflective and collaborative and that demonstrates the learner’s learning about a particular unit of work, both in and out of class*”. Artel, Spandel and Culham (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:121) define a portfolio as “*a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of student achievement and growth*”. Wenzel and Karlowits (in McMullan, Endacott, Gray, Jasper, Miller, Scholes & Webb, 2003:288) define a portfolio as a focused purposeful collection of traditional and non-traditional work that represents the student’s learning, progress and achievement over time. Hanson and Gilkerson (1999:81) add that portfolios provide evidence of learners’ growth, level of mastery and effort invested over time.

Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:122) explain portfolio assessment as a structured collection of evidence of work which contains information that illustrates growth, a detailed description of the learners’ learning and evidence of learner participation in the selection of content and of learner self-reflection, which in turn relates and provides a multidimensional view of the learners’ growth, development and achievement.

However, Martin-Kniep (in Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:121) capture the essence of a portfolio when they state that a portfolio is “*a purposeful collection of students’ work that exhibits the students’ efforts, progress and achievement in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student reflection.*”

Knowles (in McMullan *et al.*, 2003:288) presents four assumptions which provide the theoretical basis that underpins the existence and functionality of an appropriate portfolio approach. In presenting the four assumptions, he

argues that in portfolio assessment, the learner is self-directed; secondly, the learner's past experiences are a rich resource for learning; thirdly, the readiness to learn develops from life tasks and problems; and lastly, the learner demonstrates curiosity to learn. As a result he/she is self-motivated to grow and achieve.

Tomkison (in Challis, 2001:437-440) contends that portfolio assessment is reflective and formal; the scope is broad and comprises clinical and non-clinical activities. The content is comprehensive and consists of a range of data. The assessment process is continuous, open and facilitated through summative and formative assessment. Portfolio assessment comprises both the traditional and non-traditional forms of assessment (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281).

Martin-Kniep (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:122) asserts that in the process of assessing learning and learner progress, the educators and the learners focus on establishing evidence of effort. Secondly, the learners work towards establishing evidence of progress, which reveals the first and last parallel assignments and lastly, the learners should focus on establishing the evidence of achievement: that is, the nature of evidence which reflects the learners' best work. Brown, Rust and Gibbs (in Marnewick & Rouhani, 2007:304) suggest that a gap exists in the traditional assessment strategies. This gap is between assessing theory and assessing practice. They consider that portfolio assessment help educators to bridge this gap.

Portfolio assessment serves as a multidimensional tool. This multidimensional nature will be explained in the following section.

3.3 PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT AS A MULTIDIMENSIONAL TOOL

Portfolio assessment relates to and provides a multidimensional view of the learners' growth, development and achievement (Jones, 2001:226; Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:122). The fact that portfolio assessment is multidimensional in nature implies that the implementation of portfolio assessment is a complex

process that plays a diverse role in the growth, development and progress of the learner. Therefore, the functions of portfolio assessment are the following:

3.3.1 Portfolios as assessment tools

The use of portfolios as an assessment tool represents an authentic and continuous process (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281-282). The use of portfolios as an assessment tool is increasingly seen as a way to evaluate the learners' work and progress more authentically (Estrem, 2004:125). The strength of portfolio assessment as an assessment tool is that it can allow assessment that is referenced by the learners' own starting and finishing point, and can recognize and value the means by which learning has been acquired and used (Challis, 2001:438). Portfolio assessment as an assessment tool emerges as a tool by which learners' efforts to apply knowledge is judged (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281).

3.3.2 Portfolios as developmental tools

As a developmental tool, portfolio assessment is an integral part of learning and informs the learners and their educators how much the learners are learning, and how well they are developing their skills and knowledge and what they need to do to enhance further development (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281). As a developmental tool, portfolio assessment encourages the development of critical and higher-order thinking skills and autonomous learning (Cook-Benjamin, 2001:6). Portfolio assessment allows for individual expression of the learning process and outcomes and necessitates learners' engagement with the process of development that is essential for reviewing learning, development and progress (Cook-Benjamin, 2001:7; Jones, 2001:226; Challis in Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281).

3.3.3 Portfolios as diagnostic tools

As a diagnostic tool, portfolio assessment provides learners with profiles of their emerging skills, to help them become increasingly independent learners. Portfolio assessment monitors the teaching and learning process and the level

of learner achievement and, at the same time, checks their learning mistakes and consequently creates opportunities for the correction of the learning mistakes in order to enhance further learning and development (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281; Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:123).

3.3.4 Portfolios as instructional tools

As an instructional tool, portfolio assessment reviews learning, development and progress, and enables learners and educators to engage and interact freely in the teaching-learning process. Portfolio assessment guides learners in gathering information and organizing documentation in an appropriate and creative way (Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281-283). Arter and Spandel (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:122) argue that, in the process of assembling their portfolios, the learners develop self-regulation, critical thinking and the responsibility for learning content as well as skills and knowledge.

Secondly, they argue further that portfolio assessment as an instructional tool promotes effective teaching and learning and reflects progress on instructional goals. At the same time it keeps track of what learners know and can do and ultimately confirms the certification of competency, tracking of growth over time and accountability. Learners learn to reflect on their own learning and give evidence of critical reflection.

According to Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002:281-283), portfolio assessment as an instructional tool represents an authentic and continuous assessment of learner progress and creates the possibilities for integrating assessment with instruction. It furthermore promotes collaborative learning and allows learners to learn independently of the educator's supervision and guidance, and consequently develops higher-order thinking skills.

3.3.5 Portfolios as communication tools

As a communication tool, portfolio assessment offers an opportunity of bringing together the personal and shared conversations between the learner and the assessor/educator. It also enables the educator/assessor and the

learners to monitor the learning process, their development and progress together (Cook-Benjamin, 2001:6; Jones, 2001:226; Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281; Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:123). Finally, according to Azwell (in Scherman, 2004:152), portfolio assessment provides an opportunity for educators, learners and parents to communicate about learning that is taking place.

3.3.6 Conclusion

It is important to mention that the functions of a portfolio discussed in the above section, supports the assessment principles entailed in assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3; 2.3.1). In the discussion of the functions of a portfolio as a multidimensional tool the following assessment for learning principles are highlighted:

- the application of knowledge (*cf.* 3.3.1);
- the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (*cf.* 3.3.1);
- learners should be made aware of their strengths and weaknesses while being assisted to build on their strengths and overcome their weaknesses (*cf.* 3.3.2, 3.3.3);
- learners should be helped to acknowledge their successes, failures and mistakes and to overcome their failures to improve performance (*cf.* 3.3.3);
- the focus should be on the personal growth of the learner (*cf.* 3.3.2);
- learners should work independently from the educator (*cf.* 3.3.4);
- critical and creative thinking skills should be developed (*cf.* 3.3.2);
- problem-solving skills should be developed (*cf.* 3.3.2);
- learners should learn to respect the opinions and views of others (*cf.* 3.3.5);

- learners should develop as creators of knowledge (*cf.* 3.3.4);
- learners should be taught how to search for information, how to organize the information and teach learners how to present the information (the main purpose of the whole exercise being to help learners to develop research skills (*cf.* 3.3.4);
- learners should become self-regulated; learning to reflect on and evaluate their own learning (*cf.* 3.3.5);
- educators and learners should be allowed to engage in discussions that involve feedback regarding completed work, as well as discussions regarding performance (*cf.* 3.3.5);
- communication should be allowed between educator and parents, as well as involvement of parents in the assessment of their children (*cf.* 3.3.5);
- a variety of techniques, tools, methods and strategies should be involved (*cf.* 3.3.1) ; and
- the assessment should be continuous and ongoing (*cf.* 3.3.2).

Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:126) contend that portfolio assessment is a suitable tool for measuring performance at all cognitive levels and it is highly efficient in assessing the higher levels of cognitive performance. Portfolio assessment could include written, practical and oral forms of assessment (debates, speeches and roleplay) which in turn allows and accommodates different learning styles and takes into account the collaboration and integration of different Learning Areas through the use of common themes. In this way, portfolio assessment allows for the holistic growth and development of the learner.

The main aim of portfolio assessment is to encourage the learners to develop a sense of responsibility and to learn to be accountable for learning that is taking place, ultimately assuming a sense of ownership for their own learning. Paulson and Wenzel (in McMullan *et al.*, 2003:90) assert that portfolio

assessment stimulates the development of self-awareness, personal growth and independent learning.

Through the use of portfolios, the learners develop self-awareness and personal growth through the ability to reflect on their own learning, meaning that portfolio assessment promotes self-reflection and provides evidence of critical reflection. This advanced level of development is evident when the learners display a feeling of self-esteem and confidence. The development of these advanced qualities helps the learners to take charge of their own lifelong learning and prepares them for the working practice (Paulson, Redman, Wenzel & Harris in McMullan *et al.*, 2003:290).

Portfolio assessment fosters and promotes self-regulated learning in ways that traditional testing cannot, and provides a viable alternative and meaningful supplement to traditional testing (Van der Horst & Mc Donald, 2003:195). Therefore the implementation of portfolio assessment enables learners to demonstrate professional development and learning and, at the same time, allows them to determine areas of strength and weakness with respect to their continual training and further educational opportunities (Department of Education, 2002:20).

Gottlieb (in Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281) therefore contends that the use of portfolio assessment emerged as a vehicle by which learners and educators can organize, manage and analyse life at and out of school.

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Arter and Spandel (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:123) assert that the implementation and use of portfolio assessment taps learners' knowledge and capabilities to a great extent.

They further assert that portfolios investigate the learners' learning and production processes, align instructional and testing outcomes and examine the learners' functionality in real life situations. Portfolio assessment provides continuous feedback, encourages learners' engagement and responsibility for

learning, tracks the learners' progress in a multidimensional way and provides an opportunity for learners, educators and parents to communicate about learning that is taking place. Klenowski (2002:219) asserts that the implementation of portfolio assessment is useful in facilitating learning, assessment, and appraisal and it is also essential for promotional purposes.

3.5 THE PURPOSE OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:123) emphasize the importance of portfolio assessment as a developmental tool in both formative and summative assessment. Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:123) assert that, in implementing portfolio assessment, it is important to balance formative and summative opportunities in the learning situation. They argue that portfolio assessment is mainly intended for assessing the developmental process of the learner and the end product of learning.

Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:123) furthermore argue that the purpose of portfolio assessment and the role of the assessor from the developmental perspective are to ensure that the learner is assessed throughout the process of learning, the main purpose being to take into account and note the extent to which learners give evidence of mastering the Learning Outcomes. The assessor needs to ensure that continuous provision of feedback on learner progress is maintained and assistance to the learners with regard to the correction of learning errors is provided, especially while the learner is compiling the portfolio.

Du Toit and Vandeyar (2004:123), continue by arguing that the assessor should assist the learners in order to enhance their learning achievement and at the same time encourage their involvement in peer assessment. Portfolio assessment is also intended for the development of skills in critical analysis, critical reflection and the promotion of self-regulated learning and encouragement to engage in objective self-assessment. Then the purpose of assessment, with regard to the final product focuses on the end results of

learning. The process is formal and essential for making administrative decisions for purposes of certification.

3.6 TYPES OF PORTFOLIOS

The design of a portfolio will depend on the purpose it is intended for. Some portfolios are used for monitoring day-to-day progress of learners and to encourage the learners to reflect on their own learning (Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:124). These types of portfolios focus on the process of the learners' development and are used for formative and diagnostic purposes. Other portfolios provide evidence for formal assessment and some are used for recording the learners' developing work as well as final products. These portfolios focus on process and product and should indicate whether a learner is able or not yet able to integrate knowledge, concepts, values, attitudes and skills (Department of Education, 2002:12).

Given the aim and purpose which the portfolio is intended for, the educator will decide on the type of portfolio or a combination of portfolio types that will be utilized by the learners (Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:124). The Department of Education (in Du Toit & Vandeyar, 2004:124-126) distinguishes between three main types of portfolios:

3.6.1 Process or working portfolio

The process portfolio documents the learning process in which the learners engage in through various projects throughout the instructional year. Included within the process are samples of work that learners include as they strive to reach the goals of a larger project. Reflection is an important aspect of the process portfolio. It provides educators with regular planned contexts for encouraging learners to assess themselves and reflect on their own learning process.

3.6.2 Documentary portfolio

This type of a portfolio provides focused reflections of learning in which the learners engage through various projects throughout the instructional year and contains systematic collections of a learner's self-assessment, as well as an educator's assessment. The purpose of a documentary portfolio is to assess learners on pre-selected tasks, using pre-determined criteria. Each entry in the portfolio has been selected with both learner and educator input and the evaluation of the input is based on criteria specified by both learner and educator. The criteria may take the form of assessment rubrics.

3.6.3 Showcase portfolio

This type of portfolio contains the collections of work which the learner and educator believe to represent the learner's best work. The showcase portfolio tends to hold only finished products and is used for a number of educational purposes, including selection, certification and classroom management. A selection from the showcase portfolio comes from the process portfolio.

Duffy, Jones, and Thomas (1999) indicate four specific types or levels of portfolios. They indicate that these levels correspond with the types of portfolios identified by other authors, but they (Duffy *et al.*, 1999) argue for a specific ordering of the portfolios to produce an expected learner outcome. They argue that portfolios need to be purposefully sequenced to move learners along a continuum over time with an increasing level of responsibility, while the educator scaffolds learning efforts in the process.

3.6.3.1 Level 1: the everything portfolio

This is a developmental portfolio that provides evidence of an individual learner's work across a variety of subjects or Learning Areas for semester or year. This portfolio may contain both work in progress and final drafts of projects. Educators utilize this portfolio for evaluation of progress.

3.6.3.2 Level 2: the product portfolio

The educator provides the learners with a table of contents that delineates the required topics or products. The learners include various examples of their work in each area of the table of contents. The learner and educator discuss to determine how these examples match standards or quality.

3.6.3.3 Level 3: the showcase portfolio

Similar to the product portfolio, the showcase portfolio begins with an educator-generated table of contents, and the learners respond with an example of their best work to meet the table of contents' requirements. Learners are cautioned not simply to include examples of work for which they received high marks, but to consider the audience and purpose of each selection before deciding on the inclusion of an example in the portfolio. Educators provide learners with feedback on how well reasoned their choices were.

3.6.3.4 Level 4: the objective portfolio

In this level of portfolio, the educator generates a list of objectives or statements about quality performance. For example: "*the student will compose a compare-and-contrast paragraph*" (Duffy *et al.*, 1999). The learner selects from his/her work the example that best represents efforts to meet the objective or stated performance. This level requires the greatest participation from learners. It requires from them to analyse the demands of the task, to critically review all their work and then select the best example. The educator's role is to acknowledge mastery of the objective and/or provide feedback to allow learners to gain a better understanding of the required objective.

In the context of the study, the research set out to examine, among other aspects, whether the compilation of portfolios afford learners opportunities for self-assessment, reflection, growth and development, as opposed to just

being a showcase of the required evidence as prescribed by the assessment policy.

3.7 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCENARIO

According to the policy which was published in the Government Gazette (No, 18490, October 31, 1997), all schools are obligated to implement Outcomes-Based Education. This signalled a paradigm shift and a dramatic breakup from the past. This implied, among others, a move away from a system of only measurement and evaluation (tests and examinations) to the modern concept of assessment, namely what learners are able to do with the acquired knowledge. The general aim of assessing learners in Outcomes-Based Education is promotion of learning, growth and development, and continuous support for further growth (Department of Education, 2002:3; Department of Education, 2007:1-8).

With the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement, the Department of Education has reviewed the assessment policy. This new policy has been developed within the framework of Outcomes-Based Assessment. The new assessment policy is still guided by the assessment principles which promote and emphasize teaching and learning based on the achievement of outcomes. In the new policy, the continuous assessment tasks in different Learning Areas have been reviewed and some changes have been effected. In some Learning Areas forms of assessment tasks remain the same, while in others, new forms of assessment tasks have been added (Department of Education, 2007:15-16).

A variety of assessment methods, tools and forms/techniques should still be utilized (*cf.* 2.4.6) The evidence of learner performance, assessment and achievement in tests, assignments, investigations and projects during continuous assessment is stored in a portfolio (Department of Education, 2002:15; Department of Education, 2007:14-15).

Over time, with the assistance and guidance of the educator, the learners purposefully work and build up information that is retained and kept safely to provide visible proof of learner growth, development, improvement and achievement, as well as skills, abilities, competencies and dispositions acquired (Kish, 1997:254; Department of Education, 2000:11; Gwele, 2001: 92).

In the General Education and Training (GET) band, in the Senior Phase, Grade 9 marks the end of the compulsory phase of schooling. Education in this band aims at providing learners with the basic competencies or a broad foundation of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for lifelong learning. Therefore, in order that the learner obtains a General Education and Training Certificate at the end of Grade 9, the evidence of the school-based continuous assessment which is reflected in the learners' portfolios will contribute 75% to the final decision-making process for each Learning Area and the Common Task Assessment (CTA) will contribute 25% (Department of Education, 2002:12; Department of Education, 2007:16). Therefore a learner shall be promoted from Grade 9 on the basis of demonstrating competencies that reflect a balanced and weighted spread over all Learning Areas, through an institution-based continuous assessment programme and an external assessment component. The learner shall be promoted if he/she satisfies the requirements of both school-based assessment and the external summative assessment (Department of Education, 2002:12,13; Department of Education, 2007:22-23).

3.8 EVIDENCE TO BE PROVIDED IN A PORTFOLIO

- The Assessment Guidelines of each Learning Area (Department of Education, s.a.:a;b;c;d;e;f;g) provide information with regard to the following:
- The respective Learning Outcomes
- The weighting of Learning Outcomes is outlined

- Forms of assessment tasks (formal tasks) which are recommended for implementation across different Learning Areas (*cf.* 3.9)
- The table below, table 3.1, provides information on the formal continuous assessment tasks required from learners for each Learning Area in Grade 9. The purpose of this table is to highlight the number and variety of assessment opportunities that educators have during the compilation of learner portfolios to ensure that they develop learners holistically and attain the expected levels of competency.

Table 3.1: Formal assessment tasks for Grade 9 (Department of Education, 2007:16)

Learning Area	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Total
Languages					
• Home Language	3	2	3		8
• 1 st Additional	2	2	2	CTA	6
• 2 nd Additional	2	1	2		5
Mathematics	3	3	3		9
Natural Sciences	2	2	2		6
Social Sciences	2	2	2		6
Technology	1	1	2		3
Economic and Management Sciences	1	1	2		4
Arts and Culture	1	1	1		4
Life Orientation	1	1	1		3
Total	18	16	20		54

3.9 FORMS/TECHNIQUES OF ASSESSMENT TASKS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IN PORTFOLIOS ACROSS DIFFERENT LEARNING AREAS

Different forms/techniques of assessment can be utilized in all Learning Areas to help learners develop holistically in terms of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (Department of Education, s.a.: a; b; c; d; e; f; g).

Creative writing

Creative writing is a kind of essay which normally provides good evidence of the learners' creativity and can also reflect what knowledge and skills they have developed. Creative writing is also a good form of assessment to use when you want to assess values (Department of Education, s.a. c:25).

Functional writing

This is a specific writing task. You can establish the criteria beforehand and then set a functional writing task that learners need to respond to. Functional writing can be used for assessing skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (Department of Education, s.a. a:31).

Aural/Oral questions

These are mainly used to generate evidence on the learners' ability to listen, interpret, communicate ideas and sustain a conversation in the language of assessment. Oral questions include oral examinations, interviews or other conversations in which information is obtained about learners' learning (Department of Education, s.a. a:30; e:53; f:47; g:22).

Spoken language

Oral presentations usually require learners to give a speech on a relevant topic. This can either be done with a poster or a written report that must be handed in. Oral presentations can provide good insight into learners' knowledge and their values. If used with critical questions to guide the oral

presentations, one can also gain insight into the skills being developed. They can be used effectively for formative and summative assessment (Department of Education, s.a. c:25).

Performance-based tasks

This type of assessment requires learners to demonstrate a skill or proficiency by asking the learners to create, produce or do something, often in a setting that involves real world applications. The educator should assess not only the end product, but also the process that the learners used to complete the task (Department of Education, s.a. a:27; c:23; e:51; g:18).

Tests/Examinations

Tests and examinations focus on measuring the level of achievement relative to the particular Learning Outcome/s and Assessment Standards. Tests usually consist of a range of questions. Learners are required to respond to a range of questions within a specified time. They are useful to assess knowledge recall. They test understanding and comprehension, but skills, values and attitudes are equally important in assessment through tests and examinations. If questions are carefully phrased, they can also test application of knowledge. Since they are generally easy to mark reliably, they are a good way of conducting summative assessment. However they can be a useful formative tool as well. Test and examination questions may include short questions, true/false items, matching items and longer questions (Department of Education, s.a. a:27; b:29; c:23; d:20; e:50; f:45; g:16).

Practical demonstration

Practical demonstrations can be separate from or a part of performance-based assessments which involve the educator actually observing how the learner demonstrates a specific practical skill. They can be very useful for assessing how learners draw on knowledge and values to carry out practical skills (Department of Education, s.a. c:23; f:46; g:20).

Research

A research task involves the collection of data and/or information to solve a problem or to understand a particular set of circumstances and/or phenomena. While the problem that focuses the research task is well defined, the nature of data collected will determine the solution to the problem (Department of Education, s.a. c:23; f:45).

Class work/Homework

This refers to the written work that is done by the learner, either at school or at home, on a regular basis according to the need of the Learning Area. Class work and homework illustrate the learner's progress; written work is viewed as one of the means of practising and consolidating the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. Written work affords the learner the opportunity to structure and express his/her thought processes and the educator to monitor the learner's progress (s.a. b:29).

Assignments

Assignments like projects and investigations allow for a more holistic assessment of knowledge, skills and values and their application in different contexts. However, they are normally shorter and more focused than investigations and projects and are used for specific tasks (Department of Education, s.a. b:32; c:23; d:20; f:45).

Investigation activities

Investigation activities are a type of performance activity that engages learners in some form of systematic inquiry of phenomena. The National Curriculum illustrates the criteria for assessing investigations and problem-solving at various levels. The National Curriculum Statement describes at least four kinds of problems to investigate and solve: problems of making; problems of observing, surveying or measuring; problems of comparing; and

problems of determining the effect of certain factors (Department of Education, s.a.c:23; d: 20; f: 45).

Projects

Like investigation activities, projects allow for the holistic assessment of learners' abilities to apply knowledge, skills and values in a relevant context. They are substantial tasks in which learners illustrate or apply knowledge that they have gained in class. Learners can build models and compile reports, essays or posters, or even give presentations. Educators can assess different stages of the projects separately, or the entire project. Projects can involve individuals or groups. The assessor directs the choice of the project, usually by providing the learner with a topic or a brief for the investigation (Department of Education, s.a. a:27; b:31; e:53; f:45).

Simulations

Simulations can come in different forms. They normally involve the learners in the situation that stimulates reality. They usually involve educators setting up a situation that stimulates reality and then assessing learners as they play a specific role under those conditions. Simulations often involve role playing and can be used for formatively assessing application of knowledge, skills and values in different contexts, but can be designed to suit summative assessment too (Department of Education, s.a. a:29; b:29; c:24; g:21).

Self-report assessment

In self-assessment, learners could be asked to complete a form or answer questions to reveal how they think about themselves, or how they rate themselves. Attitude surveys self-concept questionnaires and interest inventories are some of the examples that are used in self-report assessment (Department of Education, s.a. a:30; c:25; f:47; g:23).

Case studies

Case studies are a detailed description of a specific situation or phenomenon. The situation can be either real or made up by the educator. They can be taken from books, newspapers, magazines, videos or radio. Case studies enable educators to assess whether learners can apply knowledge, skills and values to an unfamiliar context. Coupled with well structured questions, these can easily be used for summative purposes. Used with group work, however, educators can also use them effectively for formative purposes (Department of Education, s.a. a:27; c:23; d:20; e:52; f:46; g:19).

Role play

Learners are presented with a situation, often a problem or an incident, to which they have to respond by assuming a particular role. The enactment may be unrehearsed, or the learner may be briefed in the particular role to be played. Such assessments are open-ended and are person-centred. This kind of assessment allows for assessment of expressive skills and is also very useful for assessing values. Role plays can also be used to assess application of knowledge from one context to another. Generally, role plays are used better for formative assessment purposes. However, if used together with a project or an assignment, they can be used effectively for summative purposes (Department of Education, s.a. a:29; c:24; e:53; f:45; g:21).

Translation tasks

In translation tasks, the learners interpret information provided by the educator and express it in a different form in order to show their understanding. For example, translating line graphs into text descriptions and *vice versa*. This task is especially suited for summative assessment (Department of Education, s.a. c:24).

Interviews

An interview is probably the oldest and best-known means of eliciting information directly from learners. It combines two assessment methods, namely observation and questioning. An interview is a dialogue between the assessor and the learner, creating opportunities for learner questions. Learner responses may be written down or recorded onto a tape recorder or video/DVD player and analysed at a later stage if necessary. Interviews can be used for formative and summative purposes, but they may take a lot of time unnecessarily if the educator has a very large class (Department of Education,, s.a. a:27; b:29; c:24; g:19).

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a structured written interview consisting of a set of questions. When educators don't have enough time to interview every learner in sufficient detail, they can use a questionnaire to elicit the same information in written rather than in verbal form. Questionnaires can also be used to acquire information about attitudes, or to gauge prior knowledge of learners or to find out specific details about a group of learners (Department of Education, s.a. a:27; b:29; c:24; e:54).

Observations

This is the type of assessment that is commonly used by educators without consciously thinking about it. The educators constantly observe learners informally to assess their understanding and progress. Educators watch learners as they respond to questions or as they study. The educator listens as they speak with others. Observation can be used extensively in performance- based assessment (Department of Education, s.a. a:30; b:29; c:24; e:53; f:47; g:22).

Structured questions

Structured questions consist of a stem which describes the situation, followed by a series of related questions. The stem can be a diagram, text, picture, video, etc. Structured questions may be used for recalling information, application of knowledge and understanding, debates and arguments. They can also be used in tests, questionnaires, interviews and assignments (Department of Education, s.a. e:24; g:19).

Concept mapping

These kinds of tasks involve learners making a list of concepts and arranging them in a hierarchical way so that the most inclusive concepts are at the top and the least inclusive concepts are lower down. The concepts are linked via short propositions that define the relationships between them. Concept maps are best used as a formative assessment tool. They can be used for summative assessment too, but unless one has very clear criteria, the marking can be subjective (Department of Education, s.a. c:24)

Mind mapping

A mind map is similar to a concept map, but not the same. Mind maps start with a central concept in the centre of a page and branch out with links to the less inclusive concepts. Mind maps do not necessarily contain labels for the links. Like concept maps, they are best used as a formative assessment tool, but are not used frequently for summative assessment (Department of Education, s.a. c:24; e:54).

Brainstorming

Brainstorming involves learners applying their minds to a situation to produce a storm of creative ideas. It is usually done in groups. Sometimes learners can be required to report back after a brainstorming session. It is useful as a formative assessment tool, but is not really used frequently for summative purposes (Department of Education, s.a. b:29; c:25; e:54).

Essays

In essay tests, learners are required to construct a written response that would be several sentences to several pages in length. Essays can be used effectively for formative and summative assessment (Department of Education, s.a. c:25).

Data handling

Data handling expects of the learner to work with different forms of data in a variety of contexts to construct knowledge and develop appropriate values and attitudes. In data handling tasks, learners are expected to work with a wide range of sources and evidence as they construct knowledge. Educators can use data handling for both informal and formal assessment. Such activities are also suitable to both performance and pen-on-paper tasks. Finally, educators can make use of data handling in investigations, case studies, tests and examinations (Department of Education, s.a. d:21).

Creative writing

Creative writing is a kind of essay that normally provides evidence of learners' creativity. Creative activities can also include making models, creating posters or collages and role play (Department of Education, s.a. c:25)

Map reading and analysis

Map reading and analysis is a crucial life skill. Creating assessment tasks involving map reading and map analysis provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to read and interpret different types of maps. Learners also need to be able to make deductions in different contexts. Maps that can be used include relief maps, historical maps, topographical maps, political maps, spatial distribution maps, population density maps, orthophoto maps, synoptic charts, as well as satellite images and photos, both vertical and oblique (Department of Education, s.a. d:20).

The forms of assessment mentioned above are applicable across different Learning Areas. Therefore educators are provided with a broad and wide range and a variety of forms of assessment that they can use to assess different Learning Outcomes. The implementation and the use of a variety of assessment forms and strategies will, in the end, enable educators and learners to achieve the intended and ultimate outcomes of teaching and learning.

3.10 SUMMARY

In the preceding section, the concept portfolio was defined and the purpose and importance of developing portfolios were elucidated. The role of portfolios as multidimensional tools and the different types of portfolios which learners may develop were discussed. The implementation of portfolios in the South African scenario was explained and the required number of formal assessment tasks for inclusion in the portfolio per Learning Area was indicated. Different forms/techniques of assessment that can be included in learner portfolios were presented and briefly described. The next section focuses on the empirical research design.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous two chapters highlighted the concepts central to the study. The importance of incorporating the assessment for learning approach in the Outcomes-Based teaching and learning framework, as well as the compulsory use of portfolios in this regard, were highlighted. This chapter will focus on the empirical research that was conducted to obtain data regarding the extent to which the assessment of learning approach is reflected in the use of portfolios.

The main purpose of this chapter is to give a comprehensive explanation of:

- Aims of the study
- Research paradigm
- Research methodology
- Data collection instrument
- Population and sample
- Data analysis
- Limitations of the study

4.2 AIMS OF THE STUDY

As stated in the opening section of this chapter, the overall aim of the study is to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment. In order to achieve the aim, data was collected to determine the extent to which portfolio assessment promotes and enhances the principles of assessment for

learning. The principles of assessment for learning should underpin the implementation of portfolios in order that educators achieve what is envisaged with the use of portfolios (*cf.* 3.3). The data collected assisted the researcher with the development of a model to guide educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment in order to support assessment for learning.

For the purposes of this study, the focus was on Grade 9 educators and learners. The emphasis that is placed on the information and evidence gathered in the learners' portfolio for obtaining the General Education and Training Certificate provided the rationale to conduct research with the Grade 9 educators and learners. The overall aim was operationalized by:

- determining the criteria for the effective implementation of portfolio assessment;
- establishing whether educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment;
- determining whether the current way of implementing portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning;
- investigating what educators do in particular to ensure that the implementation of portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning; and
- developing a model which will enable practicing educators to improve their knowledge and skills in order to promote assessment for learning through the use of portfolios.

4.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (in Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:31), research is about understanding the world, and your understanding is informed by how you see the world, what you view understanding to be and

what you see as the purpose of understanding. This implies that a researcher should:

- determine whether reality will be understood from an external, objective (realist) view, or through the words created by individuals (nominalist view) (Cohen *et al.* in Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:31);
- determine whether knowledge can be viewed as objective (positivist stance) or interpretive (anti-positivist stance); and
- adopt a stance regarding human nature, that is: whether humans respond mechanically to their environment, whether they initiate their own actions or whether they fall somewhere between the two mentioned extremes.

The decisions made regarding the above impact on the choice of research methods, research designs, data collection instruments and sampling techniques. The researcher's stance regarding the above directed the study towards a mixed-method approach in which a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was utilized. The researcher thus operated from a combined positivistic-interpretivistic paradigm.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To proceed with the study and answer the question of the choice of the research methodology, the researcher decided and established the nature of the data to be gathered. Data can either be quantitative (in the form of numbers), or qualitative (perceptions or opinions) or a combination of both quantitative and qualitative.

Another important aspect that needed attention was the role of the researcher. Would the researcher conduct the study personally and interact directly with the research participant, or would the researcher be an external observer, who remained detached from the research participant in order to draw unbiased conclusions? The researcher decided to play a two-fold role.

As the researcher decided to be an external observer, whose aim was to establish and form relationships, and develop generalizations that contribute to theory based on data that was obtained through objective measures that existed independently from the feelings and opinions of individuals, a quantitative research method was selected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:95; Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:6). In this study, the aim was to establish the link between the implementation of portfolio assessment and the principles of assessment for learning. The researcher also decided to be personally involved and interact with the participants to examine their perceptions and viewpoints regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment, therefore qualitative research was also chosen.

As a combined quantitative and qualitative approach was chosen for the study, mixed-method research applies. A mixed method research design, according to Brewer and Hunter (in Creswell, 2001:501) is a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. The mixed method design provides a better understanding of the research problem. It is a good design in the sense that, if the researcher seeks to build on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative data, the method seems to be the appropriate design to utilize.

The combination of both qualitative and quantitative research designs in the study, according to Miller and Huberman (in Creswell, 2005:510) leads to the development of a very powerful mix. The value of the combination of both the qualitative and quantitative research designs is further conformed by Greene and Carocells (in Creswell, 2005:510). They assert that the assessment of both the outcomes (quantitative) and process of the study (qualitative) may produce a complete picture of the phenomena.

In the context of the study, the explanatory mixed-method approach was used (Ivankova *et al.*, 2007:264). The quantitative data was collected first and analysed, after which the qualitative data was collected and analysed. The word explanatory refers to the fact that the qualitative findings helped to explain the quantitative data obtained (Ivankova *et al.*, 2007:264).

4.4.1 Quantitative research

A quantitative research study is developed on the basis of carefully designed guidelines. These guidelines are structured around objectivity and examine the situation as it is. They do not change or modify the situation under investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:179). It was important for the researcher to verify whether the chosen research design could be acknowledged as valid for the intended type of research.

4.4.1.1 Validity of quantitative research for this study

Validity means accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility of the study as a whole (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:97). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:134) refer to validity as the truthfulness of findings and conclusions.

It was necessary for the research to determine whether the research conducted in this study complied with the following validity criteria identified by Leedy and Ormrod (2005:97-99) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006:134-142).

Statistical conclusion validity

This refers to the appropriate use of statistical tests to determine whether purported relationships are a reflection of actual relationships. In this regard, the researcher sought the assistance of the Statistical Consultation Services at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus. The researcher is therefore convinced that the statistical procedures utilized in this study (*cf.* 5.2.3; 5.2.4) were appropriate for the study to determine whether the implementation of portfolio assessment supports the principles of assessment for learning.

Internal validity

Internal validity explains the extent to which its design and the data it yields allow the researcher to draw accurate conclusions on the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99). Internal validity, therefore, allows the researcher to draw

accurate conclusions about the study, meaning that the researcher could be confident that any conclusions derived from the study could warrant that the data was collected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99). In the case of this study the following can be mentioned. There were no extraneous incidents that affected the results. One problematic factor, which could be regarded as a limitation and threat to the results, might be the fact that random sampling was not utilized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:136).

To ensure internal validity, both quantitative and qualitative data were utilized to answer the research question (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99). Collecting data by means of multiple data collection instruments enhances the validity of a study. In this regard, Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007:40) refer to crystallization. Lincoln and Grube (in Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:40) refer to crystallization as *“attending to voices that differ from your own to enable you to study multiple constructed realities”*.

External validity

External validity refers to the extent to which the conclusions drawn can be generalized to other contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:134). The external validity of the study was enhanced by the fact that the study was conducted in a real life setting with a representative sample being selected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:99). Caution should, however, be exercised in the final interpretation of the results as the sample size was small, necessitating further research to generalize findings ultimately.

Construct validity

Construct validity concerns the efficacy of using a particular data collection instrument for research purposes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:140). The researcher was convinced that the use of a questionnaire to determine educator perceptions regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment was appropriate. The questionnaire responses of the educators were also backed up by learner responses to the same questions and focus group interview responses of the educators.

4.4.2 Qualitative research

This approach was chosen as it was the intention of the researcher to seek a better understanding of a complex situation, namely the implementation of portfolios at school level (Leedy & Ormrod: 2005:95). According to Peshkin (in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:134), qualitative research serves the following purposes:

- a description of the nature of situations, settings, processes and people;
- an interpretation to gain new insights about phenomena or to discover new problems that exist within phenomena;
- a verification of assumptions, claims or generalizations within real-world contexts; and
- an evaluation to judge effectiveness of policies and practices.

As the researcher intended to describe and interpret the nature of the implementation of portfolio assessment with the aim to discover problems, judge the effectiveness of the implementation and to develop new insight into the implementation of portfolio assessment, a qualitative approach was chosen.

It was important for the researcher to verify whether a qualitative approach could be acknowledged as valid for the intended type of research.

4.4.2.1 Validity of qualitative research for this study

The validity of qualitative research for this particular study is supported by the following aspects indicated by Leedy and Ormrod (2005:100) and McMillan & Schumacher (2006:324-326).

- The classroom situations where portfolio assessment was implemented were described in sufficient detail to ease the drawing of conclusions.

- The researcher constantly sought the opinion of colleagues in the field and the opinions of the promoter as to whether appropriate interpretations and valid conclusions were drawn from the data.
- The researcher also took the conclusions which were drawn back to the respondents for verification.
- Triangulation in data collection and data analysis was allowed.
- Verbatim accounts of educators' experiences with portfolio assessment were collected.
- A tape recorder was utilized during the focus group interviews to avoid incorrect accounts of the educators' experiences.
- The researcher also searched for and reported data that was an exception or modification to the patterns found.

4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of a research design is to specify a plan for generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:22). Both quantitative and qualitative designs were utilized in this study (Fouché & De Vos, 2002:137-138; Fouché, 2002:270-273).

4.5.1 Quantitative research design

For the purpose of the quantitative study, a non-experimental descriptive research design was chosen (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:23). Descriptive research provides a summary of an existing phenomenon by using numbers to characterize individuals or a group. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:179) indicate that descriptive research involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlations among two or more phenomena. It assesses the nature of existing conditions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:24). It aims to characterize something as it is. In the

context of the study the researcher aimed at characterizing the present implementation of portfolio assessment with Grade 9 learners.

Survey research refers to almost any form of descriptive, quantitative research (Gay & Airasian in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:183). Survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes or previous experiences. The ultimate goal is to learn about a large population by surveying a sample of the population. Inferences about a particular population are drawn from the responses of the sample. As it was the intention of the researcher to explore the opinions, attitudes and experiences of the research participants with regard to the implementation of portfolio assessment, survey research was deemed suitable.

4.5.2 Qualitative research design

Qualitative research designs can be classified as interactive and non-interactive. Interactive designs use face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings, whereas non-interactive designs investigate concepts and events through an analysis of documents (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:27). English and English (in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:22) assert that phenomenology is a theoretical point of view that advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value, and one which sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and described reality. For the purpose of this study, an interactive phenomenological design was chosen, as it was the intention of the researcher to collect data and establish how individuals make sense of a particular experience or situation (namely the implementation of portfolio assessment) (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:26).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:139), *“a phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation”*. Phenomenological research

depends almost exclusively on interviews (Leedy & Ormrod: 2005:139; Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2006: 26).

For the purpose of this study, focus group interviews were chosen (*cf.* 4.6.2). The interviews were only conducted with educators, as their responses to the questionnaire differed from the learners' responses and, through the interviews, the researcher wanted to establish whether the questionnaire responses of the educators provided a true reflection regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment.

4.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

An instrument is an appropriate research method which is used for gathering information. It provides a basis on which the entire research efforts rest (Leedy & Ormrod 2005:91). Although there is a myriad of data gathering instruments for conducting quantitative research, such as checklists, indexes and scales, the researcher opted for questionnaires and focus group interviews to obtain information from educators and learners regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment (De Vos, 2002:165). Both data collection instruments enabled the researcher to collect data to address the research problem from a positivistic (questionnaire) as well as an interpretivistic (focus group interviews) stance.

4.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires are often used to make data collection more efficient and standardized. They are frequently used to provide the main source of data in primary research. They provide invaluable descriptive data about individuals or a group. They are concerned with description and measurement (Saslow, 1982:13).

As indicated by Cohen *et al.* (2007:318), the purpose of the questionnaire was firstly determined and then translated into a set of aims. In this study, the researcher wanted to explore the perceptions of educators and learners regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment. This was translated

into various aims to determine whether educators comply with the multidimensional nature of portfolios (*cf.* 3.3) as underpinned by the principles of assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3.2). It is for this reason that various sections were constructed in the questionnaire (*cf.* Annexure A) which related to the central aim. Thereafter items were identified to elicit information regarding each of the sections.

There are different types of questionnaires, namely the self-administered, the investigator-administered, postal surveys, telephone surveys and psychological tests (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:157; Mitchell & Jolley, 2004:472). For the purpose of this study, the investigator-administered questionnaire was chosen. The researcher visited the different schools on scheduled appointments after school and was allocated two classrooms, one for educators and the other one for learners. The questionnaires for both the learners and educators were completed in twenty minutes for educators and learners respectively, in the presence of the researcher. The questionnaires were collected immediately after completion. This enabled the researcher to have a 100% return rate of the questionnaires.

Cohen *et al.* (2007:320) also distinguish between structured, semi-structured, unstructured, closed and open-ended questionnaires. As it was the purpose of the researcher to determine patterns and make comparisons through the frequencies of responses, a closed and structured questionnaire was used (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:321).

4.6.1.1 Questionnaire design

Questionnaire design is a very important part of the research process since this is where data is generated (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:158). Attention was paid to the following aspects indicated by Maree and Pietersen (2007a:159): appearance of the questionnaire, question sequence, wording of questions and response categories.

Appearance of the questionnaire

The researcher incorporated the following aspects as suggested by Maree and Pietersen (2007a:159) to make the questionnaire user-friendly. The printing was done neatly, the font was not too small, clear instructions were given and the purpose for compiling the questionnaire was indicated.

Completion of the questionnaire

According to Maree and Pietersen (2007a:159) learners should preferably be able to complete a questionnaire in less than 30 minutes and adults in less than 20 minutes. The questionnaire should not contain more than 100 to 120 items. In the context of the research, both educators and learners utilized 20 minutes to complete the 23 questionnaire items.

Question sequence

Questions were ordered into sections so as not to confuse the participants. In each section, the questions were linked to a specific aspect of portfolio assessment (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:160). Special attention was paid to the wording of the questions. Some of the guidelines suggested by Maree and Pietersen (2007a:160) and Cohen *et al.* (2007:334-337) were applied:

- Clear and unambiguous language was used.
- Double-barrelled, complex questions were avoided.
- Hypothetical questions were avoided.
- Items were formulated as statements and not as questions.
- Leading questions that guide respondents in a certain way were avoided.
- Double-negative questions were avoided.

Types of questions

Questions can be divided into open (unstructured) or closed (structured) questions (Bell in Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:160). Open-ended questions do not suggest any response to the set question. They do not force participants to choose rigidly between limited responses. Instead they permit participants to answer in their own frame of reference. As data obtained from closed questions is easier to analyse than data obtained from open questions, the researcher opted for closed questions. Furthermore, the focus group interviews allowed for more openness to express opinions and subjective interpretations. The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain objective data against which the subjective interview data was compared. Therefore the closed option was viewed as suitable.

Bell (in Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:61) and Cohen *et al.* (2007:324-334) distinguish between different types of closed questions: list, ranking, rating, category, quantity, grid and scale. For the purpose of the research, scale questions were used. According to Bell (in Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:167), scale questions help researchers to discover strength of feeling or attitude. The response options are set up so that the variables measured can be expressed as a numerical score that are of either an ordinal, interval or ratio type (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:167). In this study, nominal scales that consist of two or more classes (eg. male/female) were utilized in the section of the questionnaire that focused on biographic information. Ordinal scales were used to determine knowledge and perceptions regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment (strongly agree/agree /disagree/strongly disagree and almost always/often/sometimes/almost never). These questions are also referred to as Likert scale questions (Maree & Pietersen, 2007a:167).

Aims of the questionnaire

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:179) assert that the main aim of a questionnaire is to obtain information about a particular phenomenon from people who are informed on a particular issue. The type of information will be analysed to

yield quantitative information that can be summarized through statistical procedures.

Based on the literature review, one questionnaire was developed for educators and learners. The aim of the questionnaire in this study was to obtain information from educators themselves as to how they perceive their implementation of portfolio assessment as well as from learners as to how they experience the educators' implementation of portfolio assessment. The data obtained from the questionnaires prompted the development of a model (*cf.* Chapter 6) which can assist and guide educators who are already in the practice, to develop knowledge and skills essential for the implementation of portfolio assessment which supports assessment for learning.

Content validation of the questionnaire

The structure and content of the questionnaire for educators and learners respectively, were similar. The educators and the learners completed a questionnaire comprising questions which intended to address educational practices prevailing in the classroom. As a result, the questionnaire was designed to identify, measure and determine the extent to which educators implement portfolio assessment in order to promote and enhance assessment for learning. The only difference between the questionnaires was that educators had to complete a section pertaining to biographical details which the learners did not complete.

The questionnaire for educators comprised of three sections, namely sections A and B that had to be completed by educators, and section C that had to be completed by the learners.

Section A required educators to provide biographical information.

Section B required educators to identify the purposes for which they use portfolio assessment and identify assessment processes, methods and procedures which they adopt in the compilation and completion of a portfolio (*cf.* 2.3; 2.4.6).

Section C required the learners to display their knowledge and level of awareness, with regard to the assessment processes, tools, techniques, strategies and methods which educators employ and implement when they (the learners) have to compile portfolios (cf. 2.4.6).

Sections B and C contained similar questions which enabled the researcher to make comparisons between the responses of the educators and the learners.

4.6.1.2 Reliability of the questionnaire

Pilot study

Before the actual research commenced, a pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire items (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:341). A pilot study was conducted with 50 learners and 50 educators who were not part of the sample to determine whether the questionnaire complied with reliability criteria and to determine whether the items were clear and unambiguous. A Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the various sections in the questionnaire. The following results were revealed.

Table 4.1: Cronbach alpha coefficients: pilot study

Questionnaire section	Learners Cronbach alpha	Educators Cronbach alpha
Portfolio as assessment tool	0.843	0.953
Portfolio as developmental tool	0.805	0.959
Portfolio as diagnostic tool	0.802	0.932
Portfolio as instructional tool	0.839	0.972
Portfolio as communication tool	0.877	0.946

The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the various questionnaire sections. The Cronbach alpha is a

reliability coefficient that calculates the extent to which items, such as found in a questionnaire, are correlated positively to one another (Akbaba, 2006:183). Cronbach's alpha measures consistency among individual items in a scale (Simon, 2008). Sekaran (2000) points out that the internal consistency reliability becomes higher as the Cronbach alpha moves closer to 1.

In most Social Sciences, a Cronbach alpha coefficient between 0.7 and 0.8 is yielded as acceptable when working with a set of items to be considered on a scale, but some use 0.75 or 0.80 while others are lenient and accept 0.60 (Simon, 2008). According to Simon (2008) and Garson (2008) 0.60 could be seen as in order for an exploratory study. Table 4.2 indicates that the questionnaire for learners and educators complied with reliability criteria.

An inter-item item correlation was also determined for the various items listed in the various sections of the questionnaire. An inter-item correlation is used to judge the reliability of the instrument by estimating how well the items that reflect the same construct yield similar results (Trochim, 2006). The following results were revealed for the various questionnaire constructs.

Table 4.2: Inter-item correlation: pilot study

Questionnaire constructs	Learners Inter-item correlation	Educators Inter-item correlation
Portfolio as assessment tool	0.376	0.573
Portfolio as developmental tool	0.294	0.310
Portfolio as diagnostic tool	0.336	0.225
Portfolio as instructional tool	0.491	0.424
Portfolio as communication tool	0.345	0.531

According to Trochim (2006), an inter-item correlation of between 0.15 and 0.5 yields an acceptable value. Both questionnaires complied with these criteria.

Actual study

A Cronbach alpha coefficient was also calculated for the various sections in the questionnaire for the actual study. The following results were revealed.

Table 4.3: Cronbach alpha coefficients: actual study

Questionnaire section	Learners Cronbach alpha	Educators Cronbach alpha
Portfolio as assessment tool	0.750	0.853
Portfolio as developmental tool	0.806	0.889
Portfolio as diagnostic tool	0.850	0.802
Portfolio as instructional tool	0.805	0.876
Portfolio as communication tool	0.778	0.855

In both cases, for learners and educators, the questionnaire complied with reliability criteria.

An inter-item item correlation was also determined for the various items listed in the various sections of the questionnaire.

Table 4.4: Inter-item correlation: actual study

Questionnaire section	Learners Inter-item correlation	Educators Inter-item correlation
Portfolio as assessment tool	0.266	0.423
Portfolio as developmental tool	0.324	0.511

Portfolio as diagnostic tool	0.311	0.325
Portfolio as instructional tool	0.452	0.331
Portfolio as communication tool	0.224	0.431

Acceptable inter-item correlations range between 0.15 and 0.5. Both questionnaires complied with these criteria.

4.6.1.3 Validity of the questionnaire

Validity was arrived at by considering content validity, face validity and construct validity.

Content validity is the extent to which a data collection instrument is a representative sample of the content area being measured. The items or questions should reflect the various parts of the content domain in appropriate portions (De Vos, 2002:167). The content validity for the data collection instrument used in the research was supported by the fact that the specific items in the questionnaire were constructed strictly according to the essential components of the content domain, namely the principles and purposes for implementing portfolio assessment which were identified in the literature review (*cf.* 2.3; 3.3).

The questionnaire complied with the criteria for **face validity** as the instrument truly measured what the researcher wanted to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:92). All the sections in the questionnaire measured the implementation of portfolio assessment against the characteristics of what portfolio assessment should entail.

Construct validity is the extent to which instrument measures characteristics that cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred (De Vos, 2002:167; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:92). The researcher verified the items included in the questionnaire with specialists in the field of assessment and the promoter to make sure that the items measured the construct portfolio assessment.

4.6.2 Focus group interviews

4.6.2.1 Definition of focus group interviews

The focus group method is defined as a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment (Krueger in Greeff, 2002:306). Focus group interviews are further described as a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher (Greeff, 2002:306) in order to determine a collective rather than an individual view or opinion on a specific set of open questions (Welman *et al.*, 2005:201; Cohen *et al.*, 2007:376).

The focus group method centres on group interviews as a means for better understanding how people think or feel about an issue, product or service. The selection of people, who participate in this type of interview, is based on the fact that they share certain common characteristics in relation to the topic or issue in question. The focus group method is said to be “focused” because the method involves and engages the participants in a collective activity (Greeff, 2002:305- 306).

4.6.2.2 Reasons for using focus group interviews

The focus group method was used as a supplementary source of data to the research survey that the researcher conducted. Through the focus group method the researcher was in a position to probe the participants to disclose what they think and feel about the questions which were posed. The researcher managed to secure valuable and important information from participants regarding their viewpoints and opinions related to the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The researcher created interview sessions which were interactive, and managed to create a line of communication among the participants. The approach also made it possible for the researcher to communicate with the participants with ease. The researcher listened to the participants attentively.

In the process she learnt how they perceived portfolio assessment and how they were implementing it in the classroom. Through this interview process, the researcher managed to produce a large amount of concentrated data within a short period of time (Greeff, 2002:306).

To a certain extent the data produced enabled the researcher to expose reality, and further investigate the complex behaviour that the participants reflected while engaged in the study. The researcher took note of the ideas and feelings which the participants had about the implementation of portfolio assessment, as well as of the differences which prevailed among the participants as individuals and as groups. The researcher was in a position to identify factors which influenced their opinions, behaviour and motivation, as well as ideas which encouraged the group to shed light on quantitative data already collected (Greeff, 2002:305- 306).

4.6.2.3 Approaches used in the focus group method

Three approaches are applicable in the use of focus groups, namely the exploratory, clinical and phenomenological approaches. The researcher adopted the phenomenological approach. The latter was used for the understanding of the daily experiences of the participants (Greeff, 2002:309).

4.6.2.4 Planning the focus group interview

To ensure that the study was conducted successfully, the researcher designed and consulted with colleagues, experts in the field and the promoter, and sought their opinions with regard to the plan. The aim was to secure and receive valuable feedback and have interview questions verified before the actual interviews took place. The promoter's response was positive and enabled the researcher to proceed with the study (Greeff, 2002:309).

In formulating the questions, the researcher adopted a multifaceted approach and produced well thought out questions which were primarily open-ended and allowed the participants freedom to respond from a variety of

perspectives. The researcher provided a well focused environment which enabled her to obtain sufficient information (Greeff, 2002:309).

Focus groups comprise of four basic steps and each step needs its own planning process. These steps are the following: planning, recruiting, conducting the group research, analysing data and reporting (Morgan & Krueger in Greeff, 2002: 309).

In implementing the planning process the researcher defined the purpose of the study clearly. The outcomes which the researcher hoped to achieve were also mentioned. The researcher wrote letters to the principals of the schools, in order to allow Grade 9 educators to participate in the focus group interviews. Permission was granted and the researcher proceeded with the planning process (Morgan & Krueger in Greeff, 2002: 309).

The researcher then designed the recruitment plan. Appropriate group compositions were made and appointments scheduled at times convenient for the various groups to explain the purpose of the interviews. This was done two weeks prior to the actual interview (Greeff, 2002:309-310). Participants' consent was also obtained before the actual interviews were conducted. On the day of the interview, the researcher phoned all the potential participants, reminding them of the interview session (Greeff, 2002:309-310). At the expense of the researcher the participants were transported to the school of the researcher where the interviews were conducted.

4.6.2.5 Participants

Only educators who were willing to participate in the focus group interviews were selected. The researcher ensured that the whole interview process was conducted in an informal and friendly setting and within conditions which promoted easy and simple communication among the participants. The researcher ensured that all participants were comfortable and talking to one another. More importantly, the researcher ensured that the participants engaged in meaningful conversations which served the purpose and goal of the study (Greeff, 2002: 311).

The researcher exchanged contact information with the participants and also provided information related to the subject of the research and information about the other participants in the focus group sessions.

The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and if, for any reason, they wished to withdraw from the study, they were free to do so. The participants were assured that if, for any reason they needed help or support with the implementation of portfolio assessment in the future, they should feel free to approach the researcher (Greeff, 2002:312).

4.6.2.6 Group facilitation

The interview was conducted by the researcher in person. The researcher used a tape recorder for recording all the proceedings of the interview and the response verbatim (Morgan & Krueger in Greeff, 2002:312).

4.6.2.7 The size of the focus group

Normally the focus groups comprise six to twelve participants (Welman *et al.*, 2005:202). The researcher worked with six focus groups that comprised six participants each.

4.6.2.8 Questions for the interview

On the basis of the research topic, the researcher explored specific issues. Questions were carefully formulated and based on the literature study. The questions were designed in such a way that the researcher was in a position to elicit a wide range of responses from the participants. The interview questions corresponded with the questions used in the questionnaire. The interview, however, allowed for a more unstructured, informal, open-ended and conversational approach. The questions were presented in a clear, direct, simple, short way (Greeff, 2002:314). The researcher phrased the questions in such a way that no indications were given of the type of answers expected from the participants (Welman *et al.*, 2005:203).

The questions were jargon-free, one-dimensional and specifically designed for maintaining sessions which influenced the participants to respond in a conversational manner (Greeff, 2002:314).

4.6.2.9 The environment

The study was conducted after school at the school where the researcher is employed. The participants gathered in the researcher's office at 14:45, and had enough time to settle before the interview sessions began. All the sessions were conducted from 15:00-16:00. Since the sessions were very short, the researcher provided snacks, fruits and soft drinks to keep the communication processes going. The researcher's office was big enough to provide space for seven people to sit comfortably. The seating arrangement was organized in such a way that the participants would converse with ease and allowed the researcher to hear everything that the participants were discussing and capture all the data required. The environment was non-threatening and the participants never complained or showed any signs of discomfort (Greeff, 2002:316).

4.6.2.10 Conducting the focus group interview

The researcher also familiarized herself with limitations related to the focus group interviews. The researcher showed respect for the participants and they were all treated with high regard. The interviews were tape recorded after permission was sought from the participants. During the interviews, notes were taken to review the answers and to ask additional questions at the end of the interview to provide more clarity on some of the issues discussed. As soon as the interviews were finished, the researcher listened to the tape and transcribed the interviews. No follow-up interviews were scheduled as enough information was obtained during the first session.

The researcher accommodated all views and opinions expressed by the participants. Although the researcher worked with manageable groups, it was difficult at times to handle the situation. From time to time, participants deviated from giving responses related to the questions. Instead they also

wanted to raise their concerns and problems with issues related to portfolio assessment and the topic in question. The researcher allowed digressions, as valuable information was also obtained in this way, but directed the participants to focus on the questions related to the study only.

4.6.2.11 The use of field notes

Field notes were used to capture information regarding the whole interview proceedings, including seating arrangements, the order in which the participants spoke, non-verbal behaviour such as eye contact, gestures, postures and striking themes which emerged during the conversations (Fields & Morse in Greeff, 2000:318). The field notes also contributed to the interpretation of data (*cf.* 5.3.3.7).

4.6.2.12 Strengths and weaknesses

Morgan (1997:13, 15) asserts that the strength of relying on focus groups and the peoples' participation in such studies is the ability to produce concentrated amounts of data on the topic of interest. Therefore in conducting this study, the focus group research emerged as an appropriate method of gathering a large amount of data within a short period about the specific topics that were discussed. The participants' interactions and conversations also provided the researcher the opportunity to learn and understand what the participants were thinking with regard to the topic in question, thus enabling the researcher to create a fuller and deeper understanding of the phenomena.

4.6.2.13 Piloting the focus group interview

In qualitative research, the pilot study is usually informal and a few respondents possessing the same characteristics as those of the main investigation can be involved, merely to ascertain certain trends and to make modifications. It also assists in estimating the time that may be involved and pre-empting problems that may arise in the actual interview (Strydom & Delport, 2007:337). In the context of the study, the interview questions were given to educators who were not part of the actual sample to review them for

clarity. The promoter also checked the questions for clarity and applicability before the interviews were administered.

4.6.2.14 Trustworthiness of focus group interview data

According to Nieuwenhuis (2007b:113), trustworthiness is of the utmost importance in qualitative research. The trustworthiness for the data obtained by the interviews adhered to the following pointers of trustworthiness as identified by Nieuwenhuis (2007b:113):

- The data obtained was checked against the findings obtained from the data with the questionnaire. Merriam (in Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007:38) refers to the concept crystallization. This implies that the use of several investigators or several methods of data collection should be used to compare findings.
- Participant verification was used to correct errors of fact for the researchers' interpretations.
- Stakeholder checks were done by providing the research findings to experts in the field of assessment for comment.

4.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Sampling is defined as taking a portion of a population or universe and considering it as representative of the population or universe. The universe refers to all potential subjects who possess the attributes in which the researcher is interested. Population refers to individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics of interest to the researcher (Strydom & Venter, 2002:209).

According to Maree and Pietersen (2007b:172), two major classes of sampling can be distinguished, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is based on principles of randomness and non-probability sampling not. Consequently, probability

sampling satisfies the requirements to generalize to the population, while this is not the case with non-probability sampling.

The target population of this study comprised all Grade 9 educators and learners. Due to time and logical constraints a sample was selected. By means of purposive sampling, all Grade 9 learners and educators from secondary schools in the Sedibeng West District (D8) of the Gauteng Department of Education (N = 46) formed part of the sample (De Vos, 2002: 207). Purposive samples are based entirely on the judgment of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements that contain the most characteristics of the population (Singleton, Straits, Straits & Mc Allister in Strydom & Venter, 2002:207).

The researcher assumed that the desired information gathered from the sample would be representative of the rest of the population. There are 46 High Schools in the Sedibeng West District (D8) and the reason for selecting Grade 9 educators and learners to participate in this study, resulted from the fact that they have first-hand experiences that they gather from compiling portfolios during the Grade 9 year. The total number of Grade 9 educators who participated in the study was 88. All the Grade 9 learners in the identified schools took part in the research. The total number of learners who took part in the research was 369. Questionnaires were completed during two sessions to enable the researcher to cover all the schools who took part in the research. The first session was from 03/03/2008 to 30/04/2008 and the second session from 05/05/2008 to 13/06/2008. Sessions were scheduled with individual schools in the afternoons between 14h30 and 15h30 (14h30-15h00 for learners and 15h00-15h30 for educators).

For the purpose of the focus group interviews the researcher used only the educators who were willing to take part. From the 88 who completed the questionnaires, only 36 were willing to take part in the interviews. They were randomly assigned to the six groups with six members in each group. During the actual interview sessions, only 33 participants made themselves available for the interview. Two participants never indicated their reasons for not being

available. The other participant forwarded personal reasons for failing to make himself available for the interview appointment. Focus groups two, three and four proceeded with five educators per group participating in the study. Interviews were also conducted after school between 15h00 and 16h00 from 21/07/2008 to 31/07/2008.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS

4.8.1 Questionnaires

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North West University: Vaal Triangle was consulted for assistance in the capturing, analysis and interpretation of the data collected. The collected data was captured, analysed and interpreted, using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics are used to organize and summarize data meaningfully in order to promote an understanding of the data characteristics (Pietersen & Maree, 2007a:185). Frequencies, means and percentages were calculated for the various responses in order to determine the nature of the implementation of portfolio assessment, as well as the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment supports assessment for learning. These results were presented in graphical and tabular form. Two-way frequency tables were used to explore educator and learner responses for the various questionnaire items simultaneously. This provided an immediate comparison of the educator and learner responses.

As the research wanted to go beyond summarizing and describing data, inferential statistics were also utilized (Pietersen & Maree, 2007c:198). Inferential statistics were utilized to interpret differences between the educators and learners' responses in order to determine significance and effect in practice. T-tests and Cohen's d were utilized for these purposes. P-values smaller than the 0.5 were regarded as significant and values larger than 0.5 as non-significant (Pietersen & Maree, 2007b:230).

The following interpretations were allocated to Cohen's d:

- 0.2: small effect in practice
- 0.5: medium effect in practice
- 0.8: large effect in practice (Steyn, 2005:20)

A MANOVA was conducted, using the independent variables one at a time with the dependent variables (five dimensions of portfolio assessment). The MANOVA was run to determine the effect of the various independent variables on the 5 dimensions of portfolio assessment (assessment tool, developmental tool, diagnostic tool, instructional tool, and communication tool). Due to the significant differences that were indicated for two of the variables (age and qualification (*cf.* 5.2.4)) an ANOVA was conducted on the five dimensions of portfolio assessment in terms of these two independent variables. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:373) and Pietersen and Maree (2007b:229) an ANOVA is conducted where two or more samples' means are compared on one independent variable and allows for testing differences between all groups. An ANOVA was conducted to summarize data on single independent variables in relation to the five dimensions of portfolio assessment (dependent variable).

4.8.2 Data analysis for the focus group interviews

As a phenomenological design was utilized in this study, the following steps, as suggested by Creswell (in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:140), were followed after the interviews were transcribed:

- Relevant information was separated from irrelevant information. The relevant information was broken up into small segments that each reflected a single thought.
- The segments were then grouped into categories/units that reflected various meanings participants attached to the phenomenon.
- The researcher also considered divergent perspectives.

- A composite was constructed to provide an overall description of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants.
- The focus was on common themes despite the diversity in the individuals and settings studied.

4.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are limitations in all educational research. One of the major limitations of this research lies in the size and nature of the sample. The study was conducted only in one district, Sedibeng West (D8), and only included Grade 9 educators and learners. It will be necessary to extend the research in order to generalize the findings obtained from this research. Focus group interviews with the learners could have added a deeper understanding of the problem. No comparison was made with regard to the ex Model-C schools and the township schools. This could perhaps have added a deeper dimension to the study.

Observation of educators during the implementation of portfolio assessment as well as an analysis of learners' portfolios, could have added a deeper and more complete understanding of the processes involved in the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The researcher acknowledges that, during the interviews, more use could have been made of probing questions which might have made it possible to obtain richer explanatory data to support the educators' responses. This might have enabled educators to elaborate more convincingly on the processes involved during the implementation of portfolio assessment and added additional information that could have pointed the findings in another direction. Follow-up studies are therefore necessary to obtain additional information regarding the problem.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the empirical research design. The main purpose was to put the reader in a clear frame of mind concerning the procedures that the researcher followed in conducting the research. The next chapter focuses on the application of techniques essential in analysing and interpreting the research data.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature revealed five important purposes for the implementation of portfolio assessment, namely as an assessment tool, a developmental tool, a diagnostic tool, an instruction tool and a communicative tool (*cf.* 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3; 3.3.4; 3.3.5). These five purposes link well with the principles of assessment for learning (*cf.* 1.2; 2.3) and therefore this research set out to determine whether the implementation of portfolio assessment complies with the five important purposes which are underpinned by the principles of assessment for learning. These five purposes were utilized as basis for the development of the questionnaire and interview schedule (*cf.* Annexure A & B). This chapter focuses on the data analysis for the questionnaire responses of educators and learners, as well as on the responses for the focus group interviews conducted with the educators. The chapter highlights the differences and similarities between educator and learners response and concludes with the triangulation of data collected for the questionnaires and focus group interviews. The focus group interviews were used to corroborate the data resulting from the questionnaire. The chapter layout will be as follows:

- Data analysis for the questionnaire of learners and educators.
- Data analysis for the focus group interviews with the educators.
- Triangulation of questionnaire and interview data

5.2 DATA ANALYSIS FOR THE QUESTIONNAIRE

To facilitate the process, 88 questionnaires were issued to educators of which all of them were returned. To the learners 369 questionnaires were issued and all of them were received back. This indicates that a good return rate was

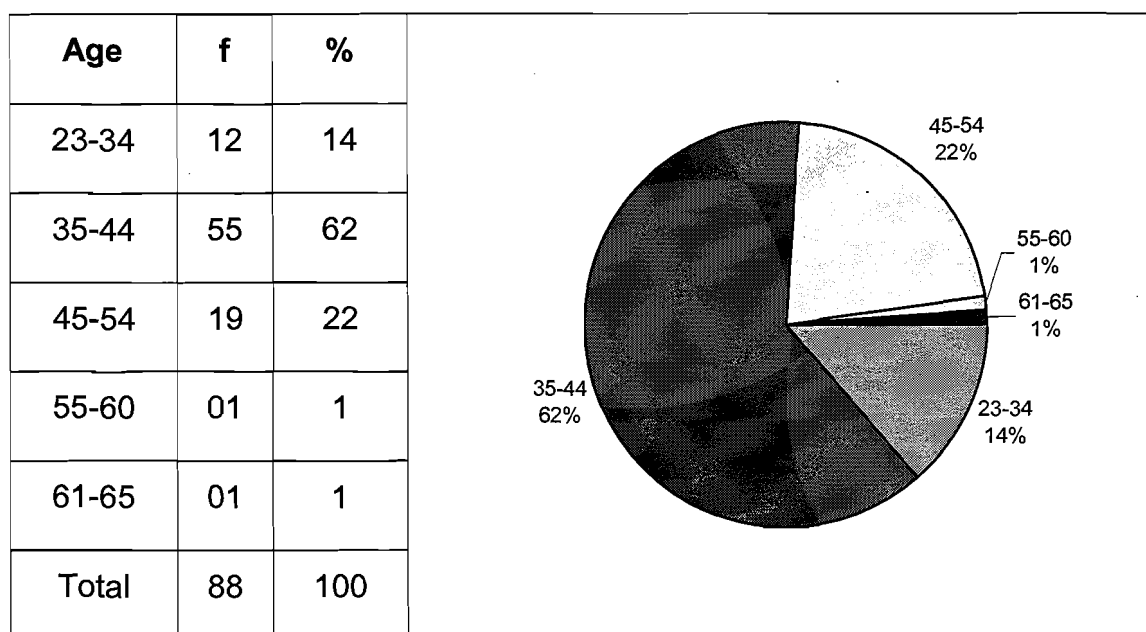
received. For report back purposes only data obtained from completed questionnaire statements are reflected in the tables.

The following section reports on the biographic information of the educators who took part in the study.

5.2.1 Biographic information: educators

The ages of educators who participated in the study are indicated in the table below.

Table 5.1: Age of educators



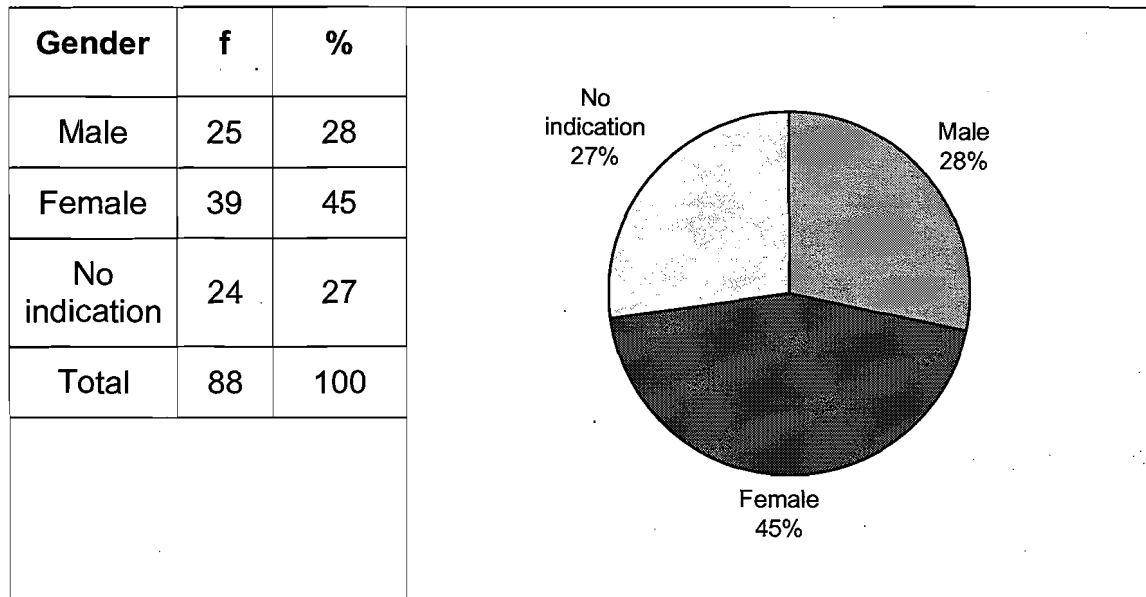
(f=frequency)

The majority of educators who took part in the study were between 35 and 44 years of age. Although the majority of educators, based on their age, could be regarded as experienced educators who are supposed to be knowledgeable on the effective implementation of portfolio assessment, it should be mentioned that these educators did not receive any training in Outcomes-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Assessment during their study years as their younger colleagues did. Their exposure to Outcomes-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Assessment was restricted to short in-

service training workshops with not much practical application. This could hamper the way in which they utilize portfolio assessment.

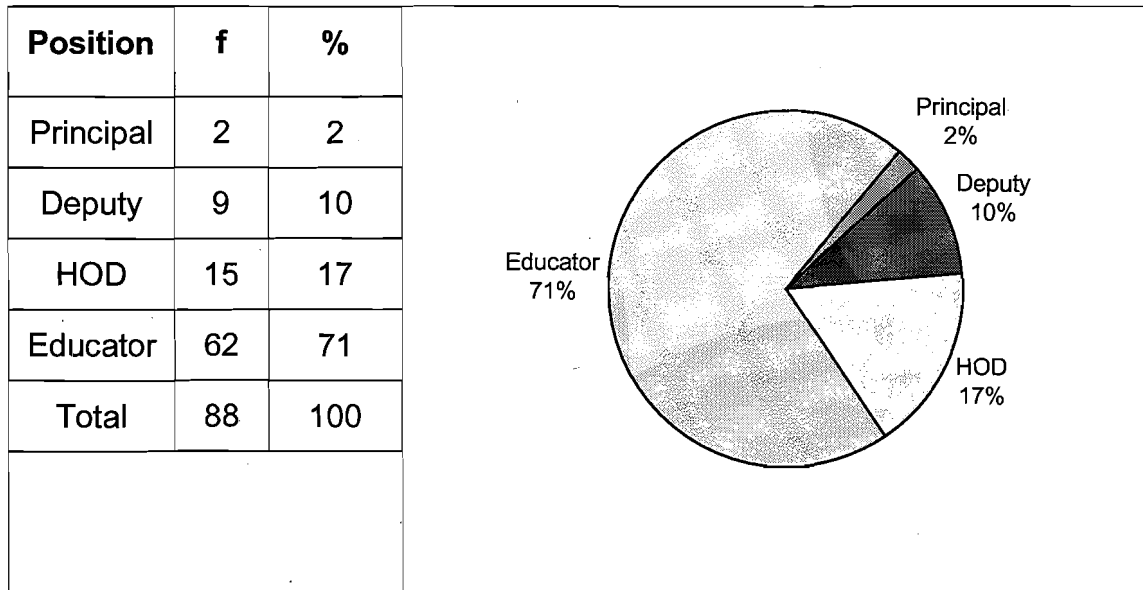
The gender of the educators who took part in the study is indicated in the table below.

Table 5.2: Gender of educators



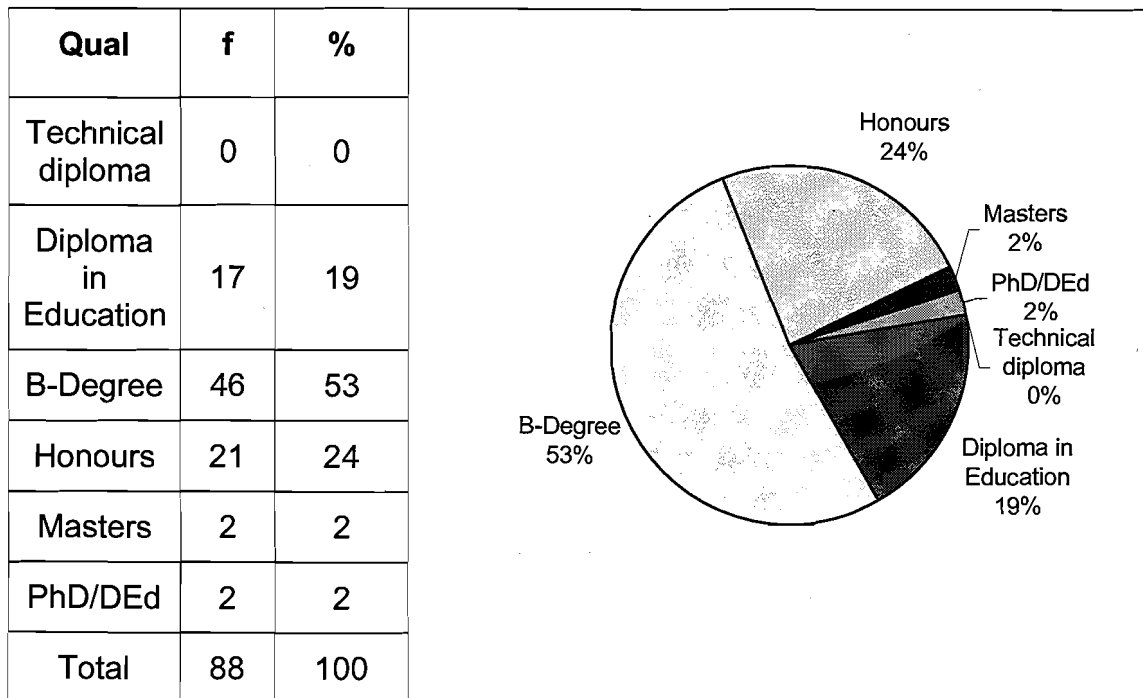
The table above indicates that the majority of educators who took part in the study were females.

The table below indicates the position that educators hold in their respective schools.

Table 5.3: Position of educators

The analysis indicates that the majority of the participants were educators whose major task entails involvement in classroom teaching, learning and assessment.

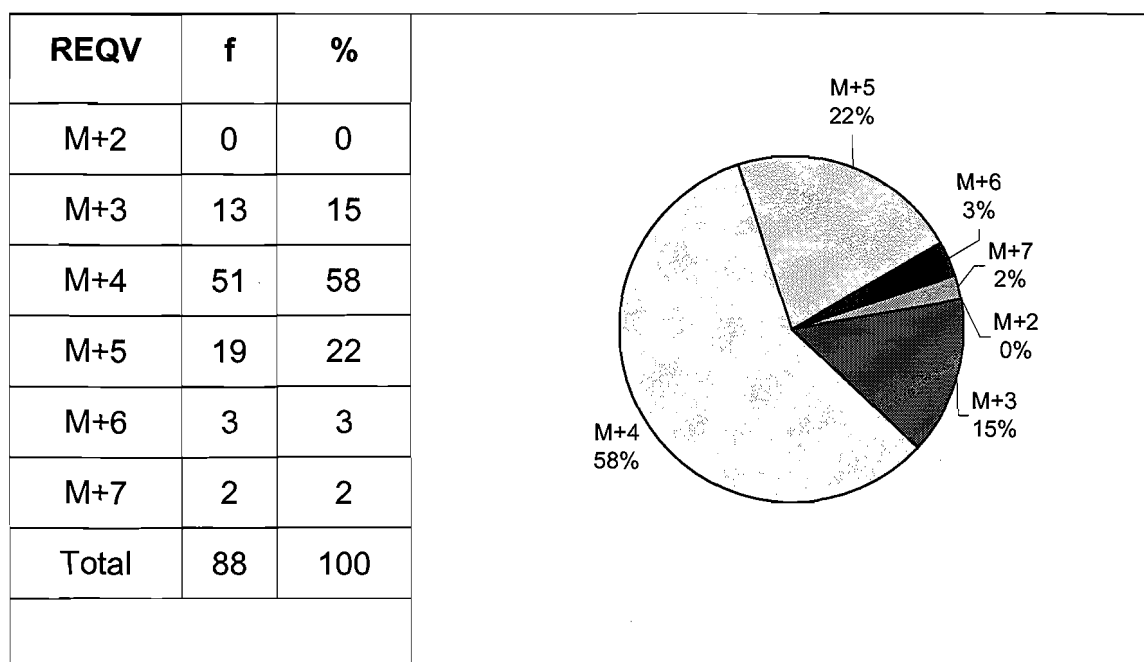
The following table indicates the qualifications of the educators who took part in the study.

Table 5.4: Qualifications of educators

The analysis of the educators' qualifications indicates that they are all well qualified educators who should be knowledgeable about the effective implementation of Outcomes-Based Assessment principles. However, a number of these educators completed their qualifications before the introduction of Outcomes-Based Education. This implies that, during their training they were not exposed to the theory and application of Outcomes-Based Education but only received short in-service workshops to acquaint them with the theory and application of Outcomes-Based Education. This could place them at a disadvantage in comparison to their younger colleagues who received training in Outcomes-Based Education during their study years.

The following table indicates the REQV (Relative Education Qualification Values) status of the educators who took part in the study. This indicates the number of recognized prescribed full-time years of study at an approved tertiary institution (Adult Learning South Africa, 2005).

Table 5.5: REQV status of educators

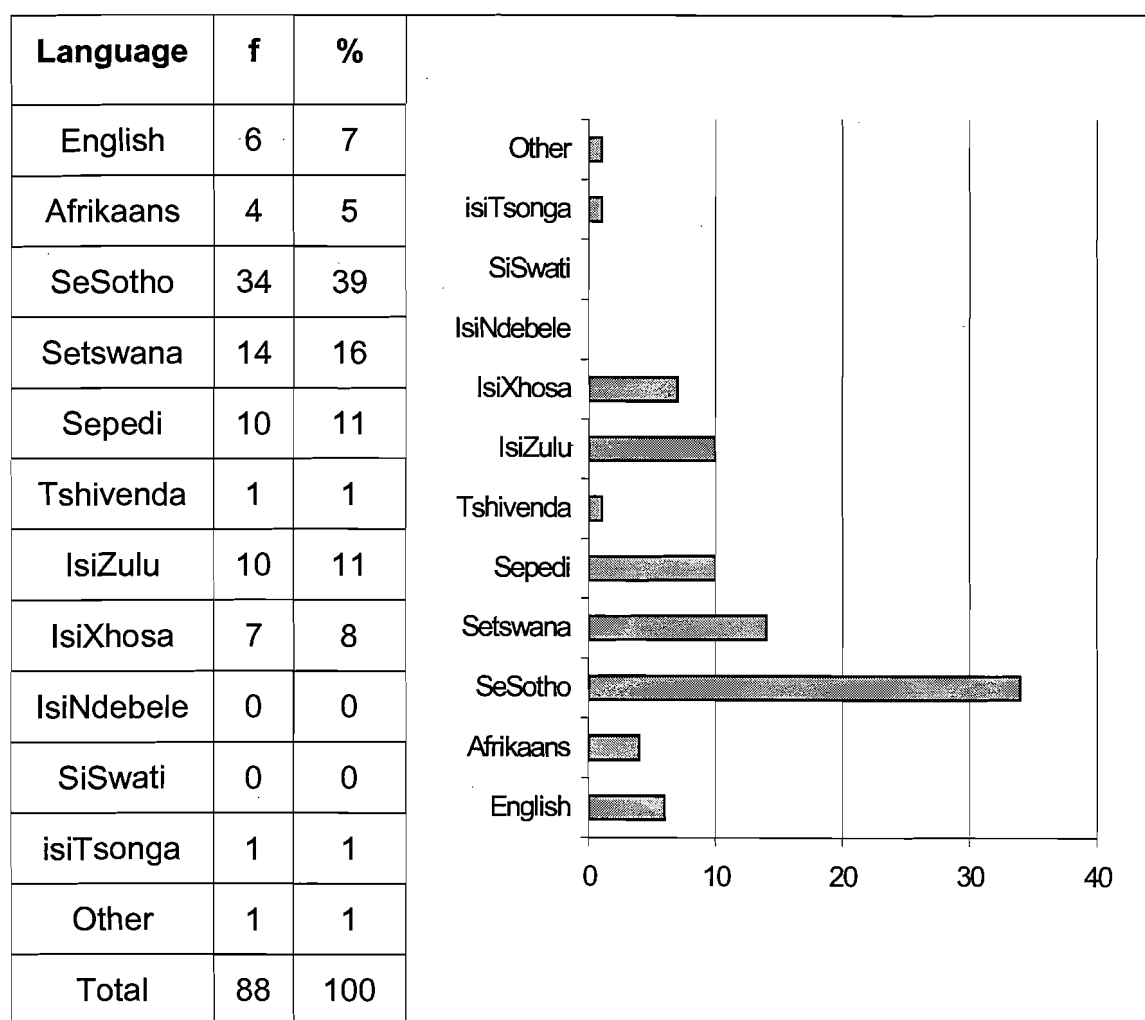


The analysis of the educators' REQV indicates that the majority were trained appropriately to fulfill their duties as educators. It could therefore cautiously be assumed that they would possess adequate knowledge and skills regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment. As already indicated a

number of these educators qualified prior to the implementation of Outcomes-Based Education and did not receive training in the theory and application of Outcomes-Based Education during their study years which might place them at a disadvantage. A small number of educators still had only three years of training, which sounds cause for concern regarding their possession of adequate knowledge to implement Outcomes-Based Education and Outcomes-Based Assessment.

The following table indicates the first language of the educators. The graph presents the frequency counts for each Language group.

Table 5.6: First language of educators



The table indicates that the majority of educators who took part in the study were Sesotho speaking.

In the context of the study, the researcher wanted to determine whether the above-mentioned variables had any impact on the way in which educators perceived the implementation of portfolio assessment (*cf.* 5.2.4).

5.2.2 Questionnaire responses: Section B and C

In the interpretation of the responses, the responses obtained for the educators and learners respectively will be compared and it will be indicated how well these responses agree with what the literature review revealed.

Section B (educator section) and section C (learner section) focused on the same aspects related to the implementation of portfolio assessment. As indicated earlier, the focus was on determining how well educators implement portfolio assessment which is underpinned by the principles of assessment for learning for assessment purposes, developmental purposes, diagnostic purposes, instructional purposes and communication purposes.

The following section will focus on the responses received to determine whether portfolio assessment is utilized for assessment purposes. Frequencies, percentages and means for the various questionnaire items will be indicated. Responses were indicated on a four-point scale: almost always (1), often (2), sometimes (3) and almost never (4).

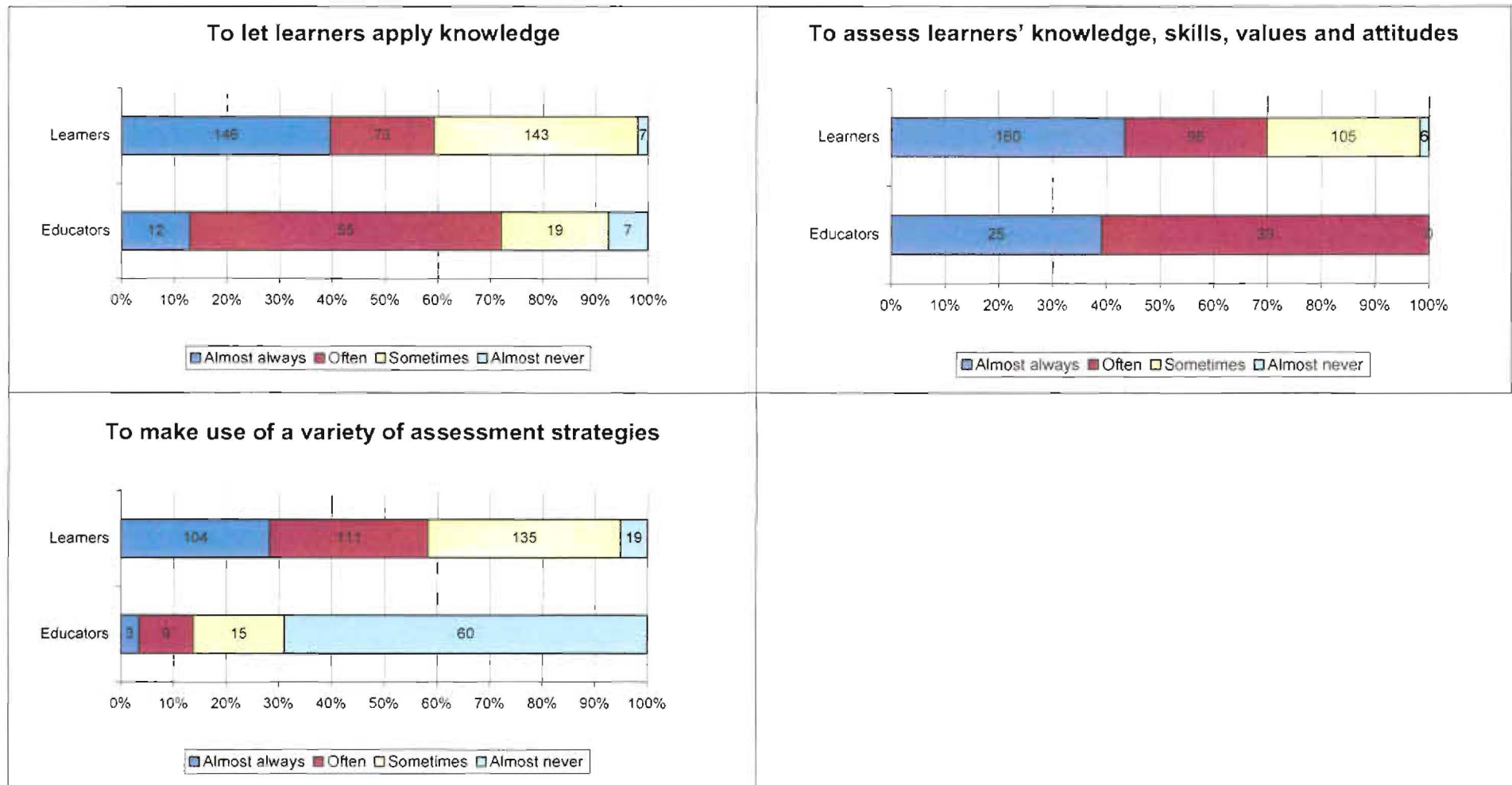
5.2.2.1 Portfolio assessment as an assessment tool

In this section, educators and learners had to indicate the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment as an assessment tool complies with the principles of assessment for learning. The table below indicates the data obtained for the educator and learner responses.

Table 5.7: Portfolio as an assessment tool

	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To let learners apply knowledge	12	14	55	63	19	22	7	1	146	40	73	20	143	39	7	2
To assess learners' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes	25	39	39	61	0	0	0	0	160	43	98	27	105	28	6	2
To make use of a variety of assessment strategies	3	3	9	10	15	17	60	61	104	28	111	31	135	37	19	5

Figure 5.1: Portfolio as an assessment tool



Interpretation of the educator responses

The majority of educators did not respond with “almost always” for any of the statements. The majority of educators claim that they often use portfolios as a tool to let learners apply knowledge (63%), that they often (61%) use portfolio assessment to assess the learners’ knowledge, skills, values and attitudes and that they almost never (61%) use a variety of assessment strategies to assess learners. This response presents a contradiction to the response in the second statement as it is not possible to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes adequately if a variety of assessment strategies are not used.

Interpretation of the learner responses

In contrast to the educators, the majority of learners indicate that the educators almost always (40%) let them apply knowledge, almost always (43%) assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and sometimes (37%) make use of a variety of assessment methods and forms/techniques during assessment. Although the majority responded with “almost always” to two of the statements it is still disconcerting that more than half of the learners were not of the same opinion.

Critical evaluation of educator and learner responses

In the absence of convincing responses from both educators and learners, it appears that the ideal of utilizing portfolio assessment for assessment purposes is not yet a reality in the classrooms of the educators who took part in the study. Although the educator responses provide some evidence that portfolios are utilized for assessment purposes, it appears as if the assessment practices which the educators promote in the classroom, are not yet fully in line with the principles of assessment for learning. According to the principles entailed in assessment for learning, assessment always has to focus on the assessment of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes by means of a variety of assessment methods, forms/techniques and tools. The variety of assessment methods, forms/techniques and tools entailed in assessment

for learning serve as basis for the effective implementation and facilitation of portfolio assessment as an assessment tool (*cf.* 2.3). The responses could point in the direction that some of the educators are still trapped in the traditional ways of assessing learners, guided by the principles entailed in assessment of learning (*cf.* 2.2). This response could be linked to the fact that the majority of educators did not receive formal training during their years of study in the application of Outcomes-Based Education, but only received short in-service workshop training and might not fully understand the application of the Outcomes-Based principles of assessment (*cf.* 5.2.1).

Based on the responses received, the following aspects remain questionable:

- whether the assessment practices of the educators who took part in the study focus on assessing learners holistically in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes acquired during learning (*cf.* 2.2.1);
- whether learners' performance, progress and advancement are promoted on a continuous basis (*cf.* 2.4.5);
- whether assessment focuses on both the process and product of learning, meaning that the focus of learning and development is not only concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, but also with the application of knowledge as well as the reconstruction and further construction and development of knowledge (*cf.* 2.3; 2.3.1); and
- whether higher-order thinking, reasoning, values and attitudes which lead to the development of social skills are developed. The attainment of the attributes mentioned above will enable learners to emerge as creative and constructive thinkers who are in a position to approach new learning situations and real life situations with ease, and to manage and solve the problems that they are confronted with inside and outside the school contexts (*cf.* 2.3; 3.3.1).

The following section will focus on the responses received to determine whether portfolio assessment is utilized for developmental purposes.

5.2.2.2 Portfolio assessment as a developmental tool

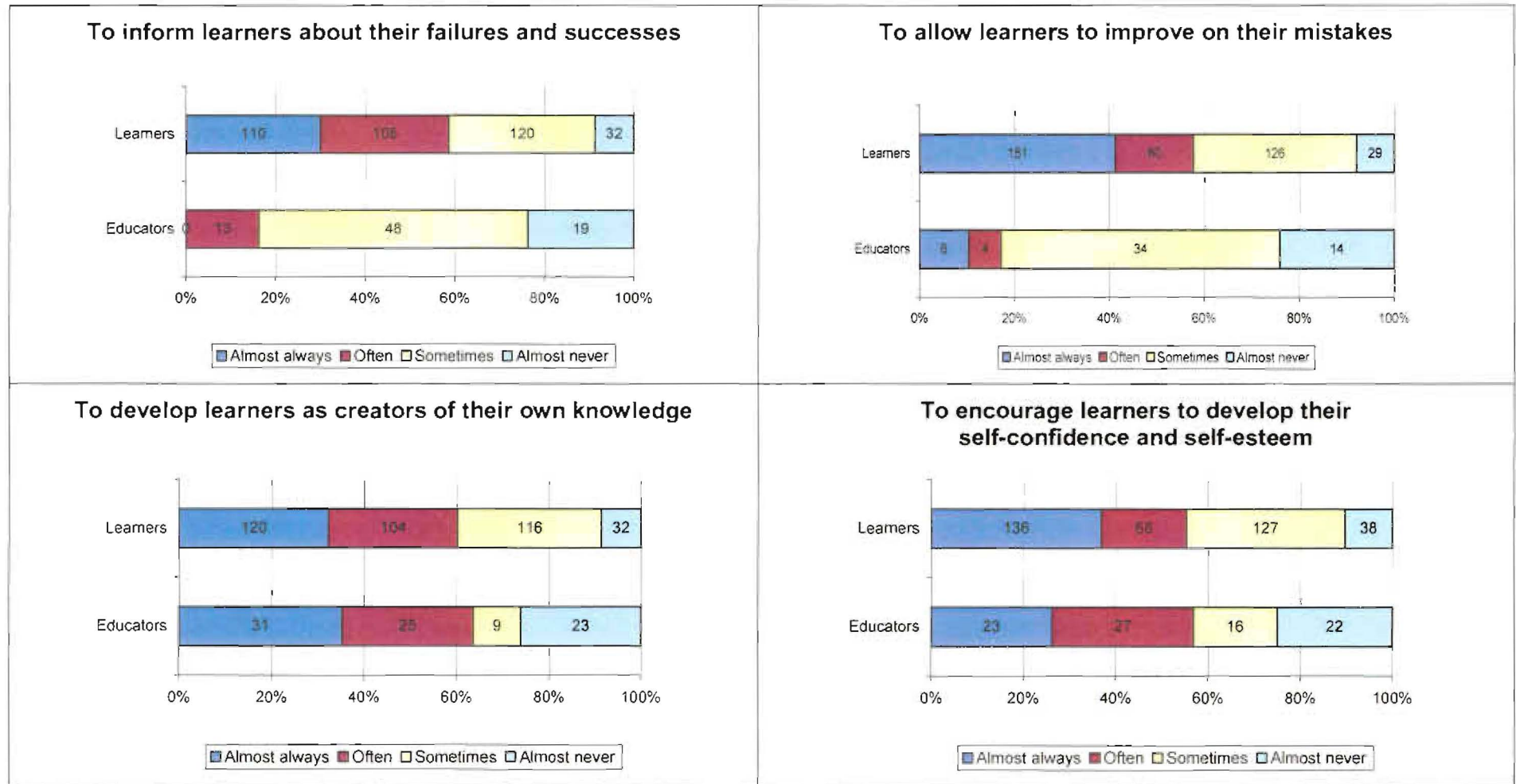
In this section educators and learners had to indicate the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment as a developmental tool complies with the principles of assessment for learning. The table below indicates the data obtained for the educator and learner responses.

Table 5.8: Portfolio as a developmental tool

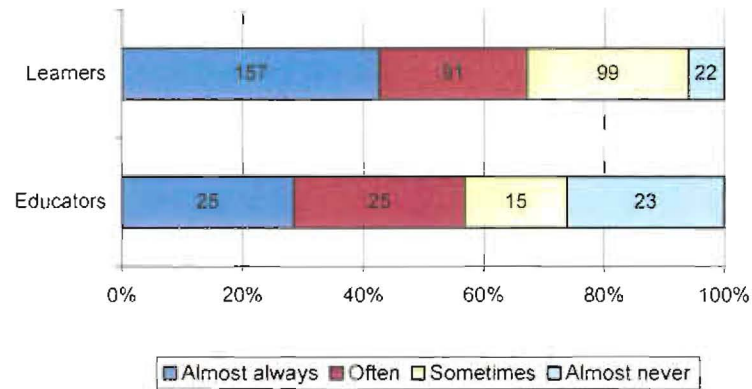
	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To inform learners about their failures and successes	0	0	13	16	48	60	19	24	110	30	105	28	120	36	32	9
To allow learners to improve on their mistakes	6	10	4	7	34	59	14	24	151	41	60	16	126	34	29	9
To develop learners as creators of their own knowledge	31	35	25	28	9	10	23	26	120	36	104	28	116	31	32	8
To encourage learners to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem	23	26	27	31	16	18	22	25	136	37	68	18	127	34	38	10
To give learners tasks which encourage them to work independently of the educators.	25	28	25	28	15	17	23	26	157	43	91	25	99	27	22	6
To encourage learners to focus on their self-growth	16	39	13	25	5	9	19	35	112	30	90	24	131	36	36	10

	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To encourage learners to develop problem- solving skills	23	26	26	30	29	33	10	11	117	32	90	24	131	36	31	8
To encourage learners to respect the opinions and views of others	23	26	24	27	28	32	13	15	203	55	62	17	76	21	28	8
To enable learners to focus on their strengths and know how to enhance them	17	19	19	22	31	35	21	24	96	26	99	27	125	34	49	13
To encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work towards overcoming them.	21	24	16	18	38	43	13	15	123	33	88	24	115	31	43	12

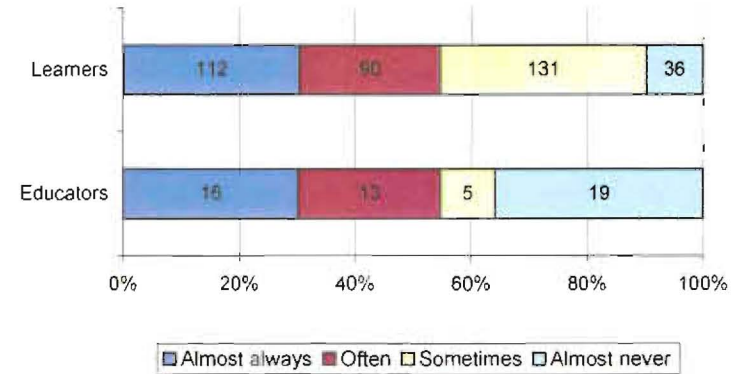
Figure 5.2: Portfolio as a developmental tool



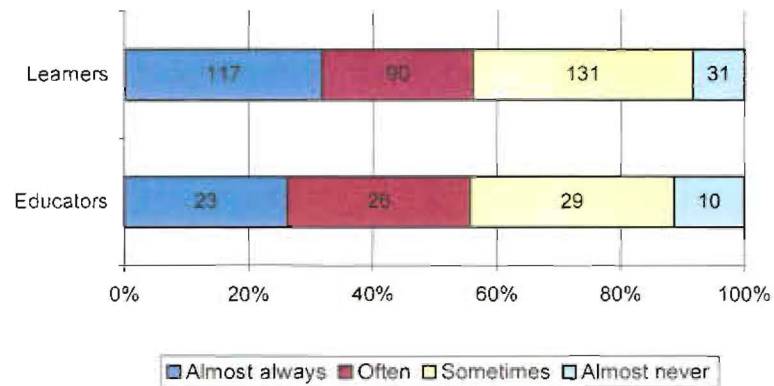
To give learners tasks which encourage them to work independently of the educators



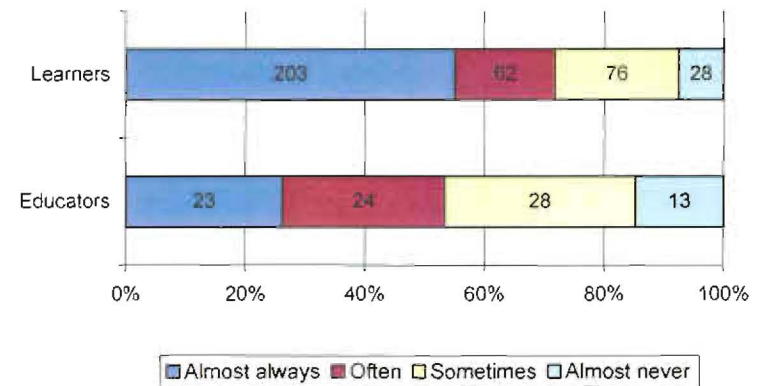
To encourage learners to focus on their self-growth



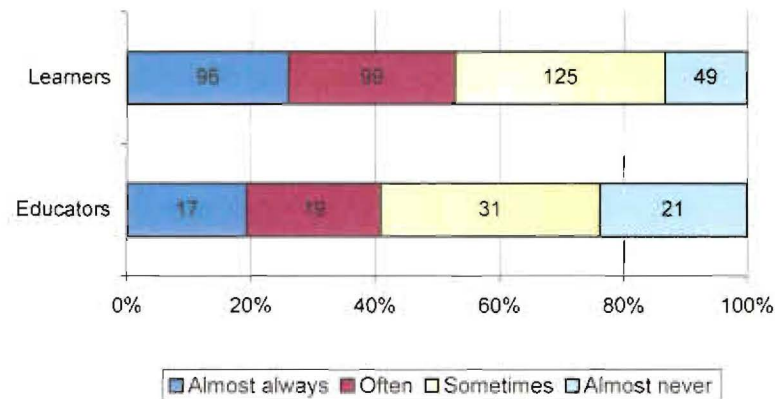
To encourage learners to develop problem- solving skills



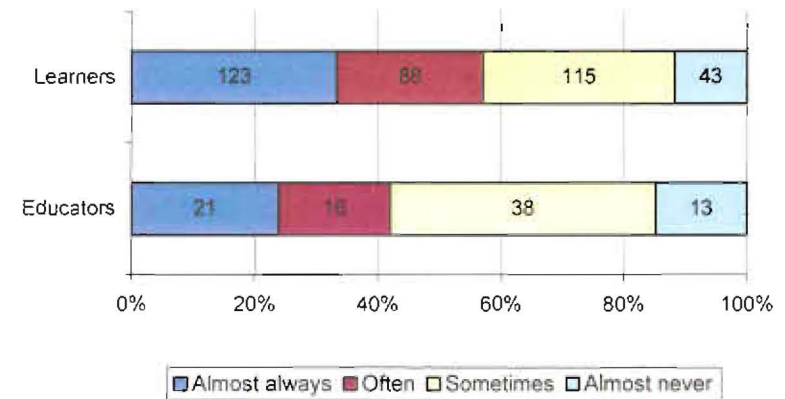
To encourage learners to respect the opinions and views of others



To enable learners to focus on their strengths and know how to enhance them



To encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work towards overcoming them.



Interpretation of the educator responses

In responding to the above-mentioned statements, the majority of educators claim that they:

- sometimes (60%) inform learners about their success and failures;
- sometimes (59%) allow learners to improve on their mistakes;
- often (28%) involve learners as creators of knowledge; often (31%) encourage the development of self-confidence and self-esteem;
- almost always (28%) and often (28%) encourage independent work from learners;
- almost never (35%) encourage learners' self-growth;
- sometimes (33%) encourage learners to develop problem-solving skills;
- sometimes (32%) encourage learners to respect the opinions and views of others;
- sometimes (35%) enable learners to focus on their strengths and how to enhance them; and
- sometimes (43%) encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work towards overcoming them.

The assessment principles entailed in the implementation of portfolios as developmental tools are based on the principles of assessment for learning. Only for one of the statements, namely encouraging independent work did the majority of educators respond with "almost always." Even so, the response was not convincing as only 28% indicated that they "almost always" encourage independent work from learners. It is clear from the many unconvincing responses that many of the educators are not fully implementing portfolio assessment for developmental purposes. All the statements

mentioned above are aimed at the nurturing of learner motivation which is one of the principles of assessment for learning. The educators' responses indicate that too many of them are not fully aware of the importance of utilizing portfolios for developmental purposes. In this regard, one could refer to the fact that it appears as if the development of other attributes such as the learners' skills, values and attitudes are not a priority and that the main focus is still on reporting on success and failure (*cf.* 2.2).

This response could point to a situation where educators still promote teaching and learning which is not learner-centred, but educator-centred and content-based (*cf.* 2.2). The little attention which the majority of educators give to addressing the learners' weaknesses and strengths, confirms that educators apparently do not fully recognize the merits of portfolio assessment as an effective developmental tool (*cf.* 2.3). Furthermore, neglecting to highlight learner strengths and addressing learner weaknesses could play an important role in decreasing learner motivation, which is important for effective learning.

Interpretation of the learner responses

In responding to the statements regarding the educators' implementation of portfolio assessment for developmental purposes, the learners indicated that educators:

- sometimes (36%) inform learners about their success and failures;
- almost always (41%) allow learners to improve on their mistakes;
- almost always (36%) involve learners as creators of knowledge;
- almost always (37%) encourage the development of self-confidence and self-esteem;
- almost always (43%) encourage independent work from learners;
- sometimes (36%) encourage learners' self-growth;

- sometimes (36%) encourage learners to develop problem-solving skills;
- almost always (55%) encourage learners to respect the opinions and views of others;
- sometimes (34%) enable learners to focus on their strengths and how to enhance them; and
- almost always (33%) encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work towards overcoming them.

In contrast to the educator responses, the majority of learners responded with “almost always” to six of the statements. However, the responses are not convincing because more than half of the learners did not share this perception. This raises questions regarding the effective utilization of portfolios for developmental purposes. A contradiction with regard to the encouragement of self-growth was noted. The majority of educators indicated that they never do this, whereas the majority of learners indicated that educators sometimes pay attention to this aspect.

Critical evaluation of educator and learner responses

The responses obtained from the educators and learners provide evidence that portfolios are used to some extent for developmental purposes. However, it should be stressed that the use of portfolios as developmental tools in the classroom should be understood as an integral part of teaching and learning. If it is not utilized effectively as a developmental tool (which appears to be the case with the educators who took part in the study), it will not be possible for educators to gather information which will inform them and the learners of the extent to which learning is taking place, as well as the extent to which the learners are developing their knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Thus educators will not have any form of guidance as to how they can enhance the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes among learners (*cf.* 3.3.1).

It is important for educators to understand the use of portfolio assessment for developmental purposes as they should draw the attention of the learners to the fact that teaching, learning and assessment are basically intended for assisting them to develop knowledge and skills that will enable them to construct and develop new knowledge, their own body of information, ideas and practices. In the context of this study, it appears as if the educators have some idea of what the use of portfolio assessment for developmental purposes entails, but they do not fully understand the practical application of this principle. This, in turn, can lead to the development and enhancement of the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem being neglected. By helping the learners to develop and enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem, learners will be encouraged to continue learning at high productive levels and this will influence them to keep on trying new things (*cf.* 2.3.1). This also helps them to become increasingly independent learners who carry out their learning independent of the educator's monitoring and supervision (*cf.* 2.4.5; 3.3.2; 3.3.3).

The following section will focus on the responses received for determining whether portfolio assessment is utilized for diagnostic purposes

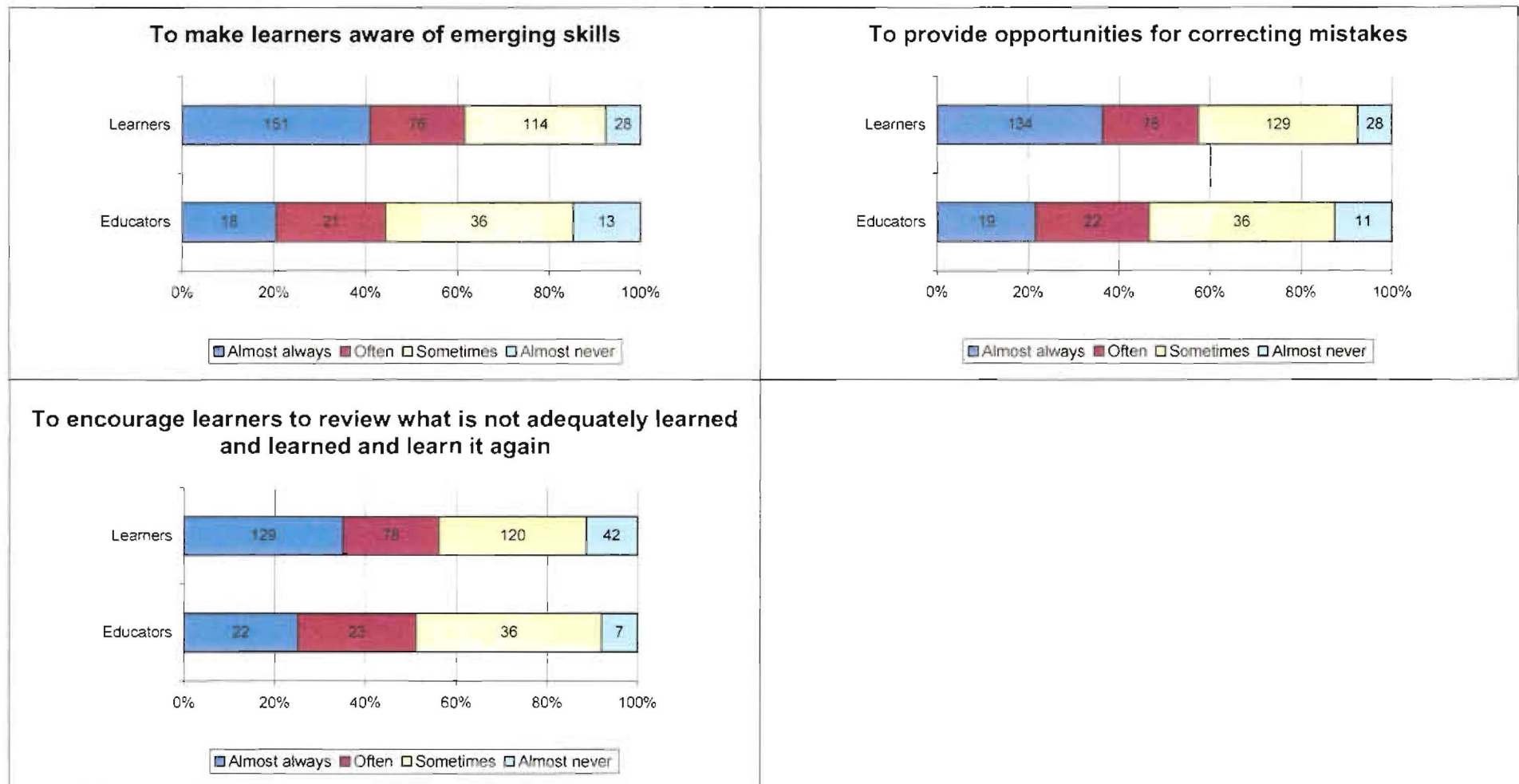
5.2.2.3 Portfolio assessment as a diagnostic tool

In this section, educators and learners had to indicate the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment as a diagnostic tool complies with the principles of assessment for learning. The table below indicates the data obtained for the educator and learner responses.

Table 5.9: Portfolio as a diagnostic tool

	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To make learners aware of emerging skills	18	20	21	24	36	41	13	15	151	41	76	21	114	31	28	8
To provide opportunities for correcting mistakes	19	22	22	25	36	41	11	13	134	36	78	21	129	35	28	8
To encourage learners to review what is not adequately learned and learned and learn it again	22	25	23	26	36	41	7	8	129	35	78	21	120	36	42	11

Figure 5.3: Portfolio as a diagnostic tool



Interpretation of the educator responses

In their response to the three statements, the majority of educators indicate that they:

- sometimes (41%) make learners aware of their emerging skills;
- sometimes (41%) provide them with the opportunities to correct their mistakes; and
- sometimes (41%) encourage learners to review what is not adequately learned and encourage them to learn it again.

Although some evidence for the utilization of portfolio assessment for diagnostic purposes is evident, a large number of the educators are not of the same opinion. The low response rate for the “almost always” options also indicate that the educators who took part in the study are not fully complying with the principles underpinning the effective implementation of portfolios for diagnostic purposes.

Interpretation of the learner responses

In responding to two of the three statements, the majority of learners contradict the responses of the educators by claiming that educators:

- almost always (41%) use portfolios to make them aware of their emerging skills; and
- almost always (36%) provide opportunities for correcting mistakes.

With regard to whether they are encouraged to review what they have not learned adequately, the majority of learners (36%) and educators (41%) responded with sometimes respectively. With regard to this response it appears that the majority of educators and learners are in accord.

Although the responses to the first two statements contradict the educator responses, the responses of the learners do not supply convincing evidence

that portfolio assessment is indeed used effectively for diagnostic purposes, such as to make them aware of their emerging skills and to provide opportunities for correcting mistakes.

Critical evaluation of educator and learner responses

Based on the responses received for this section, it appears as if portfolios are not implemented effectively for diagnostic purposes. If portfolio assessment is not utilized effectively as a diagnostic tool, it could imply that there is an absence of a strong focus on the learning problems and challenges with which the learners might be confronted with (*cf.* 2.4.3; 3.3.3). The information gathered through the diagnosis does not only help the educators to identify and detect learning problems and challenges that the learners are confronted with, but also enables the educators to provide the learners with a profile of their emerging skills. This will, in turn, motivate the learners to develop further and ultimately become increasingly independent learners (*cf.* 2.3; 2.4.3; 3.3.3). It is the responsibility of educators, when utilizing portfolios for diagnostic purposes (to identify or suspect a barrier to learning), to ensure that they guide and assist the learners to overcome any obstacles which may hinder effective learning and development (*cf.* 2.4.4).

The following section will focus on the responses received to determine whether portfolio assessment is utilized for instructional purposes.

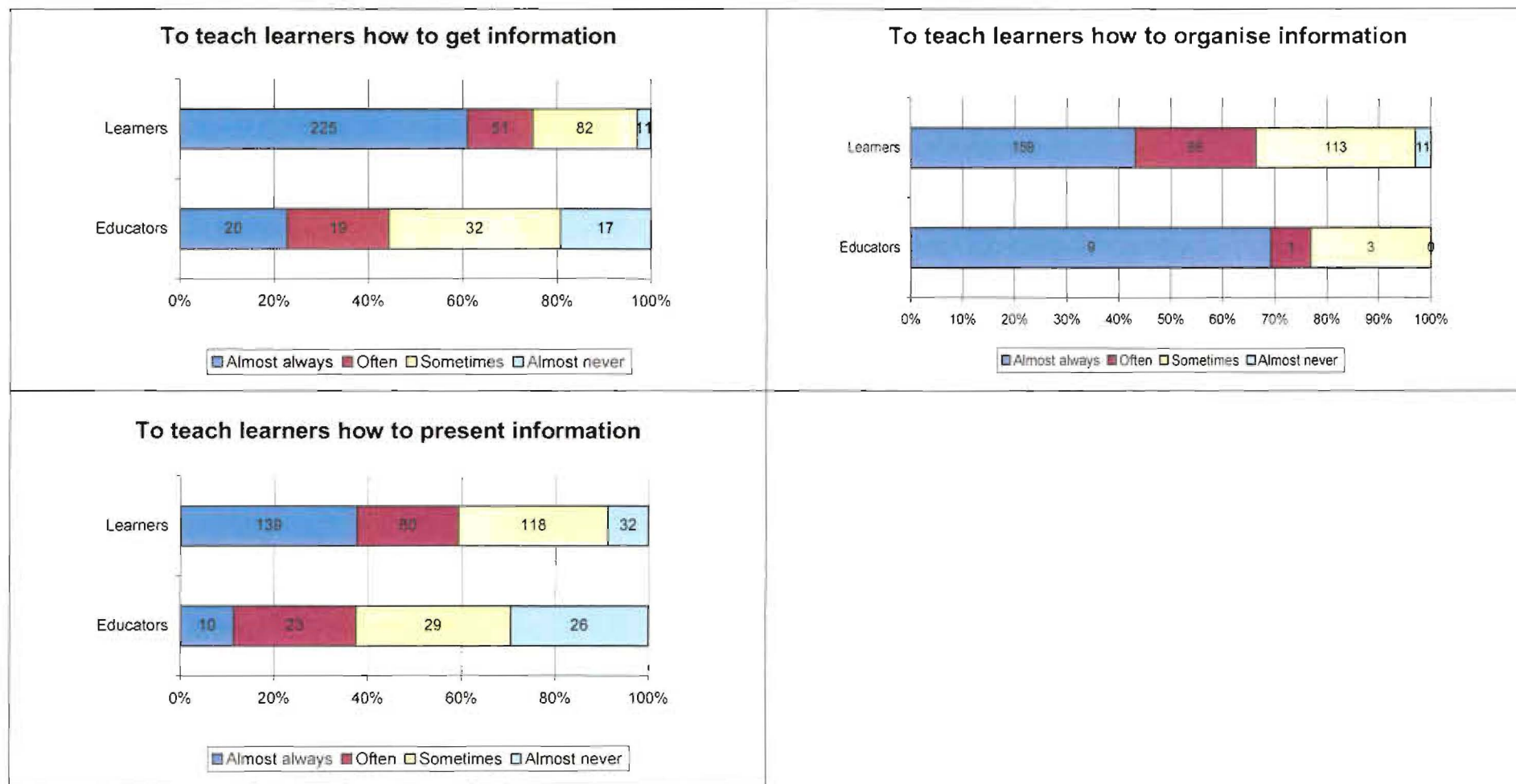
5.2.2.4 Portfolio assessment as an instructional tool

In this section, educators and learners had to indicate the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment as an instructional tool complies with the principles of assessment for learning. The table below indicates the data obtained for the educator and learner responses.

Table 5.10: Portfolio as an instructional tool

	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To teach learners how to get information	20	23	19	22	32	36	17	19	225	61	51	14	82	22	11	3
To teach learners how to organise information	9	69	1	8	3	23	0	0	159	43	86	23	113	31	11	3
To teach learners how to present information	10	11	23	26	29	33	26	30	139	38	80	22	118	32	32	9

Figure 5.4: Portfolio as an instructional tool



Interpretation of the educator responses

In their response to the three statements the majority of educators indicate that they:

- sometimes (36%) teach learners how to get information;
- almost always (69%) teach learners how to organize information; and
- sometimes (33%) teach learners how to present information.

Only with regard to one of the statements did the majority of educators respond with “almost always”, namely with regard to the fact that they teach learners how to organize information. This is, however, a response that contradicts the “almost always” response received for the first and third statements, because gathering information, organizing information and presenting information should be addressed jointly. One would have expected then, that the majority of educators would have responded with “almost always” to all three of the statements. Once again, in the absence of convincing responses it appears as if educators are not effectively implementing portfolio assessment for instructional purposes. The use of portfolios as an instructional tool is basic to all the educational activities that take place in the classroom. Teaching learners how to gather information is the starting point of any learning process. How to gather information is one of the first and basic skills that learners need to be familiarized with. Failing to help them develop these basic skills may obstruct learning and development. Skills for gathering information serve as a prerequisite for developing skills in organizing and presenting information. If these skills are not developed, learners will not be able to reconstruct and construct information. Instead, they will reproduce texts rather than transform it and present them as their own product (*cf.* 3.3.4). It is also interesting to note that only 13 educators responded to the second questionnaire item. It appears as if teaching learners how to organize is a problematic aspect for the educators who took part in the study.

Interpretation of the learner responses

In responding to all the three questions, the majority of learners, in contrast to the educators, claim that educators almost always (61%) teach them how to gather, organize (43%) and present information accurately (38%). The sharp contrast between the educator and learner responses could be explained as follows. The learners' understanding of the statements might be linked to educators' instruction, where they are told to go to the library and search for information (*cf.* 2.2). This type of instruction does not actually equip them with knowledge and higher-order skills on how to acquire information when confronted with a variety of resources. Merely instructing learners to gather, organize and present information without equipping them with the skills to do so, might lead to learning which is not process- and product-oriented but product-oriented only (*cf.* 2.2; 2.3). Learners then collect write and present raw data, without trying to reconstruct it in their own original way. Clearly, such efforts are not underpinned by the principles of assessment for learning. Although the majority of learners responded with "almost always" to the implementation of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes, there is reason for concern as there are still a large number of learners who do not share this view.

Critical evaluation of educator and learner responses

The data did not provide convincing evidence that educators utilize portfolios for instructional purposes effectively. Portfolio assessment as an instructional tool serves as a tool for promoting effective learning which is interactive. As an instructional tool, it guides and teaches the learners how to develop the skills for gathering, organizing and presenting the information accurately. Learners should be guided in how to complete tasks and in compiling and developing portfolios which are goal-oriented and goal-directed. Absence of the effective implementation of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes, as it appears to be in this study, will not assist learners to develop into independent learners (*cf.* 3.3.4).

The following section will focus on the responses received for determining whether portfolio assessment is utilized for communication purposes.

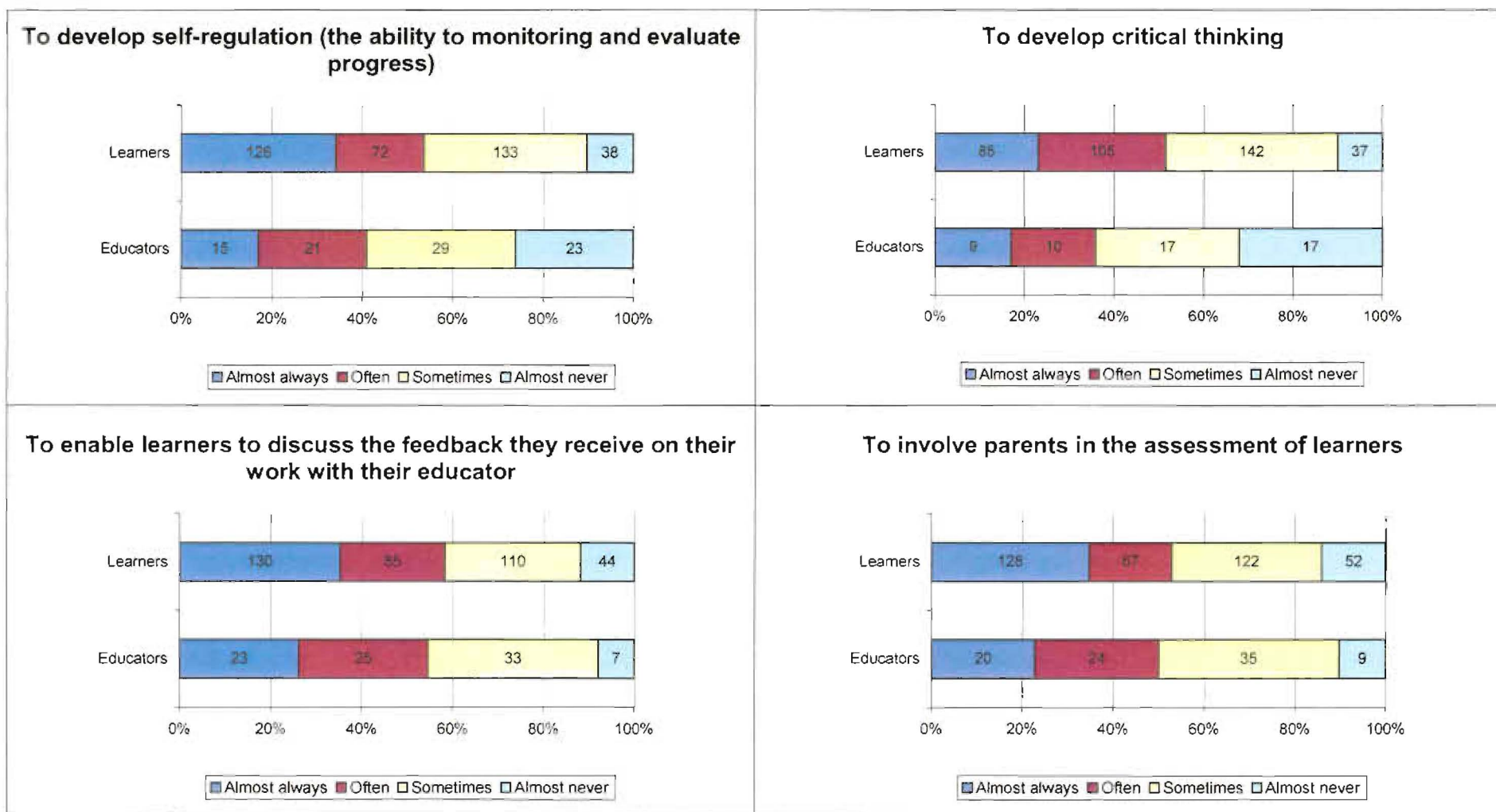
5.2.2.5 Portfolio assessment as a communication tool

In this section, educators and learners had to indicate the extent to which the implementation of portfolio assessment as a communication tool complies with the principles of assessment for learning. The table below indicates the data obtained for the educator and learner responses.

Table 5.11: Portfolio as a communication tool

	SECTION B: EDUCATORS								SECTION C: LEARNERS							
	Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never		Almost always		Often		Some- times		Almost never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To develop self-regulation (the ability to monitor and evaluate progress)	15	17	21	24	29	33	23	26	126	34	72	20	133	36	38	10
To develop critical thinking	9	17	10	19	17	32	17	32	85	23	105	28	142	38	37	10
To enable learners to discuss the feedback they receive on their work with their educator	23	26	25	28	33	38	7	8	130	35	85	23	110	30	44	12
To involve parents in the assessment of learners	20	23	24	27	35	40	9	10	128	35	67	18	122	33	52	14

Figure 5.5: Portfolio as a communication tool



Interpretation of educator responses

In their response to the four statements, the majority of educators indicate that they:

- sometimes (33%) develop self-regulation abilities;
- sometimes (32%) develop critical thinking abilities;
- sometimes (38%) enable learners to discuss feedback they receive on their work with their educators; and
- sometimes (40%) involve parents in the assessment of learners.

No responses pointing in the direction of “almost always” were received by the majority of educators. In the absence of the majority of educators indicating convincingly that they do utilize portfolio assessment for communication purposes, a concern is signalled that a vague understanding of the merits of portfolio assessment for communication purposes could prevail among the educators who took part in the study.

Interpretation of learner responses

The majority of the learner responses with regard to the implementation of portfolio assessment for communication purposes revealed the following:

- educators sometimes (36%) develop self-regulation abilities;
- educators sometimes (38%) develop critical thinking abilities;
- educators almost always (35%) allow learners to discuss the feedback they receive on their work with their educators; and
- educators almost always (35%) involve parents in the assessment of learners.

Although the majority of learners responded with “almost always” to two of the four statements, a large number of learners are excluded in sharing this view. It cannot be concluded with certainty that educators effectively implement portfolio assessment for communication purposes. Regarding the statement that refers to the involvement of parents in learner assessment, learners might be referring to the issuing of progress reports whereby parents are invited to come to schools to collect reports. During these sessions, educators usually issue reports and nothing or very little is said in detail about the assessment of learners. In most cases, educators inform parents about their children’s behaviour in the classroom. Only when parents are involved in a detailed discussion regarding a learner’s development and progress, could reference be made to communication, as it refers to more than just reporting on the results of assessment.

Critical evaluation of educator and learner responses

An absence of convincing responses creates concern as it appears that portfolios are not effectively implemented as a communication tool. This will imply that opportunities for the learners to develop self-regulating mechanisms, which will enable them to monitor and evaluate their own learning, progress, development and advancement (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4; 6.5) might fall by the roadside. Critical thinking skills and the ability to share and exchange information regarding their progress with educators might also not be adequately addressed. At the same time, the process of learners and educators jointly monitoring and evaluating progress could be jeopardized. As a communication tool, portfolios should promote communication not only between learners and educators, but also between parents and their children, as well as other stakeholders such as officials from the district office.

It is important to use portfolios as communication tools as they (portfolios) enable all stakeholders to have access to learners’ performance in terms of formative and summative assessment. This also creates an opportunity for the stakeholders to have an idea of how the learners progress and move from one level to the next. If there are learners who experience learning problems, the

educator can intervene and provide support as speedily as possible. If need be, some problems can be communicated to the parents and officials in order to enable them to receive support from all the stakeholders (*cf.* 2.3; 3.3.2; 3.3.5).

5.2.2.6 Conclusion

In the absence of convincing responses from both educators and learners, it appears as if educators require assistance regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment for assessment purposes, developmental purposes, diagnostic purposes, instructional purposes and communication purposes. A further implication is that the principles of assessment for learning which underpin portfolio assessment are also not evident during the implementation of portfolio assessment.

Portfolio as an assessment tool

The ideal responses would have indicated that educators are convinced that portfolios should almost always be utilized as an assessment tool to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. However, neither the educator responses nor the learner responses convincingly confirm this.

Portfolio as a developmental tool

The ideal responses would have indicated that portfolios are almost always utilized as a developmental tool, to inform learners about their successes and failures, to improve learners' mistakes, to develop learners as creators of knowledge, to develop the learners' self-confidence and self-esteem, to teach learners to work independently, to encourage the learners' self-growth, to help learners develop problem-solving skills, to teach learners to respect others' opinions, to focus and enhance learner strengths, to highlight learners' weaknesses and assist learners to overcome them. Although there is some evidence that portfolios are utilized for developmental purposes, it is not convincingly confirmed by the educator and learner responses.

Portfolio as a diagnostic tool

The ideal responses would have indicated that portfolios are almost always utilized as diagnostic tools to make learners aware of emerging skills, to assist learners to correct mistakes and to review and learn again that which was not understood. Although the learner responses confirmed that this happens to some extent, a large number of learner and educator responses did not reveal the same understanding.

Portfolio as an instructional tool

The ideal responses would have indicated that educators almost always utilize portfolios as instructional tools to equip learners with skills to independently collect, organize and present information. Both educator and learner responses do not convincingly provide evidence to support the implementation of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes.

Portfolios as a communication tool

The ideal responses to these questions would have indicated that educators almost always utilize portfolios as a communication tool. Portfolio assessment does not refer to the number of tasks filed in the portfolio, but rather the opportunities provided during the compilation of the portfolio to reflect on past performance and indicate where improvements have taken place. If quantity is favoured above quality in the compilation of portfolios, portfolios merely become documents in which activities are compiled to showcase as an end-product.

5.2.3 Comparison: Questionnaire responses from educators and learners

In order to determine whether there was any significant difference between the educator and learner responses obtained from the questionnaire, the responses were compared based on the mean scores for each of the sections of the questionnaire that focused on the implementation of portfolio

assessment as a multi-dimensional tool. T-tests were utilized to determine whether differences that occurred were significant. P-values lower than 0.05 were regarded as significant (Pietersen & Maree, 2007:230). To determine whether the differences between the means have any effect in practice, Cohen's d was calculated and interpreted as follows:

- 0,2: small effect in practice
- 0,5: medium effect in practice
- 0,8: large effect in practice (Steyn, 2005:20).

Table 5.12 and Figure 5.6 reveal the results obtained.

Means were calculated according to the ordinal scales utilized for classifying the questionnaire responses (1= almost always, 2 = often, 3 = sometimes, 4 = almost never).

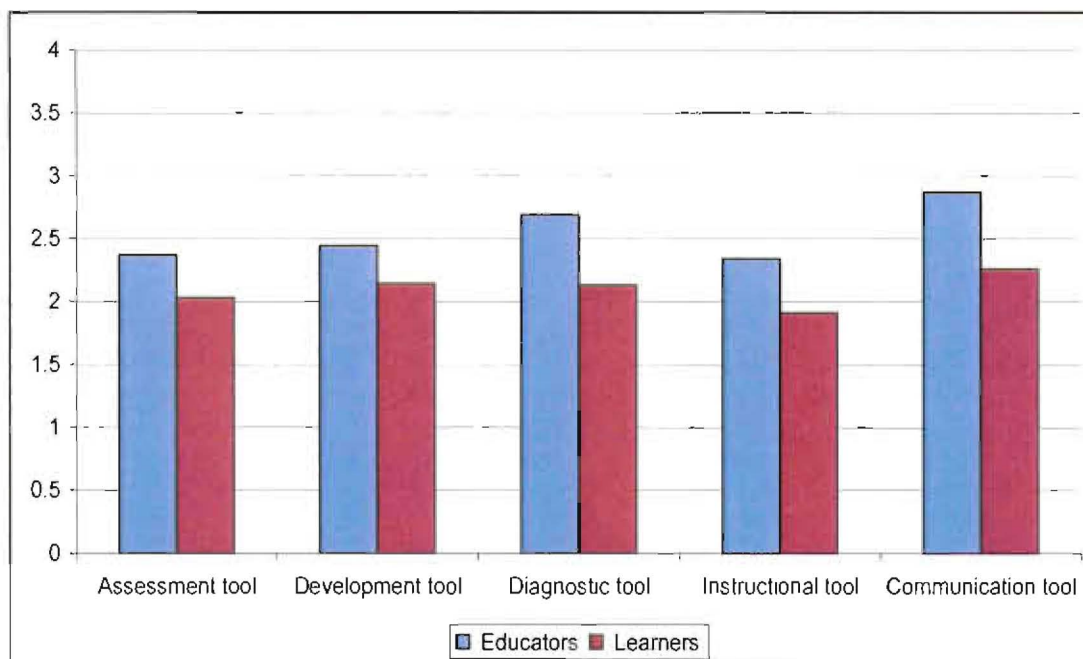
Implication: the lowest mean should be regarded as the more favourable response as it is the closest to 1 (almost always)

Table 5.12: Comparison: educator and learner responses

Questionnaire sections	Mean Learners	Mean Educators	t-value	p	Cohen D
Assessment tool	2.03	2.37	- 356684	* 0.000400	0.299762 Small
Development tool	2.14	2.44	- 379711	* 0.000166	0.344718 Small
Diagnostic tool	2.13	2.69	- 582401	* 0.000000	0.576492 Medium
Instructional tool	1.91	2.34	- 447046	* 0.000010	0.543678 Small
Communication tool	2.26	2.87	- 658901	* 0.000000	0.633157 Medium

*significant difference at $p < 0.05$

Figure 5.6: Comparison: educator and learner responses



It is interesting to note that, for both educators and learners, the highest means were calculated for the implementation of portfolios for **instructional purposes** and, for both groups, the lowest means were calculated for the implementation of portfolios for **communication purposes**. The means for the various sections reflect significant higher means for the learner responses with regard to all the sections of the questionnaire. It appears as if the learners experienced the implementation of portfolio assessment as more effective than the educators indicated that they actually do. For two of the aspects, namely for the application of portfolios as a diagnostic tool and a communication tool, the results revealed that a medium visible effect in practice was evident. The discrepancy between the educator and learner responses makes it impossible to conclude with confidence that the implementation of portfolio assessment reflects the multi-dimensional nature of the purposes of portfolio assessment that it ought to reflect. In order to address this discrepancy between educator and learner responses, focus group interviews were conducted with the educators in order to obtain a clearer understanding of their implementation practices in the utilization of

portfolio assessment and to confirm or refute the results obtained with the questionnaire (cf. 4.5.1.6).

5.2.4 Analysis of variance on the dimensions of portfolio assessment

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)

In order to add a deeper dimension to the study, the intention was also to find out if the independent variables that were used in the study, namely gender, age, qualifications, REQV level, post description and language would influence the respondents' perceptions about the implementation of portfolio assessment. Although language and REQV level were indicated as variables in the study, they were not considered for the MANOVA as the different language and REQV groupings did not comprise of equal numbers.

A MANOVA was conducted using the independent variables one at a time with the dependent variables (five dimensions of portfolio assessment). The MANOVA was run to determine the effect of the various independent variables on the 5 dimensions of portfolio assessment (assessment tool, developmental tool, diagnostic tool, instructional tool, and communication tool). The following results were revealed.

Table 5.13: MANOVA

Test					
<i>Wilks</i>	Variables	Gender	Position	Qualification	Age
	p-value	0.221	0.858	* 0.032	* 0.006

* significant difference at $p < 0.05$

The above table indicates that, with regard to two variables, namely **qualification** and **age**, a significant influence on the five dimensions was measured. It appears that qualification and age had an influence on how educators implemented portfolios during assessment.

Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Due to the significant differences that were indicated for two of the variables in the table above, a univariate (ANOVA) was conducted on the five dimensions of portfolio assessment in terms of these two independent variables. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:373), an ANOVA is conducted where two or more sample means are compared on one independent variable and allows for testing differences between all groups. An ANOVA was conducted to summarize data on single independent variables in relation to the five dimensions of portfolio assessment (dependent variable).

Table 5.14: ANOVA

	Assessment tool p-value	Developmental tool p-value	Diagnostic tool p-value	Instructional tool p-value	Communica- tion tool p-value
Age	0.117	* 0.038	* 0.046	0.543	0.701
Qualification	0.260	0.229	0.304	0.128	0.464

* significant difference at $p < 0.05$

The results in the aforementioned table revealed that only age had a significant impact on the implementation of portfolio assessment. **Age** had a significant impact on the way in which the educators implemented portfolios as **developmental** and **diagnostic tools**.

Consequently, a *post hoc* test was conducted to determine which age groups displayed these differences. A Tukey HSD (Honestly Significant Difference) test was used for this purpose. A Tukey test was conducted to investigate whether there are differences in the implementation of portfolios between the means for the **different age groups**.

Tukey HSD test

The following results were revealed for the means of the different age groups. For the purpose of the Tukey test, the different age groups were clustered as follows:

Group 1: 23-34

Group 2: 35-44

Group 3: 45+

Means were calculated according to the ordinal scales utilized for classifying the questionnaire responses (1= almost always, 2 = often, 3 = sometimes, 4 = almost never).

Implication: the lowest mean should be regarded as the more favourable response as it is the closest to 1 (almost always)

Table 5.15: Tukey HSD test for the different age groups and portfolio as an assessment tool

		Group 1 23-34	Group 2 35-44	Group 3 45+
Mean		1.750	2.466	2.460
Assessment tool: p-value	1		0.107	0.180
	2	0.107		0.999
	3	0.180	0.999	

Although the 35-44 year age group obtained the lowest mean for this section and the 23-34 year age group the highest mean, there appears to be no significant difference between the responses of the various age groups with regard to their perceptions on the implementation of portfolio assessment as an assessment tool. It cannot be concluded that age significantly impacts on the effective implementation of portfolio as an assessment.

Table 5.16: Tukey HSD test for the different age groups and portfolio as a developmental tool

		Group 1 23-34	Group 2 35-44	Group 3 45+
Mean		1.858	2.556	2.471
Developmental tool: p-value	1		* 0.029	0.116
	2	* 0.029		0.918
	3	0.116	0.918	

* significant difference at $p < 0.05$

The 35-44 year age group again obtained the lowest mean for this section and the 23-34 year age group the highest mean. A significant difference is noted between the 35-44 year age group and the 23-34 year age group. It can be concluded that the educators in the younger age group appear to be more effective than the more mature, experienced educators in implementing portfolio assessment for developmental purposes. However, no significant differences are revealed between the older experienced age group (45+) and the younger educators (23-34) or between the 45+ age group and the 35-44 year age group. In light of the fact that the educators with presumably more experience did not perform better than their younger, less experienced colleagues, the question is raised as to whether these educators might be reluctant towards the implementation of the new ideas entailed in classroom assessment and rather tend to stick to the practices that they are familiar with? On the other hand, it could be that the younger age group might have a better understanding of the new ideas entailed in the implementation of portfolio assessment and are therefore more eager to implement the new ideas entailed in the implementation of portfolio assessment.

Table 5.17: Tukey HSD test for the different age groups and portfolio as a diagnostic tool

		Group 1 23-34	Group 2 35-44	Group 3 45+
Mean		2.111	2.848	2.587
Diagnostic tool: p-value	1		* 0.041	0.344
	2	* 0.041		0.526
	3	0.344	0.526	

* significant difference at $p < 0.05$

The 23-34 year age group again obtained the highest mean for this section of the questionnaire and the 35-44 year age group the lowest mean. A significant difference is noted between the 35-44 year age group and the 23-34 year age group. The same tendency is noted as with the previous results. It can be concluded that the educators in the younger age group appear to be more effective than their more mature, experienced colleagues in implementing portfolio assessment for diagnostic purposes. However, no significant differences are revealed between the older experienced age group (45+) and the younger educators (23-34) and also not between the older age group and the 35-44 year age group. In light of the fact that the educators with presumably the most experience (45+) did not perform better than their younger, less experienced colleagues, the question is again raised as to whether these educators might be reluctant towards the implementation of the new ideas entailed in classroom assessment because they lack knowledge and skills related to the implementation of portfolio assessment? On the other hand, it appears as if the younger educators (23-43) are more eager to implement the new ideas entailed in classroom assessment.

Table 5.18: Tukey HSD test for the different age groups and portfolio as an instructional tool

		Group 1 23-34	Group 2 35-44	Group 3 45+
Mean		2.055	2.375	2.396
Instructional tool: p-value	1		0.543	0.583
	2	0.543		0.995
	3	0.583	0.995	

Although the 45+ year age group obtained the lowest mean for this section and the 23-34 year age group the highest mean, there appears to be no significant difference between the responses of the various age groups with regard to their perceptions on the implementation of portfolio assessment as an instructional tool. It cannot be concluded that age impacts significantly on the effective implementation of portfolio as an instructional tool.

Table 5.19: Tukey HSD test for the different age groups and portfolio as a communication tool

Communication tool :p-value		Group 1 23-34	Group 2 35-44	Group 3 45+
Mean		2.354	2.872	3.154
	1		0.204	0.565
	2	0.204		0.480
	3	0.565	0.480	

Although the 45+ year age group obtained the lowest average for this section and the 23-34 year age group the highest average, there appears to be no significant difference between the responses of the various age groups with regard to the implementation of portfolio assessment as a communication tool.

It cannot be concluded that age impacts significantly on the effective implementation of portfolio as a communication tool.

In conclusion: Age was indicated as the only variable that impacted on the educators' implementation of portfolio assessment as **developmental** and **diagnostic** tools. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the 23-44 year age group differed significantly in their approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment as developmental and diagnostic tools from their more mature and experienced 35-44 year old colleagues. The lowest results were obtained by the 35-44 year old educators with regard to three of the sections of the questionnaire, namely assessment tool, developmental tool and diagnostic tool. The 45+ year old educators obtained the lowest results for two of the questionnaire sections, namely, instructional tool and communication tool. The best results were obtained by the 23-34 year old educators for all five sections of the questionnaire. This could be an indication that the younger educators might be more acquainted and familiar with the theoretical and practical application of the principles that underpin Outcomes-Based Assessment due to the fact that adequate attention was paid to these aspects during their training. On the other hand, the older, more experienced educators might lack knowledge and understanding regarding the theoretical and practical application of the principles underpinning Outcomes-Based Assessment due to the fact that they only received short workshop training sessions in this regard (*cf.* 1.2).

It is interesting to note that not one of the other variables (gender, position, language, and qualification or REQV level) had any impact on the way educators perceived the implementation of portfolio assessment. What is disconcerting is that one would have expected that Heads of Department at schools, who should be able to assist and guide educators in aspects related to teaching, learning and assessment also appear to lack understanding in the effective implementation of portfolio assessment.

5.3 DATA ANALYSIS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

5.3.1 Introduction

Based on the questionnaire responses received from the educators and learners, from which it could not be concluded with certainty whether educators implement portfolio assessment for assessment, developmental, diagnostic, instructional and communication purposes, the researcher decided to utilize focus group interviews with the educators in order to confirm, contradict or elaborate on the questionnaire responses. The main purpose of the interviews was to probe the educators to explain in more practical terms how they deal with the implementation of portfolio assessment. The questions were phrased in such a way that no indication was given as to what type of answers the researcher expected.

The interview schedule comprised five questions which were directly related to the questionnaire items (*cf.* Annexure B). Annexure B provides the verbatim transcripts of the interview responses. The exact words of the participants, including grammatical errors, were kept so as to provide a true reflection of what was said. As a phenomenological design was utilized in this study, the following steps as suggested by Creswell (in Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:140) were followed after the interviews were transcribed:

5.3.2 Verbatim transcripts of the interviews

See Annexure B.

5.3.3 Themes emerging from the focus group interviews

See Annexure B for the cross referencing used in the discussion that will follow. Annexure B provides line numbers that will be used during the cross referencing.

The themes that emanated from the various interview responses for each of the questions will be dealt with separately. These themes were identified on

the basis of the frequency with which they were addressed by the research participants.

5.3.3.1 Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?

The following themes were identified from the interview responses.

Theme 1: How portfolios are used as assessment tools

Using rubrics during assessment

The educators claim that they use portfolio assessment for assessing learners effectively. The educators' responses show that they use rubrics for assessing the learners effectively (cf. B1; B3; B32; B63).

Making use of group work during instruction

The educators assert that the assessment practices are facilitated through group work and group tasks (cf. B91; B93; B94; B95; B121).

Providing a variety of assessment tasks

The educators' responses show that, in assessing the learners, they use a variety of assessment tasks, among others projects, interviews, questionnaires, investigations, and research projects, tests, exams, building models and essay writing (cf. B4; B31; 32; B33; B61; B62; B63; B64; B65; B94; B121; B123; B124; B125).

Providing assessment criteria before hand

The educators claim that, in assessing the learners, they are guided by assessment criteria which are made known to learners before they are assessed (cf. B1; B2).

Focusing on academic and practical issues

Assessment should focus not only on academic knowledge but also practical application of the knowledge (*cf.* B4; B32).

Providing understanding between educators and learners

Educators say they use portfolio assessment for promoting understanding between themselves and the learners, and to enable learners to understand what is being learned and assessed (*cf.* B31; B91; B92).

The use of different forms of assessment

Educators indicate that they use different forms of assessment such as formative, summative and informal assessment (*cf.* B5).

Expanded opportunities

Learners are given a second chance to rectify their mistakes and improve their marks (*cf.* B34; B91; B92; B125).

Discussion

According to the findings in the literature, portfolios may be implemented in the classroom during teaching and learning as multidimensional tools to promote effective teaching and learning. As multidimensional tools, the implementation of portfolios is underpinned by the principles entailed in assessment for learning. In the literature it is argued that portfolios may be presented as assessment tools, and as assessment tools they should be utilized to assess knowledge, skills and values by means of a variety of assessment strategies (*cf.* 2.3).

When examining the themes that emanated from the interview, important thoughts and ideas related to Outcomes-Based Assessment are evident, namely the use of rubrics, providing assessment criteria to learners, providing expanded opportunities and using group work, but educators do not clearly indicate that they use portfolios for assessing knowledge, skills, values and

attitudes by means of a variety of teaching strategies. These thoughts and ideas are important and an integral part of assessment for learning in general. However, when it comes to addressing the question posed by the researcher, the thoughts and ideas raised by the educators who took part in the interviews do not convincingly address the question.

Linking the theme (how portfolios are used for assessment purposes) with the responses of the educators to the questionnaire items left the researcher with unconvincing and contradictory ideas. In response to the questionnaire educators indicated that they use portfolios as assessment tools to assess knowledge, skills and values, but at the same time indicate that they do not use a variety of assessment strategies. The themes that emerged from the interview data, however, revealed a number of assessment strategies utilized by the educators which contradict the questionnaire response (*cf.* 5.3.3). In the opinion of the researcher, it appears as if educators utilize different forms of assessment but that the actual assessment function, (namely assessing for knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) is not clear to educators. They try to accommodate the assessment strategies indicated by the assessment policy, but seem not to realize what the merits of these strategies in terms of the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are. They never mention the purpose for utilizing the different assessment strategies.

Although the themes do not fully support the findings of Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002:281) who indicate that assessment should be authentic and continuous (*cf.* 3.3.1), there are thoughts and ideas entailed in the themes which show that educators who participated in the study do, to a certain extent have an idea or a minimal knowledge and minimal level of understanding of what portfolios as an assessment tool entail and how they could be utilized in the classroom. For example, they mentioned rubrics, assessment tasks, group work, assessment criteria, summative and formative assessments. All these aspects are basic components which are required during the implementation of portfolios as assessment tools.

5.3.3.2 Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing the learners?

The following themes were identified from the interview responses.

Theme 1: Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes

Lack of resources and time constraints

Educators say they find it difficult to develop the learners in totality, due to lack of resources and time constraints (*cf.* B11; B12; B40; B70; B157).

Large learner numbers

Educators indicate that it is difficult to pay attention to the developmental needs of learners due to overcrowded classrooms (*cf.* B9; B40; B157; B158; B161; B162).

Poverty

The educators assert that they cannot develop the learners in totality, because many parents cannot afford to buy the required material needed for performing the tasks that need to develop learners. Some of the educators indicate that the development of the learners is not possible because some of the tasks are done at home and learners are assisted by their parents (*cf.* B69).

Learners cannot work independently

Educators assert that they find it problematic to assist the development of learners as parents do too much for the learners and learners will not learn to develop into independent learners (*cf.* B98; B101; B129; B131).

Lazy learners

Educators say learners are too lazy to go out and do research. They indicate that only a few who go out to do research come back with the correct information (*cf.* B11).

Learner willingness

Educators indicate that learners are not willing to complete the assessment tasks given to them and that they, as educators, can only assess the work if the learners are willing to do the tasks independent of the educators and other learners (*cf.* B8; B159; B161; B162).

Theme 2: How portfolios are used for developmental purposes

Providing expanded opportunities and self-enrichment

Educators claim that to enable learners to develop according to their abilities they use expanded opportunities by giving learners extra activities and self enrichment tasks to ensure that learners develop in totality (*cf.* B37; B39; B97; B99).

Research activities

Educators assert that they use research activities to help the learners to develop in totality. They claim that they give them research topics and send the learners to go and search for information. They say the research activities promote independent learning and thinking and through these activities, learners are challenged and begin to think critically and creatively (*cf.* B8; B65; B68; B71; B99; B127; B128).

Preparing learners for real life situations

Educators say portfolio assessment exposes learners to assessment tasks which prepare them for real life situations. This will enable them to emerge as responsible grown-ups and citizens and make them aware of what they are going to be in future (*cf.* B38; B71).

Group work

Educators say they utilize group work during assessment for developmental purposes (*cf.* B8; B9).

Using different assessment forms/techniques

Educators emphasize that they use different assessment forms/techniques (questions, presentations, videos, models, research) to help learners to develop in totality (*cf.* B8; B9; B12; B69; B130).

To identify barriers to learning

The educators claim that they use assessment activities to identify barriers to learning (*cf.* B7).

To assess theory and practice

Educators say that they use portfolio assessment to help them to reconcile theory and practice (*cf.* B130).

Discussion

According to the findings of the literature learners should be engaged in developmental practices which will encourage and influence them to work independently of the educator in order to promote their self-growth and self-esteem. Learners should be made aware of their strengths and successes and be guided as to how to enhance their strengths and successes in future. Their weaknesses, failures and their mistakes should also be identified and they should be assisted to overcome them (*cf.* 2.3).

The themes emerging from the interview responses provide some evidence that educators do utilize portfolios for developmental purposes. According to the educators' interview responses, they argue for the provision of extra activities and self-enrichment tasks to secure effective learner development. At the same time, educators assert that they make use of expanded opportunities. This could help learners to focus their attention on their

weaknesses, consequently improve on eradicating their mistakes and ultimately overcome their weaknesses.

Educators indicate the use of research activities. This is in agreement with the literature findings of Barootchi and Keshavarz (2002:281) and Cook-Benjamin (2002:6) who advocate for the use of portfolios as developmental tools to encouraging learners to learn independently of educators and consequently develop critical thinking and emerge as creators and developers of knowledge (*cf.* 2.3; 3.3; 3.3.2).

The use of group work, according to the educators, will promote the development of the learners, as they need to learn to respect the views and opinions of other learners, thus enhancing their social skills. The findings further indicate that portfolios are utilized in helping to prepare learners for real life situations and to reconcile theory and practice.

It is evident that the themes emerging from the findings of the interview responses when compared with the literature findings (*cf.* Barootchi & Keshavarz, 2002:281 and Jones, 2001:226) revealed that educators who participated in the focus group interviews attempt to implement portfolios as developmental tools to a certain extent. This could serve as evidence regarding what the study was actually looking for in presenting portfolios as developmental tools (*cf.* 3.3; 3.3.2).

When comparing the interview responses to the questionnaire responses, the following can be concluded. The interview responses of the educators provide evidence that they do utilize portfolios for developmental purposes. However, when comparing this to the questionnaire responses, it appears that educators need to place more emphasis on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes, as the questionnaire responses revealed that they are not frequently used for this purpose (*cf.* 5.2.2.2). The questionnaire findings indicate that educators do not give portfolios as developmental tools the priority they deserve.

The responses from the interview sessions have drawn the attention of the researcher to the following challenges which may impact negatively on the effective implementation of portfolio assessment and consequently obstruct effective teaching and learning. Among others, educators mention poverty, insufficient time, a lack of resources, too much assistance from parents, learners' attitudes towards school work, laziness and unwillingness to learn.

5.3.3.3 Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?

The following themes were identified from the interview responses.

Theme 1: Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems

Lack of resources

The educators indicate that a lack of resources makes the identification of the learners' problems impossible. In this regard, they refer to the unavailability of well equipped libraries. They furthermore argue that a lack of access to computers and the internet in township schools restrict the assessment process (*cf.* B14; B15; B16; B17; B46).

Lack of pre-knowledge and skills

The educators indicate that it is difficult to identify the learners' problems, because learners come to secondary schools lacking enough pre-knowledge and skills for doing portfolio activities. In addition to this, learners are lazy too (*cf.* B13; B17; B73; B74; B75; B107).

Educators lack skills

Educators claim that they are not well equipped with skills to enable them to identify the learners' problems effectively (*cf.* B166).

Time

Educators argue there is not enough time to identify the learners' problems as they are pushed by pace setters (*cf.* B15; B105; B136; B163).

Learner numbers

The educators say overcrowding is one of the barriers to learning. Large numbers of learners make effective assessment impossible (*cf.* B15; B16; B17; B45; B103).

Quantity is emphasized

Educators indicate that the number of assessment tasks which learners are expected to complete in a year are too many (*cf.* B15; B134). They focus on completing the required number of assessment tasks and do not have the time to focus on identifying learner problems in the process. It appears as if quality is compromised in the process.

Too many different problems

Educators also indicate that the problems experienced by learners are too varied to be effectively addressed (*cf.* B13; B14; B15; B136).

No independent work

Educators indicate that it is difficult for them to identify learner problems as learners do not submit their own original work. They copy work from their peers and parents help a lot which makes it difficult to really detect what learners find problematic (*cf.* B46; B103).

Theme 2: How portfolios are used for identifying problems

Utilizing a variety of assessment forms/techniques

Educators indicate that by using a variety of assessment forms/techniques, they are able to identify learner problems. In this regard, they mention the use of research tasks, case studies, investigations, projects, class work, tests and

exams, speaking and reading activities and calling learners personally to find out what problems they experience (*cf.* B107; B133; B137).

Discussion

According to the findings in the literature, portfolios as diagnostic tools are utilized for making learners aware of emerging skills, for providing opportunities for correcting mistakes and for encouraging learners to focus on what was not learned adequately and to learn it again (*cf.* 5.2.2.3). All these processes involved in identifying the learners' problems are guided by the principles entailed in assessment for learning. The educators' responses from the interviews reveal different opinions regarding the use of portfolios as diagnostic tools. A number of educators regard it as impossible, due to the numerous factors that are mentioned (*cf.* 5.2.2.3). Educators who do indicate that they utilize portfolios for diagnostic purposes indicate that the use of a variety of assessment forms/techniques serves this purpose. According to the researcher, the mere utilization of a variety of forms/techniques does not provide enough evidence to conclude that portfolios are used for diagnostic purposes. Educators do not indicate, for example, how the various activities could be utilized in identifying learner problems. The numerous factors that are mentioned by the educators as being problematic in the utilization of portfolios for diagnostic purposes rather create the impression that educators appear to be sceptical of whether it is possible to utilize portfolios for diagnostic purposes. The lack of evidence for the utilization of portfolios for diagnostic purposes provided by the interview responses, agree with the educator questionnaire responses where the regular use of portfolios for diagnostic purposes was not evident either.

The themes that emerged from the focus group interviews do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that educators utilize portfolios for diagnostic purposes. A major reason contributing to this is the fact that educators themselves indicated that they lack the skills to identify the problems of learners. It could also be linked to the fact that many of the educators who took part in the study only received workshop training with regard to the

implementation of portfolio assessment and did not have enough exposure to the theoretical aspects and practical application related to portfolio assessment (*cf.* 1.2).

5.3.3.4 Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?

The following themes were identified from the interview responses.

Theme 1: How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information

Using a variety of assessment tasks

Educators claim that they use a variety of assessment tasks to help learners collect, organize and present information. These tasks include *inter alia* the following: projects, essays, research investigations, worksheets, design tasks, assignments, tests, exams, conducting interviews and questionnaire completion (*cf.* B19; B20; B79; B110; B112; B113; B140; B141; B143; B173).

Different activities

Educators indicate that, by providing different activities, they create opportunities for learners to collect organize and present information. These activities refer to the following: collecting information from computers, the internet, newspapers and magazines, doing individual and group work. Educators claim that if learners are given individual work they do not depend on one another. Educators say learners do group work and peer activities. In these activities they come up with their own ideas and share with one another, but ultimately they need to work independently as individuals and know how to find information on their own. They further say that the writing of tests and examinations as individual activities promote independent learning (*cf.* B51; B80; B169; B171).

Providing guidance

Educators are of the opinion that providing learners with clear instructions before they start completing tasks will enable learners to collect appropriate information. Furthermore, it is also necessary that educators assist learners by providing questions, assessment criteria, rubrics, headings, sub-headings and themes according to which information collection should be done (*cf.* B19; B49; B52; B111; B112).

Theme 2: Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to teaching learners to collect organize and present information

Lack of resources

Educators assert that a lack of access to resources, such as libraries, computers and the internet, makes it difficult for the learners to collect enough information to complete tasks (*cf.* B21; B22; B24).

Time

Educators indicate that they do not have time to teach learners to collect, organize and present information. They send them out to the libraries to search for information (*cf.* B169; B170).

Lazy, unwilling learners

Educators say that a number of learners are never willing to complete tasks. Those who do are few in number (*cf.* B19; B142; B172).

Poor families

Educators say learners, cannot afford to buy the required equipment needed in order to do the portfolio tasks due to their poor family backgrounds (*cf.* B19).

Learners rely too much on others

Educators mention that learners have the tendency of copying one another's work and therefore do not independently collect, organize and present information as they lack understanding and are not computer literate (*cf.* B23; B80).

Educators lack skills

Educators indicate that they cannot guide learners effectively because they also lack skills to assist learners to collect, organize and present information (*cf.* B174).

Large numbers of learners

Educators say overcrowding obstructs the effective implementation of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes (*cf.* B172).

Discussion

According to the findings of the literature regarding the use of portfolios as instructional tools, portfolios are utilized with the aim of teaching learners how to collect, organize and present information and are implemented according to the principles entailed in assessment for learning (*cf.* 5.2.2.4). Comparing the themes that emerged from the interviews with what the literature reveals, the following can be concluded. Educators mention the use of a variety of assessment forms/techniques to help learners collect, organize and present information, namely projects, investigations, discussions, research, worksheets, assignments, interviews, questionnaires, tests and exams. In collecting the information, they assert that learners should utilize libraries, computers, the internet, newspapers and magazines. They provide learners with headings and sub-headings aimed at assisting them to know how information should be organized. In this regard, the researcher is of the opinion that merely sending learners with headings and sub-headings to collect information is not enough to claim that portfolios are utilized effectively

as instructional tools. Learners need to be equipped with skills to enable them to independently locate relevant information; separate important information from unimportant information and present information (in diagram form, in table form, as a concept map, as a summary etc). This implies that educators need to demonstrate these skills and learners should observe how it should be done. The successful utilization of portfolios for instructional purposes might be constrained by the fact that educators indicate that they do not possess the skills to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information. This is also supported by the educators' responses to the questionnaire where it was indicated that portfolios are not frequently utilized for instructional purposes (*cf.* 5.2.2.4). Only with regard to teaching learners how to organize information is it indicated by the majority that this frequently happens. This could have been interpreted as providing learners with headings and sub-headings, as indicated in the interview responses.

The themes that emerged from the interview responses do not provide convincing evidence that portfolios are utilized for instructional purposes.

5.3.3.5 Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?

The following themes were identified from the interview responses.

Theme 1: How portfolios are used as a communication tool

Communication between learners, educators and district officials

Educators assert that they use portfolio assessment as a communication tool because; language is the basic means of communication. There is no way that one can complete tasks or activities without the use of language. Therefore communication between educators and learners is important because it helps learners to understand the tasks given by the educator. Secondly, they say communicating helps them to understand learners as human beings. They further indicate that communication helps educators to understand the learners' level of intelligence and enables the learners to

demonstrate their abilities, whether or not they understand (*cf.* B25; B26; B27; B29; B57; B86; B88; B89; B176; B177; B178; B179).

Communication with parents

The educators claim that portfolio assessment promotes communication between parents and educators. Through portfolio assessment, educators inform parents about their children's performance and progress. Educators say portfolios as a communication tool enables learners to showcase the products of their activities and entails tasks that allow them to communicate with their parents concerning among others, the completion of questionnaires and conducting interviews. Educators further indicate that portfolios as a communication tool enable parent and educators to discuss problems that learners may be confronted with. Where the parent is not satisfied with the learning progress, the educators can utilize a learner's portfolio to indicate to the parent how the child is performing and progressing (*cf.* B56; B57; B58; B85; B86; B87; B149).

Learner communication

Educators say that, during the completion of activities, learners communicate among themselves and share different information and different views. They also get the opportunity to express their views and feelings. This enables learners to improve their communication skills. Their communication skills are also improved by activities such as dramatizing, poetry, conducting interviews with people and collecting information from other people (*cf.* B55; B115; B116; B117; B118; B147; B148).

Reflection

Educators indicate that the use of portfolios provides opportunities to learners to write down their feelings about how the educator conducts teaching and learning in the classroom. In this way, educators get feedback from the learners and can adjust or improve their practice (*cf.* B28; B58).

According to the literature, portfolios as communication tools help learners develop self-regulation and critical thinking abilities and enable educators to discuss feedback with learners and involve parents in the assessment process. The themes identified, to a certain extent, comply with the findings from the literature in the sense that the themes reveal that educators do engage in discussion with the learners and discuss feedback, educators do involve parents in assessment and other aspects that affect learning, educators do give learners activities that self-regulate by allowing them to engage in discussions and share opinions and views. Educators also promote reflection by allowing learners to evaluate teaching and learning. The themes indicate that educators implement portfolios as communication tools. What the responses do not reveal is the extent to which learners are involved in self-regulatory processes. No evidence is found of learner involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of their learning progress.

The themes presented do not support the educators' questionnaire responses, because the responses from the questionnaire indicate that educators do not utilize portfolios frequently as communication tools.

5.3.3.6 Additional themes

Apart from the themes that were identified in the previous section, it is also noteworthy to mention that the following became evident from the interview responses.

Awareness of policy

The interview responses reveal a strong indication that educators are familiar with the assessment policy and that they try to comply with what the policy dictates as far as possible (*cf.* B2; B70; B143; B173). Based on the responses received, the researcher is, however, of the opinion that educators know the policy but seem to find it difficult to translate the policy into practice.

Vague responses/no understanding

Sometimes educators provide vague and confusing responses (*cf.* B6; B18; B29; B30; B43; B44; B50; B77; B83; B119; B180) which indicate that they do not have a clear understanding of the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment.

Divergent perspectives

With regard to certain aspects, divergent perspectives are detected. In some instances, group work is regarded as important for developmental purposes, but in other instances, it is regarded as negative as it makes a learner over reliant on others and does not promote responsible and independent learning. With regard to the role of parents, divergent perspectives are also noted. In some instances parents are seen as important for assisting learners and important role players in the development of learners. On the other hand, the role of parents is also seen as negative, as parents are sometimes indicated as factors obstructing the development of learners as they do too much to assist the learners (*cf.* B7; B46; B91; B94; B95; B98; B101; B121). Some educators indicate that the implementation of portfolio assessment is difficult, not possible and not effective (*cf.* B46; B75; B77; B106; B134; B151; B152; B153; B154; B155; B156; B170). In this regard it is interesting to mention that the group members of focus group 6 appear to be the most negative and sceptical of all the participants regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment. This might be an indication that this group of educators are in greater need of being equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment.

5.3.3.7 Field notes

During the interviews the researcher made notes of any additional information such as reactions, emotions and gestures observed during the conversations. This could be utilized in order to provide additional information and more depth to the interview responses.

At the beginning of the interview sessions, most of the educators appeared to be sceptical to respond to the questions. Some of them confessed that they thought perhaps it was possibly one way of the Department of Education to obtain information regarding their classroom practice for promotion purposes. Therefore they did not want to implicate themselves. They appeared tense, but after having been assured that this was an independent study and that they would only be quoted by means of numbers, they began to open up. As the sessions progressed, they also raised their concerns regarding a lot of work associated with the new system of education.

5.4 TRIANGULATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW DATA

In order to guide the researcher in writing a composite based on the triangulation of the data, the main trends in the findings linked to the literature review were compared to the findings based on the majority of the responses obtained from the questionnaires (educators and learners) as well as the focus group interviews (educators). The table below presents a summary of these results. The numbers indicated in brackets next to some of the responses in the last column indicate the frequency according to which educators responded to certain aspects

Table 5.20: Triangulation of data

Literature review (Assessment for learning principles that underpin the implementation of portfolio assessment)	Questionnaire Educators	Questionnaire Learners	Focus group interviews responses (Summary)
Portfolios as assessment tools			
Apply knowledge	Often	Almost always	Variety of activities, rubrics (4) as guidelines, specify Learning Outcomes, and Assessment Standards, tell what is expected, use different assessment tools: projects (5) investigations (2), assignments (4), tests (3), exams (2), research (3), group work (4), essays, models (2), practical tasks for those who are not academical, check mistakes with learners, give chances to rewrite work and improve marks (3), learners to edit each other's work, interact with community and develop skills, learners do not participate, do not focus on tests only, focus on developing insight, learners find it difficult to work on their own. Use formative, summative, formal and informal assessment. Check mistakes together with learners. Too many learners in class. Have to follow what District Office wants
Assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes	Often	Almost always	
Use variety of assessment strategies	Almost never	Sometimes	

Literature review	Questionnaire Educators	Questionnaire Learners	Focus group interviews responses (Summary)
Portfolios as developmental tools			
Inform success & failures	Sometimes	Sometimes	Not possible to develop learners in totality/can develop learners in totality. Overcrowded classes (6) pose barriers, learners assess each other, learners to go and find information on their own (5), development depends on learners themselves, develop questions and rubrics to guide learners, use different tools to accommodate different learners, give activities that relate to real life (3), give self-enrichment tasks, give learners research tasks: this helps them to think creatively and critically (6), combine theory with practice, provide more than one opportunity to complete tasks to improve performance (2), group work helps learners to develop, learners are lazy to do research, not enough time to develop learners (3), they receive too much help from parents, so it is difficult to tell if they really develop to become independent, schools do not have sufficient resources to develop learners (3), communities are poor and also lack resources, only hardworking and willing learners will benefit (3)
Improve mistakes	Sometimes	Almost always	
Learners as creators of knowledge	Almost always	Almost always	
Develop self-confidence, self-esteem	Often	Almost always	
Work independently	Always/Often	Almost always	
Encourage self-growth	Almost never	Sometimes	
Develop problem-solving skills	Sometimes	Sometimes	
Respect others' opinions and views	Sometimes	Sometimes	
Focus on learner strengths – enhance them	Sometimes	Sometimes	

Literature review (Assessment for learning principles that underpin the implementation of portfolio assessment)	Questionnaire Educators	Questionnaire Learners	Focus group interviews responses (Summary)
Portfolios as diagnostic tools			
Make learners aware of emerging skills	Sometimes	Almost always	Call learners personally to find out what their problems are/reasons for failure, socio-economic problems (poverty) an lack of resources – computers, libraries, books, magazines, newspapers, lack of support from families (3) impact on use of portfolios for diagnostic purposes, as well as overcrowded classes (5) and lack of time (4), learners copy work: obstruct teachers to address learner problems, also language barriers (reading, writing, communication), teachers do not have skills to identify problems – and only focus on assessing performance, by giving different types of activities/assessment one can detect where learners have problems: research tasks (5), case studies, investigations, projects, class work, tests, exams, – writing, speaking, reading activities, quantity of activities in portfolio is important, use tests to check where learners have problems, cannot identify with learner problems – learners are on too many different levels.
Assist learners to correct mistakes	Sometimes	Almost always	
Create opportunities for learners to review work and learn again	Almost always	Almost always	

Literature review (Assessment for learning principles that underpin the implementation of portfolio assessment)	Questionnaire Educators	Questionnaire Learners	Focus group interviews responses (Summary)
Portfolios as instructional tools			
Teach learners how to get information	Sometimes	Almost always	Show learners how to complete activities, use rubrics (2) and specify assessment criteria to and give clear instructions to learners. Provide learners with heading, sub-headings, question and themes. Use different activities: projects (5), investigations (3), discussions, research (9), worksheets, assignments, interviews, questionnaires, tests, exams. Learners are lazy, poor families obstruct effective instruction in the classroom, lack of libraries, computers, internet, resources (8), newspapers and magazines (3) obstruct teaching, learners are not willing to work, learners not committed, learners lack understanding and rely too much on each other. Educators do not have time to teach learners how to get information-just send them to the library to do research, get information from various sources, do not have the skills to help learners. Language, time, learners' poor reading and writing skills and fear to do independent work impact negatively.
Teach learners how to organize information	Almost always	Almost always	
Teach learners how to present information	Sometimes	Almost always	

			To give learners independent work and not group work (7). Others indicate that group work (6) will assist in developing independence. Independence is promoted by: Learners must come up with own ideas, solutions to problems, define problems, work with current issues/relevant topics
Portfolios as communication tools			
Develop self-regulation	Sometimes	Sometimes	Oral activities: speaking, reading, dramatizing, poetry, completion of questionnaires, conducting interviews, sharing information with peers, oral feedback in class.
Develop critical thinking ability	Sometimes/Never	Sometimes	Learners write down feelings regarding teacher instruction: teachers can improve their practice.
Discuss feedback with learners	Sometimes	Almost always	Portfolios communicate the type of family learners' come from, their intelligence level.
Involve parents in the assessment process	Sometimes	Almost always	Portfolios are used to give feedback to parents, learners and District Offices of learner performance. It showcases the learners' work.

5.4.1 Constructing a composite

The learner and educator responses to the questionnaire items differed to a great extent. Learners appeared to be more positive regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment than the educators. However, an examination of the educators' interview responses indicated links with their questionnaire responses and indicated that the learner responses could not be regarded as reliable. The interview responses indeed provided a deeper understanding of the prevailing situation regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment.

Although some evidence was found that indicated that educators comply with what the assessment policy requires, convincing evidence that supports the effective application of the principles of assessment for learning is absent, and the researcher concludes that the educators who took part in the study are aware of what the assessment policy expects and are willing to comply with what the assessment policy indicates. However, they need support in translating policy into practice (*cf.* 5.2.2.6). Educators' knowledge and understanding of the practical application of the principles of assessment for learning seem to be limited and vague and therefore the educators might still be trapped in a product-oriented instead of a process-oriented approach to assessment. This assumption is substantiated by the fact that convincing evidence for the development of learner self-growth, self-confidence, independent learning and self-regulation could not be found. This, in turn, could hamper the development of motivation and willingness to learn. The assumption is also supported by the many factors indicated by the educators that obstruct them to implement portfolio assessment effectively (*cf.* 5.4.2).

In the absence of the effective application of the principles of assessment for learning during the implementation of portfolio assessment, the researcher is concerned that the ideals of independent, confident and life-long learners might not become a reality.

Based on the data analysis, it appears that at present portfolios merely serve a showcase purpose for educators in South African classrooms. Educators are concerned that the required number of tasks as specified by policy are included in the portfolios and very little (if any!) opportunity for learner self-assessment and reflection which enhance and promote learner responsibility, growth and development are built into the utilization of portfolios for assessment purposes.

5.4.2 New dimensions

The analysis of the data entailed in the study, in particular the interview responses, further revealed that educators are concerned about a number of factors which impact negatively on the effective implementation of portfolio assessment as multidimensional tools in the classroom. In their responses, educators identified the following factors:

Overcrowding: Large numbers of learners make it impossible to implement portfolios effectively.

Time constraints: Educators argued that the time allocated for teaching is not sufficient for them to implement portfolios, especially as developmental tools.

Lack of resources: Educators assert that the unavailability of educational resources such as computers, under equipped libraries and the internet deprive learners of a privilege to access important information, thus obstructing the effective use of portfolios as instructional tools.

Learners' attitude and behaviour: Unwillingness and laziness on the part of the learners to do the assessment tasks assigned to them obstruct the effective implementation of portfolio assessment in the classroom.

Poverty: Educators indicated that the poor family backgrounds from which the learners come also contribute toward the ineffective implementation of

portfolio assessment as learners cannot acquire the necessary material and resources to complete assessment tasks.

Barriers to learning: With regard to giving attention to the learning problems that learners are experiencing in the classroom, educators indicated that this was outside their scope of work. They indicated that they were not trained as remedial specialists, and that learner problems should be referred to the School- Based Support Teams.

Educators lack skills: Educators were honest in indicating that they do not possess adequate skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively.

Compromising quality for quantity: Educators indicate that it is important to adhere to what policy indicates regarding the number of prescribed assessment tasks that have to be completed, that very little time is left to pay attention to identifying learner problems.

5.5 SUMMARY

This section focused on the analysis and interpretation of data. Based on the fact that no convincing evidence was obtained to indicate that educators implement portfolio assessment effectively to address its multidimensional purposes, the researcher therefore decided to design a model to assist educators with the implementation of portfolio assessment.

The next chapter presents the model to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment.

CHAPTER SIX

A MODEL TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This section focuses on the review of the theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory. The reason for reviewing this framework emanates from the fact that, having studied the theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory, it appears that the assessment principles which underpin assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3.1) link well with the theoretical principles and ideas entailed in the Social Cognitive Theory (*cf.* 6.3) (Bandura in Bigge, 1992:102). These are the principles that also need to underpin the successful implementation of portfolio assessment at schools. The empirical research revealed that these principles are not yet applied effectively by educators during the implementation of portfolio assessment and that educators are in need of support in order to enhance their understanding and skills in implementing portfolio assessment (*cf.* 2.3; 3.1; 5.2.2.6). Therefore in developing this model, the researcher intends to assist educators with the practical application of the principles of assessment for learning when implementing portfolio assessment.

The chapter will address the following:

- Background information to the development of the model
- The theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory
- The development of self-regulatory and self-reflective processes
- The relationship between the Social Cognitive Theory and assessment for learning
- The model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment

- Advantages and disadvantages of the model

6.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODEL

Following from the views presented in the statement of the problem (*cf.* 1.2), it is evident that educators who are already in the practice, need to be adequately trained and equipped with knowledge, skills and strategies which will enable them to implement assessment for learning through the use of portfolios effectively and efficiently. Based on the results of the empirical research it is evident that educators are not adequately trained or probably not trained at all to implement portfolio assessment effectively (*cf.* 1.1; 1.2; 5.2.4)

With the model the researcher envisages to equip practicing educators with knowledge and skills to assist them to apply the principles of assessment for learning during portfolio assessment. The aim with the model is three-fold:

- The researcher argues that the ideas and skills which the educators will develop through this model will bring their teaching and assessment practices in line with the principles of assessment for learning.
- The model could enable educators to develop self-regulatory mechanisms and consequently reflective thinking that will enable them to continue learning and to improve their teaching and assessment practices.
- The model could enable educators to equip learners with self-regulatory mechanisms and consequently with reflective thinking when compiling portfolios.

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims with the model the Social Cognitive Theory, the theoretical framework of the theory was explored.

6.3 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

The theoretical views of Bandura (1986:18) focus on the development of humanistic and behaviouristic processes of human behaviour. He identifies the components which make the social-interactive process possible, namely human behaviour, cognitive, personal and environmental factors. He asserts that all these components influence and determine the functionality of one another in a reciprocal manner, and at the same time reinforce one another in order to promote effective and positive learner development and advancement.

The theoretical ideas of Bandura (in Bigge, 1992:192) are elaborated by Pintrich and Schunk (2002:143) in presenting the basic premise of the Social Cognitive Theory. They assert that, the Social Cognitive Theory is based on the notion that people learn, develop and acquire knowledge, a range of skills, rules, strategies, beliefs and emotions by observing others. This process of learning takes place within a social context and is guided and facilitated by the “*knowing others*”, namely, educator, peers, parents or anyone involved with the learners in the learning situation who is willing to help them in developing all the positive qualities that they need to advance further. Pintrich and Schunk (2002:143) assert that while learning and development take place in the social context under the guidance of the knowing other, the learners’ learning and development is also guided by their own internal behaviour, thoughts, beliefs and values.

Following the ideas entailed in the preceding section, it is evident that learning within this theoretical framework does not advocate for learning which takes place in isolation, but in a social context where learners are given a privilege to socialize and interact with the “*knowing others*” and other learners in various ways in order to learn and develop adequately.

In explaining how the “*knowing others*” motivate, guide and facilitate learning, the social cognitive theorists base their argument on the notion that people

acquire knowledge, rules, skills, strategies, beliefs and emotion by **observing** others. The notion goes further to say that people also learn about the appropriateness of modelled actions by observing the consequences of their behaviour. As a result, the social cognitive theorists contend that, during the process of learning, the presence of the knowing other is crucial for effective facilitation and promotion of learner development and advancement. The educator models the behaviour that he/she wants learners to learn and develop, and in the process of modelling the behavior, the learners observe the educator and begin to imitate and practise the behaviour and actions (Bandura, 1986: 47-49; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:143).

Bigge (1992:162-164) further contends that through observational learning, people may learn what they observe either directly/deliberately or indirectly/unintentionally. The views above are further elaborated by Bower and Hilgard (1981:462-463) who argue that a large amount of human learning is done vicariously by observing another person making the desired skilled responses and by trying to imitate the responses modelled. In his analysis of observational learning Bandura (1986:51) contends that the provision of a model of thought and action is one of the most effective ways to convey information about the rules for producing new behaviour, because the modelling influences operate principally through their informative functions. Observational learning through modelling is governed by four interrelated sub-processes. These four constituent sub-processes, are, attentional, retention, production and motivation processes (Bandura, 1986:51-80).

Attentional processes

This process emphasizes that people cannot learn much by only observing the model. If they need to learn much from the model, it is important for them to attend to and accurately perceive the relevant aspects of modelled activities or stimuli (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:152).

Retention processes

The second major sub-function governing observational learning is the retention process. The process refers to coding and transforming modelled information for storage in memory and mentally rehearsing information. In this sub-process, the argument is that people cannot be greatly influenced by observation of modelled activities unless they remember them.

Production processes

This is the third component of observational learning and involves converting or translating symbolic and visual conceptions of modeled events into appropriate actions and behaviours (Bandura, 1986:63; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:152). According to Bandura (1986:63), most modeled activities are abstractly represented as conceptions and rules of action which specify what is to be done. Pintrich and Schunk (2002:152) assert that learners need to develop complex skills through modelling, and in the process, refine their skills through guided practice and corrective feedback.

Motivation processes

The fourth sub-process is the motivational process. According to Bandura (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:161), motivation is goal-directed behavior, instigated and sustained by expectation concerning the anticipated outcomes of action and self-efficacy for performing courses of action. Pintrich and Schunk (2002:165) describe goal-setting as a very important motivational process, in the sense that learners with a goal are apt to express a sense of self-efficacy for attaining it and engaging in activities they believe will lead to attainment. Learners are encouraged to attend to instruction, rehearse information to be remembered, expend effort and persist. Thus self-efficacy is substantiated as learners observe goal progress, which demonstrates that learners are becoming skilful in whatever they are doing (Elliot & Dweck in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:165). It is further argued by Schunk and Swartz (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:165) that providing learners with feedback on goal progress also raises their self-efficacy and through self-efficacy learners sustain

motivation and improve skills. According to Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992:845-862) goal-setting and self-efficacy are two very powerful influences on learning and development.

To ensure that the learning and development process is holistic, the social cognitive theorists posit that individuals act on the basis of their thoughts, goals, beliefs and values (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:143). This assertion led to the view that effective learning and development are not shaped by the social environment only but also by the learner's behaviour and actions which play a crucial role. This implies that while learners are involved in social activity during learning, they are also expected to engage and apply their own thinking in the learning process in order to facilitate their own development and advancement (Bandura, 1986:68; Bigge, 1992:192). This engagement of learners and the application of their own thinking are two important aspects the researcher wishes to address in the model.

In explaining the link between human, cognitive, personal and environmental factors during learning, Bandura relies on a model of triad reciprocity. The basic ideas and processes involved in this model will now be briefly explained.

6.3.1 Model of Triad Reciprocity

In terms of the model of triad reciprocity, behaviour, cognitive and other personal and environmental factors, all operate jointly in a mutual interaction as interlocking determinants of one another (Bandura, 1986:18; Bigge, 1992:156-158; Zimmerman, 2000:13). With this model, Bandura (1986:18) on the one hand implies that within the triad reciprocity model, environmental factors influence behaviour and that behaviour on the other hand influences the environment. During this process, by their very nature and actions, human beings play a very significant role in producing the contingencies reinforcement sequences. As a result, these contingency sequences are by their very nature the product of man's own making.

Following from the above assertions, it is evident that Bandura gives equal value to both personal and environmental relationships and encompasses

both within a reciprocal pattern (Bigge, 1992:156-158). The latter further asserts that Bandura does not believe that people are equipped with inborn repertoires of behaviour, but believes that people adopt various human response patterns which must be learned and these human response patterns are acquired either by direct or by observational reinforcing experiences. This implies that learning within the social learning theory framework entails a person's first acquired behaviours which are then applied in future situations. The Social Cognitive Theory is not only concerned with how behaviour is acquired, but also with how it is activated and channelled. Bigge (1992:156-158) further argues that outcomes change in humans through the intervening influence of thought, because human beings are thinking organisms who possess capabilities that provide them with some power of their own self-direction.

In the process of directing the self, people learn to predict events and to make anticipatory actions towards the events, but, depending upon times, place and persons that are involved in the process, the same behaviour may have different results or effects. This therefore implies that one and the same event can be a stimulus, a response or an environmental reinforcer, depending upon its place in the sequence at which analysis begins. Thus, according to Bandura, the learning does not only allow people to respond to the external stimuli, but also allows them to interpret the stimuli (Bigge, 1992:156-158).

The nature of persons operating within the triad reciprocity model is defined in terms of a number of capabilities namely, **symbolizing**, **forethought** and **self-regulatory and self-reflective capabilities** (Bandura, 1986:18-21). Citing Bandura, a brief explanation of each capability is presented.

6.3.1.1 Symbolizing capability

The symbolizing capability touches on every aspect of peoples' lives and human behaviour, and refers to peoples' capacity to use symbols to alter and adapt their environment. By using symbols, people process and transform experiences into internal models that serve as guides for future actions.

Through symbols, people give meaning, form and continuance to the experiences they have lived through.

By drawing on their knowledge and symbolizing powers, people can generate innovative courses of actions and with advanced cognitive capability, coupled with remarkable flexibility, people can create ideas that transcend their sensory experiences and allow them to communicate with others at almost any distance in time and in space.

6.3.1.2 Forethought capability

In most cases, the behaviour displayed by people is purposive, being regulated by forethought. People anticipate the likely consequences of their prospective actions; they set goals for themselves and plan courses of action for cognized futures. Thus, through the exercise of forethought, people motivate themselves and guide their actions anticipatorily, and consequently forethought can support their foresightful behaviour. The capability for intentional and purposive action is rooted in symbolic activity. By representing foreseeable outcomes symbolically, people can convert future consequences into current motivators and regulators of foreseeable behaviour.

6.3.1.3 Self-regulatory Capability

Pintrich and Schunk (2002:176) assert that self-regulation is intuitively linked with motivation. Zimmerman (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:178) defines self-regulation as a process whereby learners activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours and affects that are systematically oriented towards attainment of their goals. Zimmerman (in Zimmerman, 1986) further asserts that self-regulation refers to the degree that individuals are meta-cognitively, motivationally and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process. Schunk (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:176-177) believes that learners who are motivated to attain a goal, engage in self-regulatory activities, believing that these mechanisms will help them to rehearse the material learned and help in clarifying unclear information.

The Social Cognitive Theory assigns a central role to the self-regulatory functions. Within the context of this capability people do not behave just to suit preferences of others, but much of their behaviour is motivated and regulated by internal standards and self-evaluative reactions, which serve to influence subsequent behaviour.

As stated earlier, the Social Cognitive Theory explains human learning and development within the triad framework which involves the interaction of personal, behavioural and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986:20-21). In explaining self-regulation, Zimmerman (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:179) explains the process within the same framework. He argues that self-regulation is a cyclical process, and explains it on the basis of a three phase self-regulation model, namely the forethought phase, the performance control phase and the self-reflective phase (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:179).

Forethought

This process precedes the actual performance and refers to a process that sets the stage for action. The forethought phase comprises of two distinctive, but closely linked categories, namely the task analysis and self motivational beliefs.

Task analysis

Task analysis also comprises two key forms. The first key form involves the setting of goals and deciding upon specific outcomes of learning and performance (Locke & Latham in Zimmerman, 2000:17). The second key form of task analysis (according to Weinstein & Mayer in Zimmerman, 2000:17), is strategic planning. In explaining strategic planning, they argue that for a skill to be mastered or performed optimally there need to be methods appropriate for the task and the setting. Then Pressley and Zimmerman (in Zimmerman, 2000:17) argue that appropriately selected strategies enhance performance by aiding cognition, controlling affect and directing motoric execution. According to Zimmerman (2000:17), the planning and selection of strategies require some form of cyclical adjustments because of fluctuation in covert

personal, behavioural and environmental components. Consequently, due to the diverse and changing intrapersonal, interpersonal and contextual conditions, self-regulated individuals need to adjust their goals and choices of strategies.

Self-motivational Beliefs

(Zimmerman, 2000:17) contends that the development of self-regulatory skills is not of any value if people lack self-motivation. He argues that people need to have underlying self-motivated beliefs such as self-efficacy which refers to one having the means to perform a task/s effectively and having the belief that desired goals will be attained. Self-motivational beliefs, according to Bandura (1991:248-287) and Locke and Latham (in Zimmerman, 2000:18), influence goal-setting, in the sense that the more capable people believe themselves to be, the higher the goals they set for themselves and the more firmly committed they remain to the goals they wish to attain. Therefore, goal-orientation as a self-regulatory process helps in the sustenance of motivation and consequently helps in the improvement of acquisition and performance (Zimmerman, 2000:17).

Performance control phase

This phase involves the process that occurs during learning and affects attitude and learning. The phase comprises two processes, namely self-control and self-observation (Zimmerman, 2000:19).

Self-control

The self-control process involves processes such as self-instruction, imagery, and attention focusing and task strategies. These processes, according to Zimmerman (2000:18), help the learners to focus on the task and optimize their efforts. For example: self-instruction describes how learners can memorize a formula, imagery may assist in encoding, attention focusing is meant for improving one's concentration and for screening out other covert

processes, and the task strategies assist learning and performance by reducing a task to its essential parts and reorganizing the parts meaningfully.

Self-observation

On the one hand, Mace, Belfiore and Shea (in Pintrich & Schunk, 2002:178) refer to self-observation as a process which involves deliberate attention to aspects of one's behaviour. Zimmerman and Paulsen (in Zimmerman, 2000:21), on the other hand, describe self-observation as a process involving the person's tracking specific aspects of their own performance, the conditions that surround it and the effects that it produces. Following from the above definition, Pintrich and Schunk (2002:170) assert that people cannot regulate their performance if they do not know what they do. They argue further that self-observation is important in the sense that it is often accompanied by recording frequency, intensity or quality of behaviour. At the same time, it is important for determining the progress of the activity.

The theorists above further assert that, without self-observation, self-regulation and self-reflection selective memory of failure or success may come into play and this may end in not reflecting the actual outcomes of learning faithfully. Pintrich and Schunk (2002:178) view self-observation as being very important for enhancing motivation and to help learners to realize what they do. Only when learners realize what they do, can they react and alter their behaviour. The development of self-regulatory and self-reflective processes during the implementation of portfolio assessment will be a strong focus point in the model that the researcher wishes to develop.

6.4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATORY AND SELF-REFLECTIVE PROCESSES

Ertmer and Newby (1996:1) contend that the development of self-regulatory and self-reflective processes is guided by various components of self-regulation, namely planning, monitoring and evaluating. These components correspond with the phases of the model of triad reciprocity as identified by Bandura (*cf.* 6.3.1). During the learning process, these components interact

dynamically impacting on each other in a recurrent manner and consequently bringing about successful learning.

6.4.1 Planning

According to Ertmer and Newby (1996:1), a learner needs to explore a variety of ways in which to approach a task, before they can engage in the task. They argue that the learner needs to access their personal knowledge warehouse in order to recall past experiences with similar tasks and then to select an approach which matches the task requirements and personal resources in such a way that the learner obtains desired results for the task. They further contend that learners who are effective in their learning have a plan either in their minds or on paper before they start any task. This plan indicates how the learner expects to accomplish the desired goals. As a result, while working on the task, the learner constantly reflects on the plan to assess the extent to which the plan is working and, in the process, the learner revises or modifies the plan when there is a need to do so.

Planning thus involves cognitive, motivational and environmental considerations regarding the following: setting clear goals, selecting and sequencing strategies and/or procedures for achieving the goal and determining whether the task requires a great deal of concentration and effort in identifying potential obstacles for the successful attainment of the goal (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:11-13).

Following from the above, it is evident that before the learner can engage in a task there are things that the learner needs to consider, among others, the task demands (type and length of the material to be learned), own personal resource (i.e. knowledge and skills for using a variety of strategies) and, lastly, potential matches between the two (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:11).

Bayer (in Ertmer & Newby, 1996:11) contends that anticipatory planning serves three purposes. Firstly, it eases the actual execution of tasks, it increases the likelihood of successfully completing the task and, lastly, it tends to produce a product of quality. Planning requires the following from learners:

setting clear goals, selecting and sequencing of series of strategies and procedures for achieving the goal and identifying potential obstacles to the successful attainment of the goal (*cf* 6.3.1).

It is also argued that the strategies and procedures selected must not include only the appropriate cognitive strategies such as outlining, memorizing, and analogizing. They must also include motivational strategies such as recalling previous successful performances and determining task relevance, as well as environmental strategies such as removing distractions and forming work groups. These strategies may be instrumental in helping learners to complete the learning tasks successfully.

6.4.2 Monitoring

Ertmer and Newby (1996:12) argue that monitoring is a complex process which involves an awareness of what one is doing, an understanding of where it fits into the established sequence of steps and further involves anticipation and planning of what ought to be done next. The monitoring process takes place during learning, and has to continue taking place while learning is in process. From time to time the learner must mentally check what he/ she is doing to ensure that he/she is making progress towards the specified goal. Through the monitoring process, the learners focus on actually implementing the steps outlined in the main plan. At the same time learners monitor the effects of selected cognitive, motivational and environmental strategies. The whole process involves looking backward at the plan to determine if the necessary steps are being taken in the correct order. Secondly, the focus is on looking forward to the steps still to be performed, while at the same time carefully attending to what is going on at that moment (Bayer in Ertmer & Newby, 1996:12). As with planning, monitoring also involves cognitive, motivational and environmental considerations. This refers *inter alia* to an awareness of what one is doing, an understanding of where it fits into the established sequence of steps, a consciousness of whether the task is holding interest and attention and whether the learning environment is supportive enough (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:1-13) (*cf* 6.3.1).

6.4.3 Evaluating

Bayer (in Ertmer & Newby, 1996:13) contends that evaluating is a process which involves attending to a number of different things, namely the reasonableness and accuracy of any product that resulted from the learning task. The aim is to determine the extent to which the goal has been achieved, whether the overall process as well as the supporting steps was effective in achieving the goal, what obstacles were encountered and how well they were anticipated, avoided or managed. The focus is also on the overall plan to determine its relative effectiveness and efficiency, so that it can be modified if necessary, prior to its use with similar tasks in future. In so doing, the learners assesses the process, strategies and the product/outcome achieved Berliner (in Ertmer & Newby, 1996:13). In this regard, Bandura (1986:335-390), Pintrich and Schunk, (2002:178) and Zimmerman (2000:21) refer to self-judgment. This refers to comparing current performance levels with one's goal or self-evaluating one's performance and attributing causal significance to the results obtained which leads to either self-satisfaction or making adaptive inferences. The latter refers to the fact that learners decide to choose more effective strategies (Bandura, 1986:355; Zimmerman & Martinez in Zimmerman, 2000:25).

These self-evaluative processes do not only give direction to human behavior, but also serve as incentives and create motivators (Bandura & Cerone in Bandura, 1986:354). Self-evaluative processes, according to Bandura (1986:355-357) have many implications for the learners' self-concepts and self-esteem. The learners' self-esteem, if evaluated positively, leads to the development of self-pride for fulfilling their standards of self-merit and this makes them feel pleased with themselves, thus instilling a high and resilient sense of personal self-efficacy. In essence, self-evaluation processes, according to Bandura (1986:355-357), have many implications for the learners' self-concepts and self-esteem. The learners' self-esteem, if evaluated positively, leads to the development of self-pride for fulfilling their standards of self-merit and this makes them feel pleased with themselves,

thus instilling a high and resilient sense of personal self-efficacy. During evaluation, cognitive, motivational, as well as environmental considerations are involved, namely to determine whether the utilized strategies worked, whether the task was enjoyable and motivational, and whether the unexpected obstacles were remedied (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:1-13).

Rogers (2002:849) links the above-mentioned processes of planning, monitoring and evaluation to the realm of teaching. He asserts that, within the teaching and learning process, a reflective educator facilitating the teaching-learning process does not merely seek solutions, nor does he/she do things the same way every day without an awareness of both the source and impact of his/her actions. From his/her practice and the learners' learning, the educators seek meaning and create from this a theory to live by, meaning that the educators create a story that provides the structure for the growth not only for them as educators, but also for the learners. To explain the process of reflection, Rogers (2002:849) contends that Dewey believes that reflection involves a rigorous way of thinking, which entails moving the learner from a state of perplexity (disequilibrium) to a harmonious state of settledness (equilibrium). The researcher also wishes to build self-regulation and self-reflective processes into the model during the implementation of portfolio assessment.

6.5 SELF-REGULATION AND SELF-REFLECTION IN PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

Self-regulation and self-reflection are processes which are essential for the effective facilitation of portfolio assessment. Portfolio assessment creates situations in which learners must reflect on what they are doing (Gwele, 2001:92-94), think about their own thinking and at the same time monitor their progress and engage in a self-evaluation process. The learners' engagement in this reflective process helps them take charge of their own learning and encourages ownership, pride and self-esteem (Kish, 1997:255; Barootchi & Kesharvarz, 2002:28). In this regard, Grosser and Lombard (2005:46) also assert that portfolio assessment indicates the importance of reflection in the

development of portfolios and the critical role that educators need to play in facilitating the implementation of portfolio assessment.

Reflective thinking, according to Kish (1997:254-260), implies a form of creativity that moves away from a concern about the product to a concern with the process (*cf.* 2.3.1). During learning and assessment, reflection comprises two categories, namely reflection on practice and reflection in practice (Schön, 1983, 1987). Both are involved in the development of portfolios. Reflection on practice refers to making sense of past assessment experiences for the purpose of orienting oneself for current and/or future actions or thought. Reflection in practice refers to the managing of the assessment experience through careful planning, monitoring and evaluating (*cf.* 6.4) while it is taking place, and constantly adjusting and changing (Ertmer & Newby, 1996:1-13).

Following from Ertmer and Newby's view on reflection (1996:1-13), it is evident that educators need to support and facilitate the implementation of portfolio assessment in such a way that learners participate fully in reflection on and in practice. These reflective functions will not happen by listening or reading only. The functions will become habits through their use (Grosser, 2007:48). Learners should receive explicit instruction in the use of these functions and educators must make time to guide learners while they become comfortable with these functions. Risko, Vukelich and Roskos (2002:139-140) highlight the use of two models in this regard, namely the monologue and dialogue reflection models. The monologue model makes learners aware of questions they need to ask during different stages of the assessment process. As soon as the learners get acquainted with the process of reflection, reflection should also be viewed as a social activity in which dialogue reflection with peers and/or the educator takes place. This could take place in the form of individual conferences, informal conversations or class discussions. These views will also be supported by the researcher in the designed model.

According to Fernsten and Fernsten (2005:303), the role of reflection in the implementation of portfolio assessment is underestimated or missed.

Learners need to think critically about assignments, and call to mind effective and ineffective process strategies and consider steps in the overall learning process that should be adopted, adapted or eliminated (Fernsten & Fernsten 2005:308; Duffy *et al.*, 1999).

6.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY AND ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

In order to design the model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment, it was necessary to establish a close fit between the theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory and the conceptual framework of assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3) that underpins portfolio assessment. Through this analysis, the researcher will attempt to demonstrate that the Social Cognitive Theory is a suitable framework for the model as it supports and advocates for the implementation of assessment principles which promote the following:

- the holistic development of learners that focuses on the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1.1; 6.3.1.2);
- quantitative and qualitative standards of assessment that focus on approaches and processes which promote a powerful influence of academic performance, characterized by the development of higher-order thinking and reasoning (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4);
- broad and comprehensive educational processes which support the implementation of assessment tasks and activities which are integrated and promote effective teaching and learning, as well as learner development, growth and advancement (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4);
- accessible, open and transparent assessment which aims at familiarizing the learners with the assessment criteria related to the tasks or activities which the learners are expected to do, as well as guidelines and direction (modelling) with regard to how the task should be done (*cf.* 2.2; 6.3);

- dynamic and integrated assessment that reconciles theory and practice (knowledge and application) (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1);
- assessment processes which are multidimensional and facilitated by a variety of assessment strategies, techniques, tools and methods to expose and engage learners in teaching and learning activities which help them develop research tools, and consequently skills for collecting, organizing, interpreting and presenting information (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1.3);
- an emphasis on the importance of self-analysis and self-assessment in order for learners to check their progress, areas of weakness as well as their strengths (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1.3);
- flexible processes that accommodate the learners' needs and interests to ensure that the diverse needs and interests of learners are being taken care of and at the same time placed at the centre of learning. The fact that the learners' needs and interests are taken into account provides all the learners with the opportunity to be adequately developed and to become adults who are competent and functional, responsible and accountable enough to take charge of their lives in the world of adulthood (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4);
- assessment processes which are ongoing and continuous and promote and support continuous learning and development through various phases which are recursive and unending and intended for promoting lifelong learning (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4);
- assessment processes which are developmental in nature and involves learners in analyzing their the performance and progress while learning. The aim of the analysis is not only on the end product of learning, but the actual developmental processes and stages that the learner undergoes while doing the task (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4)
- social and interactive learning and assessment that emphasize the presence of the "*knowing other*" in the classroom whose role it is to model what he/she wants the learners to learn (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3);

- cooperative and collaborative learning and assessment which create room for learners to engage in group work and to share information, resources and learning material. The process allows learners to engage in discussions, exchange ideas and assist one another with regard to the understanding of what they are learning. The learners' active participation in tasks and collaborative learning motivates learners to learn further (*cf.* 2.3; 6.5);
- goal-oriented, goal-committed and goal-directed processes (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1.3);
- self-regulatory and self-reflective processes for educators and learners (*cf.* 2.3; 6.3.1.3; 6.4); and
- outcomes which are process and product-oriented (*cf.* 2.3; 6.4).

6.7 THE MODEL TO IMPROVE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

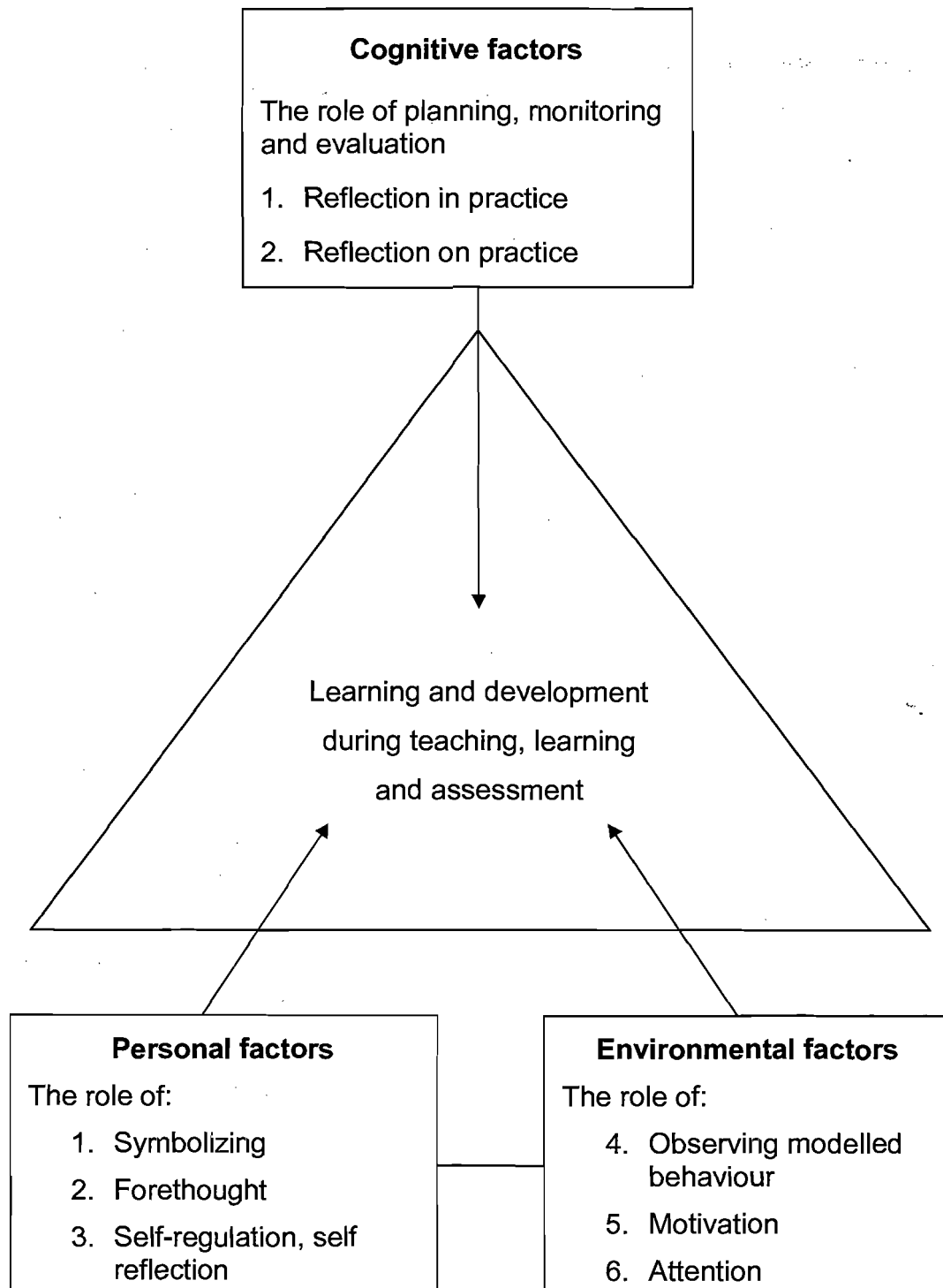
This section presents the model which is based on the Social Cognitive Theory to assist educators to implement portfolio assessment effectively according to the principles of assessment for learning. The model, which the researcher chooses to label **“A self-reflection model for the implementation of portfolio assessment”**, will be presented as follows:

- A figure (Figure 6.1) depicting the important cornerstones of the model is firstly provided.
- Diagrammatical presentations of the model according to the multi-dimensional nature of what portfolio assessment should entail is provided.
- Specific processes which focus on self-regulation and self-reflection will be linked to the implementation of portfolio assessment in order for educators to do justice to the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment.

The development of the model is based on the theory of Bandura (1986) and should guide the implementation of all portfolio assessment tasks and activities.

This model provides a functional analysis of a process and its components that could be used by the Department of Education to train educators in the implementation of portfolio assessment.

Figure 6.1: A self-reflection model for the implementation of portfolio assessment: a functional analysis of the process and components



The figure above depicts the cornerstones for the practical application of the model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment. The model indicates that, during the implementation of portfolio assessment, **cognitive**, **personal** and **environmental** factors impact on teaching, learning and assessment (cf. 6.3). Before learners are expected to complete tasks or activities for their portfolios, clear guidelines and demonstrations of what is expected of learners should be provided. This will give learners the opportunity to observe and pay attention to the modelled behaviour. When learners are clear on what is expected of them, their motivation to complete the tasks or activities could be increased, which in turn could lead to a more successful completion of the task (cf. 6.3). During the completion of the task self-regulation and self-reflection processes are utilized to plan, monitor and evaluate the learning progress (cf. 6.4).

Furthermore, the implementation of portfolio assessment should do justice to its multidimensional nature, namely as an assessment tool, a developmental tool, a diagnostic tool, an instructional tool and a communication tool (cf. 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.3.3; 3.3.4; 3.3.5). The following diagrammatical presentations indicate to educators what the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment implies and that it involves joint collaboration between educators and learners. In each of the diagrammatical presentations, the cornerstones of cognitive, personal and environmental factors will be evident.

Figure 6.2: Portfolio as an assessment tool

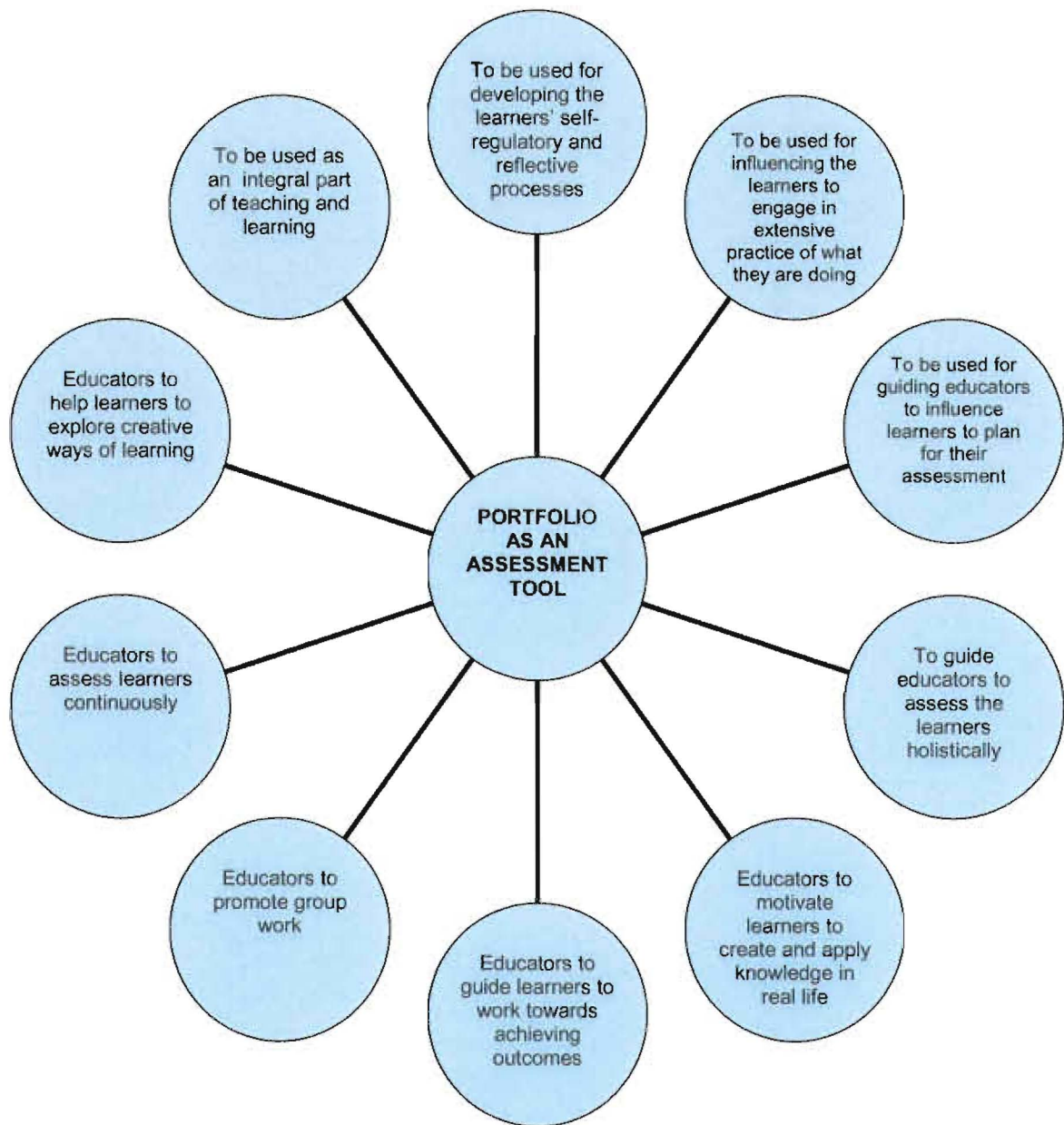


Figure 6.2 indicates to educators what the implementation of portfolio assessment for assessment purposes entail. This will be achieved when educators take cognizance of the fact of portfolios as assessment tools:

- develop the learners' self-regulatory and reflective processes;
- influence learners to engage in extensive practice of what they are doing;
- influence learners to plan for their assessment;

- are utilized for assessing learners holistically;
- motivate learners to create and apply knowledge;
- guide learners towards achieving outcomes;
- promote group work;
- assess learners continuously;
- help learners to explore creative ways of learning; and
- are recognized as an integral part of teaching and learning.

In order for educators to determine whether they achieve the above-mentioned, the following self-reflective checklist comprising of five questions that focus on the main issues entailed in the utilization of portfolios for assessment purposes is suggested by the researcher to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment. By means of purposeful questioning, the checklist expects of educators and learners to verify whether assessment tasks and activities will serve the assessment purpose they ought to serve.

Table 6.1: Checklist: Portfolio as an assessment tool

EDUCATORS		LEARNERS		COMMENTS
Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		
Will I assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes with this task/activity?		Did this task enable me to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes?		
Have I scheduled time for learners to plan, monitor and evaluate their progress to task completion?		Did I receive time to plan, monitor and evaluate the task/activities?		
Have I planned for opportunities to promote group and peer activities?		Did I have the opportunity to take part in group and peer activities?		

Have I provided opportunities for the development of a variety of skills: problem-solving, communication, creative and critical thinking, social skills?		Did I have the opportunity to develop a variety of skills: problem-solving, communication, creative and critical thinking, social skills?		
Have I provided opportunities for learners to do self-assessment and self-reflection?		Did I have the opportunity to do self-assessment and self-reflection?		

The researcher suggests that this checklist is utilized until such time that the above-mentioned actions automatically become part of the educators' and learners' approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment. By involving learners in the process, they are given the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills themselves. The learner evaluation also provides a control mechanism to the educator to verify the way in which portfolio assessment is implemented.

Figure 6.3: Portfolio as a developmental tool

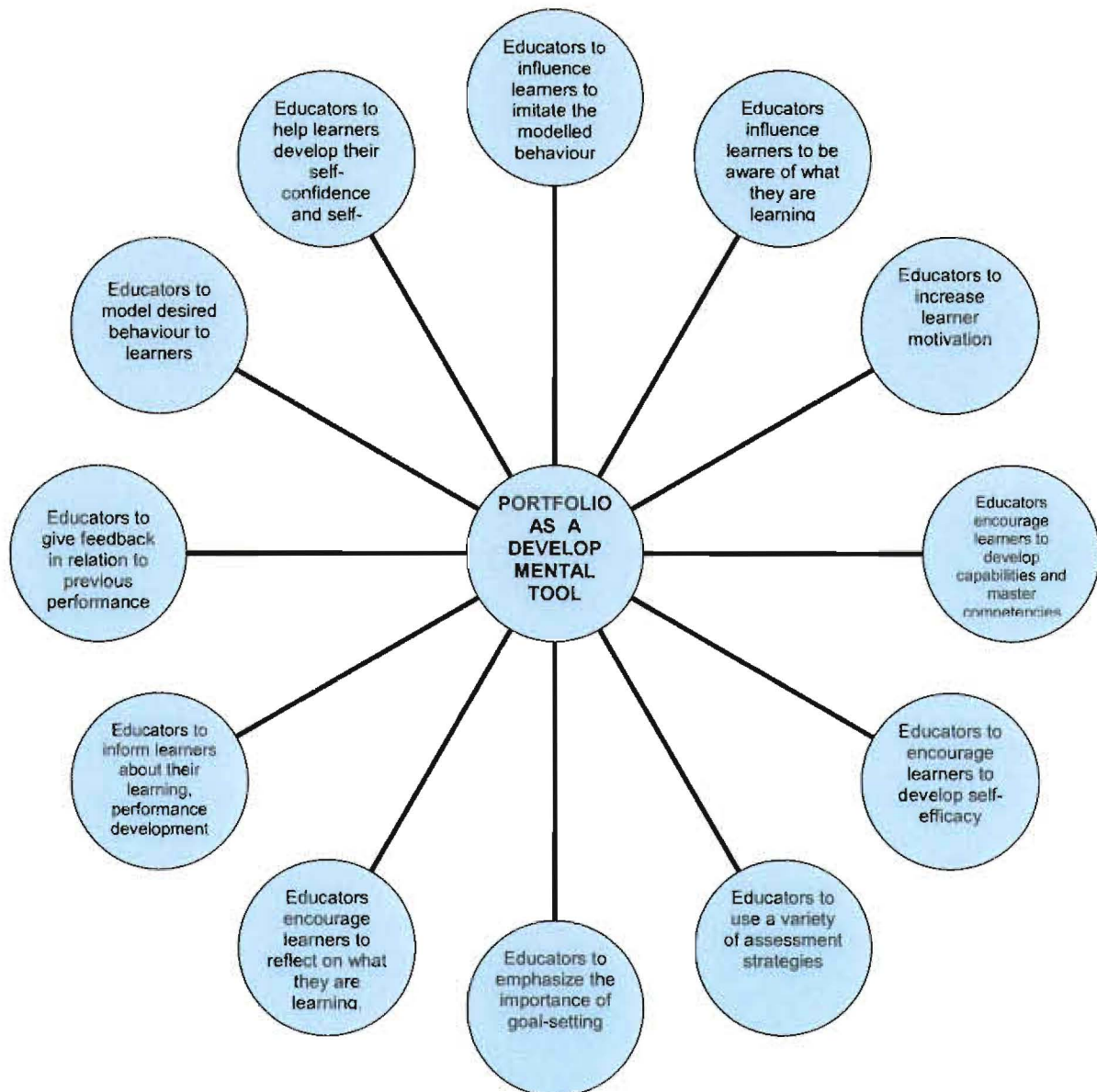


Figure 6.3 indicates to educators what the implementation of portfolio assessment for developmental purposes entails. This will be achieved when educators take cognizance of the following aspects when utilizing portfolios for developmental purposes:

- influence the learners to imitate the modelled behavior;
- influence learners to be aware of what they are learning;

- encourage learners to develop capabilities and master competencies;
- increase learner motivation;
- encourage learners to develop self-efficacy;
- use a variety of assessment strategies;
- emphasize the importance of goal-setting;
- encourage learners to focus on what they are learning;
- inform learners about their learning performance development;
- provide feedback in relation to the previous performance;
- model desired behaviours to learners; and
- help learners to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence.

In order for educators to determine whether they achieve the above-mentioned, the following self-reflective checklist comprising five questions that focus on the main issues entailed in the utilization of portfolio assessment for developmental purposes, is suggested by the researcher to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment. By means of purposeful questioning, the checklist expects of educators and learners to verify whether assessment tasks and activities will serve the developmental purposes they ought to serve.

Table 6.2: Checklist: Portfolio as a developmental tool

EDUCATORS		LEARNERS		COMMENTS
Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		
Have I built in time to model to learners what is expected of them with this task/activity?		Did the educator model to me what was expected of me with this task/activity?		

How will constructive feedback be given to learners regarding this task/activity?		Did I receive constructive feedback regarding this task/activity?		
How will I provide learners with feedback on their progress in relation to their performance in previous tasks/activities?		Did I receive feedback that related my performance in this task/activity to previous tasks/activities?		
Have I built in opportunities for learners to set their own goals and follow through on their goal achievement?		Did I get the opportunity to set my own goals and follow through on my goal achievement?		
Have I built in opportunities for learners to reflect on their progress towards task completion?		Did I get the opportunity to reflect on my progress towards task completion?		

The researcher suggests that this checklist is utilized until such time that the above-mentioned actions automatically become part of the educators and learners' approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment. By involving learners in the process, they are given the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills themselves. The learner evaluation also provides a control mechanism to the educator to verify the way in which portfolio assessment is implemented.

Figure 6.4: Portfolio as a diagnostic tool

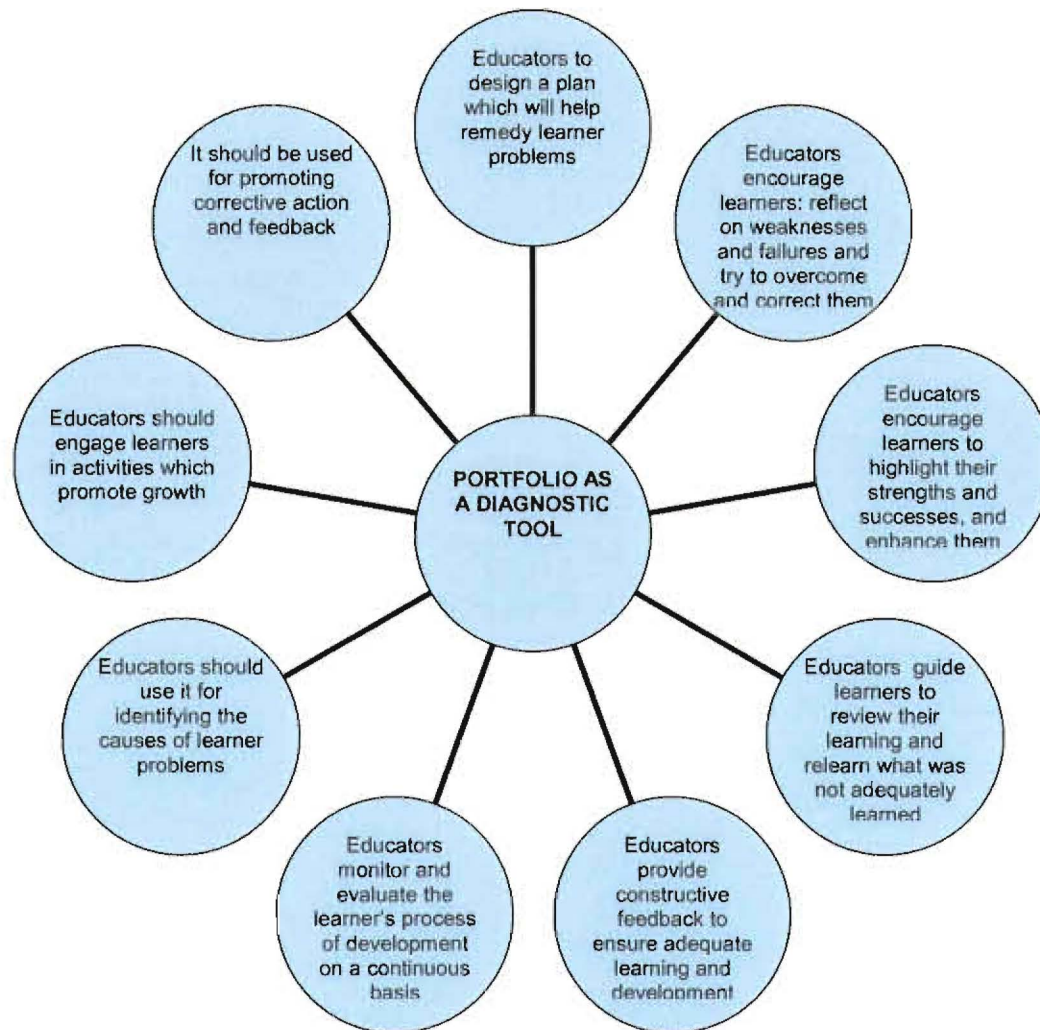


Figure 6.4 indicates to educators what the implementation of portfolio assessment for diagnostic purposes entails. This will be achieved when educators take cognizance of the fact that portfolios are diagnostic tools that:

- help educators design a plan which will help to remedy the learner problems;
- encourage learners to reflect on their weaknesses and try to overcome and correct them;

- encourage learners to highlight their strengths and successes and enhance them;
- guide learners to review their learning and relearn what was not adequately learned;
- encourage educators to provide constructive feedback to ensure adequate learning and development;
- encourage educators to monitor and evaluate the learners' progress and development on a continuous basis ;
- are utilized by educators for identifying the causes of the learners' problems;
- encourage educators to engage learners in activities that promote self-growth; and
- are utilized for promoting corrective action and feedback

In order for educators to determine whether they achieve the above-mentioned, the following self-reflective checklist comprising five questions that focus on the main issues entailed in the utilization of portfolio assessment for diagnostic purposes is suggested by the researcher to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment. By means of purposeful questioning, the checklist expects of educators and learners to verify whether assessment tasks and activities will serve the diagnostic purposes they ought to serve.

Table 6.3: Checklist: Portfolio as a diagnostic tool

EDUCATORS		LEARNERS		COMMENTS
Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		
Have I designed a plan of action to identify learner problems during the completion of the task/activity?		Did the educator identify problems which I experienced during the completion of the task/activity?		

Have I designed a plan of action to identify learner strengths and weaknesses during the completion of the task/activity?	Did the educator identify my strengths and weaknesses during the completion of the task/activity?	
Have I built in opportunities for learners to identify their own strengths and weaknesses during the completion of the task/activity?	Did I get the opportunity to identify my own strengths and weaknesses during the completion of the task/activity?	
Have I built in opportunities for learners to identify ways in which to overcome their weaknesses and to build on their strengths during the completion of the task/activity?	Did I get the opportunity to identify ways in which I could overcome my weaknesses and build on my strengths during the completion of the task/activity?	
Have I built in opportunities for learners to improve their performance?	Did I get the opportunity to improve my performance?	

The researcher suggests that this checklist is utilized until such time that the above-mentioned actions automatically become part of the educators and learners' approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment. By involving learners in the process, they are given the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills themselves. The learner evaluation also provides a control mechanism to the educator to verify the way in which portfolio assessment is implemented.

Figure 6.5: Portfolio as an instructional tool

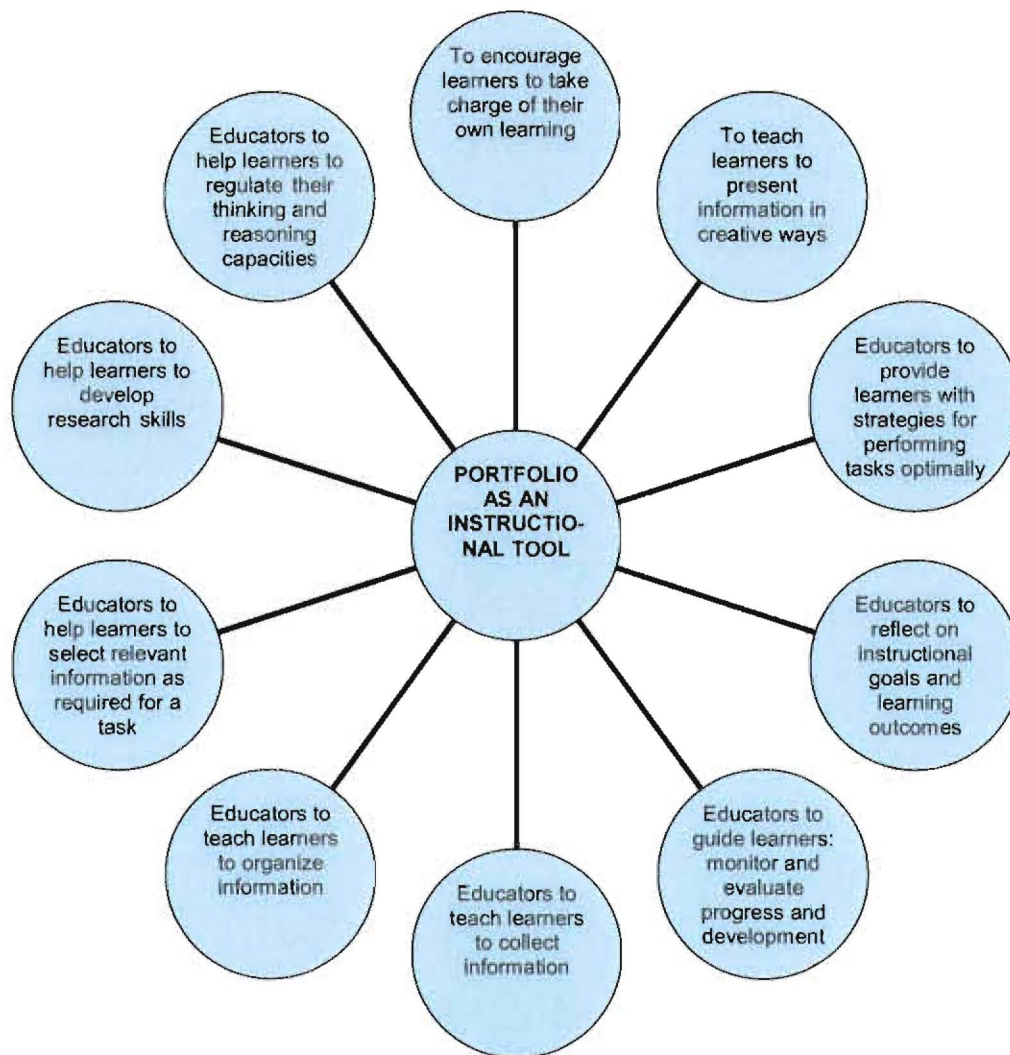


Figure 6.5 indicates to educators what the implementation of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes entail. This will be achieved when educators take cognizance of the fact that portfolios as instructional tools encourage educators to:

- motivate learners to take charge of their own learning;
- teach learners to collect information;
- teach learners to organize information;
- help learners to select relevant information as required by the task;

- help learners develop research skills;
- provide learners with strategies for performing tasks optimally;
- help learners to regulate their thinking and reasoning capabilities;
- help learners reflect on their instructional goals;
- help learners to focus on their thinking and reasoning capacities; and
- teach learners to present information in creative ways.

In order for educators to determine whether they achieve the above-mentioned, the following self-reflective checklist comprising four questions that focus on the main issues entailed in the utilization of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes is suggested by the researcher to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment. By means of purposeful questioning, the checklist expects of educators and learners to verify whether assessment tasks and activities will serve the diagnostic purposes they ought to serve.

Table 6.4: Checklist: Portfolio as an instructional tool

EDUCATORS		LEARNERS		COMMENTS
Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		
What strategies am I going to teach to the learners to enable them to collect information for completing the task/activity?		Did the educator teach me strategies to enable me to collect information for the completion of the task/activity?		
What strategies am I going to teach to the learners to enable them to select relevant information for the task/activity?		Did the educator teach me how to select relevant information for the task/activity?		
What strategies am I going to teach the learners to present the information collected for the task/activity?		Did the educator teach me how to present the information collected for the task/activity?		

How am I going to develop the learners' skills for conducting research?		Did the educator develop my skills to conduct research?		

The researcher suggests that this checklist is utilized until such time that the above-mentioned actions automatically become part of the educators and learners' approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment. By involving learners in the process, they are given the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills themselves. The learner evaluation also provides a control mechanism to the educator to verify the way in which portfolio assessment is implemented.

Figure 6.6: Portfolio as a communication tool

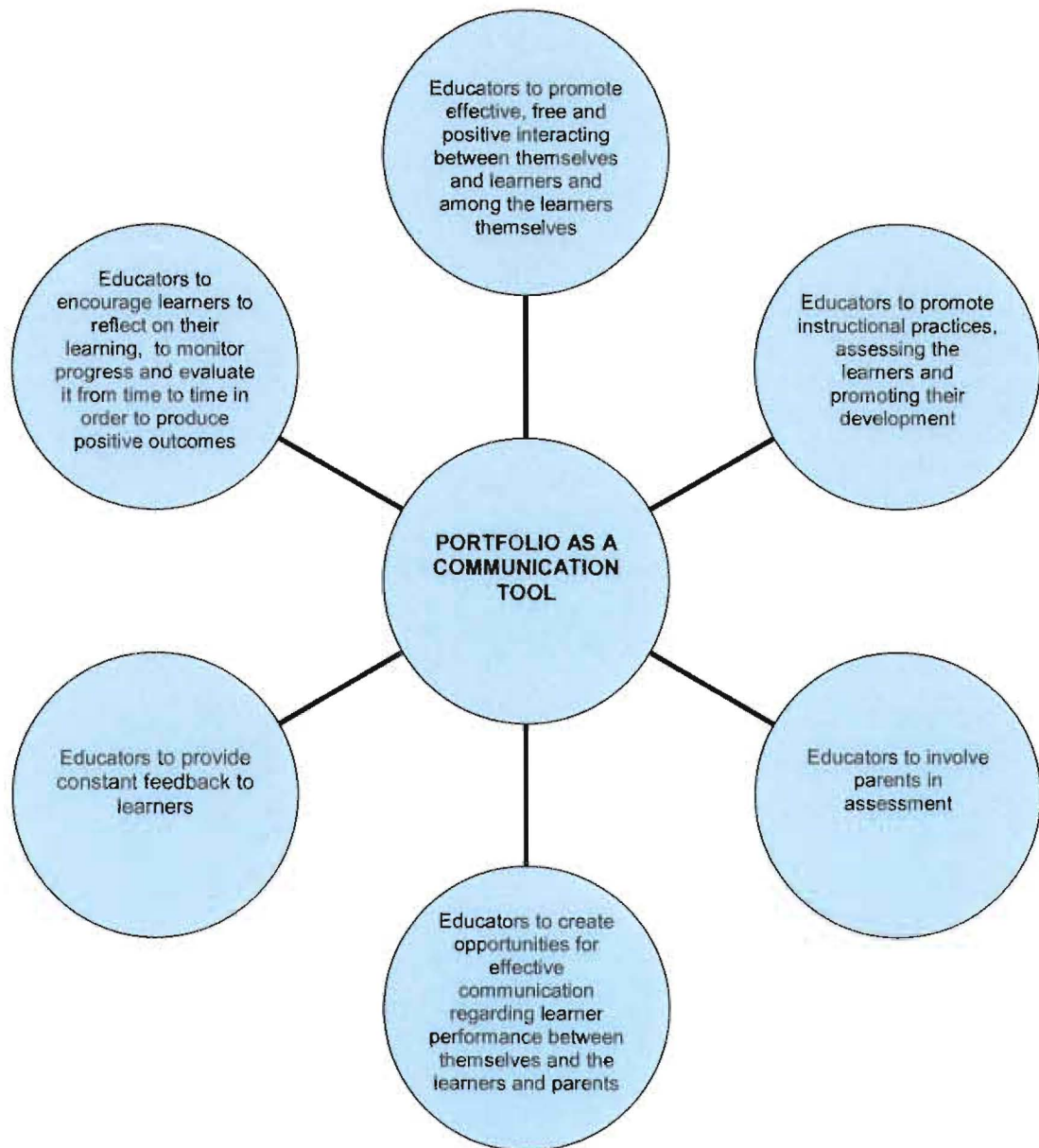


Figure 6.6 indicates to educators what the implementation of portfolio assessment for communication purposes entails. This will be achieved when educators take cognizance of the fact that portfolios as communication tools encourage educators to:

- promote effective, free and positive interaction between themselves and the learners and among the learners themselves;

- promote instructional practices which assess the learners and promote their development;
- involve parents in assessment;
- create opportunities for effective communication regarding learner performance between themselves, learners and parents;
- provide constant feedback to learners; and
- allow learners to reflect on their learning, monitor their progress and evaluate their efforts from time to time in order to produce positive outcomes.

In order for educators to determine whether they achieve the above-mentioned, the following self-reflective checklist comprising five questions that focus on the main issues entailed in the utilization of portfolio assessment for instructional purposes is suggested by the researcher to guide the implementation of portfolio assessment. By means of purposeful questioning, the checklist expects of educators and learners to verify whether assessment tasks and activities will serve the diagnostic purposes they ought to serve.

Table 6.5: Checklist: Portfolio as a communication tool

EDUCATORS		LEARNERS		COMMENTS
Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		Indicate with √ whether the following was achieved		
Did I create opportunities to communicate with the learners regarding their efforts to complete the task/activity?		Did the educator communicate with me regarding my efforts to complete the task/activity?		
Did I create opportunities to communicate with the learners regarding their progress?		Did the educator communicate with me regarding my progress on the task/activity?		

Did I create opportunities for providing feedback to parents regarding the learners' efforts in completing the task/activity?		Did the educator provide feedback to my parents regarding my efforts in completing the task/activity?		
Did I create opportunities for learners to communicate with their peers regarding the task/activity?		Did the educator communicate with me regarding my efforts to complete the task/activity?		

The researcher suggests that this checklist is utilized until such time that the above-mentioned actions automatically become part of the educators and learners' approach to the implementation of portfolio assessment. By involving learners in the process, they are given the opportunity to develop self-regulatory skills themselves. The learner evaluation also provides a control mechanism to the educator to verify the way in which portfolio assessment is implemented.

The model involves monologue (educators and learners individually) and dialogue reflection (joint reflection between educators and learners) (*cf.* 6.5) and it is suggested that educators and learners engage in discussions regarding the aspects referred to on the checklists after having completed the checklists individually. Through the discussion, problems can be detected and improved on.

6.8 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE MODEL

After careful and critical reflection regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the model as compared to whether it incorporates the principles of assessment for learning, the researcher wishes to highlight the following advantages.

6.8.1 Advantages of the model

Apart from the fact that the model links well with the principles of assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3), the following advantages are also noted:

- the model can be utilized across all Learning Areas;
- the model can be utilized before task completion and after task completion;
- the model promotes social and interactive learning;
- the model allows learners to apply their own thinking;
- the model encourages to develop reflective skills which encourage learner motivation, willingness and confidence;
- the model links the cognitive, personal and environmental factors that are important for effective teaching, learning and assessment; and
- educators can visit one another's classrooms and evaluate their implementation practices of portfolio assessment by utilizing the suggested checklist.

6.8.2 Disadvantages of the model

The following aspects are highlighted as disadvantages of the model.

- The process may be time-consuming. Reflective functions are not acquired by listening or reading only. They become habits through their use (Grosser, 2007:48). Learners and educators should receive explicit instruction in the use of reflection and educators must make time to guide learners while they become comfortable with reflection (Grosser, 2007:48).
- Training of educators in the principles of assessment for learning and reflection is necessary.
- The process may also have serious financial implications. Completing the checklists implies duplication costs.

6.9 SUMMARY

This chapter elucidated the model to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment. The model is underpinned by a Socio Cognitive framework that supports the principles of assessment for learning, and allocates an important

role to self-reflection during the implementation of portfolios for assessment purposes.

The next chapter will conclude the study with a summary, findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher endeavours to revisit the aims of the study in order to ascertain whether they have been achieved. Some problem questions were posed in the opening chapter of this study. These needed to be answered as the study unfolded.

The researcher's task in this chapter is to check whether the literature review, the questionnaire, as well as the focus group interviews contributed to answering the problem question on which the study was based. The layout of this chapter is as follows:

- Overview of the study
- Findings from the literature review
- Findings from the empirical research
- Findings in relation to the aims of the study
- Recommendations
- Suggestions for further research

7.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This section intends to give a brief overview of all the previous chapters of this study. The purpose of this exercise is to focus the reader's mind on the important aspects of each chapter, so that the findings and the recommendations that ensue will link up meaningfully.

7.2.1 Chapter one

The purpose of this chapter was to orientate the reader to the problem that was identified for this study. The problem statement related to the challenges and difficulties that educators are confronted with regarding the effective implementation of portfolio assessment. The main aim of the study focussed on the improvement of portfolio assessment by designing a model that could assist educators with the implementation of portfolio assessment (*cf.* 1.2).

7.2.2 Chapter two

This chapter focussed specifically on the literature dealing with the approaches to assessment, namely the traditional assessment approach (also called assessment of learning) and the alternative assessment approach (also referred to as assessment for learning). In implementing the traditional assessment approach, educators are guided by assessment principles and practices promoting learning which focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the learners' intellectual aspect, leaving other areas of their being undeveloped or underdeveloped (*cf.* 2.2). In the context of the study, the principles of the alternative assessment approach were of particular importance as these principles underpin the implementation of portfolio assessment. These principles focus on the holistic development of learners (*cf.* 2.3). Assessment within this framework promotes teaching and learning which aim at nurturing and enhancing the learners' skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. These principles were applied in the model that the researcher developed.

7.2.3 Chapter three

This chapter presented the theory of portfolio assessment. Specific attention was paid to the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment. This multidimensional nature formed the basis for the compilation of the questionnaire, interview schedule and the designed model. The multidimensional nature refers to the purposes for which portfolio assessment are intended, namely for assessing the learners effectively, developing the

learners, identifying the learners' problems, teaching them how to collect, organize and present information and, lastly, for promoting effective communication among all the stakeholders (*cf.* 3.3). The importance of portfolio assessment was discussed and different types of portfolios were identified (*cf.* 3.6; 3.7). The discussion related to the implementation of portfolio assessment in the South African context and highlighted the various opportunities available for educators to utilize portfolios for the above-mentioned purposes (*cf.* 3.7; 3.9).

7.2.4 Chapter four

This chapter elaborated on the combined quantitative and qualitative research design that was utilized to achieve the aims of the study. In this study, the aim was to establish the relationship between the implementation of portfolio assessment according to the intended purposes and the principles of assessment for learning. As the researcher decided to be an external observer whose aim was to establish and form relationships and develop generalizations that contribute to theory, a quantitative research method by means of questionnaires to educators and learners was selected (*cf.* 4.5.1, 4.6.1). The researcher also decided to be personally involved and interact with the participants to examine their perceptions and viewpoints regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment, therefore qualitative research by means of focus group interviews was also chosen (*cf.* 4.5.2; 4.6.2). As a combined quantitative and qualitative approach was chosen for the study, mixed-method research applies. In the context of the study, the explanatory mixed-method approach was used. The quantitative data was collected first and interpreted, after which the qualitative data was collected and interpreted. The word explanatory refers to the fact that the qualitative findings helped to explain the quantitative data obtained.

7.2.5 Chapter five

Data collected through the questionnaire and focus group interviews was analysed and interpreted in this chapter. The findings obtained from the

questionnaires indicated that educators are not effectively implementing portfolio assessment according to the principles of assessment for learning and therefore do not fully utilize portfolio assessment for the purposes it is intended for. The focus group interviews which were conducted with educators only confirmed the fact that educators' knowledge, familiarity with and understanding of portfolio assessment and its implementation need attention (*cf.* 5.2; 5.3; 5.3.3; 5.4). Based on the results obtained from the research, the researcher designed a model to assist educators with the implementation of portfolio assessment so that the principles of assessment for learning are applied and the purposes with the utilization of portfolio assessment are met.

7.2.6 Chapter six

This section focused on presenting a detailed theoretical framework of the Social Cognitive Theory, more specifically the principles which formed the basis for the development and design of the model, which suggests ways to educators according to which they could implement portfolio assessment effectively so that the principles of assessment for learning and the intended purposes for the implementation of portfolio assessment will ultimately be achieved (*cf.* 6.2; 6.3; 6.10).

7.3 FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to obtain information on the correct way of utilizing portfolios for assessment purposes, a thorough literature review was conducted. From the literature review the following conclusions were made regarding the effective implementation of portfolio assessment:

- The literature review suggested that the implementation of the alternative assessment approach does not necessarily phase out the traditional assessment approach. It comes in as a supplement to make the whole assessment process complete. This implies that the reconciliation of the traditional (assessment of learning) and alternative assessment approaches (assessment for learning) and their utilization through

portfolio assessment would effectively address the needs and interest of the learners (*cf.* 2.2; 2.3; 2.4).

- Portfolio assessment refers to the gathering and compilation of evidence of work which contains information that illustrates development and growth. In this regard, the principles of assessment for learning are extremely important (*cf.* 2.2; 2.3; 2.4.3; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5);
- Portfolio assessment should be utilized for assessment purposes, developmental purposes, diagnostic purposes, instructional purposes and communication purposes (*cf.* 3.3).

The findings obtained from the literature review guided the interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the focus group interviews. The researcher wanted to establish whether the current way in which educators implement portfolio assessment complies with the information revealed in the literature.

7.4 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The following findings were derived from the empirical research:

- It was evident that educators do combine the traditional and alternative assessment approaches during the implementation of portfolio assessment (*cf.* 5.3.3; 5.4; 5.4.1.1; 5.4.1.2; 5.4.1.3). This finding supports the finding obtained from the literature review (*cf.* 2.3). They also indicated that they are knowledgeable concerning what policy regarding Outcomes-Based Assessment requires. It is evident that educators are knowledgeable about the general Outcomes-Based Assessment principles but that they lack knowledge and skills regarding the practical application of these principles (*cf.* 5.3.3; 5.4; 5.4.1.1; 5.4.1.2; 5.4.1.3).
- Not enough evidence was provided to confirm with certainty that educators use portfolios in such a way that learner growth and development are promoted. It appeared as if the principles of assessment for learning are

not yet a reality in the classrooms of the educators who took part in the research (*cf.* 2.3; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3; 5.3.2).

- The utilization of portfolios for assessment, developmental, diagnostic, instructional and communication purposes also appeared to be problematic for the educators who took part in the research (*cf.* 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3; 5.3.2).
- Although the questionnaire responses obtained from the majority of learners who took part in the research were more favourable than the responses obtained from the educators, the learner responses were not convincing enough to conclude that educators implement portfolio assessment effectively (*cf.* 5.4.1.3).

From the empirical research additional findings that were not directly related to the literature review were also derived. The following additional findings were noted:

The age of the educators had an impact on the way they implemented portfolio assessment (*cf.* 5.1). The younger, less experienced educators (23-34 year old) seemed to be more acquainted with the implementation of portfolio assessment according to the principles of assessment for learning. Specifically with regard to the implementation of portfolio assessment for developmental and diagnostic purposes, significant differences in favour of the younger, less experienced educators compared to their more experienced (35-44 year old) colleagues were noted. The researcher concludes that this could be attributed to the fact that their training might have equipped them better with the appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with the implementation of portfolio assessment than their colleagues who only had exposure to a few workshop sessions.

During the focus group interviews the educators highlighted a number of factors that impact negatively on their intentions to implement portfolio assessment effectively (*cf.* 5.3.3.3.2; 5.3.3.3; 5.3.3.4; 5.3.3.5; 5.4.1.4).

Educators revealed a strong indication of the application of policy during assessment (*cf* 5.3.3; 5.4; 5.4.1.1; 5.4.1.2; 5.4.1.3). This also supported the fact that educators were not completely unaware of what the principles of Outcomes-Based Assessment entail. What appears to be problematic is the translation of these principles into practice.

In the absence of clear and convincing evidence that educators fully understand the principles of assessment for learning and the purposes of portfolio assessment, there is a concern that the development of learner self-growth, self-confidence and self-esteem are neglected. This, in turn, hampers the motivation and willingness of learners to continue learning. All of the aforementioned skills are necessary in order for learners to become what the National Curriculum Statement envisages, namely independent, confident and life-long learners.

7.5 FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aimed at unearthing facts about the following aspects which were identified in chapter one (*cf*. 1.3).

Aim 1: To determine the criteria for the implementation of portfolio assessment

Through the literature review, the researcher identified that the principles of assessment for learning should be evident during the implementation of portfolio assessment (*cf*. 2.3) as the holistic development and growth of learners stand central to the utilization of portfolio assessment. Furthermore, portfolios should be utilized as multidimensional tools. To achieve its effective implementation, portfolio assessment should be utilized as an assessment tool, a developmental tool, a diagnostic tool, an instructional tool and a communication tool (*cf*. 3.3).

Aim 2: To determine whether educators are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment

This aim was attained through the triangulation of the educator and learner responses to the questionnaires and the educator response to the focus group interviews. Through the study it was discovered that educators are neither completely familiar with the assessment principles entailed in assessment for learning, nor with the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment (*cf.* 2.3; 3.3). What appeared to be problematic was the translation of assessment policy into practice. The literature also revealed that the training opportunities for educators to implement portfolio assessment effectively were insufficient (*cf.* 1.2).

Aim 3: To determine whether the current way of implementation of portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning

This aim was attained through the triangulation of the educator and learner responses to the questionnaires and the educator response to the focus group interviews. The study revealed that educators have a vague understanding of how principles of assessment should be applied during the utilization of portfolio assessment. This also contributed to their not utilizing portfolios for the multidimensional purposes it ought to be utilized for (*cf.* 5.2.2; 5.2.2.2; 5.3.3).

Aim 4: To determine what educators do in particular to ensure that the implementation of portfolio assessment promotes assessment for learning

According to the findings from the interview responses, educators have, to a certain extent, familiarized themselves with the theoretical aspects related to Outcomes-Based Assessment as indicated in the assessment policies, but the translation of policy into practice seems to be problematic. It therefore appears that the implementation of portfolios as multidimensional tools remains a serious challenge to practising educators.

Aim 5: To determine the characteristics that a model should yield to enable practicing educators to improve their knowledge and skills in order to promote assessment for learning through the use of portfolios

The empirical study revealed that there is a need to develop a model that could help educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment. The model has been developed and comprises guidelines that could assist educators to implement portfolio assessment so that the principles of assessment for learning are promoted and the multidimensional nature of portfolio assessment is addressed during its implementation (*cf.* 6.10).

7.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings, the researcher recommends the following:

- It is imperative for educators to make an effort to familiarize themselves with the assessment principles entailed in assessment for learning in order to improve their knowledge and understanding of the alternative assessment approach and portfolio assessment in particular.
- In order to develop knowledge and skills that will enable them to implement portfolio assessment effectively, educators should register at Higher Education Institutions for courses related to Outcomes-Based Assessment.
- The Department of Education should introduce extensive and comprehensive training and workshop programmes that will provide the type of training which will help educators to develop and enhance their knowledge and understanding of the alternative assessment approach and its practical implications for the implementation of portfolio assessment.
- In addition to the above-mentioned, experts in the field of assessment should be invited by the Department of Education to visit schools to provide practical guidelines to educators in the classroom.

- Educators themselves should engage in discussions with colleagues in order to share their knowledge and understanding regarding the effective implementation of portfolio assessment. They could visit one another's classrooms and evaluate their implementation practices in order to check and verify the extent to which they are able to implement portfolio assessment effectively.
- Educators should attend seminars and conferences where topics related to assessment for learning and portfolio assessment in particular are discussed.
- Educators should, from time to time, engage in self-assessment activities, to check and verify their level of competency regarding the implementation of portfolio assessment.
- This research also points to important implications for educator training. Educator training programmes should equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively according to the principles of assessment for learning.
- It is imperative that educators become reflective thinkers in order to examine their implementation of portfolio assessment in order to make adjustments and/or improvements.

7.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study made the researcher aware of related topics that require further research. The following suggestions are made for further research:

- A study to determine the extent to which the application of the principles of assessment for learning develops cognitive capacity.
- Research needs to be conducted to determine whether the designed model will have an impact on the way educators implement portfolio research.

- A critical analysis of self-regulation and reflection and the importance of these two processes in the development and advancement of cognitive capacity.
- A study to determine how factors such as time, overcrowded classes and lack of resources impact on the effective implementation of portfolio assessment.

7.8 CONCLUSION

Although the use of portfolios in assessment is difficult and challenging, and the present study indicates that the current implementation practices of the educators who took part in the study are not fulfilling the expectations of assessment for learning, the implementation thereof is not negotiable (Grosser & Lombard, 2005:55). Portfolio assessment is viewed as an important practice that supports the holistic development of the learners within the school context. Therefore it is important that educators accept the challenge to find ways of familiarizing themselves with the principles entailed in assessment for learning in order to implement portfolio assessment effectively for the purposes it is intended. Another major challenge will be to develop reflective thinking through the use of portfolios in order to enhance the personal growth and independence of learners. If educators do not accept this challenge, portfolios might remain mere showcase documents that bear little evidence of learning independence and responsibility acquired by the learner, and the aforementioned ideals of assessment for learning (*cf.* 2.3.1) might not become a reality in the classroom.

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ANNEXURE A

QUESTIONNAIRE



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26 February 2008

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTIONS A AND B = FOR EDUCATORS

SECTION C = FOR LEARNERS

Dear educator and learner

I am currently busy with a Doctoral Degree at the North-West University, Vaal Triangle Campus. My research wants to determine how effective the implementation of portfolio assessment is. I will appreciate it if you can complete the questionnaire. You will complete the questionnaire anonymously and all information will be handled with the utmost confidentiality. The results obtained will be used for research purposes only. Thank you, your time and cooperation are valued.

Mrs M Tlokotsi

Instructions for completing the questionnaire:

1. The questionnaire is strictly for research purposes only.
2. Please do not enter your name of your school on this questionnaire.
3. Your honest response will be of great value to the researcher.

Please answer all the questions by marking with an X in the appropriate block

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Your age falls in the range of

24-34	1
35-44	2
45-54	3
55-60	4
61-65	5

2. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

3. What position do you hold?

Principal	1
Deputy Principal	2
HOD	3
Educator	4

4. Your highest qualification

Technical Diploma	1
Diploma in Education	2
Degree	3
Honours	4
Masters	5
PhD or DEd	6

5. What is you REQV?

A = M + 2	1
B = M + 3	2
C = M + 4	3
D = M + 5	4
E = M + 6	5
F = M + 7	6

6. What is your home language?

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Sesotho	3
Setswana	4
Sepedi	5
Tshivenda	6
Isizulu	7
IsiXhosa	8
IsiNdebele	9
Siswati	10
IsiTsonga	11
Other, specify	12

Section B: EDUCATORS

1. To what extent do you use portfolios for the following purposes?

1. As an assessment tool	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost never
a) To let learners apply knowledge				
b) To assess learners' knowledge, skills and values				
c) To make use of a variety of assessment strategies to assess learners				
2. As a developmental tool				
a) To inform learners about their success and failures				
b) To allow learners to improve on their mistakes				
c) To involve learners as creators and developers of their own knowledge				
d) To encourage learners to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem				
e) To give learners tasks which encourage them to work independently of the educator				
f) To encourage learners to focus on their self growth				
g) To encourage learners to develop skills for solving problems				
h) To encourage learners to respect the views and opinions of other learners				
i) To enable learners to focus on their strengths and know how to enhance them				
j) To encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work on overcoming them				
3. As a diagnostic tool (to identify problems)				
a) To make learners aware of emerging skills				

b) To provide opportunities for correcting mistakes				
c) To encourage learners to review what is not adequately learned and learn it again				
4. As an instructional tool				
a) To teach learners how to get information				
b) To teach learners how to organise information				
c) To teach learners how to present information				
5. As a communication tool				
a) To develop self-regulation (planning, monitoring your own learning and evaluating your own learning)				
b) To develop critical thinking (evaluate & give an opinion)				
c). To enable learners to discuss the feedback they receive on their work with the educator				
d) To involve parents in the assessment of their learners				

Section C: LEARNERS

1. To what extent do your educators use portfolios for the following purposes?

1. As an assessment tool	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost never
a) To let learners apply knowledge				
b) To assess learners' knowledge, skills and values				
c) To make use of a variety of assessment strategies to assess learners				
2. As a developmental tool				
a) To inform learners about their success and failures				

b) To allow learners to improve on their mistakes				
c) To involve learners as creators and developers of their own knowledge				
d) To encourage learners to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem				
e) To give learners tasks which encourage them to work independently of the educator				
f) To encourage learners to focus on their self growth				
g) To encourage learners to develop skills for solving problems				
h) To encourage learners to respect the views and opinions of other learners				
i) To enable learners to focus on their strengths and know how to enhance them				
j) To encourage learners to highlight their weaknesses and work on overcoming them				
3.As a diagnostic tool (to identify problems)				
a) To make learners aware of emerging skills				
b) To provide opportunities for correcting mistakes				
c) To encourage learners to review what is not adequately learned and learn it again				
4. As an instructional tool				
a) To teach learners how to get information				
b) To teach learners how to organise information				
c) To teach learners how to present information				
5. As a communication tool				
a) To develop self-regulation (planning, monitoring your own learning and evaluating your own learning)				

b) To develop critical thinking (evaluate & give an opinion)				
c). To enable learners to discuss the feedback they receive on their work with the educator				
d) To involve parents in the assessment of their learners				

Thank you for your cooperation!

ANNEXURE B

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

	Focus group 1	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?	Thoughts	Emerging themes
B1	Respondent 1:	" <u>Yes...</u> I do use portfolio assessment for assessing learners, because when I give them activities, that is portfolio activities, each an every portfolio activity have an assessment where you find that ...eh that guides on how to go about with regards to the activity, and where you find that sometimes you have a <u>rubric</u> and that rubric must have a <u>criteria</u> "	Yes, rubrics, criteria	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B2	Respondent 2:	" <u>Yes</u> we use portfolio as one of the assessment tool because it is <u>required</u> by the programmes. That we are doing in the NCS. The NCS requires that every learner should be assessed and they must have portfolios. Then we also address <u>Los and Ass</u> which are prescribed in that particular topic or particular task that we are giving them. I do believe that we use them for assessing learners effectively ...Thank you."	Yes, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Standards	Policy How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B3	Respondent 3:	"Eh ... portfolio we find that we give the kids the <u>rubrics as guidelines</u> to follow what we are going to assess. So I think is	Rubrics	How portfolios are used as

		very effective because it gives them what it is expected of them.”		assessment tools
B4	Respondent 4:	”Ok... eh... portfolio is very important ... portfolio assessment is very important especially when you are using <u>different tools</u>...ach.. sorry. There are kinds of tools that can be used ... neh.... It can be the <u>project</u>, it can be an <u>investigation</u>, it can be a <u>questionnaire</u>, it can be an <u>assignment</u> and all those things, they are... they are all allowed. Those learners who cannot perform <u>academically</u> but <u>maybe practically</u> may be given a chance to gain marks...thank you. ”	Project, investigations, Questionnaires assignments Academically and practically	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B5	Respondent 5:	”Eh ...portfolio...eh .. portfolio assessment you assess learners by <u>formative and summative assessment</u>, formal assessment, informal assessment. In portfolio assessment we use formal assessment for giving learners <u>marks</u> and can use <u>rubrics</u>, <u>checklists</u> and all those staff.... Pass mam ”	Formative, summative, formal, informal assessment, marks, rubric, checklists	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B6	Respondent 6:	”I am sorry mam pass”	No response	

	Focus group 1	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B7	Respondent 1:	"Yes...I can say it is <u>not possible</u> to develop the learners, due to the number of learners we have in the classrooms, <u>the classes are overcrowded</u>, but when you use the activities from the portfolio to assess the learners you are able to see the <u>barriers of learning</u> which the learners have and maybe look at what is it that you can really do to develop them. I firstly give them portfolio activity, having ... eh ...an <u>assessment criteria</u> and then from there when the learner is not performing well in that, I give them <u>another activity</u> which is similar to that one, where you find that this one is easier to the first one and if maybe I see that the learner is still having a problem I ask other learners to...to assess him or her. Maybe call the <u>parents</u> to come to school so that we can be able to see how we can help this learner or sometimes if there is an agreement between me and the parents that, maybe the learner must be sent to the <u>SBST</u> so that the learner can get help from	Not possible Overcrowded classes Barriers of learning Assessment criteria Other activities Parents School Based Support Team	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes How portfolios are used for developmental purposes How portfolios are used for developmental purposes How portfolios are used for

		Bthem."		developmental purposes
B8	Respondent 2:	"Eh...I think the portfolios can help the learners to develop in totality if eh ... they can be willing to <u>work independently</u> if given some <u>research topics</u>. They will have to go out and <u>find all the information for themselves</u> from the <u>libraries and the internet</u>. <u>If its possible read newspapers and the magazines</u>. So I think it depends on them, actually if they can be willing to do the tasks independently without the help of other learners or educators."	Independent work Research topics Find information for themselves from libraries/internet/newspapers/magazines	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B9	Respondent:3	"<u>Yes</u> of course..., it depends...it is determined, this is determined, I will be more or less the same with others....This is sometimes determined by the <u>number of learners</u> in class...whenever we are to follow the ratio as it is suppose to be followed...yes this is possible. Taking into consideration all the <u>measures or ways of assessing learners</u> if they ever all put in place, it is possible to develop the learners in totality. "	Yes Number of learners Different ways of assessment Questions	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes How portfolios

		"The process that I would follow I put everything that is available to them in the form of <u>questions</u>. If for example I develop some certain questions, if let's say it is an assignment...I I ever ...I ever develop, say I come up with questions, I also put in place the <u>rubric...</u>to make available the rubric, so that they can see how I am going to assess them, because the rubric serves as a tool that is going to at least guide them on how to go about.. eh.... On that particular activity....very correct." "One other thing maybe which I would encourage them to do it is <u>group work as</u> well as encourage them to contact and <u>investigate</u> with the other people eh...eh...other people in the <u>outside world</u> so that they can gather information."	Rubrics Group work Investigations in the outside world	are used for developmental purposes How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B10	Respondent:4	"Ohh ... mam give me time to think eh... for now pass me"	No response	
B11	Respondent:5	"It is not possible we <u>are running short of resources</u>, we would in fact love to do that, but unfortunately the learners are <u>too lazy</u> to go out and do <u>research</u>. It is only the few of them who will come up with the right or correct answers that we are looking for but...but if we had facilities it would be important to develop	Resources Learners lazy for research Important to develop learners in	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental

		them in totality."	totality	purposes How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B12	Respondent:6	"Developing the learners in totality I think this will differ from one school to the other. The first thing that we need to consider before we can think of developing the learners in totality..eh ... I think we need to consider the question of <u>resources and the question of time allocation</u> . Developing the learners in totality needs time and there are different <u>types of tools</u> and the different styles that the teacher can use in order to develop the learners in totality e.g. <u>Presentations, videos, journals and photographs</u> for learners who cannot grasp anything. It all depends on resources and time allocation...thank you mam."	Resources Time Different tools: presentations, videos, journal, photographs	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
	Focus group 1	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B13	Respondent 1:	"Yes, I do use portfolio as a tool to identify the learners'	Yes	How portfolios

		problems why because it is through the learners' performance that we can be able to see where they have <u>problems and</u> if maybe I see that the learner <u>cannot be able to answer some of the questions or complete their own activity</u> . I call him or her and try to find out what are the barriers to learning, what is it that makes him or her not to perform...the. I ... I ...eih... pass mam "	Learner performance Cannot answer questions Cannot complete own activity	are used for identifying problems
B14	Respondent 2:	"I think portfolio work eh...assist the educator to identify ... eh ... yes in to identify the learners' problems in totality ... even though I won't say in totality as such, because this depends from one learner to another... and there are so many issues that can considered when assessing learners... others are <u>socio-economic problems, lack of resources in schools, the style which the educator use for assessing learners</u> and it makes it eh...not easier but it makes it eh... impossible for the educator to assess the learners in totality"	Socio-economic problems Lack of resources Different assessment styles	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems
B15	Respondent 3:	"On the question of assessing or identifying the learners; problems in totality, I think mam has also hinted out on the aspects such as eh...eh... <u>resources</u> yes I was also going to	Resources Learners on	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios

	say resources because if there is lack of resources, it may not be possible for learners to complete the tasks, because the tasks that we give to learners, we must address them at <u>different levels</u>, so that we must address them maybe the issues of skills and other matters.” ”So we give them work according to certain levels ...eh To determine their growth and also their maturity in certain aspects The other thing is the question of <u>numbers in classes</u> eh...eh....eh....that is also a barrier to achieve a holistic development, because the high numbers and overloading of work in the classrooms...This may also be a barrier because educators may not be able to...to <u>assist every learner where they lack and need assistance.</u> ” ”The educator may not be able to identify or see what is lacking, even if you can see or identify a problem, educators do not have <u>time to because of the pressure of work</u>, e.g. The very portfolio work needs time at the same time quantity is emphasized. Educators are expected to give learners the amount of work that they must go through which is determined by the school	different levels Numbers in class Time Work pressure Educators focus on work	for identifying problems Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems

		programme and pace setters. As a result the <u>educators concentrates more on what has to be done that is giving them work</u> to keep up with the pace setter, at the same time leaving them behind not understanding "		
B16	Respondent 4:	"Alright thank you very much mam...yes that is possible...yes that is possible but since other teachers have correctly indicated that... it differs from one school to another. I just want to highlight a point more especially in township schools, the majority of the schools are having a <u>lot of learners</u> in the class, that is still a.....a....a....crisis... eh which leads to a barrier, whereby it can disturb the totality....the...the usage of portfolios to...to.....to...to develop the learners in totality...." "But in schools that were formally known as model C schools yes the process is possible because the ratio there is always taken into consideration... whereby in class you can hardly find learners who are more than forty in the classroom. In township schools really is always the case, the majority of schools are still having learners who are around fifty or more in class...eh ... that in itself is a barrier because it makes it difficult for the educators	Yes Numbers of learners Resources Township schools	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems

		not to be able to develop the learners in the usage of a portfolio assessment to develop the learners in totality ” ”This one really it differs even in the question of <u>resources</u>, <u>township school</u>, the majority of them are not having resources, hence I am saying this and some of my colleagues here have hinted this aspect as well.”		
B17	Respondent 5:	”Thank you mam...yes I do use portfolio assessment as a tool but not in totality, because there are <u>problems</u>, <u>one the availability of resources</u>, like libraries, for example in our school we do not have an equipped library, so the learners do not have eh...the material to complete their portfolios, no. two we do not have computers in our school, no. three we do not have enough <u>human resources</u>, that is people who can help learners, especially in the townships where they live”. ”Then the other problem is the skills that the learners have.....Firstly I am teaching grade eight and nine, the learners when they come to high school <u>they do not have pre-knowledge</u>. One has to start from scratch, some don’t even understand what	Yes Problems Resources Libraries Human resources Lack of pre-knowledge Lazy Number of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems

		a portfolio is, we have to battle to teach the learner as to how...to....eh...compile a portfolio. The other problem with their skills is that most learners are <u>lazy</u>, because if you give them a task to do, they won't even complete it...eh" "The other problem is the <u>number of learners</u> in the class, there are many learners, you can't even reach them within the forty minutes that is allocated for them as per period and you will have to go to the next aspect the following day and if you don't complete the work as prescribed in the programme you may be left behind so you see it's difficult"		
B18	Respondent 6:	No response	No response	
	Focus group 1	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?		
B19	Respondent 1:	"Yes mam I do use portfolio assessment for learners to collect, organize and present information even though you may find that it is not accurate because different assessment activities are given. For example research, project, assignments and so forth. When they have to go about with the activities,eh as an educator	Yes Assignments, research project, guide, rubric, Learning	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and

		I do <u>guide them and show them how to complete the activities</u>, even the activities have a rubric and it also have the <u>Learning Outcomes and Ass</u> which means that at the end they know <u>exactly what is expected from them.</u> ” Unfortunately the learners that we have at our school are very <u>lazy</u> to complete or do their work, because the minority of them is the ones who complete the work. So maybe the problem lies with the barriers to learning, because some of them come <u>from poor families, so maybe that is one of the problems which disturb them form learning and complete their work</u> ”	Outcomes, Assessment Standards Lazy Poor families	present information. Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to teach learners to collect, organize and present information.
B20	Respondent 2:	”Yes I think as educators...as educators we try to use portfolio assessment as a tool for collecting, organizing and presenting information. For instance we use different eh...in order to try to use <u>different ways of assessing learners</u>. For instance we have <u>projects</u> as a form of portfolio assessment, we have <u>investigations, questionnaires</u> in the form of interviews, we have <u>worksheets, assignments, exams and tests</u> and also do regular... we do class activities in their class books. So in one way or another we try even though there are barriers, but we try	Yes Different ways of assessing: Projects, investigations, questionnaires, interviews, worksheets,	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information.

		to do as many as possible to use different tools in order to collect, to organize and to present data or information"	assignments, exams, tests	
B21	Respondent 3:	"Yes...as educators we try to teach our learners to collect, organize and present information accurately...eh but now the problem that I want to talk about that also hinders us from rendering the service to these learners , for example have equipped <u>libraries</u> in schools, then we were going to be able to go practically, maybe to look for information from books or whatever material we were going to use. If we had an opportunity to have such facilities I think we were going to be able to teach them thoroughly how to go about with the work. " "Another thing is the question of computers, if we had access to computers, that is if we had <u>computer centers</u> in our schools and what we call the <u>internet</u> we were also going to be able to go through eh ... to go with the learners through these computers to enable them to search or to look for information ... eh by themselves, but because such eh....facilities especially when giving learners research work to do...which the educators may like to give to the learners...learners may be able to collect	Yes Libraries Computer centres Internet	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to teach learners to collect, organize and present information.

		information eh...as accurate as possible. "		
B22	Respondent 4:	" Right ...eh teaching learners to collect, organise and present information accurately...yes we do this but a lot has to be taken into consideration about eh... the accuracy of all these things that have been maintained, because <u>yes</u> learners can be taught how to collect, as well as how to organize and present, but the question is how accurate will they be... one become...I am saying this because some of the learners yes... are relying from others in order to collect or to do the whole thing" "So now as an educator you need to guard against such, but now the question of ...eh resources comes again, whereby for learners to be able to collect, organize and present really, some of the <u>resources</u> like eh...like this thing of <u>computers</u> because they have to get an access to <u>internet</u>, but now if ever there is a lack of resources, there are no computers it might be difficult for learners to collect enough information . " "Yes through the media eh...such as for example <u>newspapers</u>, <u>magazines</u> learners can be able to do that, but that won't be	Yes Resources Computers Internet Newspapers Magazines	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information. Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information.

		enough for them to collect and organize enough information. So due to such a lack of information, they cannot be able to present accurate information or the information that they collect might not be enough so eh...that's it. "		
B23	Respondent 5:	"Yes mam eh...I do use it to help learners organize, collect information, although not accurately done, because some of the learners they <u>lack understanding</u> . Those that eh... those learners that understand how to do it accurately, it means a lot still to be done in order to reach accuracy "	Yes Learners lack understanding	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information.
B24	Respondent 6:	"Yes mam I do...but...it is going to be difficult because other learners are not willing to do their work. In our school we have so many problems, we lack <u>facilities eh...resources</u> and for ...pass mam. "	Yes Facilities Resources	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for teaching learners to collect, organize and present

				information.
	Focus group 1	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B25	Respondent 1:	"Yes we use it as a communication tool, because whenever we do the work or activities we use language, we cannot eh...learners ...the learners cannot be able to complete the activities without using the <u>language</u> ."	Yes Language	
B26	Respondent 2:	"Yes we use portfolio work as a communication tool, because if eh.... A learner has problems regarding his or her work and then is another way of learners ,,eh mmh... of learners eh... to...to...show an educator whether they understand what he or she was teaching. "	Yes Learners communicate their problems and understanding to the educators	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B27	Respondent:3	"Yes mam...I do think that we use portfolio work as a means of communication and that will be determined by the way in which that learners going to understand the task given. From there you will be able to see if maybe eh... he was able to <u>understand</u> the work that he was suppose to do eh...by going through the task given. One of my colleagues mentioned the aspect of language,	Yes Understanding of the learners	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

		so the language I think is important because if they do not know the language concerned their interpretation of the work that they are suppose to do might be very wrong. "		
B28	Respondent:4	"Yes....eh...eh we may use portfolio assessment eh...tool....to...to.... for communication purposes, because even as a teacher you do an <u>introspection</u>...an introspection as far as that is concerned, because in a form of a <u>questionnaire</u> you may ask maybe learners questions. You may come up with handouts whereby you give or issue out to learners in order for them to write whatever they <u>feel or think about you as their educator</u>, maybe about your style of teaching or method of teaching. " "So it depends...so then...in...in... that way you are using it as a tool for communication. You can be able to to know where are you suppose <u>to improve even as a teacher</u>. Even for learners we give them charts so that they can cough out whatever they feel you are doing wrong. "	Introspection by teachers Questionnaires to learners: What they think of the teaching How educators can improve	How portfolios are used as a communication tool.
B29	Respondent:5	"Thank you mam... <u>I do</u> use the portfolios a communication tool because firstly we use language. Then after language we do	Yes (Not a clear	How portfolios are used as a

		understand the learners as humans in the classroom and we use it to educate the learners, more information will be delivered to the learners through....when you see whether you are lacking or you are fast. " "Then it communicates to the educator the type of family from where the learner comes from, even the <u>environment</u> tells you and you see all this from the <u>learner's work</u> as you communicate with him or her. Secondly it will make you understand the <u>level of intelligence</u> of the learner. "	response) Learners' work communicates environment where they come from and level of intelligence	communication tool.
B30	Respondent:6	"Yes mam because communication is the skill, you can assess the learner, you can see if the learner can communicate or he can communicate or she cannot talk clearly or she cannot understand."	(Question not understood)	
	Focus group 2	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?		
B31	Respondent 1:	"Yes I am using portfolio as an assessment tool, because everything that is needed in the portfolio is very important. Eh...like maybe...we are having the different tools that are	Yes Variety: assignments,	How portfolios are used as assessment

		needed in the portfolio. Like for instance I can say eh... the <u>assignment, the projects, the investigation and other assessments, tests</u> and the other information that is needed in the portfolio. So I am assessing the learners in order to find out if the learner is <u>performing well</u> ...or maybe the learner is <u>achieving the goals</u> . "	projects, investigations, tests: communicate performance and goal achievement	tools
B32	Respondent 2:	"According to the question...alright according to the question there eh... in terms of assessment or assessing the children we also have the <u>rubrics</u> , whereby these rubrics are guidelines for assessing children. We also have the activity forms whereby we can also <u>assess the insight knowledge of the children</u> , for example it can be the assign... the <u>homework</u> , the portfolio...inside the portfolio it will be a <u>test</u> , an assignment, like mam has already said a mouthful. The only thing I can add here and there ...thank you. "	Rubrics Insight, knowledge Homework Test	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B33	Respondent 3:	"Ok eh...I would like to... actually my response will concur with that of respondent number two, to say yes eh...I use portfolio as a way of assessing learners, but <u>that is not enough</u> because eh...portfolio cover less activities than those which are stipulated	Work schedule activities	Additional tasks

		in the work schedules”		
B34	Respondent 4:	”Yah...we can be able to ... do that effectively, that is we give learners a <u>second chance</u> , whereby in the first chance they have to mark themselves and then the second chance we give them the chance so that they <u>rectify their mistakes</u> so that they can be able to get marks.”	Second chance Rectify mistakes	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B35	Respondent 5:	”Did not honour the appointment when contacted later the participant indicated that there was a pressing issue which needed immediate attention.”	No response	
B36	Respondent 6:	”No reason was forwarded to the researcher, every time the researcher attempted to the phoned the participant, the call was sent to the voicemail.”	No response	
	Focus group 2	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B37	Respondent 1:	”Yes learners can be developed because we give them a <u>second chance</u> in order for them to perform good. We also give them <u>expanded opportunities and other tasks</u> as well in order for the learners to pass as far as the QBE and NCS is concerned”	Yes Second chance Expanded	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes

			opportunities Other tasks	
B38	Respondent 2:	"Ok in terms of that question mam, they can also <u>apply</u> whatever portfolio aspects they may learn in their <u>real life</u> . I mean the work or the material we are dealing with at school, can be applied it in the real situation, in real life in future, so they can apply it in the future. "	Apply in real life	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B39	Respondent 3:	"Eh yes....eh this is the way of giving them the <u>expanded opportunities</u> to develop and <u>according to their abilities</u> ."	Expanded opportunities According to abilities	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B40	Respondent 4:	"They cannot be developed in totality because we have eh... we have less <u>time</u> in most cases. Then the <u>number of learners</u> ...eh results in the educator not being able to go through the diagnostic process. "	Time Number of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes

B41	Respondent 5:	"Did not honour the appointment when contacted later the participant indicated that there was a pressing issue which needed immediate attention."	Did not honour interview appointment	
B42	Respondent 6:	"No reason was forwarded to the researcher, every time the researcher attempted to the phoned the participant, the call was sent to the voicemail."		
	Focus group 2	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B43	Respondent 1:	"The portfolio is something that you know the learners with, and it's where the learner should eh....oh please pass mam."	No response	
B44	Respondent 2:	"In that case you can assess the learners with his or her work, like we have already said we can assess the learners with the learning staff he is having, eh...pass mam"	No clear response	
B45	Respondent 3:	"Eh...it is easy to use it if the learners are not <u>crowded in the class</u> ...eh...because you are able to diagnose their problems. The crowded class is time consuming and it is not easy to identify their problems using crowded class. "	Crowded class	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying

				problems
B46	Respondent 4:	"I really like to differ with this, because time plays an important role in this eh...one; we said we give learners projects, and number two we said learners do <u>not have access to computers</u> , number three <u>learners copy each others' work</u> and <u>parents do help</u> them with the work as a result the educator cannot identify the learners' problems in totality."	Not possible Computers Copy work Parents help	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems
B47	Respondent 5:	Did not honour interview appointment	No response	
B48	Respondent 6:	Did not honour interview appointment	No response	
	Focus group 2	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?		
B49	Respondent 1:	"Yes we do assess them....or we do assist them to collect information, giving them the topic and other questions to stick on, and then the other thing that we focus on we give them the <u>subheadings of the topics or the themes</u> in order for the learner to be briefly...pass mam.	Yes Subheadings Themes	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information

B50	Respondent 2:	"Yes madam as like we are also training them to be the future parents, they also need to understand this. To listen to us so that they can also listen to other people in the future. We are not practicing this for only now we are also implementing this for the future. "	Yes Not a clear response	
B51	Respondent 3:	"Eh...this is an excellent way of teaching learners independent working, teaching them how to collect information from various sources."	Yes Independent work Collect information from various sources	How portfolios are used to teach learners to collect, organize and present information
B52	Respondent 4:	"I'd like to have a problem with this because as educators eh... we have ...eh we have problems with the rubrics because we are marking learners using <u>rubrics</u> and yet we do not have <u>enough skills for making rubrics</u> at times eh... when it comes to marking eh... collecting, organizing and presenting information accurately."	Rubrics Not enough skills for making rubrics	How portfolios are used to collect, organize and present information Factors

				impacting on the use of portfolios to teach learners to collect, organize and present information
B53	Respondent 5:		Did not honour interview appointment	
B54	Respondent 6:		Did not honour interview appointment	
	Focus group 2	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B55	Respondent 1:	"Yes because usually the activities that they are working on, they work together as <u>groups</u> and they <u>communicate there and they share the ideas and they give different views</u> and there are facts,. They collect the information; there is a lot of	Yes Groups Share ideas and	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

		communication there. So that is why we take the portfolio as an assessment, because through the activities they are working on they communicate....pass mam. "	views	
B56	Respondent 2:	"Ok sometimes since we are having eh... number of children or number of learners in our class we've got many learners in our class so that...whereby we cannot be able to identify them all, but in terms of the communication in writing we can have their portfolios and know a child or learner by the way he will be conducting his or her portfolio. Another thing we can also <u>communicate with others like my seniors, parents and learner himself or herself</u> . Also...ok eh also the seniors not the one that we are working with but seniors from maybe above, that is the <u>education district officials</u> . We can also communicate with them by sending the portfolios to them. "	Communicate with seniors, parents, learners, district officials	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B57	Respondent:3	"Eh...by <u>marking their activities and by giving feedback to learners and applying remedial work</u> , it is an effective way of communication between <u>the educators and the learners</u> ."	Feedback Remedial work Educators and learners	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

B58	Respondent:4	"Yah... the learners in some portfolio works they will be able to <u>express their views and feelings</u> and the educator will be able to get to get some of the problems of the learners and then we can be able to <u>show parents</u> how learners are working with the portfolios. "	Learners express views and feelings Parents	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B59	Respondent:5	Did not honour interview appointment	No response	
B60	Respondent:6	Did not honour interview appointment	No response	
	Focus group 3	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?		
B61	Respondent 1:	"Yes I am using it....I am giving the activities for EMS we are having five <u>different types of assessing</u> the learners. We are having <u>simulation</u> , we are elective, we are having <u>presentations</u> , we are having <u>projects</u> ...So we are using different types, like if learners have to research or make research we give them the activity as a portfolio activity."	Yes Different types of assessment: Simulations Presentations Projects, Research	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

B62	Respondent 2:	"Yes I do use portfolio assessment to assess the learners effectively...the reason being ...eh so they are expected to do <u>projects</u> in grade nine. So the project that they are doing for example the budget, it needs more of the learners to be committed to their work and to write this...what we call ...eh ...project. They need to listen to news every time, so that they know about the news...current information regarding the budget of the country. For example other ones again to eh... become...to do <u>assignments</u>, they need go out and make some research. So to go out and make some <u>research and questionnaires</u> that I need to give them so that they can apply whatever information in their assignments"	Yes Projects Assignments Research Questionnaires	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B63	Respondent 3:	"Yes...eh I do use portfolio to assess learners effectively in grade. I am teaching Technology and in Technology we have five stages of technological processes called IDMEC: Identifying, Design, Make, Evaluate and Communicate. That is a <u>project</u> and each and every stage I give them a rubrics and they follow the stages as they are. They design, they make and I give them rubrics...I give them the <u>rubrics</u> again and evaluate and also	Yes Project Rubrics	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		communicate to learners how did they go about designing the project or a model."		
B64	Respondent 4:	"Yes mam I do use portfolios as a form of assessing my learners in grade nine Social Science classes. The portfolio part helps us a lot as the educators, because it helps us to understand the different levels at which learners are performing and number two it does not only confine them to classroom work. They are also getting the opportunity of going out and collect information and that also helps them a lot in terms of <u>interacting with the community members and to develop their skills</u> in totality as citizens of the country. "	Yes Interact with community to develop skills	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B65	Respondent 5:	"Yes in EMS... in EMS grade 9 I do use portfolios as the form of assessment, the reason being that...in most of the time when you give class works to the learners you find that they do not do the and sometimes they do...or go home and get assistance from others. So by giving them <u>research projects</u> it helps to make them put more effort into their work. I think this is the real quality that we need from...from other tasks, which is research...thank you. "	Yes Research projects	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

B66	Respondent 6:	Did not honour our appointment no reasons forwarded	No response	
	Focus group 3	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B67	Respondent 1:	"Yes I am using portfolio assessment for developing the learners in totality because according to the constitution learners have to be <u>culturally and aesthetically sensitive</u> across a range of social contexts. Also learners nowadays whatever is happening, more especially when coming to EMS , whatever is happening, it is according to the way they are living and then also the experiences teaching or its is making them aware of what they are going to be in future...thank you. "	Yes Culturally and aesthetically sensitive	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B68	Respondent 2:	"Yes I do use this to develop the learners in future, the reason being...eh ... to make a <u>project</u> like a budget. The learners most know how to manage their funds or their daily money, their pocket monies and the other one again; recently we have internship as one of the topics. Nowadays we are talking about the interest rates that are going up and down, I am sorry up. So the learners they need to know about eh...talking of what we call	Yes Projects Future Parents	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes

		credit in <u>future</u> or the <u>parents</u> are taking credit nowadays so at least learners will develop to know that is not important for them. So think eh ...it can eh...it help the learners to develop. "		
B69	Respondent 3:	"Not exactly in totality mam eh... you know in Technology as I mentioned we have five stages. The first stage is the making stage, where the learners will have to get to a workshop and use machinery to make their <u>models</u> again we do not have material or machinery because learners do not pay school fees...eh because of the community in which the school is situated. The school is situated in a <u>poor community where parents do not have money</u> and really it becomes a problem in Technology. So I cannot really...develop ...learners holistically as expected. "	Making models Poor community Parents have no money Not possible	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B70	Respondent 4:	"Ok...eh...mam I want to believe that developing learners in totality...learners in totality or holistically is the cornerstone of the Department of Education's policy. Yes we do try to make sure that in our portfolios we address the issue like the ones, that is learners should develop holistically...should develop in	Policy Difficult Resources	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental

		totality but the issue of <u>resources</u> is one of the factors that are restricting the progress in this regard but we are trying. We are battling to get through this and the types of activities that we give to the learners are the activities that will ensure that at the end of the day they have developed...thank you very much. "		purposes
B71	Respondent 5:	"Yes...we do especially in EMS, because Economic and Management Sciences is more practical. I can say you apply it on daily basis, when you give the learners a <u>project</u> to go to the bank and ask about the different services that they offer. It...you know helps them to be aware of the situation when they are grownups. What is going to happen is that they will be responsible citizens; they will know how to manage their finances. They can help their parents on managing their own finances and that is development."	Projects (real life issues)	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B72	Respondent 6:	Did not honour our appointment no reasons forwarded	No response	
	Focus group 3	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B73	Respondent 1:	"I am responding... I cannot say I am using it in totality because	Reading	Factors

		there are some of the learners who cannot get exactly what is happening about them because they <u>cannot read</u> and they can <u>also not write</u> . They cannot even read what they have written, so there are different methods when coming to inclusivity. Whereby we have to include these learners with learning barriers or problems. If a learner maybe you have given her a project or research, if the learner cannot make it you will have to identify what the problem is. Most of the time you will find that other learners cannot get what the problem is. They have to be referred to the district office for help... thank you. "	Writing	impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems
B74	Respondent 2:	"Yes, I think... eh... we are trying to identify the learners problems... yes but it is very difficult... yes because eh... some of the assignment they will need to write six pages and they <u>cannot write them in English</u> . Sometime you will find that they only write only two pages, instead of writing the required six pages. The reason being the language, English they cannot what we call write in English. So we are trying but..."	Yes, but difficult Language	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems
B75	Respondent 3:	"Not in totality mam as I have already mentioned that in Technology, <u>we need workshops, we need material, we need</u>	Not possible	Factors impacting on the

		<u>machinery</u> . Now you find that learners who can not write well they cannot be given enough opportunity to do practical work or to show case their skills in technology because of lack of resources which I have just mentioned; machinery and materials which the school cannot afford because of the community”	Lack workshops, material, machinery	use of portfolios for identifying problems
B76	Respondent 4:	”Eh... mam I think I use it as a tool to identify learners with specific problems because one, in the first place you can identify the learners who get a problem in terms of <u>writing</u> , that is number one. Number two you can also identify learners who have a problem of <u>communicating</u> with other people when we send them out to seek information. Number three you can also realize that the learner has a problem in terms of <u>integrating from a variety of sources</u> . ”	Yes Writing Communicating Integrating a variety of sources	How portfolios are used for identifying problems
B77	Respondent 5:	” <u>Yes</u> I do but I cannot say in totality because, we experience some problems where by some of the learners, they do not do their tasks. So in some cases it becomes <u>very difficult</u> as an educator to come up with eh... to come with a clear direction... to get a clear direction of what as an educator you are suppose to do. So it is simple... it is simple and it is gonna be very easy if	Yes, but difficult Not a clear response	

		we as educators try to guide and motivate these learners to do their job on daily basis... thank you. "		
B78	Respondent 6:	Did not honour our appointment no reasons forwarded	No response	
	Focus group 3	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?		
B79	Respondent 1:	"Yes I do especially in E.M.S, when you send learners out to do a <u>research</u> or if you give them a <u>project</u> , it means that you equip them with the skill to collect the information and this gives us eh... it puts us in a situation where by our learners are skilled with collecting information... thank you. "	Yes Research Project	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B80	Respondent 2:	"Yes I do use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to at least collect information accurately. Usually they collect information from <u>the newspapers...</u> they also collect <u>information from the internet</u> , but when coming to the internet... most of the learners cannot access the internet. The learners are <u>not yet computer literate</u> especially in grade, but we try our	Yes Newspapers Internet Learners not computer literate	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present

		level best to make sure that we guide them on how to collect the relevant information from the newspapers... thank you. "		information Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information.
B81	Respondent 3:	"Yes mam... eh ... in technology when learners are doing a <u>project</u> ... eh... they follow five stages of the technological processes, that is investigate, identify, make, eh... design making, evaluate and communicating. Now in investigation they do collect information, do research and identify problems which are there, they follow these as they are in their portfolio until the last stage where they communicate with the educator and the whole class. "	Yes Project	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B82	Respondent 4:	"Yes mam, because when coming to E.M.S learners have to	Collect current	How portfolios

		collect information more especially of what is happening in <u>South Africa</u> . We are concerned with the economy of the country so when coming to E.M.S as compared to technology, the information that they get in technology they can use it in E.M.S because technology has to be investigated and has to give a report on how to... on how it can improve the economy of the country. Eh... the country as such has to be productive... thank you. "	information	are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B83	Respondent 5:	"Pass mam... thank you "	No response	
B84	Respondent 6:	Did not honour our appointment no reasons forwarded	No response	
	Focus group 3	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B85	Respondent 1:	"Yes mam I do use portfolio as a communicative tool because the reporting that we do in portfolios is the <u>reporting that has to go to the parents</u> . The parents need to know what is going on in the learning of their children. Therefore on that basis I can say portfolios are used as the communication tool. "	Yes Reporting to parents	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B86	Respondent 2:	"Yea I do use a portfolio as a communication tool, the reason being to give learners the task you need to <u>explain and give</u>	Yes	How portfolios are used as a

		<u>them the clarity</u> with regard to the importance of the portfolios. So in a year they need to get <u>reports</u> so these reports is part of communication again to <u>learners and also to parents</u>. So learners can know their levels because there are seven levels where by the need to understand their performance. That ii is eh... the outstanding ones, the adequate ones, the moderate ones, so somewhere somehow eh...I can say eh... we communicate easily with them, because from these results you can know their <u>performance</u>...I thank you ”	Explanations to learners Reports to learners and parents Performance	communication tool
B87	Respondent:3	”Yes... portfolios serve as a communication tool in Technology after the learners have completed a project, they will be able to <u>showcase</u> to everybody, the class, the teacher, the parents and the community. Eh ... their and how they managed to solve the problems the community is facing. ”	Yes Showcase work	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B88	Respondent:4	”Yes I am using it... as a communication tool, because it helps the <u>learners to check their progress</u>, work more especially when coming to the <u>summative assessment</u>. The summative assessment gives the overall of what has been learnt, throughout the year. As such the portfolio is communicating with	Yes Learners check their progress Summative	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

		them effectively...thank you. "	assessment	
B89	Respondent:5	"Yes mam I do ... each an every time when you have provided learners with the portfolio activity. There is a need for them to know which part of the activity <u>they did well or not</u> . So by that we are communicating with them and then the <u>results</u> which they also get, I think we use them to evaluate the learners and give them <u>feedback</u> and all this is part of communication".	Yes Whether learners did well or not Results Feedback	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B90	Respondent:6	Did not honour our appointment no reasons forwarded	No response	
	Focus group 4	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?		
B91	Respondent 1:	"Yes I would say to a certain extent actuality eh... portfolio assessment is used effectively eh... but to a certain degree it is not. Especially why not... especially in a <u>group work</u> . Sometimes in some instances you give learners group work in like for example in natural sciences. When you give them a practical work where they are suppose to work together as groups some of the learners do not participate. We find that those who are responsible are the ones who participate, so obviously others	Yes Group work: not effective Essays Learners check one another's work Educator checks	How portfolios are used as assessment tools How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		will benefit from those who actually participated effectively. So in that particular instance it is <u>not actually effective</u>. There situations whereby it is actually effective especially when you give them <u>essays</u> in the classroom, in English for example. I also teach English, so when I give them essays I normally explain first what is expected of them. After that I let them actually write the draft ...the draft in which they will <u>actually alternate and edit one another's' work</u> after that <u>I collect their work</u> and look at the mistakes they have made, check the mistakes together and thereafter I hand over to them to <u>rectify their mistakes</u> and then correct them if necessary. So others will have a chance of <u>rewriting</u> their tasks and those that perform well will actually be requested to rewrite. "	Rectify mistakes Rewriting	
B92	Respondent 2:	"Ok mam I think it is effective because normally what I do to the learners in class, I give them the <u>essays</u>. For instance I am teaching Isixhosa, I give those essays we discuss as a class and then from there they write the essays, then I can take them back to different learners and then they edit the essays. I mark them and after that I give them back to them so that they can <u>repeat</u>	Essays Educator indicates mistakes Repeat essays	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		<u>these essays</u> in order to get good marks.”		
B93	Respondent 3:	”Yes it is effective because it usually gives learners time maybe to understand the topic, and if maybe they do not understand they get a chance in a <u>group</u> and assessment is effective. So al in all I can say it is effective. ”	Yes Group work	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B94	Respondent 4:	”Yes it is effective because when you give them a <u>project or they work in groups</u> , others are parasites they do not participate and others participate and those who are not participating benefit from those who are participating. Yes it is effective. ”	Yes Projects Group work	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B95	Respondent 5:	”Yes I can say it is effective because eh...there are learners who are afraid of doing their work on their own. If you give them work they may for example as an <u>assessment as a group...others will benefit from others, because they will hear answers from others</u> and they can be able to do the work that you give them. For example if you give them a letter in English, because I am teaching English and the other can not understand to write a letter, the format to write the letter. So they benefit a lot when	Yes Group work: learners can benefit from each other	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		they work as a group. So I can say it is effective.		
B96	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 4	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B97	Respondent 1:	"So... eh ... I can say...what I am saying is that the only measure that we actually eh.... Probably we must also make use of other measures. No I don't think we actually use portfolios only as a measure actually to develop learners in totality. I mean sometimes we give them <u>extra activities</u> which are not related to portfolio assessment. So in order to help them actually to be developed. "	Extra activities	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B98	Respondent 2:	"Eh...no I don't think learners can develop if you eh... give them portfolio work only, because most of the learners they normally take work home so that their parents or brothers can help them. So in that case they can not develop".	No Parent or brothers help learners too much	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B99	Respondent 3:	"I think mam it depends because sometimes you give them	Research	How portfolios

		<u>research</u> if they are going to do it all by themselves. If maybe is part of self-enrichment it is whereby they can develop learners in totality. So it depends on the activity type of a portfolio activity. "	Type of activity: self enrichment	are used for developmental purposes
B100	Respondent 4:	"Yes it depends on activity type, like you give them a questionnaire, they are going to ask questions at home and ask their parents or neighbours to help them"	Yes Type of activity Questionnaire	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B101	Respondent 5:	"I think it develops them eh... at certain stages you will find that they go to their <u>parents</u> to help them and from there they are able to do their work on their own."	Parents	
B102	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 4	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B103	Respondent 1:	"Portfolio assessment in totality eh... not exactly...I would say not exactly why, like I mentioned earlier on. Yes it actually guides you; you can use assessment as a tool to develop learners in totality but sometimes. Like I said earlier on that others actually use you know they benefit from those who are a	(Not a clear response) Big classrooms (numbers)	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems

		bit intelligent. So it is not completely hundred percent. So it's actually better to give them something else you know give them other tasks that are not related to portfolio work, so as to develop them effectively. Another thing that I can say is that sometimes it is actually difficult because you know we are actually working with number of learners...<u>big classrooms</u> so sometimes learners actually cheat. The also have the tendency of <u>helping one another</u>. So you give them tasks and whilst you are at the back maybe helping someone else you know the ones who are seated in front can actually help one another. So in that case you can actually think that the learner has managed to do the task effectively in his own or on her own only to find that the child has actually been assisted by another learner. "	Learners assist each other	
B104	Respondent 2:	"Eh I think I can be able to identify the learners with learning problems because I give them... give learners <u>certain tasks</u>, maybe they have to prepare a speech. So now if the learner can not speak, I can be able to identify that problem through the <u>speech</u>. "	Certain task will enable you to identify certain problems	How portfolios are used for identifying problems

B105	Respondent 3:	"It depends again on the learning activity, because usually in Social Sciences when we give learners the portfolio activity maybe to do it all by themselves, when they come back due to time constraints we can not go back and give the learner another chance because we are pushed by the pace setter to finish up the work. <u>So there we do not have enough time</u> to do it in totality."	Not enough time Pace setters	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying problems
B106	Respondent 4:	"Mmh I don't it's I don't think it is possible because you have to give learners other tasks like research projects or even design project, eh... case studies project and not activity only, not portfolio assessment only. "	Not possible	
B107	Respondent 5:	"Eh...I can say yes I can identify learners with problems because in the class, when they are doing their class work, maybe for example an exercise kapa activity...I am sorry mam or activities you find that they are able to do them because they will be looking at others as you can see it that way. Then when you give them a portfolio task, for example an <u>essay or letter</u> , <u>you come across the learners who cannot write and they are unable to read</u> , they do all these things right when they look from	Type of task Essay or letter Learners who cannot read or write Rely on others	How portfolios are used for identifying problems

		others. So I can identify those learners when I give them the activity of the portfolio. "		
B108	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 4	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?		
B109	Respondent 1:	Can you pass that one while I am still thinking		
B110	Respondent 2:	"Eh I also think I can do because if you give the learner an essay, first he has to go and collect the information, the learner can not write an essay without collecting information. He has to collect the information; from there the learners can be able to present whatever...I think I can. "	Yes Essay : collect information and then present	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information accurately
B111	Respondent 3:	"Yes mam the learners can gather information, because as the educator has to ...you can give learners...as an educator to do the without <u>explaining the task</u> , what it is all about and <u>where to get information</u> . If possible the <u>educator is the one that has to</u>	Yes Educators: explains task and	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect,

		<u>collect</u> all the information for the learners. So that the learners when they are alone at home they know exactly where to start and thereafter they can then come back to report to the class and then the educator, it is his or her duty again to guide the learners that maybe, you were wrong here you were right here, in that way the learner can manage. ”	where to get information If possible educator to collect information	organize and present information accurately
B112	Respondent 4:	”Mm ...I think you as an educator you must give them your <u>criteria</u>, like you are going to use a <u>checklist or rubric</u>. You tell them to go and do the <u>research at the libraries or supermarkets</u>. It will depend on what or which task you give them. ”	Provide criteria: checklists or rubrics Research: libraries, supermarkets	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information accurately
B113	Respondent 5:	”Yes when we give them the <u>research</u> I think they can gather the information...eh for example you give them the research to go and research maybe eh... a topic or something to go to research that they can go to the <u>libraries or other places</u> to...so each find information and then....then... I think eh... you must be <u>clear of</u>	Yes Research: libraries Be clear	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and

		what you want the children to go and want...the information and come and report back in the class, think this way they will be able."		present information accurately
B114	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 4	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B115	Respondent 1:	"Yes in English for example learners are expected to do <u>oral work, speaking, reading</u> and as they read they also have to <u>answer questions</u> . Then we also do <u>literacy skills where you test their listening ability and they respond by actually communicating.</u> "	Yes Oral work Speaking Reading Answer questions Literacy skills Listening ability Communicating	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B116	Respondent 2:	"I think they can through the <u>oral activity</u> , I agree with what my colleague said, because normally we give them a task where they go home and prepare these speeches. So now by so doing	Oral activities	How portfolios are used as a communication

		it is much easier for them to speak outside the classroom."		tool
B117	Respondent:3	"Ok mam...I think communication is a broad term, sometimes learners dramatize and that is communication. It depends on the instruction that they have to follow, e.g. Dramatizing, poetry, reading, speaking with all these activities they are communicating. So I say yes I can use portfolio as a communication tool. "	Dramatizing Poetry Reading Speaking	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B118	Respondent:4	"Yes it is the best one, like I said if you give them questionnaires they are going to interview their neighbours or parents. So they start to build their confidence. "	Yes Completing questionnaires: interviewing Build confidence	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B119	Respondent:5	"Can... yes pass mam."		
B120	Respondent:6	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	

	Focus group 5	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?		
B121	Respondent 1:	"Yes I use portfolio eh..eh...portfolio activity as a tool because it gives the child, portfolio gives the child an opportunity to <u>work on his own</u> one, two it also, it has a duration where a child work as an individual <u>or in groups</u> , and that is better than what we call a test, a <u>class test</u> , that is why I say it is important".	Yes Individual work Group work Tests	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B122	Respondent 2:	"Ya... I think I do use portfolio as a tool to assess the learners effectively so, because I believe and think that portfolio, summarizing it, actually includes the <u>learners' work during a course of time, maybe a year</u> . Number two I believe that it fosters and encourages individualism from learners and also encourages learners to research more extensively on the Learning Area. "	Work during a course/year	What a portfolio is
B123	Respondent 3:	"Yes it is used as an effective tool, because portfolio is a <u>collection of the learners' work</u> . It includes <u>assignments, controlled tests and a lot of things</u> that the educator can use to assess the learners' performance. So it helps the teacher or	Collection of work Assignments, tests	How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		educator to identify the learners' problems"		
B124	Respondent 4:	"I do use portfolio as a form of assessment, one of the reason being that, besides unlike using <u>just a formal test</u> , whereby only those learners who are academically well, will benefit. Portfolio activities <u>cater for all learners in terms of their expertise or in terms of their intelligence</u> . So it caters for all learners. "	Not just test To cater for all learners	How portfolios are used as assessment tools
B125	Respondent 5:	"Yes I also agree with my colleagues, although I am not sure of it being used effectively. No I am not sure about that, I am not sure about it being used effectively but it is an effective tool. To what extent is it effective I am not sure, really I don't know, but I mean since it <u>does not only focus on tests</u> which the previous system of education did, I think with this one we have <u>assignments</u> , which can be done at home, we have <u>investigations</u> and so on. So it does not only focus on the learners' understanding in class as it was the case with the previous system, as it was only tests which were written and nothing else. " "Yes it is an effective tool, but to what extent really I can not tell,	Not sure of effectiveness Not only tests Assignments Investigation Opportunity to improve	How portfolios are used as assessment tools How portfolios are used as assessment tools

		at the same time it is objective in the sense that you can give learners the same activity over and over again, so that they can basically <u>improve their marks</u> . So I can say to a certain extent it is an effective tool. “		
B126	Respondent 6:	”Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded.”	No response	
	Focus group 5	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B127	Respondent 1:	“Yes I can say we use it to develop the learners in totality because if you give a child for example a chance to <u>research</u> , I think the child when have the information he can utilize it effectively, and secondly it also makes him to be independent and not depend on his teacher or his parents. At the same time it encourages individuals to work and achieve to the best of their abilities. “	Yes Research	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B128	Respondent 2:	“I believe that portfolio as a tool encourages the total development and education of the child. In the sense that portfolio work does <u>not only focus on the work that is done in class</u> . Actually it includes activities like <u>research</u> , once the	Yes Not only class work	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes

		learner is given a task on a research he will be able to be challenged or to <u>think creatively or critically</u> so. In that we actually prepare him or her to be more of a critical thinker. “	Research Think creatively and critically	
B129	Respondent 3:	“Yes mam not in totality because most of the work given to the learners is homework and most of them get help for their parents and neighbours. So this can help improve their results because most of the time, if you get help from someone it is not easy to forget it, so but development is not in totality. “	Yes but..... Help from parents/ neighbours	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B130	Respondent 4:	I would say portfolios can be used to develop the learners in totality because it is a holistic approach. Even in a class where learners are doing Maths, you do the <u>theoretical</u> part that is something which is abstract; you can go to an extent of doing <u>practicals</u> somehow. So I would say yes it does allow total development of the learner. “	Yes Theory and practice	How portfolios are used for developmental purposes
B131	Respondent 5:	“Yes I want to agree with my colleagues. I mean portfolio work, if you give them work to do <u>at home there is that copying and taking somebody else’s work</u> . So the learners who will develop	Yes Copying work	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios

		are the ones who are working hard any way, but the rest anyway will basically be parasites, taking someone else's work and making it as if it is their own. So it does develop those who are hardworking any way. " "Those who are not working will not necessarily develop in totality because they are actually copying from the learners who have done their work. So I am confirming what I said initially, that it is actually an effective tool, but it is not effective in the sense that, I mean we cannot go through each and every script to check whether there was any copying or not. So it does develop those who are working hard, but those who are not working hard are actually left behind"	Only hardworking learners	for developmental purposes
B132	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 5	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B133	Respondent 1:	"Yes... Yes I can if I give them work <u>not as individuals</u> but <u>working as groups</u> and with others. Yes I can identify the problems maybe if I give them <u>projects</u>, others do not do it.	Yes Not individual work	How portfolios are used for identifying

		Therefore when I ask the question, why did you fail to adhere to the date, maybe some will say, they have some problems as individuals...eh those who cannot cope well with the job and those who are lazy to do the job, those who are copying, those may be the reason for having not doing the work because they have problems. “	Group work Projects	problems
B134	Respondent 2:	“Yes I am going to be a little bit negative, in the sense that some of the activities that are given to the learners, being national <u>activities, some of them are not relevant to the syllabi or to the work schedule.</u> I think if they can be modified to be more relevant, I think they will actually go a long way to develop us to be able to identify learners who actually struggle.”	Negative Have to do irrelevant activities	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B135	Respondent 3:	“So mam not in totality again, but I can say you can identify their problems because the portfolio assessment involves <u>different methods</u> , whereby you can identify some of the problems as I mentioned, that some of the portfolio work that learners are doing are homework. So you can identify the problems when you give learners a <u>controlled test, class work and other activities.</u> So the work that they are doing at home you cannot	Different methods Home work Test Class work Other activities	How portfolios are used for identifying problems Factors impacting on the

		be sure that it is a work of quality and you are not sure whether they have done it on their own or were assisted. “	Home work not sure if it is their own work	use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B136	Respondent 4:	“I think portfolio assessment, we can say we use it for identifying the learners’ problems, but because of the <u>time frame</u> we can meet all the options, which ever needs attention first. “	Time: cannot meet all needs	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B137	Respondent 5:	“Yah...again I agree with my colleague here, you can only use a test. I mean <u>tests</u> are the only reflection that is true of the learners, because the learners are writing on their own. <u>Assignments and projects</u> normally there are group works you know and obviously in <u>group work</u> those learners who are committed will usually contribute more, than those who just sit and listen and are basically lazy. So I think only <u>tests and</u>	Tests Assignments Projects Group work Only: Tests	How portfolios are used for identifying problems

		<u>examinations</u> which are also part of a portfolio work anyway. I think it is true we can use portfolio to identify those learners who are lagging behind or the slow learners, but only if we use tests."	Examinations	
B138	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 5	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information?		
B139	Respondent 1:	"I won't say yes or no but what I can say it can be positive and sometimes it can be negative because we have <u>different types of learners</u> in our classes. Others are hyperactive they want to work, others are not talking and they are shy but work hard, others are extroverts but they are shy. So I cannot say yes they do it, so my answer is partially yes and partially no. "	Yes/No Different types of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information
B140	Respondent 2:	"Yes I think I try to teach them to collect as much information as they can. For example I usually give learners a <u>research</u> , where they actually go out to research. That is basically one way of collecting information, and whilst that information is collected it actually has to be organized in such a way that it is structured	Yes Research	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and

		until it ultimately makes sense. I in terms of the presentation while the research is actually being written down the formal presentation take place. “		present information
B141	Respondent 3:	“As it is used as a tool for teaching, it involves a lot of lessons, for example like communicating teaching with the outside world. So the learners enjoy to learn what they know and what they understand. “	Communicating with the outside world: what learners know and understand	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B142	Respondent 4:	“ I Think portfolio assessment yes I do use it for teaching, then maybe to give the learners a chance to go and collect data and so on. Like my colleague has said before, most of the time it benefits those who are <u>passionate</u> and <u>committed</u> about the work they are doing, because others will just collect from those who have done the work. “	Yes Passionate and committed learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information
B143	Respondent 5:	“Eh... believe I do teach them to collect and organize data, by	Yes	How portfolios

		giving them <u>projects and research</u> , yes I am basically doing it. We let them go outside and collect data and analyse it. So I think that since this is a new system for all of us I cannot say we are perfecting it, but I mean we are actually doing what is required by policy. The policy says we have to give them work which requires them out of the class room to collect such data. So I think I do teach them that but not perfectly so. "	Policy Projects Research	are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B144	Respondent 6:	"Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded."	No response	
	Focus group 5	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B145	Respondent 1:	"Yes I can say yes by the mere fact that we give them instructions and also assessing them through their portfolios. Looking at the child to see whether he has achieved the objectives of a particular task or failed to achieve them You go back and respond to the child by mere doing that you are communicating with the child. "	Yes Respond as to whether achieved objectives	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B146	Respondent 2:	"Yes I think I do use portfolios as a communication tool. As you know that communication can be in various forms. I believe communication in the form of <u>written report</u> that is one form of	Yes Written report	How portfolios are used as a communication

		communication. I believe as a communication tool it is the best because it allows the learners to relate and cough out how he or she is thinking through a form of a report. “		tool
B147	Respondent 3:	“Yes it is a communication tool because it gives the learners a chance to <u>seek information from the libraries and to communicate with others</u> as a result it is a communication tool. “	Yes Libraries Communicate with others to find information	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B148	Respondent 4:	“Yes I say portfolio can be used as a communication tool because on another aspect it gives learners a chance to <u>share information</u> amongst themselves. It lets learners know what others are thinking. “	Yes Learners share information	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B149	Respondent 5:	“Yah I think I do use it as a communication tool because if parents come complaining about their children failing or anything. One would take out a portfolio of a particular learning area and <u>show the parent</u> that that the child has failed because of this and that. Basically that is communication and communication can be used as a tool to relate whatever	Yes Parents	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

		information you may have about the child being a retained or promoted child. Yes I do use it as a communication tool. “		
B150	Respondent 6:	“Did not honour the appointment no reasons forwarded.”	No response	
	Focus group 6	Question 1: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for assessing learners?		
B151	Respondent 1:	“I do use it as an assessment tool but I don’t think I am using it effectively. “	Not effective	
B152	Respondent 2:	“Yes I use it just like mam has already said, but I don’t think I used it to the maximum. “	Not effective	
B153	Respondent 3:	“Yes I use it to such an extent that some learners do not give us the portfolio. So we have problems there. “	Not effective	
B154	Respondent 4:	“Yes mam same applies to me, I try to use portfolio assessment, but based on the number of learners that we have, we do not use it effectively. “	Not effective	
B155	Respondent 5:	“Yes I do use portfolio but some of the criteria are not up to the standard, because <u>we do not use the criteria or format that is given to us in the policy or work schedule.</u> Like we have to	Not working according to policy District indications	

		assess what is given to us by <u>the education district office</u> which is not enough. I use it but though not satisfactory, because we follow what the district want and not the guidelines from the policy. “		
B156	Respondent 6:	“I use it mam but I don’t think it is effective...pass mam. ““	Not effective	
	Focus group 6	Question 2: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for developing learners?		
B157	Respondent 1:	“Ok I use it for developing learners but not in totality because of the <u>time frame and also the number of learners</u> in the classroom. So it does not give us enough time to develop learners in totality.”	Yes but.... Time frame Number of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B158	Respondent 2:	“Yes mam I am also echoing the same sentiments, I use it but I cannot cover the whole aspects of life, that is in totality. There are some restrictions in as far as the curriculum, is concerned, in other subjects, but in Life Orientation we are trying. Again the <u>number of learners</u> that we have in our classes are too many to	Yes but..... Number of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental

		can supervise hundred percent."		purposes
B159	Respondent:3	"Yes I use it to develop learners, but it is about the learners who try to or want to develop or to be developed. If the learner is not willing it becomes difficult. "	Yes Learner willingness	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B160	Respondent:4	"Pass mam. "		
B161	Respondent:5	"Yes I do use it although we have a problem, the <u>number of learners</u> in class. As a result we do not use it in totality, we only focus to those who are, those who show the <u>willingness</u> to be developed"	Yes Number of learners Willingness	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for developmental purposes
B162	Respondent:6	"We do not use it in totality because of the <u>number of learners</u> in the classroom. "	Yes Number of learners	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for

			Willingness	developmental purposes
	Focus group 6	Question 3: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for identifying the learners' problems?		
B163	Respondent 1:	"No we don't use it for identifying the learners' problems especially in totality. When we use it we sometimes identify the learners with problems, but we don't. As I indicated earlier on, we don't have <u>enough time to identify learners' individually and try to help them in totality</u> . We do try but just up to that point that we have according to time."	No Time	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying learner problems
B164	Respondent 2:	"No I don't think we use it, actually we have a problem of being guided by the Learning Area. So we cannot cover the child in totality. "	No Guided by Learning Area	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying learner problems
B165	Respondent 3:	"Pass mam. "		
B166	Respondent 4:	"Yes mam I say no for that one, for the mere fact that some of	No	Factors

		us we may <u>not</u> have the skills of identifying learners with <u>problems</u> , that is why I am saying no. “	Lack of skills to identify problems	impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying learner problems
B167	Respondent 5:	“No we do not use it for identifying the learners’ problems in totality because the portfolio work does not indicate everything that we have done in class. Some of the problems do not involve the curriculum. So we use portfolio <u>only for assessing the learners’ performance</u> especially in matters related to curriculum and what we have taught. And but not in totality. “	No Problems not related to curriculum Only for assessing performance related to curriculum	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios for identifying learner problems
B168	Respondent 6:	“We do not use it in totality, what I can say is that we’ve got, actually we don’t prepare it as a tool to identify the learners with problems, but we do have learners who have problems, but it is some of them not all of them. “	No	

	Focus group 6	Question 4: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a tool for teaching learners to collect, organize and present information accurately?		
B169	Respondent 1:	"No we do not use for that, I don't think I can do that. We just give them <u>instructions to go to the library and collect information and write it</u>. Then when they come back we just go through the task and we don't have <u>time to teach them step by step</u> it is impossible to it that way because of time"	No Library No time to teach learners	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information
B170	Respondent 2:	"Yes mam it is the way it is suppose to be done but I am trying although there is a difficulty of a <u>lot of paperwork</u>, which	Yes A lot of paper work	Factors impacting on the

		sometimes make things very much difficult to achieve the goal. “	Difficult to achieve goal	use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information
B171	Respondent 3:	“Mam I think yes because when we give learners a task or activity that want them to go the <u>library</u> to fetch information. Is not tat the learner is going to learn how collect information but to collect it and to be on the standard required in order to be able to do the portfolio work. “	Yes Library to collect information	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B172	Respondent 4:	“Yes mam I do try to use it to help learners to collect information, however the <u>number of learners</u> in the classroom make it impossible for all learners to be covered. Besides the level of communication of our learners is also a problem. <u>Some learners are not committed</u> and they are always playing truant most of the time. This makes it difficult for one as an educator to achieve what he or she wants to achieve. Yes I try but to some degree. “	Yes Number of learners Learners not committed	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information

B173	Respondent 5:	"Yes we use it like I said some of the Learning Areas are guided by policy with regard to what to assess and what is supposed to be in the learners' portfolios. According to my Learning Area EMS, in EMS in the learner's portfolio there must be a <u>projects</u>, <u>a case study and a research</u> and so they all contribute to that, that is the collecting, organizing and presentation of information accurately. So everything depends on the Learning Area and the department concerned, with regard to what we are supposed to do as educators. "	Yes Policy Depends on Learning Area Projects Case studies Research	How portfolios are used to teach learners how to collect, organize and present information
B174	Respondent 6:	"I think for that question the problem is with me as the teacher. I <u>think I don't have the skills to</u> help learners to research the information, so I think I need to be developed. "	Do not have the skills	Factors impacting on the use of portfolios to collect, organize and present information
	Focus group 6	Question 5: How do you as an educator use portfolio assessment as a communication tool?		
B175	Respondent 1:	"Pass mam. "		

B176	Respondent 2:	"Yes mam it is used as the communication tool, because when you are giving the learners a task to go and <u>research</u>, <u>when they give you what they have researched</u> you will be communicating with them. Yes it promotes a two way communication. "	Yes Two way communication Learners communicate their work to you	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B177	Respondent 3:	"Yes we use it as a communication tool because this is where you are going to pick up some problems from the learners. You will be able to see where the learner is lacking and where he is not coping at all. Through communication the teacher is able to help the learner. "	Yes Problems – communicate with learner	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B178	Respondent 4:	"Yes in the Social Sciences we have a session where learners have to come to <u>present something</u> in front. Then it reflects whether the learner has a clear understanding of whether he has performed and then as the educator I am able to know if the learner has an in depth knowledge or problem. In that way I say yes, we do use portfolio as a communication tool "	Yes Presentations: reflects learners understanding	How portfolios are used as a communication tool

B179	Respondent 5:	“Yes I think we do use portfolio assessment as a communication tool, although in some cases it is not done directly, that is through direct communication. What normally happens as the educator you just read, more especially case studies, then the learners answer questions then you give <u>feedback</u> on the case study. Therefore we communicate through feedback. “	Yes Feedback	How portfolios are used as a communication tool
B180	Respondent 6:	“I think this is how we communicate in class, say if you ask the learners the question in class, do you understand, if the learners say yes, of course this is how we communicate. If you give them a task you can see that this one understands better than the other one. Yes portfolio is a communication tool. “	Response not clear	

ANNEXURE C

RESEARCH PERMISSION

1. I have read the above and understand the contents of the same.

2. I hereby permit the researcher to use the above information for the purpose of the research.

3. I understand that the above information may be used for the purpose of the research and may be published in the form of a report, article, book, etc.

4. I understand that the above information may be used for the purpose of the research and may be published in the form of a report, article, book, etc.

5. I understand that the above information may be used for the purpose of the research and may be published in the form of a report, article, book, etc.



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

ENQUIRIES: NM STRYDOM

TO WHOM IT MAY CONERN

FROM : MS NM STRYDOM
ACT.SAO: POLICY & PLANNING UNIT
SEDIBENG WEST DISTRICT (D8)

DATE : 04 MAY 2007

This serves to confirm that permission has thus been granted to:

MS M TLOKOTSI

to conduct research in 46 Secondary Schools within the Sedibeng West District 9(D8)
on the topic:

"A Model for the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment"

for purposes of completing her PhD in Educational Sciences.

It is understood by Ms M Tlokotsi that this approval is granted on condition that her research will not take place during contact time and will therefore not disrupt teaching and learning.

It would be greatly appreciated if she can be afforded the opportunity to continue with her research without any prejudice.

Trusting you will find this to be in order.

Yours in Tirisano

MR SD THINANE
SENIOR MANAGER
SEDIBENG WEST DISTRICT (D8)

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
SEDIBENG WEST DISTRICT (D8)

Cnr Goodyear & Shakespeare Street
Goodyear Building
TEL: (016) 933 3300/1/94

Private Bag X067
Vanderbijlpark, 1900
Fax: (016) 933 2108



UMnyango WezeMfundo
Department of Education

Lefapha la Thuto
Departement van Onderwys

Date:	15 February 2007
Name of Researcher:	Tlokotsi Matsiliso
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 337
	Masoheng
	1908
Telephone Number:	0845946451
Fax Number:	0169863588
Research Topic:	A Model for the Implementation of Portfolio Assessment
Number and type of schools:	46 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Sedibeng West

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

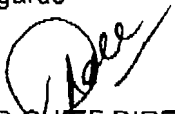
Permission has been granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met, and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted:

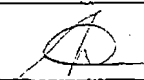
1. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter that would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*

4. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
5. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Persons who offer their co-operation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
6. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Senior Manager (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
7. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year.
8. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
9. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
10. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
11. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
12. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Senior Manager: Strategic Policy Development, Management & Research Coordination with one Hard Cover bound and one Ring bound copy of the final, approved research report. The researcher would also provide the said manager with an electronic copy of the research abstract/summary and/or annotation.
13. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
14. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Senior Manager concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards


ACTING CHIEF DIRECTOR: OFSTED

The contents of this letter has been read and understood by the researcher.	
Signature of Researcher:	
Date:	04/05/2007

ANNEXURE D

LETTERS TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, EDUCATORS, PARENTS AND LEARNERS



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

P.O.Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

21 January 2008

INFORMED CONSENT (PRINCIPAL)

Dear Principal

I am busy with a research study for my PhD- degree. I need your permission to conduct research at your school. This document will provide you with information regarding the project and what the involvement of your school will entail. If you feel comfortable with the contents of the explanation I will appreciate it if you could sign the section indicating your consent to take part in the study.

Kindly note the following before you give consent to participate in the project.

There are programmes in place offered by the Department of Education intended for supporting educators in the implementation of portfolio assessment in schools. It is the opinion of the researcher, that the programmes are not fully providing educators with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively and efficiently. This study therefore intends to develop a model which will enable the educators to implement the process more effectively and efficiently.

I have obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct this research and therefore now request your permission to conduct research in your school with Grade nine educators and learners. I will personally address the learners and educators and explain the research to them and request them to complete a questionnaire for me and take part in focus group interviews (educators only). They will be informed that participation is not compulsory and that they may withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable. The completion of the questionnaire will be done after school and it will take them twenty minutes to complete it. Interviews will also take place after school, will last for about an hour, and will be scheduled at a time convenient for the educators. Learners and educators need to provide their perceptions regarding the way in which portfolio assessment is presently conducted in the classroom.

There are no direct benefits for taking part in the study. The designed model though may in future help your educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The responses that you present will be kept confidential by the researcher. When reporting about the outcomes of the study no names will be revealed.

The research is conducted by a doctoral student, M.M. Tlokotsi under the supervision of Dr M.M. Grosser from the school of Educational Sciences, North West University (Vaal Triangle Campus). If you have any question or queries you can contact Dr Grosser at 016 910 3063 (work).

CONSENT:

I.....(full name) have read and understand the nature of my participation in the project and agree to participate

Signature:.....

Date:.....



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

P.O.Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

21 January 2008

INFORMED CONSENT (EDUCATORS)

Dear Educator

I am busy with a research study for my PhD- degree. I need your assistance to provide me with information to complete the study. This document will provide you with information regarding the project and what your involvement will entail. If you feel comfortable with the contents of the explanation I will appreciate it if you could sign the section indicating your consent to take part in the study.

Kindly note the following before you give consent to participate in the project.

There are programmes in place offered by the Department of Education intended for supporting educators in the implementation of portfolio assessment in schools. It is the opinion of the researcher, that the programmes are not fully providing educators with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively. This study therefore intends to develop a model which will enable the educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

With the permission of the Gauteng Department of Education and principals in secondary schools falling under the Sedibeng West Education District, I will visit schools and ask for permission to select Grade nine educators to participate in the study. I will personally address the educators and request them to complete a questionnaire and take part in focus group interviews. Educators will be informed that participation is not compulsory and that they may withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable. The completion of the questionnaire will be done after school and it will take twenty minutes to complete it. Interviews will also be scheduled after school at a convenient time for everybody and will last for about an hour. Educators need to provide information regarding the way they utilize portfolio assessment in the classroom.

There are no direct benefits for taking part in the study. The designed model though may in future help educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The responses that you present will be kept confidential by the researcher. When reporting about the outcomes of the study no names will be revealed.

The research is conducted by a doctoral student, M.M. Tlokotsi under the supervision of Dr M.M. Grosser from the school of Educational Sciences, North West University (Vaal Triangle Campus). If you have any question or queries you can contact Dr Grosser at 016 910 3063 (work).

CONSENT:

I.....(full name) have read and understand the nature of my participation in the project and agree to participate

Signature:.....

Date:.....



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

P.O.Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

21 January 2008

INFORMED CONSENT (PARENTS / GUARDIANS)

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am busy with a research study for my PhD- degree. I need your permission to involve (Name of the learner) as a participant to provide me with information to complete the study. This document will provide you with information regarding the project and what the learner's involvement will entail. If you feel comfortable with the contents of the explanation I will appreciate it if you could sign the section indicating your consent to that he/she may participate in the study.

Kindly note the following before you give consent to participate in the project.

There are programmes in place offered by the Department of Education intended for supporting educators in the implementation of portfolio assessment in schools. It is the opinion of the researcher, that the programmes are not fully providing educators with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively. This study therefore intends to develop a model which will enable the educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

With the permission of the Gauteng Department of Education and principals in secondary schools falling under the Sedibeng West Education District, I will visit schools and ask for permission to select learners who will participate in the study. I will personally address the learners, explain the research to them and request them to complete a questionnaire for me. Learners will be informed that participation is not compulsory and that they may withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable. The completion of the questionnaire will be done after school and it will take them twenty minutes to complete it. Learners need to provide information on how portfolio assessment is currently implemented in their classrooms.

There are no direct benefits for taking part in the study. The designed model though may in future help educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

CONFIDENTIALTY: The responses that you present will be kept confidential by the researcher. When reporting about the outcomes of the study no names will be revealed.

The research is conducted by a doctoral student, M.M. Tlokotsi under the supervision of Dr M.M. Grosser from the school of Educational Sciences, North West University (Vaal Triangle Campus). If you have any question or queries you can contact Dr Grosser at 016 910 3063 (work).

CONSENT:

I.....(full name) have read and understand the nature of my participation in the project and agree to participate

Signature:.....

Date:.....



NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITHI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT
VAAL TRIANGLE CAMPUS

P.O.Box 1174, Vanderbijlpark
South Africa, 1900

21 January 2008

INFORMED CONSENT (LEARNER)

Dear Learner

I am busy with a research study for my PhD-degree. I need your assistance to provide me with information to complete the study. This document will provide you with information regarding the project and what your involvement will entail. If you feel comfortable with the contents of the explanation I will appreciate it if you could sign the section indicating your consent to take part in the study.

Kindly note the following before you give consent to participate in the project.

There are programmes in place offered by the Department of Education intended for supporting educators in the implementation of portfolio assessment in schools. It is the opinion of the researcher, that the programmes are not fully providing educators with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement portfolio assessment effectively. This study therefore intends to develop a model which will enable the educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

With the permission of the Gauteng Department of Education and principals in secondary schools falling under the Sedibeng West Education District, I will personally address the learners and request them to complete a questionnaire for me. Learners will be informed that participation is not compulsory and that they may withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable. The completion of the questionnaire will be done after school and it will take twenty minutes to complete it. Learners need to respond to questions that will determine their view on how portfolio assessment is presently conducted.

There are no direct benefits for taking part in the study. The designed model though may in future help educators to improve the implementation of portfolio assessment.

CONFIDENTIALITY: The responses will be kept confidential by the researcher. When reporting about the outcomes of the study no names will be revealed.

The research is conducted by a doctoral student, M.M. Tlokotsi under the supervision of Dr M.M. Grosser from the school of Educational Sciences, North West University (Vaal Triangle Campus). If you have any question or queries you can contact Dr Grosser at 016 910 3063 (work).

CONSENT:

I.....(full name) have read and understand the nature of my participation in the project and agree to participate

Signature:.....

Date:.....