BUILDING A PORTFOLIO OF ABET PRACTICE

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ABET-Style

Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the module, **Building a Portfolio of ABET Practice.** It is one of the modules in both the Higher Certificate and the Diploma in Adult Basic Education and Training. The aim of the module aims to help you build up a portfolio of evidence for your own ABET practice. Through this you may become familiar with the kind of advice and instruction you need to give to adult learners preparing evidence to be assessed on their achievement of literacy and basic education learning outcomes.

The module is an introductory one at level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is meant to outline adult learning information that is of practical application to an entry-level adult basic education and training practitioner.

In this first section we introduce you to the contents of the module. In it you will find basic information about

- the purpose of the module
- the learning outcomes for the module
- the study units in the module
- the study guide material and readings
- sources of additional information
- tutorial support
- assignments and assessment
- study expectations.

Purpose of the module

This module has two main purposes: firstly, to enable you to assist learners who wish to prepare, organise, present and check evidence about their practical outcomes-based assessment achievements; and secondly, to help you in presenting a portfolio of your own evidence of learning achievements. The module will train you in a particular method of recording outcomes-based assessment evidence on competence in various aspects of adult basic education and training.

Learning outcomes

The statements of learning outcomes provided below tell you what **results** are expected from your study of this module. The statements tell you what material you are expected to learn, master and know as well as what you should be able to do or demonstrate. Of course these learning outcomes rest on the assumption that you will read and study this study guide, engage in the recommended study activities and complete all the assignments.

> At the end of the module, you should be able to do the following (both in spoken and appropriate written form):
>
> (1) provide ABET learners with information on portfolio assessment
> (2) advise and support ABET learners to prepare, organise and present assessment evidence
> (3) check learner evidence and give feedback on it

The module study units

This module consists of the following topic areas covered in six study units of printed material:

Study unit	Title	Topics covered
1	Outcomes-based assessment and the National Qualifications Framework	Principles and procedures of outcomes-based assessment The National Qualifications Framework and assessment The use of registered assessors
2	What is a portfolio?	The requirements for your portfolio How to complete your portfolio
3	Preparing assessment evidence	Ensuring that assessment instructions are clear Anticipating the barriers to collecting evidence What is valid, relevant, authentic and sufficient evidence?
4	Organising assessment evidence	How does one organise evidence? How does one present evidence?
5	Checking assessment evidence	How does one check the validity, authenticity, relevance and sufficiency of evidence?
6	Giving feedback on evidence	The rules of good feedback Feedback on readiness Feedback on sufficiency Feedback for positive action

To be effective, adult educators not only have to teach or train but also facilitate assessment – assessment that enables the learner and other interested parties to be certain that the learner has achieved the desired learning outcomes. Part of this facilitation of assessment is to ensure that the learners are able to present all the right evidence that shows that they have achieved these learning outcomes.

The study guide material and readings

The instruction in this module is done in two ways:

(1) through this study guide with its study units of printed course material and readings which you are expected to read and study

(2) through interactions with a tutorial group (if you are able to attend one)

Study units

The printed course material for this module is subdivided into six **study units**. Each study unit covers topics relating to one of the learning outcomes.

What is in each study unit?

Each study unit has

- a purpose
- learning outcomes
- content material
- activities
- readings
- further reading

Purpose

This provides a **general** statement on what you will learn in the study unit and what material has been supplied to help you do this.

Study unit learning outcomes

These are **specific** statements about what you will be able to do when you have worked through the study unit and engaged in other course activities relating to the study unit.

Content material

This is the material you will read and think about. Other support material, mainly readings, may also be used.

Activities

Included in the study material will be a number of learning tasks you will perform. These tasks should help you monitor your own understanding of the material. The activities will include questions, exercises, self-tests and ideas to think and write about.

Reading(s)

At the end of some of the study units you may find a reading or readings.

Further reading

A list of further reading will be provided near the end of each study unit. These readings can be found in textbooks, books, journal articles and other publications as well as on the internet. You will have to find these readings yourself. In nearly all cases, the books and journals are available at Unisa Library, and some at the University's regional centres.

How much time should I spend on each study unit?

This module is rated at 12 credits. This means that it is assumed that you will spend about 120 hours of study on this module. This means that you need to plan to spend time reading the materials, engaging in the activities as you read, attending tutorials, writing assignments and preparing for and writing the examination.

We recommend that you study for the following number of hours as indicated in the table below:

Activity	Duration
Reading through the whole study guide (6 study units)	40 hours
Doing the activities	40 hours
Writing the assignments	20 hours
Preparing for and writing examination	20 hours

Sources of additional information

Most of the basic information you need for the module is either presented in this study guide, in the tutorial sessions or available in the tutorial letter you received with the study guide.

But what about information you need that is not found in the above? What other information do you need?

The internet

Another primary source of information is the internet or world wide web. Unisa does have computer facilitiesthat you can use to access this computer-based resource.

Other students studying this module

Studying on your own can be a lonely task. A rich resource of support, information and experience is your fellow students (whether given informally, by your setting up a study group or by joining a Unisa tutorial group).

Support from the module coordinator

You can make use of the support given by the module coordinator. You are welcome to make appointments to see him or her. You can also communicate with him or her by letter, telephone, fax or email (details are provided in the tutorial letter).

Assignments and assessment

The assessment in this module will be based on the **assignments** and the **examination**.

You will be required to complete **two assignments** during the module. Each assignment has a due date and must be sent in on or before that date. The two assignments are compulsory and they will count 10% towards your final mark.

Completion of the **first assignment** is a requirement for entry to the final examination. If you do not complete and submit this assignment, you will not be allowed to write the examination.

The examination

This will be written at one of the recognised Unisa examination centres. The examination will be a two-hour paper.

Things to remember about assessment

In thinking about assessment, remember that what should be assessed is **your demonstration** that you have achieved the **learning outcomes** for the module. To this end you need to

(1) show that you have a **knowledge** of adult learning (which you demonstrate by writing about adult learning in appropriate ways in the assignments and examination answers)
(2) demonstrate that you have the **skills** to think and plan how you would use your knowledge of adult learning in practical ways in your education and training activities
(3) display **attitudes** that indicate that the knowledge you have of how adults learn is meaningful to you personally (both as an adult learner and as an educator of adults), and that the way you use your skills will be effective when working with adults (which is displayed in the way you demonstrate your knowledge and skills)

The following actions will **not** help you demonstrate your achievement of the learning outcomes:

(1) Writing what you have learnted by **rote** (this means learning words, texts or facts off by heart without really understanding their meaning). You will not do well in your assessments if you simply write down the study material word for word (verbatim).
(2) Not making use of your own experience. We are interested in your experiences, ideas, feelings and activities as an adult learner. You will do well in your assessments if you combine what you have learnt in the study material with your own well-thought-out ideas. You will succeed if can show us that you are able to apply what you have learnt in your work and activities.

Study expectations

To be truly successful in this module you will need to spend many study hours reading and writing. The module was written assuming that you have a school grade 12 level of competence in

the language of instruction and in reading and writing skills. It is further assumed that you can learn from predominantly written material and that you can find, analyse and evaluate information relevant to the learning programme. Lastly, you are expected to spend time carefully reading and studying the study material and readings provided, do the assignments and prepare for the examinations.

STUDY UNIT 1

Outcomes-based assessment and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- describe the functions of the NQF
- list at least FOUR principles and procedures of outcomes-based assessment
- discuss how and where to use registered assessors in teaching

1.1   INTRODUCTION

As the name suggests, outcomes-based education indicates that education should have an end product or outcome. In other words, teaching and learning should lead to concrete results in order to prove that learning has in fact occurred as a result of instruction. The learner is therefore the centre of the teaching and learning processes as well as the assessment that follows these processes. Assessment in outcomes-based education must be holistic and aimed at measuring specific skills and knowledge the learner has acquired. Assessment therefore occurs in different ways not only to afford the learner multiple opportunities to demonstrate competencies but also to measure such competencies from various angles (perspectives) for the realisation of authentic assessment.

1.2   PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES FOR OUTCOMES-BASED ASSESSMENT

In outcomes-based education, assessment is not left to chance. To be able to make an informed and reliable judgment on a learner's competencies, the process of assessment must be guided by certain criteria or principles. The principles and criteria used for assessment should relate to performance. The following are some of the principles that govern outcomes-based assessment:

- The educator must increase the range of assessment styles and methods. For example, a test or examination alone cannot adequately measure a learner's competencies because it is a once-off or single method. Assessment should provide learners with plenty of opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their competencies in the specific knowledge and skills they have acquired.
- Methods and styles of the assessment procedure must be appropriate to the outcomes being measured. If, for example, a learner is to be assessed on her typing skills, the procedures and methods for measuring such competencies should not include the skills need to repair the computer or typewriter. Assessment should focus only on the competencies of specific skills and knowledge that need to be measured.
- Assessment must be planned and continuous and integrated into teaching. It must be both formative (ie process), summative (ie product), formal and informal in order to give a clear and holistic picture of the learner's overall competencies. Thus assessment should be regarded as part of teaching-learning and building blocks that end up in a final product. Learner achievement should not be based only on the results of summative assessment.
- Outcomes-based assessment should comprise a variety of methods and be learner-centred to allow the learner to provide some input. The assessment process and procedure should not only be the domain of the educator. A variety of methods or strategies such as self-assessment (learners assessing themselves), portfolio assessment (learners keeping records of their own learning efforts), peer assessment (learners assessing one another's work), joint assessment (both learner and educator assessing the learner's work) and group assessment (learners being assessed in groups).

The ABET policy document (DoE 1997:57–58) adds that outcomes-based assessment must

- be accessible and developmental – that is, assessment should be convenient, accessible to learners and yield results that both educators and planners can use to improve learner performance
- use methods, instruments and processes that are sensitive to and devoid of various forms of bias and discrimination (eg cultural values or language)
- be integrative – that is, it must assess the skills, knowledge and value outcomes of learning in an integrative and not an isolated manner
- be moderated for it to yield valid and reliable results which are of high quality across all sectors
- be based on learning outcomes, range statements and assessment criteria stated in the specific unit standards
- recognise the prior learning and experience of learners for credits
- be relevant – that is, focus on skills, knowledge and values that are relevant to the learning outcomes; it must be appropriate and close to the ways in which people learn and how they will use or apply the skills and knowledge being assessed
- be reliable – that is, assessment must produce similar results consistently, regardless of the assessor or context
- be valid – that is, assessment must test what it is intended to examine or find out and nothing more

Explain in your own words the the meaning of the following terms:

- transparency
- measurability
- fairness

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1.3 THE NQF AND ASSESSMENT

According to the ABET policy document (DoE 1997), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was established through Act 58 of 1995. The mission of SAQA is to

- create an integrated framework for learning
- enhance the quality of learning
- accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities
- contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the socioeconomic development of South Africa

To realise the above mandate, SAQA established its operative arm, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

What is the NQF?

The NQF is a set of principles and guidelines that provides a national vision, philosophy and organisational structure for a qualifications system in South Africa. In short, the NQF is a unified structure of recognised qualifications. It is a framework of qualifications that records learner achievement and this (learner achievement) can only be realised through the various forms of assessment. As a set of principles, the NQF provides guidelines on registering records of learner achievement (SAQA Act 58 of 1995, s 2).

What exactly does the NQF do?

By providing principles and guidelines for recording learner achievement, the NQF both enhances national recognition of knowledge and skills and ensures an integrated system that encourages lifelong learning. Nkomo (2000:13–19) adds that the NQF philosophy indicates that decisions on learning programme design, development, delivery and assessment need to constantly consider the learning outcomes that learners need to demonstrate. Programme developers need to ensure that the learning programmes accommodate opportunities to develop and assess the critical outcomes. The NQF provides for an integrated or holistic assessment. An integrated assessment envisaged by the NQF must be appropriately incorporated into teaching and learning to ensure that the purpose of a qualification is achieved. Such assessments, according to Nkomo (2000), must use a range of formative and summative measurements such as portfolios, simulations, workplace assessments and written and oral examinations.

The NQF provides clear learning pathways, access, mobility and progression in education and training. The pathways assure learners that improvement in knowledge and skills could increase opportunities for employment. This assurance encourages people to study and acquire better knowledge and skills for both personal and national development.

NQF levels

NQF level	Band	Qualification type
8	Higher	Postdoctoral research degrees
7	Education	Doctorates
		Master's degrees
6	and	Professional qualifications
5	Training	Honours degrees
		National first degrees
		Higher diplomas
		National diplomas
		National certificates
Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)		
4	Further	National certificates
3	Education	
2	and	
	Training	
General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)		
1	General Education and Training	Grade 9 ABET level 4 National certificates

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ACTIVITY 1.2 (self-assessment)

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(1) List two principles of outcomes-based assessment.
(2) Briefly discuss why these principles are important in assessing adult learners.
(3) Briefly describe the NQF in your own words.

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STUDY UNIT 2

What is a Portfolio?

STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- describe a portfolio and its functions
- discuss the requirements and purpose of a portfolio
- prepare a portfolio for assessment

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The traditional method of assessment procedure focuses on one method, that is, a written test or examination. This type of assessment is narrow and inadequate because it does not allow for the learners' input. It is once-off exercise that does not take into consideration a learner's input, initiative and learning activities over time. If, for instance, a learner were to fall ill or be involved in an accident during the period of the test or examination, all her/his efforts for the year would not be considered and he/she would be regarded as a failure.

Outcomes-based assessment, however, looks at the assessment of learners in a far broader way. It does not only consist of a test or a one- or two-hour written examination. In outcomes-based assessment, other procedures and methods of collecting evidence on learners' competencies (apart from tests or examinations) are put into practice or taken on board.

This study unit introduces you to one important assessment method, that is the portfolio. The nature, functions, requirements and preparation of a portfolio as a means of collecting evidence of skills and knowledge (competencies) form the focus of this study unit.

2.2 THE PORTFOLIO: ITS NATURE AND FUNCTIONS

A portfolio is a record of evidence of a learner's learning efforts over time. It is an alternative assessment method that provides a profile of a learner's learning achievements, in particular skills and knowledge. In other words, a portfolio is a collection of a learner's work which provides a

representation of his/ her achievements. It includes evidence of a learner's work compiled for assessment. According to Palomba and Banta (1999:131), a portfolio is a type of assessment in which learners' work is systematically collected and carefully reviewed for evidence of learning and development. As an alternative method of assessment, a portfolio assists learners to provide evidence in all the steps they have taken to acquire specific knowledge and skills. The process of building a portfolio as evidence of learning (competencies) makes learners committed, account-able and responsible in both learning and assessment processes. A portfolio has the following important functions:

- It showcases a learner's competence in specific knowledge and skills.
- It allows the learner to reflect on what has been taught and learnt so that he/she can provide the assessor with evidence to support his/her learning efforts and achievements.
- It is a summary of the best or quality work done by learners at their own initiative, and can be presented for assessment and grading.
- It helps learners to start a [tray] of evidence of their successes and lessons learnt.
- It gives learners time to reflect on their progress and communicate what they have learnt in a positive way.
- It preserves a detailed picture of learners' achievements over time and helps them to track such achievements.

Asssessment by means of a portfolio is less competitive, more informative, involves learners in self-evaluation and promotes learning. It makes learners more responsible for their own learning and thus prepares them to be responsible thinking citizens. Juniewicz (2003:74) adds that the process of building a portfolio encourages students to accept responsibility for their own work through reflection, self-assessment, goal setting and explaining their work accountably.

2.3   REQUIREMENTS FOR A PORTFOLIO

The importance of a portfolio as an assessment tool was explained above. An assessment portfolio has to satisfy certain requirements, as highlighted below.

- **Quality**. A portfolio as an assessment tool is judged by its quality – hence the need for it to be well planned, organised and presented.
- **Relevant information**. To meet the requirements as an assessment tool, a portfolio must contain specific signficant information, that is, evidence of the learner's work and achieve-ments. Information on what the learner is capable of doing is crucial for a portfolio as an alternative method of assessment.
- **Learning outcomes**. As a requirement for assessment, a portfolio should contain the state-ments of specific skills, knowledge or competencies the learner should acquire as a result of instruction. The anticipated learning outcomes, which form the basis of assessment, must be listed by the learner. Without learning outcomes, it will be difficult if not impossible to conduct a valid, consistent and authentic assessment.
- **Assessment criteria**. At the start of any course of study, the criteria (guidelines) on how learning outcomes will be measured (ie how assessment will be conducted) is set out for learners. Since the learner knows the assessment criteria ahead of time, he/she is required to include such guidelines when preparing a portfolio for assessment. The inclusion of the assessment criteria in the portfolio should assist any qualified assessor (not necessarily

the educator or the course presenter) to measure the learner's competencies in a more valid and authentic manner.

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(1) List three functions of an assessment portfolio.
(2) Discuss any three requirements for an assessment portfolio.

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2.4   HOW TO COMPLETE A PORTFOLIO

The traditional form of assessment (eg a test or examination of one to 3 hours) has been criticised by many in recent times as narrow, less authentic and therefore inadequate in measuring what learners actually know. In outcomes-based education, assessment covers a range of formative and summative activities. Portfolio assessment has become a vital part of integrated assessment practice in OBE – hence the need forlearners to learn and acquire the skills in building portfolios. In building or completing a print portfolio, the learner must ensure that the following important information is included in the binder or file:

(1) **Title page**. The building of a portfolio must start with a title page. In the same way as every book needs a cover, every portfolio must have a title page to tell the reader, at a glance, what is contained in the binder or file. The title page affords the learner an opportunity to make a good first impression, since the builder (of the portfolio) can configure it to best show the information and deliver his/her message (Jones & Shelton 2006:108).

(2) **Table of contents**. A portfolio, like a book or file, needs a table of contents. The table of contents may differ from one portfolio to the next, each one reflecting its unique features, entries and organisation. According to Jones and Shelton (2006:109), a table of contents serves two purposes. Firstly, it informs the reader about what the learner has included in the document; and secondly, it tells the reader how the learner has organised the contents.

(3) **Self-introduction**. A portfolio must include a self- introduction page in which the learner introduces himself or herself. The learner can attach his/her photograph to the self-introduction page and provide a concise personal story and professional or career information about himself/herself. The self-introduction information may be guided by the following two things (Jones & Shelton 2006)

(a) the purpose of developing the portfolio– that is, the builder must keep his/her audience in mind

(b) the type of content the builder/learner wishes to reveal to the reader or audience

(4) **Philosophy statement**. It is crucial for a learner portfolio to include a personal philosophy statement. tTis is a short statement of what the learner thinks about life or what guides his/her life. The following is an example of the philosophy for a nursery school teacher: Children are like growing plants; they need to be nurtured.

(5) **Major learning achieved**. An assessment portfolio must focus on the learning (ie skills and knowledge or competencies) achieved by the learner through the various activities he/she has undertaken. The details of learning should be presented in the evidence section of the portfolio.

(6) **Evidence pages**. A learner assessment portfolio must include evidence pages. The captions and explanations provided should tell the reader what to look for and what the information means in relation to the criteria set by the assessor. Some of the assessment evidence a learner could include in his/her portfolio to show the skills, knowledge and competencies acquired would be the assessment reports by peers, a few assignments done and marked by the teacher or peers, reports and pictures of projects (done by the learner alone or in a group), artifacts and detailed information on his/her other efforts at learning.

ACTIVITY 2.2

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(self-sssessment)

(1) Describe the two types of assessment techniques you encountered in this study unit.
(2) Which technique, in your own opinion, is more learner centred? Give reasons for your answer.
(3) In one sentence, express your personal philosophy of life.

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STUDY UNIT 3

Preparing assessment evidence

STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- provide your learners with clear instructions on assessment
- anticipate some barriers to collecting assessment evidence
- describe what constitutes a valid, relevant, authentic and sufficient evidence

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This study unit introduces you to the preparation of assessment evidence in outcomes-based education. It explains the concept of evidence and examines ways of making assessment instructions clear. The study unit also discusses a number of anticipated barriers to the collection of assessment evidence, and what constitutes valid, relevant, authentic and sufficient evidence.

3.2 WHAT IS ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE?

The term "evidence" may be defined as information that proves a fact or a proposition. The *Concise Oxford dictionary of current English* (1990) defines it as available facts or circumstances supporting something, or a belief or proposition indicating whether or not something is true or valid. Evidence describes all the components of a portfolio that support the builder's claims of competence with regard to knowledge, skills, dispositions and accomplishments (Jones & Shelton 2006: 65). In the context of outcomes-based education, assessment evidence may be described as clear and obvious information which establishes what a particular learner has achieved. These may include the learner's work samples, observations, lesson plans, photographs, journals and field work.

ACTIVITY 3.1

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Take a few minutes and write down the answers to the following questions:

- Why do we assess learners?
- When do we assess learners?
- Why do we need evidence in outcomes-based assessment?

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3.3 ENSURING THE ASSESSMENT INSTRUCTIONS ARE CLEAR

In outcomes-based education, evidence is crucial in assessing learners. Owing to the significance of evidence, both the educator and the learner must know what outcomes are expected in a specific assessment. The evidence required to show that a particular learning outcome has been achieved or performed is far more important than it used to be when all that was needed was a mark or a symbol (Sieborger & Macintosh 2002:44).

To enable learners to produce valid evidence, the educator must provide them with clear assessment instructions. This means a specific learning outcome and its consequent assessment criterion should be provided during the teaching-learning interface or prior to assessment. As they learn or work through various activities, learners should be made aware of how they would be assessed and the kind of evidence that would be required of them.

Consider the following example:

Specific outcome

The learner should be able to demonstrate knowledge and skill in typing his/her postal address, saving the document and shutting down the computer.

Assessment criterion:

Practical demonstration is identified.

In the above example, the assessment instructions and criterion are clear, straightforward and unambiguous to both the educator and the learner. The evidence to be produced and collected here relates to the following: *opening the computer, typing the address, saving the document and shutting down the computer.*

3.4 ANTICIPATING THE BARRIERS TO COLLECTING EVIDENCE

In collecting assessment evidence, one can foresee some obstacles which may impede the learner's success or progress. A few of the barriers to the collection of assessment evidence are highlighted below.

- Language could be a barrier to the collection of assessment evidence. Many people learn through a second or even a third language and may experience barriers when their communication skills in the language for the assessment are limited. Some of the written or spoken words may be above the level of the learners, which could make it difficult for them to understand the information required of them. Some like to impress their readers by using words or concepts unknown to non-native speakers of the language of instruction. This could prevent learners from demonstrating their competencies in the knowledge and skills being assessed.

  To minimise language barriers, educators and/or assessors should use simple words of a language in which both the learner and the assessor are able to communicate adequately.

- Ambiguity in instructions and answers could become obstacles to learners during assessment. In a situation where assessment instructions are unclear or some of the items (say, multiple-choice questions) have more than one correct answer, the learners might not be able to demonstrate their competencies as required. This can be avoided if the assessment instructions are clear and understandable to the learners and moderated by a qualified moderator who can draw the attention of the assessor to the possible barriers and suggests ways to overcome them.
- Using bias assessment tools could be a possible source of barriers to evidence collection. Some assessment instruments, methods and processes might discriminate against particular learners or could be biased towards their gender and cultural values. Learners may come from rural, urban, rich or poor homes or different cultural backgrounds. Hence the application of unbalanced assessment instruments, methods and procedures may favour only some of the learners or undermine the gender and cultural values of others.

  In anticipation of such possible barriers, the instruments, methods and processes for collecting evidence must be balanced, fair and inclusive.

3.5   WHAT IS VALID, RELEVANT, AUTHENTIC AND SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE?

Valid, relevant, authentic and sufficient assessment evidence indicates that the final product presented, exhibited or demonstrated by the learners is of sound quality, acceptable, consistent, adequate and covers the specific skills and knowledge set out to be measured. Thus the evidence provided is genuine (work of the learner), substantiated with documentary evidence, reliable and enough for a judgment on a learner's competencies. Sieborger and Macintosh (2002:35) add that an authentic assessment is appropriate for the purpose for which it is used and for the nature of what is being assessed. It includes more practical, realistic and challenging approaches to assessment than traditional written methods.

If a portfolio assessment is to satisfy all the criteria listed above, it must be planned and organised systematically and fairly. For assessment evidence to be valid, genuine, consistent and sufficient it must be holistic, continuous and inclusive. What this means is that the learners must be assessed in their entirety by providing them with multiple opportunities and methods. The result of a single method of assessment (say, a written or oral test) cannot report on all the competencies of a learner. Assessment should therefore be based on a variety of methods, procedures or forms such as written/oral tests, portfolio, demonstrations, debates, projects and examinations. All these forms of assessment must be both formative and summative in order to holistically measure what the learner knows. They must be done continuously and the learner's achievement recorded over time. This makes it possible to record and report on the overall authentic and valid competencies of the learner in specific knowledge and skills.

Jones and Shelton (2006:66–67) suggest the following guidelines on selecting and using evidence:

- All evidence should express the voice of the builder. In other words, the evidence must be an honest and accurate representation of the learner's work, learning, accomplishments, understanding and practices at a given time.

- All evidence should relate back to and support the purpose of the portfolio – that is, the learner should evaluate the relevance of the evidence in terms of how it helps to meet the purpose of the portfolio.
- Each piece of evidence should be weighed against criteria to determine the best fit. In other words, each piece of information must demonstrate what the learner knows in relation to the criteria to be met.
- Evidence must be explained to clearly communicate connections and relevance to the criteria and/or philosophy. This means that the reason for including each piece of information should be made transparent to the reader/assessor.
- The body of chosen evidence should be evaluated to ensure balanced coverage of all criteria. In other words, although specifications for the breadth and depth of coverage of criteria may vary, the learner should ensure that all the criteria are adequately addressed.

| ACTIVITY 3.2 | (self-assessment) |

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(1) List three possible barriers to evidence collection.
(2) How can these barriers be reduced?

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STUDY UNIT 4

Organising assessment evidence

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- organise evidence for assessment
- present evidence for assessment

4.1   INTRODUCTION

At present, the only way to prove that learning has taken place is through valid and authentic assessment where the learner is afforded opportunities to show evidence of learning. Such assessment should, however, be based on explicit and transparent learning outcomes. Before evidence can be presented for assessment, the learner must organise it. In this study unit we focus on how to organise and present assessment evidence.

ACTIVITY 4.1

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Take a few minutes to write down the answers to the following questions:

- How would you convince a stranger that you can drive a motorcar?
- What would you present as evidence of your driving skills?

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4.2   HOW TO ORGANISE ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

In outcomes-based education, assessment evidence can be any object or piece of information which establishes or shows what a learner has achieved. Evidence gives substance to a learner's claims of competence which is why every portfolio must include relevant evidence of specific knowledge and skills. The following are examples of the assessment evidence a learner can include in an assessment portfolio: information on individual or group project, records of work done, examination and test papers and reports or results. If assessment is based on written work such as assignments, the different items or questions must be arranged or answered on different

pages with clearly stated subtitles, sections and page numbers. Where the evidence involves or requires diagrams, sketches, calculations, maps, and so on, these must be clearly labelled for easy identification and understanding by the reader. The learner must organise captions and explanations in such a way that the information the reader looks for is easily available and relates to the criteria set by the educator/assessor.

Jones and Shelton (2006) suggest the following hints for learners who build or compile portfolios for assessment:

- **Alignment**. The issue of alignment relates to the placement of elements or evidence on the pages of the portfolio. Alignment requires the portfolio builder to consider the whole space – edge to edge – where the margins, blank spaces and graphic elements work together.
- **Proximity**. This relates to how close the graphic elements are to one another. The principle of proximity requires the learner to arrange the evidence in such a way that similar elements are grouped together in the same section and dissimilar elements separated.
- **Use of graphic elements**. This is of great concern when designing a print assessment portfolio. The portfolio should not be overdressed with too many graphic elements. The style of arranging evidence by overdecorating the portfolio could embellish the background, font sixes or borders, but completely overwhelm the evidence or information. Graphics should therefore be used with caution.

4.3   HOW TO PRESENT EVIDENCE FOR ASSESSMENT

Portfolios, like books and magazines, are publications. The more appealing they are, the better chance they have of being read and taken seriously (Jones & Shelton 2006). Assessment evidence in print form should be presented in ring binders with a clear table of contents indicating the respective pages for all items. The information should not be scattered on the pages or presented haphazardly. The evidence must be presented logically and systematically to make identification of information and reading easier for the assessor. Assessment evidence should be presented in such a way that when the reader/assessor opens the portfolio, every detail is there to be seen for assessment. The assessor must not struggle to find evidence which might either be hidden or placed under the wrong heading or on the wrong page. The content of the portfolio must follow a linear structure – that is, one page should follow another. If there are support documents which cannot fit into the space on the pages, they should be included in an appendix at the end of the portfolio.

Assessment evidence should be illustrative and graphic in presentation. In the words of Jones and Shelton (2006), graphics make this part of portfolio (ie evidence) come alive. The learner should thus allow the reader to see what is being talked about. A picture, for example, can be worth a thousand words if it is selected and presented in an appropriate manner. If the learner has presented a workshop or training activities, photos portraying his/her involvement should be included. If a learner wishes to include as evidence documents that are not his/her original work, he/she must apply for copyright permission from the owners.

In presenting evidence in print, it is always preferable to be consistent with regard to colour, background, font and graphics. This helps to unify the portfolio and prevents it from looking like a patchwork of disconnected pages.

(self-assessment)

■ ■ ■

(1) Discuss any three important things to remember when building a portfolio.
(2) Explain how you would present evidence in your portfolio.

■   ■   ■

Criteria for building a portfolio

Key:

N = not acceptable (0–3)
A = acceptable/fair (4–6)
G = good (7–8)
V = very good (9–10)

Criteria	Evidence/justification
Section A : Content of portfolio	
• Personal information	A brief profile/background information, name, gender, context, experience, children, marital status, skills, activities, etc
• ABET involvement	Extent of involvement, current and past involvement in teaching adults and in which environment
• Knowledge of content	Knowledge of content of the relevant study guides, application of content of the study guides and the correct use of ABET discourse
• Authenticity	Provision of factual and relevant information
• Demonstration of evidence	Provision and demonstration of valid and relevant supporting evidence
• Originality	Provision of original and practical work
Section B: structure of portfolio	
• Nature of work	Presentable (in terms of quality and neatness)
• Organisation	Good layout, information properly and logically arranged under relevant sections and subsections

STUDY UNIT 5

Checking assessment evidence

STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- check the validity and relevance of evidence in portfolios submitted by learners for assessment
- establish the authenticity of assessment evidence in a learner's portfolio

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5.1   INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning contexts, assessment describes a multiplicity of ways to measure a learner's achievements. Thus the word "assessment" should not only bring to mind tests, examinations and written exercises, but also alternative ways of gaining information and giving feedback on learners' progress (Sieborger & Macintosh 2002:5). One important way of assessing learners besides the assessment instruments already mentioned in this section, is the use of a portfolio. In a situation where a portfolio is used as an alternative assessment tool, the learners provide evidence on specific tasks assigned to them. The educator (assessor) goes through the portfolio and checks the evidence the learner has included for assessment. This study unit focuses on checking the validity, authenticity and relevance of evidence submitted by learners for assessment.

ACTIVITY 5.1

■   ■   ■

(1) Define the term "feedback" in your own words.
(2) List three ways to provide feedback on a learner's work.

■   ■   ■

5.2 HOW TO CHECK THE VALIDITY, AUTHENTICITY, RELEVANCE AND SUFFICIENCY OF EVIDENCE

When assessing a learner's portfolio, the assessor judges or estimates the value of the evidence submitted by the learner. To arrive at better judgment, the assessor peruses the portfolio to check the validity, authenticity, relevance and sufficiency of the evidence submitted by the learner. In checking the validity of evidence in a learner's portfolio, the assessor looks at how sound the information is and to what extent the learner'ss work falls within the perimeters or guidelines and formalities for creating and exhibiting the particular evidence. Evidence that is not provided in accordance with guidelines set for learners, may be rejected or excluded from the assessment exercise.

The assessor also peruses, examines and establishes how authentic (ie genuine, original, reliable and trustworthy) the evidence is, before making a decision or a judgment of its worth. If there is some doubt about the originality of the evidence, the assessor may reject it or request the learner to submit proof to substantiate its originality and genuineness.

The assessor checks for the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence submitted by a learner. Here the assessor examines the evidence to establish its relationship to the outcomes set for the assessment and the extent to which the evidence meets the minimum requirement. In so doing, the evidence that has no bearing on what is expected or is considered inadequate (ie too little or insufficient), may be rejected by the assessor. The learner may be asked to improve the relevance and sufficiency of the specific evidence.

ACTIVITY 5.2

■   ■   ■

(self-assessment)

(1)   Explain how you would check the validity and authenticity of evidence.
(2)   How would you ensure that the evidence in your portfolio is sufficient?

■   ■   ■

STUDY UNIT 6

Giving feedback on evidence

STUDY UNIT OUTCOMES

After working through this study unit, you should be able to

- explain the rules of acceptable feedback
- provide constructive feedback on learners' evidence
- identify when learners are ready to provide evidence on their portfolios

6.1   INTRODUCTION

Feedback has a vital place in teaching and learning. It is the responsibility of the educator to provide feedback on the learning tasks done by learners. Learners usually anxiously wait to hear what the educator or assessor thinks of the work they have done. This study unit focuses on giving feedback on evidence provided by learners in building a portfolio.

6.2   THE RULES OF ACCEPTABLE FEEDBACK

There are a number of rules that guide the provision of acceptable feedback on how to build a portfolio. A few of these rules are highlighted below.

- **Acceptable feedback should be constructive**. The educator's comments and suggestions should lead to growth or enable the student to develop a satisfactory portfolio. Feedback should never be sarcastic or insulting, but useful and informative. In the distance education context where there is little or no face-to-face contact, it is crucial for the educator's or lecturer's comment to include suggestions that enable the learners to improve their work, that is, point them in the right direction.
- **Feedback should be timeous**. For feedback to be more effective and serve its purpose, it should be immediate or timeous. The learners' work must not be left lying around weeks or even months without comments or suggestions for improvement. Where feedback is delayed, the learners may lose track of what or how they did a particular task. Feedback

should be prompt because the sooner learners receive it, the better chance they will have of improvement in the specific learning task.

- **Feedback should encourage learners**. The educator should give feedback that spurs learners on to do better. Feedback should be in the form of written comments or statements that encourage and direct learners to improve on their learning tasks.
- **Feedback should on a one-to-one basis**. As far as possible, the lecturer or educator should provide feedback for individual work. If the learners perform individual tasks and each task will therefore be unique, they will require one-on-one feedback. Such feedback will enable the learners to be assessed individually. This is far more constructive than generic feedback which may not address the specific shortcomings of individual students.
- **Feedback should focus on the learning outcomes**. Feedback should focus on the learning outcomes set for the task or specific activity the learners did, and not mainly on other issues such as punctuation or grammar. Although satisfactory writing and language skills should be encouraged, they should never overshadow the feedback on the specific task assigned to learners.

ACTIVITY 6.1

■ ■ ■

(1) List four criteria of acceptable feedback.
(2) Why are these criteria so important in assessment?

■   ■   ■

6.2.1 Feedback on readiness

Educators assign learning activities or tasks to learners to find out the extent to which specific knowledge or a skill has been mastered. To enable learners to perform a specific learning activity, the educator must prepare the learners for it. For example, if the task requires the learners to prepare evidence for their portfolios they must be taught, guided and given relevant sources to read. This (reading) task provided by the educator prepares the learners to do the activity in question, that is preparing and organising their evidence for their portfolios. The learners should be asked to complete their portfolios only when much of the work to be included in the portfolio has been completed. It is unfair for the educator to assess the learners if they are not ready. Even if the initial preparatory tasks have been completed, some learners may still need help. In giving feedback to such learners, the educator provides them with proper suggestions and guidelines on improvement. A written comment such as the following may be of some value: "You do not seem to have prepared properly for this task. Please read chapter 2 on organising assessment evidence in **Maxwell**. This source will help you prepare your assessment evidence."

6.2.2 Feedback on sufficiency

The feedback on sufficiency of evidence in learners' portfolios should indicate the extent to which the learners have grasped the skills of providing evidence, whether all the required material has been included and whether all the components of the portfolio have been adequately addressed. Where the evidence is inadequate or insufficient, the feedback should reflect this by highlighting

what the learners must do to improve the work. The educator's feedback might relate something that was included as evidence but is irrelevant The learner should should then be advised to go through the guidelines again to ensure that he/she retains only what are required. The feedback may also suggest elements that can be added to make the evidence adequate.

6.2.3 Feedback for positive action

Assessment feedback which does not motivate the student to learn and tell him/her what needs to be done to improve his/her work has no educational purpose. Feedback on a learner's work should lead to a positive action. The educator could motivate the learner by stating the following:

(1) "It is clear that you have not grasped the required skills. Read pages 23 to 27 in the study guide again to help you structure your work properly."
(2) "You made a mistake here. Follow these suggestions to help you improve."

Such feedback on the learner's work could lead to positive action to help him or her to improve his/her efforts.

ACTIVITY 6.2

■   ■   ■

(1) Write down one positive idea on feedback you could suggest to your learners.
(2) Why do you think it is important to give students positive feedback?

■   ■   ■

Self-evaluation check list for building a portfolio

Item	Yes	No
1. Did I write my student number in the appropriate place on the assignment cover?		
2. Did I write my full names and postal address on the assignment cover?		
3. Did I write the correct course code and assignment number on the assignment cover?		
4. Did I include a profile of myself?		
5. Did I read the instructions carefully before compiling my portfolio?		
6. Did I follow all the instructions carefully when doing the assignment?		
7. Did I read all the relevant study guides to understand their contents before doing the assignment?		
8. Did I include sufficient evidence in my portfolio?		
9. Did I do all sections of the assignment as provided in Tutorial Letter 101?		
10. Did I draft my work first and check the spelling, grammar, and so on, before copying the final work for submission?		
11. Did I interview a new literate or illiterate adult when doing this assignment?		
12. Did I develop material that can be used for a new adult reader?		
13. Did I give my story a title?		
14. Did I do the assignment myself?		
15. Did I enjoy doing this assignment?		
16. Did I learn something new in this assignment?		
17. Will I be able to teach adult learners to prepare portfolios as evidence of learning?		
18. Did I reflect on my work after completing it?		

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