# TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF PORTFOLIO AS AN ASSESSMENT

# TOOL IN LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS

**By**

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# CERTIFICATION

**This is to certify that this dissertation has been read and approved as having met the requirements of the Faculty of Education, National University of Lesotho for the award of Masters in Education (M.ED).**

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Lipuo Maryann Mothetsi- Mothiba

30 July 2019

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# ABSTRACT

The study investigated teachers' perceptions on the use of a portfolio as an assessment tool in Lesotho primary schools. The research approach used in this study is mixed method. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 20 schools which were purposively selected from the Examinations Council of Lesotho's (ECoL) database. Out of the twenty schools, interviews were conducted in six of these schools and 3 learners' portfolios from each of these six schools were also studied. Information that was collected for this study included: (1) teachers' interpretations of a portfolio as an assessment strategy; (2) how teachers implemented portfolio and 3) teachers' views on the use a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the classrooms in Lesotho. The findings of this study have established that although teachers were exposed to the use of portfolio as a learning and assessment tool, they had limited knowledge and skills which are necessary for implementing this mode of assessment effectively. The findings also indicated that they had different interpretations of portfolio as an assessment tool. As a result, their use of portfolio was mostly influenced by their individual interpretations. Consequently, there was no consistency in how teachers used a portfolio as a learning and assessment strategy. These findings suggest that there is need for the Ministry of Education and Training in Lesotho to provide training to teachers if the desired results are to be achieved.

**Key terms:** perceptions, curriculum, curriculum reforms, curriculum policy

# CHAPTER 1.1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to establish the perceptions of the primary school teachers in Lesotho on the use of portfolio as an assessment tool. The use of portfolio in teaching and learning, and for assessment is linked with the learning theories of constructivism. Constructivist learning theory posits that, based on interpretations of experiences in the world, knowledge is individually constructed and socially co-constructed by learners (Jonassen, 1998). This view about learning has contributed to an emerging debate that emphasises that assessment should be continuous and embedded in a teaching process (Guskey, 2003). For example, Shepard (2000) argues that assessment should not only assess a learning product but also the process of learning and be integral to teaching and learning.

Another theory which has influenced this debate is the Theory of Multiple Intelligence. According to Gardner and Hatch (1989), the supporters of this theory, human beings have seven multiple intelligences (forms of thinking) which are independent of one another. This theory suggests that individual human beings exhibit different profiles of intelligence and therefore, various assessment strategies that allow learners to demonstrate their different intelligences should be used. That is, other than limiting assessment to pencil- and- paper tests, which often require learners to recall what they have been taught, these strategies should allow individual learners to demonstrate what they can do with their new knowledge (Stanford, 2003). Gardner and Hatch (1989) perceive that, using varied authentic assessment strategies supports a learner to construct knowledge. They affirm that teaching and assessment should take into consideration the whole learner profile of intelligences. As has been rightly pointed out, in the document entitled *Current Perspectives on Assessment* of the Department of Education and Training Victoria document (2005),

> ***Assessment practices [sic] need to reflect changes [that] are based on the new understandings of theories, new curricula that are being developed, new knowledge and skills that are necessary for the 21st Century and the accountability requirements of the systems and governments.***

This new thinking about teaching, learning and assessment is also influencing changes in the educational system in Lesotho. Recently, the government of Lesotho introduced reforms in the school education. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy that guides teaching, learning and assessment was introduced in 2009. It is in this policy that a portfolio has been introduced as a teaching, learning and assessment strategy that is recommended for teachers to use.

This study investigated how teachers perceived the use of portfolio in teaching and learning, and how their perceptions influenced their practices with it.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section is to provide the background to what triggered the change in Lesotho's education system, and how that impacted on curriculum and assessment. This information is presented in the following format: factors that influenced the change in the education system in Lesotho; curriculum before the reforms in the Lesotho Education system; assessment of learners before the reforms; and the new assessment strategies proposed by the reforms. Also, in this chapter the research problem that has driven this study, and the research questions that were used to collect data, as well as the significance of the study are described.

### 1.2.1 Factors that influenced change in the education system in Lesotho

The recent reforms in the education system in Lesotho began in 2009 with the development of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) Framework. This policy was intended to review the school curriculum and assessment structures and guide the reforms. Among others, these reforms were driven by:

- The Lesotho government's desire to respond to the economic challenges of the country such as, high rate of unemployment, poverty, and unproductive workforce which was not able to meet the knowledge and skills demands of the modern-day knowledge-based economies (Ministry of Education & Training, 2009:4).

- Lesotho's response to the global emphasis on interactive and meaningful participation of learners in the teaching and learning process (Val Klenowski, 2002), and that assessment should be an integral part to teaching and learning (Shepard, 2000).

- Lesotho government's intention to promote issues of quality, relevance, equity and accessibility of education (Ministry of Education and Training, 2009). There was a general view that, for a long time, school education in Lesotho had been catering for few intellectually capable children and leaving many others out.

- Government response to the demands of international conventions, treaties and protocols, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG2) which proposed that education should be accessible to all school going children (Education for All), and

currently, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 which advocates for inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The changes that have occurred in the education system in Lesotho as a result of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) Framework are discussed hereafter.

### 1.2.2 Curriculum in Lesotho education before the reforms

Before the reforms, the school education system was organised into three main programmes: primary education, junior secondary education, and senior secondary education. In these entire programmes, curricula were also organised into subjects.

*Primary Education Curriculum*

The duration of this programme was seven-years (Standards 1 – 7). The curriculum at this level consisted of eleven subjects, among which, all learners were required to take and pass four core subjects namely; English language, any other language, Mathematics and Science in order to proceed to junior secondary level. Learners' progression to the next level of education was determined by their performance in the end of year tests (from Standards 1-6) and an exit examination at the end of Standard 7.

*Junior Secondary Curriculum*

This was a three-year programme (Form A to Form C). At junior secondary, subject requirements were the same as those of the primary level. At this stage, studying and passing English language was still compulsory for those who wished to further their education in the mainstream education. Learners also had some freedom to choose some subjects to study.

*Senior Secondary Curriculum*

Senior secondary education program (Form D and Form E) was a two-year program after junior secondary education. This programme used Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) curriculum for teaching and assessment. The curriculum had a wide range of subjects from which learners picked their preferred package. In addition to these requirements, learners who aspired to proceed to tertiary education were required to take and get a Credit pass in English Language.

*Learner Assessment before the reforms*

Summative assessment, which was mainly driven by examinations, was commonly used to assess learners' internal progression and programme exit. There were two types of assessment in all three programmes which could be named as internal and external assessments.

**(a)** Internal assessment

Internal assessment combined tests and examinations and these were developed, administered and graded at school level. The tests were taken in the first three quarters of the academic year and an examination at the end of the fourth quarter). This type of assessment was used to determine an internal progression of learners from one level of the program to the next (for example, from Class 1 to Class 2 or from Form A to Form B).

There were some inconsistencies in how these examinations and tests were administered and used to determine the final mark in the schools. For example, some schools used only end of year examinations while others used a combination of quarterly tests and end of year examinations. In fact, there was no policy that was governing this type of assessment. As a result, there was a wide range of assessment practices which were used to assess learners internally.

**(b)** External assessment

Examinations that were mostly developed, administered and graded by the Examinations Council of Lesotho (ECoL) were used to determine the learners' exit position from primary, junior secondary or senior secondary programs. All internal or external assessments were based on pen-and-paper mode of assessment, with the exception of "practical examinations" for technical and vocational subjects. Learners' performance was reported only in terms of scores and it was rated as Merit, First Class, Second Class and Third Class (Table 1.1 provides an example of how this was done).

External examinations were also used for certification to prove that a learner had successfully completed a relevant programme. It is worth noting that any internal work done by the learners such as tests and assignments were not considered during the final grading of learners' performance in the final external examinations. Those who failed these examinations (this applied also for internal examinations) were required to repeat classes or drop-out of the programme. Consequently, there were high rates of grade repetition in the education system in Lesotho. This also resulted in many school-age children dropping out of school system to roam the streets. For example, Table 1.1 shows that candidates who sat the Primary School

Leaving Examinations (PSLE) from 2011 to 2015 were 209183, of which about 5500 failed every year and around 2000 did not even attempt to take the examinations.

**Table 0.1: Primary School Leaving Examinations Results 2011-2015**

| Academic Year | No. of registered Candidates for Exams | No. of Candidates absent from Exams | No of Examination Candidates | Examination Results | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1st Class | 2nd Class | 3rd Class | Total No Passes | Total No Failures |
| **2011** | **42635** | *1883* | 40752 | 6920 | 11107 | 17528 | 35555 | **5197** |
| **2012** | **41460** | *1799* | 39661 | 5286 | 9489 | 19810 | 34585 | **5076** |
| **2013** | **41654** | *1827* | 39827 | 7275 | 9863 | 17951 | 35089 | **4738** |
| **2014** | **41507** | *1690* | 39817 | 6506 | 10844 | 17619 | 34969 | **4848** |
| **2015** | **41927** | *1864* | 40063 | 5519 | 10384 | 19117 | 35020 | **5043** |

Source*: adapted from PSLE Results book* by *Examinations Council of Lesotho year 2015*

Basically, also as argued by Guskey (2003), the purpose of assessment in most countries was to rank the schools and learners in order for purposes of accountability, and not necessarily to help the teachers to improve their instructional approaches nor give them information about their individual learners' progress and development. It was also observed by Halahala and Khalanyane (2014) that Lesotho school examinations were used as a tool to sort, classify reward or punish a learner. They criticised this mode of assessment and grading, saying that it was insufficient to accurately assess learners' competences and skills.

As it could be observed in Table 1.1 summative examinations that were used in the education system in Lesotho were not benefiting all learners, rather it benefited few whom the system viewed as "intelligent". Therefore, it was essential that changes that would benefit all children were introduced in the country's education system, hence the government efforts to introduce a Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework in 2009 that would drive necessary reforms in the education system.

**1.2.3 Curriculum reforms in the education system in Lesotho**

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework introduced by the government in 2009 has made changes to the school education structure in Lesotho. First, the school programmes are organised into two, namely: Basic Education, which is a ten-year programme; and secondary

education which has a duration of two years. The focus of the study is on the Basic Education Programme.

In the Basic Education Programme, curriculum is organised into five learning areas which are: Creativity and Entrepreneurial (CE); Personal, Spiritual and Social (PSS); Scientific and Technological; Linguistic Sesotho and Linguistic English, as well as Mathematical. These are described below:

*Creativity and Entrepreneurial (CE):* the curriculum content for this area is drawn from subjects such as, Business Education, Home Economics, ICT, Agriculture, Arts, Crafts, Music and drama.

*Personal, Spiritual and Social (PSS):* Materials for this learning area include aspects of: History, Geography, Religious Studies, Social Studies, Life Skills Education, Health and Physical Education.

*Scientific and Technological (ST):* The content has been drawn from subjects, such as Agriculture, Physical education, Science, Technical subjects, Geography, Life skills Education, Health and Physical Education

*Linguistic and Literary:* The learning area is divided into Sesotho and English which are the two official languages in the country. The purpose of this area is to equip learners with effective communication skills.

*Numerical and Mathematical (NM):* The learning area derives its content from Mathematics.

*Learner Assessment*

The Ministry of Training & Education (2009:22) advocates for teaching and learning that focuses on a learner and that is "based more on learner's own activities." The idea is that learner assessment should serve different purposes, such as monitoring, summative and formative. For the monitoring of education system, learners in Grades 4, 7 and 9 are required to take assessment at national level with the intention to check the attainment of defined minimum competences required for the learners at each level. At grade 7, the assessment will check learners' level of attainment of competences and their readiness for Grade 8. This assessment will also be used to monitor the progress of the education system. Learners, at this grade will also be awarded certificates of statement of success which will describe their level of attainment in each learning area. The learner's achievement will be measured against the end of level objectives and not against other learners' performances. The levels of success are

categorised into (1) below basic, (2) basic, (3) proficient, and (4) advanced. These are used as the measurements of knowledge or skill attained (Assessment Strategy document, 2012:19) instead of categorising learners in pass or fail as it was done in the old system.

According to the Ministry of Training & Education (2009), Continuous Assessment (CASS) should be considered as a key strategy to monitor and assess learners' progress. The policy recommends that CASS uses various strategies, which include, but are not limited to, quarterly tests, coursework, projects, portfolios and practical tests to develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. CASS should also help learners to overcome the learning barriers. Teachers should use assessment to diagnose learning difficulties and offer necessary intervention, and the learners' work should be documented as evidence, from which both the teacher and the learners can reflect.

Some learning areas such as Creativity and Entrepreneurial (CE) whose content is sports, arts, drama, and music cannot be learned and assessed effectively with only a pen-and-paper test. It requires learners' involvement in activities more than just writing. The teachers should be able to observe and keep a record of performance in order to monitor learning progress. Similarly, documenting learners' work in other learning areas can offer a teacher and the learners an opportunity to reflect on the artefacts or written materials that they (learners) produce at every stage of learning. It is believed, in this study, that nothing can achieve this better than using portfolio for assessment because, examining the artefacts students have produced and compiled gives some insight into the learners' capabilities and accomplishments. Portfolio embraces the individual differences in learning styles and exploring different abilities. There is evidence from literature that very little effort, if any at all, has been made since the introduction of the new policy in schools to find out how teachers perceive and implement portfolio as an assessment strategy to improve teaching and learning and to document learners' work as evidence of performance.

## 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The curriculum reforms that have been introduced in Lesotho schools compel teachers in the Basic Education Programme to use continuous assessment (CASS) as a teaching and assessment strategy. Teachers should use data generated by this type of assessment to inform their own teaching, to determine learners' achievement, and to monitor learners' progress.

These reforms encourage teachers to use a variety of assessment strategies, including a portfolio. Teachers are encouraged to use the portfolio strategy in two ways: as a learning task for a learner or as a tool to assess learner performance and growth. For example, as a learning task, a History teacher can assign a learner to investigate and create a portfolio about the life of Moshoeshoe 1. As an assessment tool, teachers compile the learners' work for three purposes: to provide evidence of learners' abilities, to show learner's progression, and to inform teaching and learning. Where teachers use portfolio as an assessment tool, it is recommended that they should work with their learners to create and maintain a portfolio. This approach is driven by the view that involving learners in their work may increase their motivation to learn and to be interested in their studies.

Using portfolio as a teaching or assessment strategy is new in Lesotho. Motlomelo (2001) investigated the use of portfolio in schools and his findings indicated that many teachers had a very limited knowledge or experience in the use of portfolio for teaching or assessment. Prior to the implementation of the new policy, teachers were used to assessing learners' achievement and progression through tests and examinations.

Post the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Framework in 2009, there hasn't been any study yet that investigated teachers' perceptions of using a portfolio for learning and assessment in Lesotho schools. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to establish teachers' perceptions on the use portfolio for learning and assessment in the primary schools in Lesotho. This information is important because teachers' perceptions have been reported to influence the success or failure of curriculum reforms. For example, Bantwini (2009), exploring the meanings attached to the new Science curriculum reforms by teachers in South Africa, established that the interpretation teachers gave to the new curriculum reform determined their curriculum implementation journey, and this usually determine the success of the education reforms.

## 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

 The collection of data for this study was guided by the following questions:

1. How do teachers in Lesotho primary schools interpret portfolio as an assessment strategy?

2. How do teachers' use a portfolio as a strategy for teaching and learning?

3. What are teachers' views of using a portfolio as an assessment strategy in Lesotho primary classrooms?

## 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In Lesotho, information regarding how teachers use portfolio for assessment as recommended by the reforms is scarce. This study provides insights on how teachers view and use a portfolio for teaching and learning and for assessment in the primary schools in Lesotho. Therefore, the study will benefit those who are interested in the successful implementation of the reforms that are brought about by the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy. These include the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), the Examinations Council of Lesotho, the Inspectorate as well as, the teacher training institutions. These groups will use this information to develop programmes aimed at training and capacitating teachers for the new reforms. Also, since this study is the first of its kind to investigate the use of portfolio in the schools in Lesotho post the reforms, the study acts as a baseline for other studies to follow. The study reveals what is actually happening in the classroom about the use of portfolio for teaching, learning and assessment. That is, it explains how teachers have embraced portfolio as one of the strategies recommended by the Policy to improve teaching and learning. The findings of this study will, therefore, help decision and policy makers when making decisions on how to support teachers to implement the reforms in their classroom practices. Most importantly, the study makes a contribution to the scholarly literature on teachers and reforms in education in the country.

## 1.6 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The definition of key terms section defined and described the following concepts: perceptions, curriculum, curriculum reforms and curriculum policy.

### 1.6.1 Perceptions

Lindsay and Norman (1977) define perception as an interpretation of a situation by an individual. These perceptions, especially of teachers, as indicated by Chere-Masopha (2011: 7) could be influenced by factors such as, "gender, age, personal histories and experiences in the everyday life, professional experiences in the classroom; knowledge and skills in their everyday personal and professional lives". As a result, even where teachers have technical know-how, their implementation of an innovation in education and its subsequent change depend on their beliefs. Chere-Masopha (2011) further acknowledges the importance of recognising the perceptions of teachers, indicating that these have a significant impact on teachers' commitment to their professional practice and the way they implement their

classroom activities. This is affirmed by Krüger, Won, and Treagust (2013), who argue that teachers' knowledge, experiences and beliefs greatly impact the way they teach and implement curriculum and educational change.

### 1.6.2 Curriculum

Curriculum is a plan for learning, which involves the statements of goals or purpose of education, learning experiences, organisation of learning experiences, and determining of whether purposes have been met (Tyler, 1949), Curriculum is not static, but a process of constant evolution and change in response to an ever-changing world, and since it is the foundational element of effective schooling and teaching, it is often the object of reforms (Watermeyer, 2012). These reforms mostly gear towards responding to the needs of society and any educational policy which is developed should, therefore, direct towards addressing these needs (Ministry of Education & Training, 2009).

### 1.6.3 Curriculum reforms

This is the change or reshape of the curriculum with the hope of bringing improvement and also as an attempt to address major weaknesses of the existing curriculum programs (Henchey, 1999). The reforms in Lesotho has led to the development of the new curriculum and assessment strategies which were guided by the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy. The purpose was to bring improvement in the education system in Lesotho.

### 1.6.4 Curriculum Policy

Curriculum Policy is a body of principles guiding the action (Kirst and Walker, 1971) of designing curriculum, class content, methods of teaching, assessment and qualifications.

*Curriculum policy and reforms in Lesotho*

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) of Lesotho has introduced a policy document called the Curriculum and Assessment Policy (CAP) 2009 to reform both the curriculum and assessment practices. Regarding assessment, the policy requires schools to use Continuous Assessment (CASS) to monitor and provide information about learners' academic achievement. It encourages teachers to use a variety of formative and summative assessment strategies to inform teaching and learning. Such strategies should be authentic, and inclusive.

In the Curriculum and Assessment Policy document there is list of assessment strategies recommended for learner assessment. Among these, portfolio has been recommended as one.

The other reforms proposed by the policy is the three paths the learners can follow after completing Grade 8. These are: Academic, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as well as Artisan paths. To determine a path learner should follow, his or her talents should be well explored, and evidence of their achievement should be well documented. Therefore, it should be used to document pieces of evidences that demonstrate individual' strengths and weakness. It is believed that this would assist a teacher in guiding a learner on an educational path he or she should follow.

## 1.7 SUMMARY

The chapter has described the purpose of the study and factors which motivated the study. The study looked into the perceptions of teachers on the use of portfolio in the teaching, learning and assessment with the focus on their interpretation of portfolio, the way they implemented it and their views. The study has been triggered by the reforms in education which were driven by the introduction of the new Curriculum and Assessment policy document of 2009. The document stipulates among others, the reforms in curriculum and assessment. The reforms in the education was the government response to, among others, the international conventions on education, provision of relevant and quality education and the issue of high failure and drop-out rates among young school children. These reforms, recommended among others, the curriculum that was integrated and this resulted in the traditional subjects being organised into five learning areas. CASS was recommended with the use of various assessment strategies. The use of portfolio was recommended as one of the strategies to promote CASS to address and reduce the failure rate.

Three research questions for the study were asked as follows: How do teachers in Lesotho primary schools interpret portfolio as an assessment strategy? 2) How do teachers' use a portfolio as a strategy for teaching and learning? and 3) What are teachers' views of using a portfolio as an assessment strategy in Lesotho primary classrooms? The significance of the study was also discussed.

## 1.8 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The study has been divided into five chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1 has covered the following: the introduction, which entails the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study and definition of key terms. Chapter 2 has covered the empirical literature review related to the perception of teachers on the use of portfolio for assessment. In this chapter, the definition of key concepts has been dealt with, as well as the conceptual framework. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study. This has included the research design, in which the methods used to collect data have been discussed. The mixed method approach which has combined both qualitative and quantitative methods has been discussed. Chapter 4 focuses on the presentation of results, with specific focus on analysis of the data collected through both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Chapter 5 focuses on the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

# CHAPTER 2.1: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to establish how teachers perceive and use portfolio in teaching and learning in the primary schools in Lesotho. This chapter discusses the literature that was reviewed and used to frame this study. The chapter is divided into three sections, namely: Introduction (this section), Conceptual framework, Empirical Literature and Summary.

## 2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the concept that has framed this study. Assessment is defined as an on-going process of gathering data about teaching and learning, analyzing and reflecting on evidence so that teachers can evaluate learners' performance and make informed judgment to improve learners' learning (Department of Education and Training Victoria, 2005). It is described as a continuous process which should be formative and whose purpose, should not only be to measure learners' performance, but to also monitor and improve teaching and learning (Ministry of Education & Training, 2009).

### 2.3.1 Forms of assessment

Assessment is classified into two forms namely; summative and formative. The classification is based on the purpose for which assessment is used, that is, either for improvement of learning or for selection and certification (Ministry of Education & Training, 2009). These are explained below.

*Summative assessment*
This is a form of assessment which is done at the end of the teaching process, for example, at the end of unit or term. The purpose is to evaluate learners' achievement at the end of teaching and award them grades. Learners' performance in this form of assessment is compared against the set standards or benchmarks. This assessment focuses on how much learners have learned and is used for selection and certification of learners (Ministry of Education & Training, 2009).

*Formative assessment*

Unlike summative assessment, the formative assessment strategy is an integral part of learning because it is carried out continuously during the teaching and learning process. The purpose is to improve teaching and learning by monitoring the process. The focus is on how learners are learning. It is done so that teachers can adjust their instructional strategies to respond to the needs of the learners, and to also help learners become aware of their learning gaps, as it provides ongoing feedback to learners about their progress towards targeted goals, and evidence of learners' self-assessment and progress in mastering the stated knowledge and skills (Stiggins, 2005; Mueller, 2004). In the context of Lesotho, formative assessment is conceptualised as diagnostic and continuous in nature. As stated, "Formative Assessment in the form of Continuous Assessment (CASS) will be used in schools at all levels of education to check the learning progress. It will be used by teachers for diagnosis of learning difficulties to identify areas requiring attention." (Ministry of Education & Training 2009, 23).

*Continuous Assessment*

Continuous Assessment "Is an on-going system of monitoring and assessing learners' progress with the aim of improving their learning" (Examinations Council of Lesotho & Newman, 2012, 7). In Lesotho, continuous assessment, advocates a shift from the traditional way of assessing learners with pencil and paper only, but to use a variety of strategies to enhance teaching and learning and attainment of the curriculum goals (Examinations Council of Lesotho & Newman, 2012). These range of strategies involve quarterly tests, projects, portfolios, practical tests, quizzes, and coursework. The focus of this study is, therefore, on the use of portfolio in teaching and learning as a strategy for assessment.

## 2.3.2 Portfolio as a strategy for assessment

Portfolio has its origins in the area of visual and performing arts, where it is used to showcase artists' accomplishments and their most favoured works (Jongsma, 1989). The artists, architects, photographers, and painters use portfolios as a means of showcasing their creative process and outcomes. In this area the portfolios contain evidence of the best practices and demonstrate how the skills of the owner developed over the years.

Mueller (2014) upholds that, although all portfolios begin with the type of the story to tell about someone, its definition vary from person to person depending on the use or purpose, and there are many types of portfolio. For instance, people in the world of business use portfolio to mean a range of investments held by a person or organisation in financial institutions

(Merriam dictionary). Portfolio may also be viewed to mean an office or duties of a minister in the department. Artists and photographers use portfolio to mean a set of pictures, drawings or photographs bound in a book or compiled loose in a folder. Professionals, on the other hand, use portfolio to mean a collection of a set of photographs of a model intended to show the potential employer one's achievements in the career (Collins Dictionary). Meeus, Van Petegema and Engelsb (2009: 403) argue that:

> *In reality…. there is not one portfolio, but rather there are a series of different portfolio applications, each of which has its own [purpose] and format.*

They indicate that the concept of portfolio has a degree of generality analogous to the concepts of 'file' or 'assignment'. In education, the definition and interpretation of a portfolio has no consensus. Meyer and Tunin (1999:131) put it, "portfolios are common… but educators share neither a common definition of portfolios nor a method for using them." Dysthe (1999) also sees the portfolio as 'chameleon' that changes colour according to how and why it is used. This therefore confirms that it is not possible to use only one definition for a portfolio because the definition of portfolio changes according to user's purpose and how it is used. Despite this, Abrutyn and Danielson (1997) argue that portfolio is becoming increasingly popular as it is perceived as a constructivist strategy which Altinay (2008) supports that it enables a learner to construct knowledge through reflection and critical thinking.

*Theory of Constructivism and use of portfolio in teaching and learning*

Portfolio as a learning and assessment strategy underpins the theory of constructivism. Portfolio is generally viewed as an appropriate assessment approach consistent with current learning approaches, inspired by constructivists' learning theories, in which a learner is viewed as an active partner in the process of learning, teaching and assessment (Klenowski, (2002); DeVries, (2002); Von Glasersfeld, (1990) and Hein (1991) indicate that the theory of constructivism focuses on a learner as a whole person. They stipulate that constructivism theory advances that:

- Children construct knowledge.
- Knowledge is not supplied by a teacher.
- Learners construct knowledge for themselves from direct personal experiences, making errors and looking for solutions in the process.

- Learning is, and should be, connected with personal experiences.

Constructivism theory of learning is associated with the epistemology of constructivism in research. This epistemology upholds that participants or people are creators of their own actions and make meanings through those actions (Adams, 2006). Explaining how the use of portfolio enhances learners' creation of knowledge, Altinay (2008) points out that during portfolio development learners construct knowledge or meaning for themselves through reflection and critical thinking when examining the artefacts, they have produced. This is affirmed by Driessen, Overeem, van Tartwijk, van der Vleuten and Muijtjens, (2006) who perceive portfolio as an authentic assessment tool that encourages learners to take responsibility of their learning, and that provides both the teachers and learners with rich, authentic and observable products to reflect on. Authentic assessment is the kind of assessment that requires learners to plan, do the work, self- assess, revise, consult and construct a product (Russ, 1989). The authenticity of portfolio for assessment is seen when learners consult with their teachers and allow them to reflect on the quality of the products which they have developed in order to identify their strength and weakness (Driessen et al., 2006). In addition, Eridafithri (2015) indicates that portfolio is a valuable strategy for assessment for learning because it provides learners with an opportunity to reflect on the tangible evidence of what they have learned. By reflecting, learners are able to identify their learning needs, their abilities and interests, and thus, enhance teaching and learning. Assessment for learning is explained by ECoL and Newman (2012) as an approach to formative assessment that focuses on the progress of learners, moving from where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how they get towards the desired goal. William and Black (2001) also wade in this debate by indicating that portfolio is a tool that gives both the teacher and learners an opportunity to be actively involved in learning activities and to continuously monitor and enhance learning progress. Portfolio as a formative assessment strategy can provide learners, teachers and parents with an on-going feedback that teachers can use to analyse learners' growth and make decision regarding future instruction (Stowell and Tierney, 1994). Since portfolio can mean different things to different people and can also be used for different purposes, this, therefore, suggests that it is essential for the user to understand what portfolio means as an assessment strategy.

*Portfolio for Assessment*

O'Maley and Moya (1994) make a distinction between a portfolio and a *portfolio for assessment*. They indicate that whereas a portfolio is a collection of a learner's work, experiences, and exhibition, portfolio as an assessment strategy is a systematically planned assessment procedure that is used to collect and analyse the various sources of data kept in the portfolio to obtain accurate information about the depth and breadth of the learners' capabilities in many domains. It goes beyond a test score to include collection of learner's pieces of work which is purposefully selected to tell a story about that learner. However, Brookhart and Nitko (2007: 249) point out that portfolio for assessment should, "neither [be] a scrapbook nor a 'dumping ground' for all the student's accomplishments." They point out that it should not be a collection of all the learners' work but identified items which have been carefully selected to accomplish a purpose. It should show one or more "works-in- progress" that illustrate creation of a product, such as an essay, evolving through various stages of conception, drafting, and revision. Borich and Kubiszyn (2010: 205) hold the same view that portfolio assessment should be a planned collection of a learner achievement, which documents what a student has accomplished, and the steps a learner has taken to get there. They state further that the collection process should represents a collaborative effort between a teacher and a learner in the decision-making of the purpose, content and evaluation criteria of the portfolio. This is also supported by Arter and Spandel (1992) who point out that the contents of a portfolio in assessment should reflect learner participation in the selection of content, guidelines for selection, decisions on the criteria used for judging merit, and that there should be evidence of learner reflection.

Different models in constructing and implementing portfolios are suggested, but the common element in all of them is that assessment is based on a collection of a learner's work done over a period of time as opposed to timed sit-down examinations (Dysthe, 1999). There are also common factors that influence the construction of all types of assessment portfolio as indicated by Wongwanich and Tangdhanakanond (2012) and these are, learning environment and the purpose. Moya and O'Malley (1994), Wongwanich and Tangdhanakanond (2012), Mueller (2014), also suggest that the following attributes should be considered when constructing a portfolio for assessment:

- Purpose: a teacher and a learner should know the purpose of developing a portfolio, i.e. whether the portfolio is constructed for grading purposes or to show growth. This gives the teacher and the learner an opportunity to provide direct observable products and

understandable evidence concerning learners' performance (Borich and Kubiszyn 2010). In this way, the teacher and learner are able to provide reliable records and evidence of the learner's achievement.

- Identify learning goals to assess through the portfolio: Goals will help the teacher to know what the learners are expected to do and achieve. The learning goals will also guide the selection and assessment of learner's pieces of work for the portfolio.

- Match classroom tasks with portfolio outcomes: The task given to the learners should help achieve what portfolio intends to demonstrate.

- Collect portfolio evidence: Both the teacher and learners decide beforehand who determines what goes into the portfolio. These are the materials to be contained e.g. texts, visuals, artefacts etc. to provide evidence.

- Social interaction in the process of portfolio construction involves conferencing session, which involves reflection. Arter and Spandel (1992) point out that self-reflection is the one that makes portfolio instructional, and the true nature of instructional value of doing portfolio is seen when learners use criteria and self-reflection on what they want.

- Establish assessment criteria: the assessment criteria should also be explained to learners, which give learners clear targets of their growth and achievement

**Types of portfolio for assessment in teaching and learning**

According to Alimemaj and Ahmetaj (2000), there are no hard rules for portfolio implementation as an assessment strategy and no single way of implementing them because portfolio is used for different purposes and should, therefore, vary in the way it is designed and constructed. The following are some types of portfolio assessment: process portfolio, showcase portfolio and evaluation portfolio.

- Process portfolio

One type of portfolio assessment, as indicated by Mueller (2014), is a Growth Portfolio or Process Portfolio. Dias de Figueiredo (2005) refer to this type of portfolio as a Learning Portfolio, while it is called Learning Progress by Brookhard and Nikto (2007). On the other hand, Abrutyn and Danielso (1997) have dubbed this type of portfolio a Working Portfolio. They indicate that this type of portfolio involves a collection of work overtime showing growth and improvement after reflection. It contains examples of the learner's work completed at several points in time. It is a continual, systematic collection of learners' work

samples such as early drafts, records of thinking, re-writings, and the comments that indicate how a learner has progressed over a given time, which could be daily, weekly or monthly (Birgin and Baki, 2007). It is mostly used for formative assessment purposes because the intention is to diagnose learning difficulties, keep a record of change, and monitor learners' progress to guide new learning. It also contains the finished samples of work which may be selected later for permanent assessment or Showcase Portfolio

- Showcase Portfolio

Showcase Portfolio or Product Portfolio is also referred to, by Abrutyn and Danielso (1997), as a Display Portfolio. Brookhard and Nikto (2007), in turn, refer to this type, as Best Works Portfolio. They indicate that this type of portfolio is selective because it contains only the best learners' pieces of work which learners have selected after their reflections. It contains items which demonstrate the highest level of achievement attained by the learners. These items may include: the drawings learners like, poems, or anything that can tell who they are. Slater (1996), who also refers to this type as a Limited Portfolio, asserts that in this portfolio, a learner presents few pieces of evidence to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives. The learners have to know the scoring rubric of the entries of their portfolio so that they can select the best entries. This type of portfolio focuses on the final products that the learners have produced, not on the process that has led to the final product. So, both the teacher and the learner select samples of accomplishments that may be impressive to the recipient of the portfolio.

- Evaluation portfolio

Evaluation Portfolio includes the samples that represent each subject, and it is evaluated against the set curriculum goals and standards or objectives (Mueller, 2014). The main purpose of this portfolio is to document what learners have mastered in any curriculum area (Abrutyn & Danielson, 1997). It can be dedicated to one or more subjects and should show knowledge and skills learners have mastered on a specific curriculum content. This is used as evidence that a learner has sufficient knowledge and skills in a content area to move to the next level or grade. This type just like in Showcase Portfolio, the focus is on the product not the process. It is assessed holistically for grading purposes.

## 2.4 .EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Even through the use of portfolio is considered important for teaching and learning, there appear to be very few scholars that have studied teachers and uses of a portfolio in the classroom. For example, the only studies that have been conducted seem to have been focused on investigating teachers' views and attitudes towards the use of portfolio. These studies are of Eridafithri (2015); Wongwanich and Tangdhanakanond (2012) and Motlomelo (1998).

Eridafithri's (2015) study was carried out in Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar Islamic High Schools in Indonesia. The purpose was to find out how teachers perceived the use of portfolio in assessing English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Questionnaire and observation were used to collect data from the 26 teachers who participated in the study. The results established that despite the Indonesian English Curriculum which stated that portfolio be used as one of the alternatives strategies for assessment, teachers were reluctant to use it. Although some teachers used portfolio, this strategy was not commonly known and those who knew about it had limited knowledge. According to this study, teachers found it difficult to design a marking rubric that assesses learners' portfolios. However, the results of this study also established that despite their limitations, these teachers had a positive view on the use of portfolio for teaching and learning (including using it for learner assessment).

Another study that was reviewed was that by Wongwanich and Tangdhanakanond (2012), which, similarly, investigated teachers' attitude towards the use of portfolio assessment. This study sought to establish how teachers viewed and used portfolio in Thailand schools, after the portfolio was formally introduced by the National Education Act of 1999. A survey questionnaire was given to 242 teachers of varying subjects, teaching experience and who were from different regions of the country. The findings revealed that teachers had strong positive attitude towards portfolio use as an assessment tool.

In 1998, Motlomelo surveyed the attitudes and practices with regard to the use of portfolio assessment of 180 primary school teachers, teacher educators, examiners and curriculum developers in Lesotho. The findings revealed that teachers in Lesotho schools were not using a portfolio for teaching and learning. They showed that teachers were, generally, not aware of the term portfolio. Despite their limited knowledge, teachers in this study had positive attitude towards portfolio use when it was defined and explained to them by the researcher. The study indicated that in addition to lack of knowledge, the limited use of portfolio was attributed to,

among others, lack of educational policy on portfolio assessment, which meant that the teachers were not obliged to use it.

The use of portfolio as an assessment strategy has been recently introduced in the primary schools in Lesotho by the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy (2009). This policy discourages assessment methods which are predominantly summative but encourages learner assessment which is continuous and formative. In this policy, portfolio is recommended as one of the strategies that can be used for learner assessment that is continuous and formative. However, there appears to be limited information in the literature regarding teachers' perceptions on the use of this strategy. Thus, the only study that could be located on teachers and portfolio use in the schools in Lesotho was Motlomelo' study. However, another notable weakness is that this study was conducted twenty years ago, long before the recent curriculum reforms were introduced in Lesotho schools. This then suggests a gap in knowledge on how teachers currently perceive the use of portfolio as an assessment strategy. This is one notion that necessitated this study, to establish how teachers in Lesotho currently perceive and use portfolio for assessment.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter reported on the literature reviewed for this study. The chapter is divided into three major sections which are: conceptual framework and empirical literature. The concept 'assessment', which framed this study, has been described. Under the section on Empirical Literature, findings of studies that investigated the use of portfolio assessment in the classroom have been reported and a knowledge gap on the current teachers' perceptions of portfolio in Lesotho schools has been established. The next chapter describes the research methods that were engaged to collect data for this study.

# CHAPTER 3.1: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perceptions on the use of portfolio as an assessment strategy in Lesotho primary schools, and how their perceptions influence their assessment practices. Chapter 2 reported on the literature that was reviewed for this study. This chapter, in turn, describes the methodology used to collect the data for the study. This information is organized into three sections as follows: Research design, Population and Participants.

## 3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research approach to this study was driven by the Constructivist Epistemology within Relativist Ontology. This is a form of Epistemology which postulates that social reality is constructed differently by different people, and that there is no absolute reality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Relativism suggests that there are multiple realities, and reality is relative to individuals and depends on the context, and the culture of an individual (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) uphold that participants or people are creators of their own actions and make meanings through those actions and situations, and those actions should, therefore, be interpreted through the eyes of the participants. In this study, the researcher listened to how different participants understood, interpreted and used portfolio in their own contexts.

This study used a mixed methods approach to research design in which quantitative and qualitative methods were both used to collect and analyse data. Mixed research methods approach uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study to collect and analyse data. These methods could be used concurrently or sequentially (Creswell et al., 2003).

According to Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), there are two primary things a researcher has to consider when using a mixed methods design and these are: whether the methods used should operate concurrently or sequentially, and if sequentially, which method should have more weight than the other. Therefore, there are two types of mixed method designs which

have been established from the literature. These are Concurrent or Parallel Design and Sequential Design.

*Concurrent Design: QUAN+QUAL (or qual + quan):* In this design, both methods are important and are of equal weight in the study. They can run concurrently or sequentially. In the case where they are implemented sequentially, their sequence is not important for the study as each method is independent from the other. In this design, data are triangulated. According to Morse (1991), this approach, in which two or more methods are used at the same time to collect data on the same research problem, is also referred to as Simultaneous Triangulation. The significance and the usefulness of this approach are based on the argument that research claims are stronger when they are based on a variety of methods. Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003) also point out that combining methods of research for data collection allows for depth and breadth of information about a phenomenon, and the researcher is also able to gain perspectives from different types of data and levels within the study. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) add on to say that because the world is becoming increasingly complex and interdisciplinary, it requires researchers to use multiple methods that complement each other. This approach has been identified as a key element in the improvement of research in social sciences and education (Gorard &Taylor, 2004) because the weakness of the other can be supplemented by the strength of the other and, in turn, maximizes the validity and reliability of the research findings.

*Sequential Design:* In this method the information is gathered in phases, either qualitative or quantitative data may be gathered first, depending on the objective to be achieved by the researcher ( Creswell et al.,2003) and results of one method are used for planning the next research method ( Morse,1991), as explained below.

*QUAN* → *qual:* denotes that quantitative method is important and will be supplemented by qualitative method (lowercase implies less emphasis or weight). If the QUAN is followed by qual (lowercase), it means the two methods will run sequentially. The qual will follow if new issues are emerging in the study, which need clarification.

*QUAL* → *quan*: denotes that qualitative method weighs more and will be supplemented by quantitative method, and they will be running sequentially.

The choice of a design is dependent on the rationale or purpose for conducting the mixed methods research approach, which could either be for triangulation, complementation, initiation, development or expansion (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The study adopted

QUAN+QUAL mixed method approach. The rationale for the choice of this approach was to triangulate the findings. The quantitative method that was adopted for this study was a survey while interview and document analysis methods were chosen for collection of qualitative data.

*Survey*:

This is referred to as any form of descriptive or quantitative way of gathering information about a population's characteristics, attitudes and opinions using different methods such as interview or questionnaire (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In this case, the researcher has confined survey to the acquiring of data using questionnaire that was sent to a sample participant selected from the population. The questionnaire contains a checklist and a rating scale. The advantage of this approach is that a participant responds to the questions with accuracy within a short time

*Interviews*

This is a qualitative form of data collection in which the researcher interacts with the interviewee, using structured or semi structured questions. In the structured format, the researcher asks only the standard questions while in the semi-structured one, the researcher may ask standard question and then probe the interviewees to get clear reasoning (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). In this study the researcher has followed the semi-structured interview format, whose advantage is that it can yield rich information through allowing the researcher to ask many questions.

*Document analysis*

Document analysis, according to Leedy and Ormard (2005), is used when a researcher wants to examine the contents of a particular body of material or text, in order to identify patterns, themes or biases. The authors indicate that in this approach, the researcher starts first by identifying a specific body of material to be studied, defines the characteristics to be examined and then scrutinizes the material based on the characteristics given. The frequency in which an indicator or characteristic appears suggests or reflects magnitude. The purpose of using this method was to cross-validate the information obtained from the interviews.

## 3.4 POPULATION AND PARTICIPANTS

Since the population was a large group of primary school teachers in Lesotho, it was difficult to reach them all, hence the teachers to participate in this study were, therefore, selected. The characteristics of the population and the selection of participants are described below.

### 3.4.1 Population

The population of this study was the teachers in primary schools in Lesotho, whose schools have registered with ECoL for Grade 7 End-of-Level assessment, which is the exit point of the lower basic education level. In ECoL's database, schools were classified into districts. In each district, the schools were classified according to proprietorship (ownership) type. These are (1) private, (2) church, and (3) government-owned. The schools were, therefore, selected from ECoL database, focusing specifically on the Maseru district urban primary schools

### 3.4.2 Survey participants: Sampling approach and sample size

Purposive sampling was used to select the participants for this study. Firstly, 25 schools were selected using these criteria:

(1) The schools should have been implementing the new curriculum. It was important that all the teachers who participated in this study were involved in the implementation of the integrated curriculum which had just been introduced in the educational system in Lesotho. The use of portfolio is recommended as one of the teaching and assessment strategies in this curriculum.

(2) School ownership: The proprietorship of schools is varied, namely; church, government and private. Since most schools are owned by the churches in the country, the researcher decided to sample the largest number of church so that different denominational churches could have representation. Therefore, the selection was: 13 church-owned, 8 government-owned, and 4 privately owned schools.

(3) Location (urban): All the schools were based in Maseru Urban area where it was convenient to the researcher to make follow-up visits, if necessary. The permission to collect data form these schools was first sought from the principals who were contacted telephonically. When the researcher arrived at a school, the principal would check the timetable and call the teacher who was available or free at the time to meet the researcher. Thirteen of the participating teachers were from church-owned schools,

eight were from the government schools and four were from the private schools. They were all trained as teachers.

### 3.4.3 Interview participants: Selection and size

For the interview method, six teachers were selected from the survey participants and these teachers were from 6 different schools which were selected on the basis of ownership of the schools for convenience. Three teachers were selected from church schools, two from government schools, and one from the private schools. All of them had more than 6 years of teaching experience and their profile is summarized in Table 3.1 below.

**Table 0.1: The profile of teachers who participated in the interview of this study.**

| Teacher | School type | Age | Gender | Highest Qualification | Teaching experience |
|---------|-------------|-----|--------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | LECSA Church | 36 | Female | Masters | Over six years |
| 2 | Government | 40 | Male | B.Ed. Honors | Over six years |
| 3 | Government | 40 | Female | B.Ed. Primary | Over six years |
| 4 | RCC Church | 50 | Female | B.Ed. Primary | Over six years |
| 5 | Private | 37 | Male | B.Ed. Honors | Over six years |
| 6 | RCC Church | 35 | Female | B.Ed. Honors | Over six years |

### 3.4.4 Selection of Documents for Analysis

Three portfolios of learners were subjected to content analysis to validate the information obtained during the interview. Only one portfolio per school was analysed. Those were the schools which participated in the interview. The selection was based on the interviewees' responses in the sense that learners 'portfolios were sought only from schools where teachers indicated that they used them. These are the portfolios which were subjected to document analysis. Responses from participants about where they acquired knowledge about portfolio were also considered.

## 3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The study used a mixed methods research approach for data collection, in which a survey (quantitative), and interviews and document analysis (qualitative) methods were used. Instruments that were used in these methods to collect data are discussed hereafter, and these are: a questionnaire, an interview protocol as well as a portfolio checklist.

### 3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher after an extensive literature review on teachers' perceptions. A combination of questions that were used to develop this instrument were adopted from similar studies such as Goctu (2016), and Elango, Jutti, & Lee (2005). The questionnaire used, 'Yes' or 'No' questions and the closed-ended questions which used a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire that was developed started with eight questions gathering demographic information of the participants. This included age, gender, qualification, teaching experience, number of grades taught, learning areas taught, class size and type of school. This was followed by three sections, namely: a) teacher knowledge about portfolio, b) implementation of portfolio and c) teachers' views about portfolio use.

### 3.5.2 Semi-structured interview protocol

As already mentioned, the study used, as one of the instruments, semi-structured interviews to collect data. The first part of the interview protocol consisted of eight questions which gathered demographic information of the participants. This instrument began with the questions that collected the following information of the participants: age, gender, qualification, teaching experience, number of grades taught, learning areas taught, class size and 2type of school. The researcher sequentially asked these questions as they appeared in the interview protocol. There were three broad questions that formed the three sections of the protocol. These questions were:

    a)  What is your knowledge of a portfolio in teaching and learning?
    b)  How do you use portfolio in your classroom?
    c)  What is your opinion about the use of portfolio in teaching and learning?

The semi-structured interview protocol was, therefore, organized in three sections, namely: a) teacher knowledge about portfolio, b) implementation of portfolio, and c) teachers' views about portfolio. During data collection, the researcher started by asking the broad questions

mentioned in this section and then used probing questions to enable the participants to give out more detailed responses to fully address the broad questions.

### 3.5.3 Document Checklist

The researcher developed a checklist that would assist to collect data for the analysis of the documents of the learners' portfolio. The information that was collected with this instrument, included the school of the participating teacher and the characteristics of the portfolio analysed.

The analysis was done based on the checklist developed by the researcher, which was developed based on the features of portfolio assessment as described under literature review by Moya and O'Malley (1994), Wongwanich and Tangdhanakanond (2012), Mueller (2014). According to them the portfolio should have the following features: evidence of the entries (contents), learning outcomes to be assessed through portfolio, classroom tasks which match the portfolio outcomes, evidence of guidelines for selection of entries, scoring criteria, evidence of conference between the learner and teacher, evidence of self- reflection and evaluation and evidence of feedback

### 3.6 DATA COLLECTION

This section describes the data collection procedure employed in this study. A questionnaire was used to collect survey data, interview protocol for interview data, and a document checklist was used for the analysis of portfolio contents.

### 3.6.1 Survey

After securing the permission from the principals of the selected schools, the researcher went to those schools to distribute the questionnaire physically to the teachers. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, rapport was established between the researcher and the respondents. The researcher gave a letter of consent to the principal and participating teachers to read and seek clarification where necessary. Thereafter, a declaration form was signed by both parties (see, annexes 5 & 6). The researcher then gave out the questionnaire and explained it to the participants, after which they were allowed to seek clarification again. The participants were then, after all necessary clarity had been given, left to respond to the questionnaire on their own. The questionnaire was collected after a week by the researcher.

Copies of the questionnaire instrument were distributed to twenty-five teachers. The distribution of the questionnaire to the schools was influenced by their proximity to the researcher. The government school sub-group received eight questionnaires. Roman Catholic Church schools (RCC) were given six, while schools owned by the Lesotho Evangelical Church of Southern Africa (LECSA) got four copies. Finally, the Anglican Church of Lesotho (ACL) schools were given three, and private schools (PS) four copies of the questionnaire.

Out of the twenty-five distributed questionnaires, twenty-one were returned. The four which were not returned were: i) One from government schools, ii) two from private schools and iii) one from church schools. The last wasted copy was the one which had been distributed to church schools, which returned partially answered and as a result, discarded. The finding of this part of the study were, therefore, based on the data collected from the twenty participants.

### 3.6.2 Interview data collection

In this study, six teachers were interviewed using a face to face approach. To respect confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were named teacher 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
Interviewees' responses were tape-recorded, and notes were also taken with the permission of the respondents. Only one teacher (teacher 3) requested not to be tape-recorded during the interview, indicating that she would panic and feel uncomfortable. She responded in Sesotho and later the information was translated into English. The purpose was to avoid language obstruction that could lead to the distortion of information or giving insufficient information. The rest of the participants said they were comfortable responding in English (teachers 1,2,4,5 and 6). This means five interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed later. The field notes were also taken. The duration for each interview was between twenty and thirty minutes.

### 3.6.3 Document analysis data collection

The learners' portfolios of teachers 1, 3 and 6 were analysed. The selection was based on the responses given by the teachers during the interview that they felt they were competent in portfolio assessment and they used it in their classes. Three learners' portfolio were, hence, analysed using the checklist. The analysis was done based only on the following:

- Identification
- Container for selected items
- Contents of the portfolio
- Scoring rubric(s)

- Evidence of self-refection
- Evidence of guidelines for selection of entries
- Evidence of feedback
- Evidence of teacher and learner conference
- Evidence of tasks
- Evidence of learning outcomes assessed

The researcher also took some pictures of the contents of the portfolios (see annex 4 A & B) as evidence of how the portfolios studied looked.

## 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

This section describes how data were analysed. The information is presented in three parts, in accordance with the methods used to collect data.

### 3.7.1 Survey data analysis

Survey data were analysed using the SPSS software. Before the analysis, Excel was used to code the variables. The data were then exported to SPSS, where they were analysed using descriptive statistics to generate frequencies and graphs to show patterns and relationships. The results from this analysis are presented in the next chapter.

### 3.7.2 Interview data analysis

The analysis of the results was divided into three sections, in accordance with the research questions, namely: a) teacher's knowledge about portfolio, b) implementation of portfolio and c) teachers' views about portfolio. In each section themes were developed and coded.

### 3.7.3 Document data analysis

The analysis of the contents of the learners' portfolio was based on the characteristics of portfolio stated in the checklist tool. The researcher checked the portfolios against the checklist, by ticking ( ✓ ) the features which were observable in the learners' portfolios.

## 3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Observing ethical considerations is critical in research because it encourages mutual trust and respect between the researcher and respondents. In this study, the principal and teachers involved were informed about the nature of the study and the kind of participation that would

be required from them. The consent from the participants to participate voluntarily was sought and they were even ascertained that no penalty would be imposed on them for refusal to participate. They were given a guarantee by the researcher that their rights to accept or decline to participate, as well as their rights to privacy, would be respected. The responses that were given by participants have been presented in a way that could not be associated with a particular participant. The consent letters requesting permission to administer the instruments for this study were given to the principals and participants as a way of seeking consent (see annexes 5 and 6).

# CHAPTER 4.1: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to find to out how primary teachers in Lesotho schools interpret portfolio as an assessment strategy, how their interpretations of portfolio influenced their use of portfolio in teaching and learning, and their views of using a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho classrooms. The study made use of a mixed-method approach, in which a questionnaire, interviews, as well as document analysis were used to collect data for this study. The results from the analysis of these data are presented in this chapter. This chapter has the following sections: Introduction (this section), survey results, interview results, document analysis results and triangulation of results.

## 4.3 PARTICIPANTS PROFILE

The survey results of this study were based on responses by the twenty participants who fully completed the questionnaire. There were seven participants from the government schools, eleven from the church schools and 2 two from private schools. Out of the twenty participants who responded to the questionnaire, 7(35%) were from the government schools, 11(55%) were from the church schools, 2(10%) were from private schools. The participants were 5(25%) males and 15(75%) females. All of them were trained and experienced teachers with 4(20%) having less than six years of teaching experience and 16(80%) more than six years teaching experience. Out of this twenty, 10(50%) were Diploma holders, 9(45%) were Degree holders and one teacher had a Masters Degree. The profile of these participants is summarised below in Figure 4.1.
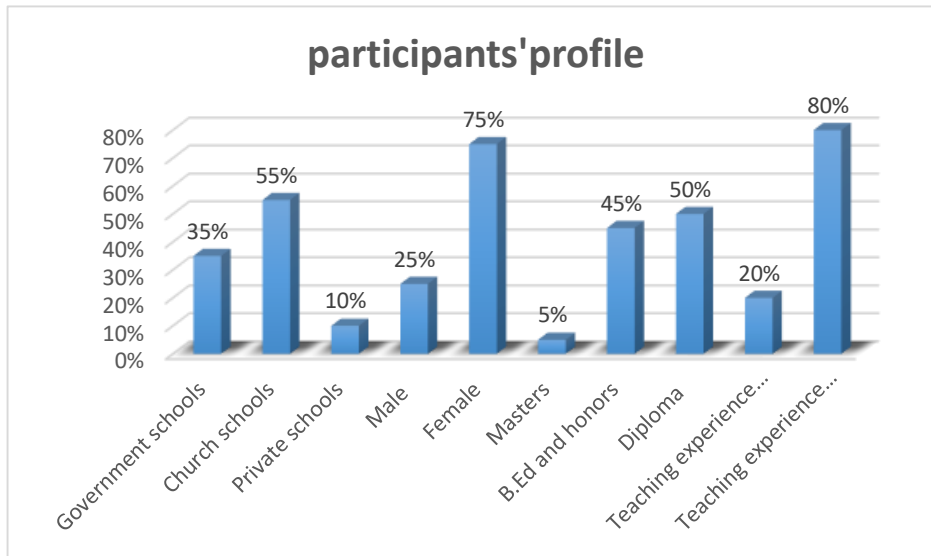
**Figure 0.1: Participants' profile**

## 4.4 SURVEY RESULTS

A questionnaire was collected from the 20 teachers who were sampled to participate in this study as described in the previous section (Participants Profile). The questionnaire was divided into three sections, namely: (1) teachers' interpretations of portfolio as an assessment strategy, (2) teachers' implementation of portfolio. 3) Teachers' views on the use a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho. The results are presented hereafter.

### 4.4.1Teachers' interpretations of portfolio as an assessment strategy

The information about teachers' interpretation of a portfolio as an assessment strategy is presented as follows: a) teachers' knowledge of portfolio, b) teachers' use of portfolio, and c) teachers' views about the use of portfolio in Lesotho classrooms.

*Portfolio knowledge*

A question about teachers' knowledge of portfolio was a 'yes' or 'no' question to which teachers 'responses were to indicate whether they knew or were familiar with the term 'portfolio' in teaching and learning. Their responses were analysed, and the results showed that out of the twenty participants, 18(90%) responded yes while 2(10%) said that they were not familiar with the concept of portfolio in teaching and learning.

These teachers were also asked to indicate by ticking ( ✓ ) their sources of knowledge about portfolio. The sources of knowledge were listed as: NCDC and ECoL, their schools, and other teachers.  The results are presented below in figure 4 2. Out of twenty participants, 3 (15%)

did not respond to the question, 3 (15 %), indicated that they had heard other teachers talking about portfolio, 2 (10%) indicated that they obtained knowledge from the training they received from their schools and 12 (60%) indicated that they had acquired knowledge of portfolio assessment through training they received from ECoL and NCDC.
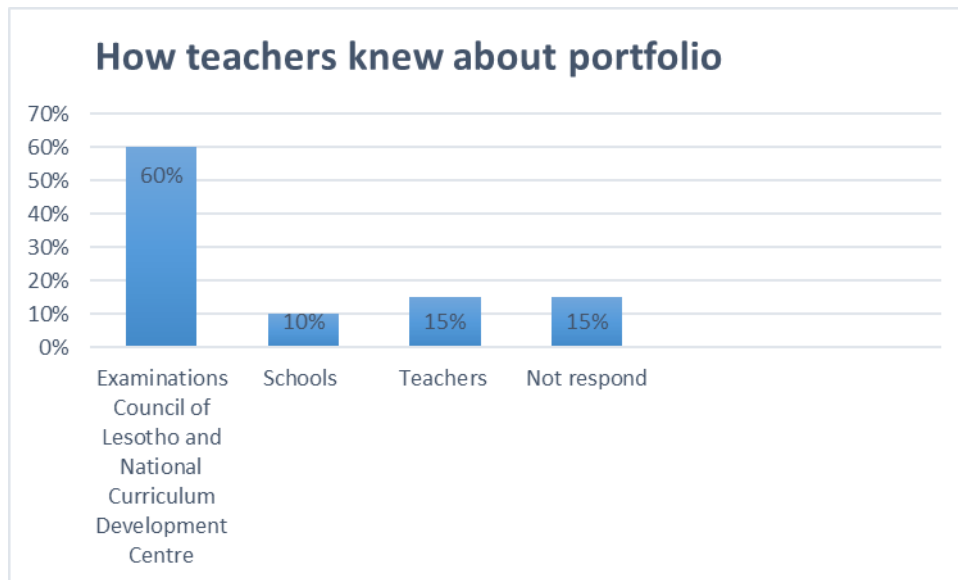


Figure 0.2 How teachers knew about portfolio

The participants were also asked about their awareness about of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy recommendation about the use of portfolio in teaching and learning. They were asked whether they were aware of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy that recommends the use of portfolio to improve teaching and learning, and to document learners' work as evidence of what they know and can do. This was also a 'yes' or 'no'. Only one participant did not respond to the question. The rest (19 participants) indicated that they knew about the recommendation. The participants were further asked to indicate by choosing from the options provided, how they knew about the Curriculum and Assessment Policy recommendation. Seventeen participants indicated that they learned from ECoL and NCDC workshops, four teachers indicated that they had learned from their schools; three indicated that they also got the information from reading the policy document. This is summarised in Table 4.1.

**Table 0.1: The source of information about policy recommendation.**

| Question | How did you know about the policy recommendation of portfolio use in schools? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Source of knowledge | NCDC and or ECoL | School | Policy document | Did not respond |
| No of participants | 15 (75%) | 4(20%) | 3(15%) | 1(5%) |

## 4.4.2. Teachers' uses of portfolio

In this section the following questions were asked to describe how the participants implemented portfolio in their teaching. The participants were asked a 'yes' and 'no' question to indicate if they used portfolio in their teaching. To this question, 14 (70%) teachers out of twenty responded that they were using a portfolio, while 6 (30%) teachers indicated that they were not.

The participants were also asked about their confidence in the use of a portfolio. They were asked to rate their level of knowledge and confidence in the use of portfolio by ticking (✓) against the options provided, which best describe their level. Options provided were the following: very little, beginner, intermediate and advanced, to describe their level of knowledge. Fourteen teachers responded to this question. The results showed that two teachers believed that they had very little knowledge, six teachers viewed themselves as beginners, three as intermediate, and three as advanced in using portfolio in the classroom. The results are summarised in Table 4.2.

**Table 0.2: The number of participants at each level of knowledge in portfolio use.**

| Question | How do you describe your level of knowledge in portfolio use? | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of knowledge | Very little | beginner, | intermediate | advanced | no response |
| Number of participants | 2 (10%) | 6 (30%) | 3(15%) | 3(15%) | 6 (30%) |

With regard to rating their level of confidence in the use of portfolio in class, they were to select between high, average and low. Fourteen teachers responded to this question. Three

rated their confidence as high, four as average and seven rated theirs low. This information is displayed in Table 4.3

**Table 0.3:  Level of confidence of the participants in portfolio use.**

| Question | How do you rate your level of confidence in the use of portfolio? | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level of confidence | Low | average | high | no response |
| Number of participants | 7 (35%) | 4(20%) | 3(15%) | 6(30%) |

The participants were also asked to indicate the purpose for which they used portfolio in class by ticking (✓ ) only the statement(s) that best suit their purpose. This question was supposed to be answered by only those who attested to using portfolio. Fourteen teachers responded to this question. The results are shown in in Figure 4.3.
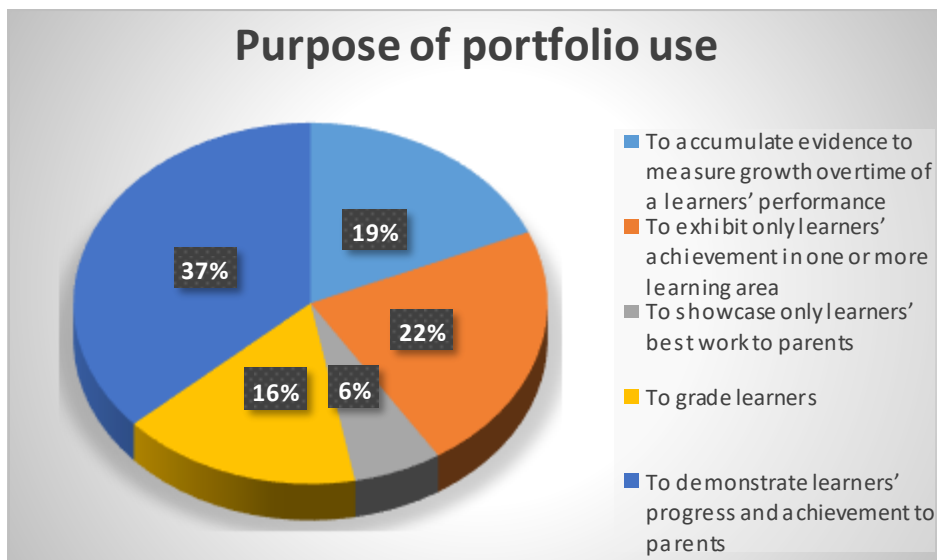


**Figure 0.3: Purpose of portfolio use**

The results generally revealed that most of the participants used portfolio to show growth and achievement of learners. Out of the fourteen participants, 5 (37%) used portfolio to show progress and achievement to parents, 3(19%) used it to measure learners' growth, 3(22%) to show what learners have achieved, 2(16%) to display learner's best work and 1(6%) for grading.

A list of assessment practices which matched the portfolio assessment was provided and the participants were asked to choose those that they practised in class. They were to respond to this question by ticking (√) 'yes' or 'no' to the statements that matched their practices.

The results revealed that there were some teachers who indicated that they never used some of the steps of this assessment practice. For instance, 16 (80%) indicated that they did not allow learners to be part of the decision-making with regard to how they would like to be assessed, 3 teachers (15%) indicated that they did not hold conferences with either parents or learners to discuss learners' progress. Most teachers, 16 (80%) also indicated that they did not engage learners in self-reflection. However, all of them confirmed that they matched the tasks they gave to learners with learning outcomes and they also documented their learners' work.

### 4.4.3 Teachers' views on the use a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho

The questions in this section collected information about teachers' views on the following: a) the benefits of portfolio and b) the challenges teachers were experiencing or knew in relation to the use portfolio in teaching and learning. The responses were analysed. During the analysis, two levels of agreement in the questionnaire ('strongly agree 'agree) were grouped to indicate agreement while 'not sure' 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' were grouped to mean disagreement. This part was supposed to be answered by all those who knew about portfolio, even if they were not using it in class. A total of eighteen teachers responded to this section. The results are presented in Table. 4.4.

**Table 0.4: Teachers' views on the use of portfolio assessment.**

| Belief statements | agree | | disagree | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *no* | % | no | % |
| 1. Portfolio facilitates student learning | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 2. Portfolio demonstrates strength and weakness of learners | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 3. Learners are able to apply knowledge in various ways | 14 | 78 | 4 | 22 |
| 4. Portfolio contributes to cooperation | 4 | 22 | 14 | 78 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | between me, parents and my colleagues | | | |
| 5. | Portfolio contributes in making students' work more active and problem-based | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 6. | Portfolio increases students' awareness of the importance of every piece of work they are assigned | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 7. | Working with portfolio makes teaching and learning fun | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. | Portfolio develops teachers' pedagogical ability | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 9. | All teachers should know how to use portfolio as an assessment tool | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 10. | It is difficult to use portfolio for assessment in the schools in Lesotho* | 4 | 22 | 14 | 78 |
| 11. | lots of time and resources are required for teachers to use portfolio effectively* | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 12. | Portfolio changes teachers' role to be more of an instructor than a facilitator* | 0 | 0 | 18 | 100 |
| 13. | Portfolio establishes a link between instruction and assessment | 2 | 11 | 16 | 88 |
| 14. | Portfolio promotes subject integration | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| 15. | Portfolio takes time away from other important school activities * | 18 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

 The results in this section revealed that out of the eighteen participants who responded to the questionnaire, a significant majority favoured the use of portfolio. All the respondents responded positively to statements 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8, which described portfolio as a valuable strategy in assessment for both teachers and learners. They agreed that portfolio makes teaching and learning interesting and it also facilitates learning, in that it displays learners' weaknesses and strength and also enables learners to actively participate in learning and apply knowledge. They agreed that the use of portfolio makes teachers become facilitators in teaching and are able to link teaching with assessment. However, all the respondents

(100%) believed that portfolio is time-consuming and requires a lot of resources. Therefore, about 4(22%) believed that it is difficult to use portfolio in the classroom in Lesotho.

### 4.4.4 Summary

 The survey findings revealed that eighteen teachers (90%) out of the twenty who participated in this study were familiar with the term portfolio and were also aware that portfolio was recommended as one of the assessment strategies to be used in schools. Their knowledge of how to use portfolio has been obtained from sources such ECoL and NCDC (60%), schools (10%) and other teachers (10%). However, the results revealed that although the teachers knew about portfolio, only fourteen (70%) actually used it in their classrooms. About 9 (64%) used portfolio in teaching for the purpose of demonstrating learners' progress, growth and achievement while 36% indicated that they used it to show learners' best achievements and for grading purposes. With regard to the level of knowledge and confidence about the use of portfolio, three teachers (15%) indicated that they were confident and had enough knowledge. Despite this, most teachers believed that portfolio is important and that teachers should be encouraged to use it. However, they indicated that portfolio development needs time and resources. As a result, some indicated that it is difficult to use portfolio in Lesotho schools.

### 4.5 INTERVIEW RESULTS

The interviews were also used to collect qualitative data in this study. Six teachers (four females and two males) participated in the interview method. The interviewees were selected cautiously to represent the different school proprietorship such as government, church, and private ownership as shown in Table 2.1 in chapter 3. To respect confidentiality and anonymity, the participants were labelled teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as also shown in chapter three, Table (2.1). The interview questions in this section were intended to collect information about teachers' interpretations of portfolio as an assessment tool, teachers' implementation of portfolio; and teachers' views on the use a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho. This information is presented accordingly.

### 4.5.1 Teachers' interpretations of portfolio as an assessment tool

The questions that were used as prompts in order to establish teachers' interpretations of portfolio as assessment tool were: to give their own definition of a portfolio; their sources of knowledge about portfolio as an assessment tool and (3) their understanding of a portfolio as an assessment strategy.

a) Teachers' definition of a portfolio

Two definitions emerged from teachers' responses and these were: a portfolio as a process for documenting learners work in a file or folder, and a portfolio as a tool for learning.

- Portfolio as a process for documenting learners' work in a file or folder: some teachers, (Teachers 3 & 4) defined portfolios as a process of documenting all learners' work in a file or folder. For example, Teacher 3 explained this by saying, ***"I teach Grade 6 and everything my learners did from Grade 1 up to now is contained in their folders."***

- Portfolio as a tool for teaching and learning: The rest of the teachers (Teachers 1, 2, 5 and 6) viewed a portfolio as a tool for learning. For example, this is how Teacher 1 explained,

> *It is a tool that I use for teaching. I give learners a task to do on their own.*
> *While they are working, I monitor and assess their progress to see if they*
> *are doing well or have problems, from the beginning of the task to the end.*

b) Teachers' sources of knowledge about a portfolio

The participants we asked to explain how they learned about the portfolio in teaching and learning. According to the participants, they learned about portfolio through in-service training, formal training and or from more than one source.

- In-service training

According to Teachers 3 and 4, they attended workshops which were organised by NCDC, ECoL and the Department of Inspectorate. The purpose of these workshops was to train teachers on the new curriculum. For example, in her own words, Teacher 2 said:

> *We were told that we should document learners work as evidence, so that when*
> *they progress to the next class, the other teacher should see what they know and*
> *don't know because learners are no more classified as fail or pass or repeat.*

Teacher 4 supported this by indicating that she learned about it from the workshop that was organised by the Ministry of Education and Training through Inspectorate and also through her peers. She said:

> *Besides Inspectorate workshops, I also gained knowledge from other*
> *teachers during our cluster meetings which we hold to scheme together and*
> *discuss issues which challenge us and how we can improve our teaching.*

- Formal Training

The other four teachers indicated that they were trained on the use of portfolio when they were pursuing their Honors Degree and Master Degree in South Africa. Teacher 1 said

> *I did portfolio development as part of my coursework. We were assigned to teach our learners through developing portfolios and submitting those portfolios as part of an assignment.*

What the four teachers said confirmed Motlomelo's findings (1998) that the respondents who attended South African universities seemed to be familiar with a portfolio as opposed to those who did not.

- Recommendation form CAP document

Another question asked respondents to explain if they knew about the recommendation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy that portfolio should be used as one of the assessment strategies. They all indicated that they knew of the recommendation and they support the idea.

### 4.5.2 Teachers' use of portfolio in the classroom

The interviewees were asked to explain how they were using portfolio in teaching and learning and for what purpose.

a) How teachers use a portfolio in the classroom

In this section there were several themes which emerged, describing how the participants used portfolio. These were (i) the filing of learners' work using portfolio (ii) as a learning tool for revision, (iii) for parents meeting and iv) as a teaching method.

- Evidence of learners 'work

The participants described that they had requested learners to create folders to keep all the work done for the year. They put everything in the folder that the learners had done, be it a test, pieces of class work, or a project. The participants indicated that learners had no choice of selection of what to put in their portfolios but kept the records of what they were asked by the teacher to keep. Some participants indicated that portfolio was a file for the tests only, not for everything they had done.

- A learning tool for revision

They were asked to explain how they engaged learners in self- reflection or evaluation. The respondents interpreted reflection as revision. They revealed that what they often did was to ask learners to go through their documented work to revise for tests.

- Parents meeting

Another question was to tell who else other than learners they shared learner's portfolio with. When responding to this question, all of them indicated that they involved parents during meetings. They indicated that in their schools, parents are called for meetings to discuss their children's performance with teachers. It is during this time that they would give the parents their children's folders to see how they perform at school.

- Teaching strategy

Some participants described that they used portfolio as a task given to learners. As described by teachers 1, 5 and 6, learners are usually given a task to perform and are expected to file all the stages of the task until it is completed. They indicated that they often started by telling learners what they were going to learn and what they would be expected to do. Teacher 6 explained

> *If it is Numeracy, for instance, I start by telling them the objective, so as to call their attention. We are going to learn about addition from 0 -10. I ask what materials are needed and what to bring. I jumble card numbers and ask them to do their own additions, each at their own pace. They keep their work either in their folders or paste them on the wall, depending on the size of the product. The purpose is to engage learners in the manipulation of objects, to allow them to explore, to apply learner-centered approach.*

They indicated that they used portfolio in many subjects, and they encouraged learners to document according to subject. This is with the exception of Teacher 1 who indicated that due to the big size of her class she preferred group portfolios especially when learners carried out projects (see annex 4 A and B). She further explained that she often divided tasks into sub-tasks and she asked the learners to file everything they had completed so that they could see where they started and where they were going. She indicated that this helps her monitor learner's progress in learning. This is what she said,

> *I interact, talk with my learners where needed…I even discuss scoring rubric with them before they embark on the task, so that they can self -*

*assess as they do the work. I usually use it while I want to guide learners to achieve a particular objective. For instance, if I want to teach them about how to make a poster, I show them what it is… discuss the task and scoring rubric. They do the task and keep a record of the stages of the task…*

Her sample of the scoring rubric for the task given to learners is given. (see annex 4C). The respondents also indicated that they varied tasks to accommodate learners' different abilities.

Another question asked the teachers to describe how they involved learners in portfolio development. Respondents 1, 2, 5 and 6 indicated that they involved them at the development stage when they discuss the objectives of the activity, where they have to collect materials for learning activities, carry out activities and document them, while teachers 2 and 4 indicated that learners were involved in the documentation of their work and keeping of their portfolios only.

### 4.5.3 Teachers' views on the use of portfolio as an assessment tool in the Lesotho classrooms

The participants were asked to express their feelings about the use of portfolio in the teaching. They were asked to express the benefits and challenges. With regard to benefits the following themes emerged:

a) Improves learning and boosts motivation

All the respondents showed that they liked portfolio and they encouraged that it should be used in schools. Teacher 6 indicated that her learners become excited because,

*All of them use different styles of learning and their creativity is boosted. It boosts self-confidence when they look at their products. It promotes cooperation and teamwork because they discuss amongst themselves.*

Teacher 1 indicated that with the projects they engaged learners in, they were able to test a variety of skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. She further indicated that she was able to employ learner-centered approach during portfolio development because learners are actively participating in the learning activities.

With regard to challenges they encountered on the use of portfolio in class, the following themes emerged: i) the issue of storage, ii) incompetence in the use of portfolio, iii) large class size, and iv) time.

- Storage

All the interviewees  indicated that storing learners' profile and documents was a challenge. They explained that keeping learners work at school was difficult due to robberies and theft. One teacher indicated that because of this problem, they had asked their learners to keep the portfolios at home and bring them when needed. But this also posed a challenge as learners tend to remove from their portfolios the items, they have not performed well in.  As a result, the evidence of learners' work gets distorted.

- Limited knowledge of portfolio

Some participants indicated that although they knew and used portfolio, they felt that they had limitations in its use in the classroom as explainedin the training they received from ECol and NCDC was not sufficient. For example, one teacher pointed out that he attended a workshop organized by the District Resource Teachers and that's where they were encouraged to document learners work for evidence of what learners knew and could do, and that's when he started requesting parents to buy folders for their children's work. Another teacher indicated that she learnt about portfolio from ECoL's workshops. It was during the assessment training workshops where they were informed that the curriculum requires the use of portfolio as one of the strategies for CASS to promote teaching and learning and also document learners' work for progression from Grade 1 to 7 as PSLE was being phased out. However, although she has been in a pilot school, where a lot of supervision was done, she said she still felt that she needed more training. This issue of training was reiterated by Motlomelo (2001) that teachers require planning, managing and the organisational skills for portfolio to be well implemented.

- Class size

Teachers 1, 2, 5 and 6 indicated that they were challenged by the big class sizes and this limited their use of portfolio in teaching. Teacher 1 indicated that she has opted for group portfolios because individual portfolio was difficult due to her big class size.

- Time

Some of the interviewees raised the issue of time. They indicated that portfolio was time-consuming. They pointed out that portfolio often took two to three days to cover the material that could be covered in one day if other teaching strategies were used.  They explained that

time was sometimes prolonged by learners who do not timeously bring the resources needed for some tasks, as portfolio requires a lot of resources and time to plan with leaners. For instance, teacher 5 indicated that when they asked learners to bring some materials to work with, but their parents are reluctant to provide such materials. This is affirmed in the literature that portfolio assessment requires time and considerable funds for teachers and resources to be developed (Elango et al., 2005; Motlomelo, 2001; Goctu, 2016).

## 4.6 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS RESULTS

The analysis of three learners' portfolios was carried out to collect more data on how the participants were using portfolio assessment. The selection of teachers whose portfolio were analyzed was based on the responses they gave during the interview. Portfolios were taken from learners taught by teachers 1, 3 and 6 were selected. The analysis was done using a checklist that was developed by the researcher. The portfolios were checked and analyzed against the following:

1. Container or folder
2. Evidence of the owner of portfolio,
3. Evidence of the entries (contents),
4. Learning outcomes to be assessed through portfolio,
5. Classroom tasks and their match with learning outcomes assessed,
6. Evidence of tasks showing learners growth or progress;
7. Evidence of guidelines for selection of entries,
8. Evidence of scoring criteria and feedback,
9. Evidence of conference between learner and teacher,
10. Evidence of learner self-reflection and evaluation.

It was observed from the analysis that the contents of the portfolios were not uniform but varied from portfolio to portfolio. The findings of this checklist were as follows

1. The three portfolios had containers as either a box or a folder;
2. All the portfolios had a form of identification which was a name of a learner, or a group;
3. Portfolios had the contents such as: tasks given, quarterly tests, class tests, pictures, drawings and group projects. However, they varied a lot as one of them contained only quarterly tests
4. Evidence of tasks given

5. There was only one portfolio which had evidence of a scoring rubric for the task documented.

## 4.7 SUMMARY OF QUALITATIVE RESULTS

In this study, six teachers were interviewed on the following issues: their understanding of the portfolio as an assessment strategy, how they implement portfolio assessment and their views about the use of portfolio as an assessment strategy. The participants indicated that they used portfolio as a tool for teaching and learning, a file that has documented learners work, as evidence of learners' work, as a learning tool for revision, and also to show parents how learners performed during parents meeting. With regards to challenges these were the themes which emerged: the time-consuming nature of portfolio, too big classes to use portfolio, lack of storage for portfolios, and limited knowledge of portfolio among teachers. Regarding how they knew about it, they indicated that they had learned through formal training and informal training which included pre-service and in-service training. The teachers had a feeling that the in-service training they received was not adequate and that even after this training, they still viewed themselves as incompetent to use portfolio in their practices. Despite the challenges, the results showed that teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of portfolio. They emphasized that it is also important for motivating learners to learn.

## 4.8 TRIANGULATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

This section has focused on the triangulation of the results of the three methods which were used in the study to collect data. The study used a mixed method approach in which a survey was used to collect quantitative data and a combination of interview and document analysis to collect qualitative data. The purpose of this approach was for these methods to complement each other where there were weaknesses. It was also to allow the researcher to gather rich information that would allow for understanding of teachers' perceptions of the use of portfolio in teaching and learning. The findings of the three methods (survey, interview and document analysis) were triangulated in order to generate different sets of results. This triangulation resulted in confirmations and contradictions from the results that were generated by individual methods.

### 4.8.1 Confirmation of results

Data collected from the three methods confirmed that all the participants had a common understanding of portfolio, that it involves documenting learners' work. The participants

reported this in the survey and during the interviews. These results were supported by those generated from data that were collected through document analysis. It was established through this method that teachers documented learners work as portfolios. Again, with this triangulation it was established that as the participants had indicated, they knew about a portfolio even though they had different interpretations of how learner portfolios should be administered. For example, the document analysis results reflected inconsistency in how teachers used portfolio as an assessment strategy. The inconsistency was evidenced by the discrepancy in the entries of learners' portfolio and the purpose for which portfolio is used as described by the teachers during the survey and interview. The documentation or development of learners' portfolios greatly varied and were erratic, showing no uniformity. The triangulation of survey and interview results also revealed that teachers generally have a positive attitude and perception towards the use of portfolio assessment in teaching and learning.

## 4.8.2 Contradictions in the results

Data collected through document analysis could not confirm some of the claims made by the participants in the questionnaire and during the interviews. Even though the participants indicated that they knew about portfolio, interview results indicated that their knowledge was limited, and this was reflected in their weak definitions of portfolio in teaching and learning. Also, even though they claimed that they used portfolio as a teaching and learning strategy in the classroom, this claim was not reflected in the learners' portfolios. Portfolios lacked most of the contents which they are expected to have. For instance, some portfolios contained only learners' responses to the assigned tasks and tests and no evidence of tasks tracking learners' progress towards a certain learning outcome or target.

# CHAPTER 5.1: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION

The study investigated teachers' perceptions on the use of a portfolio as an assessment tool in Lesotho primary schools. Information collected for this study included: a) teachers' interpretations of a portfolio as an assessment strategy; b) teachers' implementation of portfolio in classrooms in Lesotho; and c) Teachers' views on the use of a portfolio as an assessment in the classrooms in Lesotho. A questionnaire, interview protocol, as well as document analysis checklist were used to collect data. The survey data were analysed using SPSS, the thematic approach was used for the analysis of interview responses, and portfolio checklist was used to collect data based on the learners' portfolios. The results from these three methods were presented in Chapter four. The interest of the researcher in this study was ignited by the introduction of the new curriculum in the basic education level in Lesotho. The Curriculum, among others, recommends that teachers use portfolio as one of the strategies of continuous assessment to improve teaching and learning, and provide evidence of what learners know and can do.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings, draw up some conclusions emerging from the results and make some necessary recommendations for improvement of the implementation of portfolio as an assessment strategy. The chapter, therefore, includes the introduction, discussion of the findings, conclusions, limitations, as well as, the recommendations.

## 5.3 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

There were twenty teachers who participated in this study. All of them were surveyed, six of them were also interviewed, and three learners' portfolios were analysed. The research questions for this study were:

1. How do teachers in Lesotho schools interpret portfolio as an assessment strategy?
2. How do teachers implement portfolio in their teaching and learning?
3. What are teachers' views of using a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho classrooms?

### 5.3.1 Teachers in Lesotho schools interpret portfolio as an assessment

The study has found out that the concept of portfolio was known to most of the teachers. However, even though teachers have heard or been educated about portfolio, there was evidence that they lacked deep knowledge about a portfolio. They also had different interpretations. Some viewed it as a strategy of teaching and learning which documents learners' work which is either in progress or completed. According to this interpretation, such documentation should demonstrate learners' academic growth, abilities and capabilities as well as where they started from up to the achievement of the targeted goal or objective. This interpretation is supported by Borich and Kubiszyn (2007) who see portfolio for assessment as a documentation of one or more works-in-progress that illustrate creation of a product, evolving through various stages of conception, drafting, revision and completion.

There were those who understood portfolio as a file in which all learners' work should be documented. This interpretation was evidenced by the portfolios which were analyzed. There was no systematic way in which the contents were documented. They lacked some of the basic elements of portfolio as documented in the literature. These include systematic documentation of portfolio contents, variety of tasks, and tasks to track learners' growth in a particular skill or concept. This, therefore, could not be regarded as a learning or assessment portfolio. For example, Brookhart and Nitko (2007: 249) warn that portfolio should not be viewed as "a scrapbook nor a 'dumping ground' for all the student's accomplishments." It should not be seen as a collection of all the learners' work but should be a collection of identified items which have been carefully selected to accomplish a purpose. This suggests that keeping learners' records only should not be considered a portfolio. If this approach could be taken, it would defeat the purpose of portfolio as an assessment strategy in teaching and learning. A portfolio, according to Mueller (2014), should tell a particular story about the learner (for example growth, struggles, failures and successes).  It should not be seen as only a documentation of work that accumulates over a period without displaying, for instance, failures and successes and growth of a learner.

This study has also established that, there have been changes and improvements in relation to the knowledge and use of portfolio in the classroom in Lesotho as compared to the time of Motlomelo's study (1998) which was done twenty years ago and whose findings were that the teachers in Lesotho were not familiar with the term portfolio. Perhaps this change is also a

result of the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, which recommends the use of portfolio for assessment in the primary schools in Lesotho.

The study also discovered different interpretations of portfolio by teachers. This could be attributed to their level of exposure to the use of portfolio in teaching and learning, and the kind of training the teachers received on the use of portfolio. For example, one of the participants indicated that she was never exposed to portfolio during her training as a teacher, but only learned about it through workshops, whose schedules were most of the time tight, with training activities done in a rush. This participant and others who were trained through workshops from NCDC, ECoL and Inspectorate, perceived portfolio as a folder that only contains the learning products of a learner.

However, those who got training from South African universities interpreted portfolio differently. Their view was that a portfolio was not only a collection of learners' works, but also a teaching strategy that, when used, engages a learner in a meaningful way. This group of participants demonstrated better knowledge and understanding of a portfolio in teaching and learning, than the group which received training through agencies such as NCDC, ECoL and Inspectorate. They understood it as a documentation of the learning processes and documentation of the products that result from these learning processes. As it is demonstrated by this study and Motlomelo's study conducted 20 years ago (1998), portfolio assessment is not taught in the institutions of higher learning in Lesotho, hence teachers have very little knowledge about it and it is used in a limited way in the schools in Lesotho. This was confirmed by the learners' portfolios that were studied which displayed a limited evidence of portfolio mastery by teachers. For instance, of the three portfolios which were analysed, two contained the learners' collection of work which was not marked. There was also no evidence of marking assessment criteria or rubric for either individual task or the portfolio as a whole. Literature indicates that without assessing and scoring the learners' work, there is no point for teachers to compile documents which do not indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the learner (Spandel and Arter, 1992). The popularity and power of portfolio in assessment lies in its nature of displaying learners' abilities through observable evidence (Salaiman et al, 2015).

Another finding of this study which is worth mentioning is that not all the participants were aware of the recommendation of the Lesotho Curriculum and Assessment Policy's requirements about using portfolio as an assessment strategy. For example, out of twenty

participants who were surveyed, two indicated that they were not familiar with the term and this suggests that these participants were not aware of the policy requirement.

## 5.3.2 How teachers implement portfolio in their teaching

Regarding how teachers implement portfolio in teaching and learning, most participants revealed that they used portfolio in teaching and learning to show growth and achievement of learners. However, the results of the portfolio analysis failed to support that. Out of fourteen teachers who were surveyed, twelve indicated that they used portfolio for the purpose of showing progress and growth of learners. But the analysis of learners' portfolio results revealed no link between the learners' portfolios contents and the purposes indicated by the teachers. Literature suggests that in growth or process portfolio, assessment tasks should look more like instructional activities than tests and should reflect systematic planning and clear assessment criteria or a rubric to judge learners' level of performance in the activity (O'Maley and Moya, 1994). Although the artifacts were visible in the learners' portfolios, there was no evidence of systematic planning and progression of learners' early and late entries to demonstrate and track the growth of the learner toward a targeted skill or objective. Being clear about the purpose for the portfolio development is an essential element of portfolio because it determines how a portfolio should be constructed and what it should contain (Alimemaj and Ahmetaj, 2000). Understanding the purpose for the development of portfolio also gives the teacher and the learner an opportunity to provide clear and straightforward observable products and understandable evidence about learners' performance (Borich and Kubiszyn, 2010). Some interviewees also admitted that they never discussed the purpose of portfolio development with their learners. Furthermore, portfolio that is used for assessment should include the scoring rubric, but out of the three portfolios, it was only one portfolio which had evidence of a scoring criteria. This was evidence that the contents of the learners' portfolios were not aligned to the purpose which teachers said they used portfolio for.

Secondly, although the teachers indicated that they knew portfolio and used it in class, the survey results revealed that most of their assessment practices did not conform to portfolio assessment practices. For instance, the results, revealed that sixteen (80%) of them could not involve the learners in making decisions with regard to matters relating to how they should be assessed. This was confirmed by the interview results in which, for instance, one teacher pointed out that decisions on what and how to assess were solely her discretion and responsibility. All the participants in the interview revealed that even what to be documented

in the portfolio was not the choice of the learners but that of the teacher. Learners' participation is central to portfolio development. Arter and Spandel (1992) argue that portfolio development should reflect learner's participation in the selection of content, guidelines for selection of entries and, decisions on the assessment criteria. They are supported by Borich and Kubiszyn (2010) who argue that portfolio implementation begins with the teacher and learners coming together to agree on the purpose, pieces of work and processes required for portfolio development. This practice of denying learners participation contradicted the constructivism theory, on which portfolio is underpinned, that a learner should be an active partner in the learning process so that they would be able to construct knowledge. It also defeats the purpose of portfolio assessment as stated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy document, that portfolio should be used to promote learning by actively involving learners in the learning process, and that it should serve as a formative assessment to promote continuous assessment. Portfolio, as a formative assessment tool, should diagnose learning difficulties, keep records of change and monitor progress, so as to guide new learning.  This perception of portfolio use is in line with Black and William's (2001) argument that portfolio is a tool that gives both the teacher and learner an opportunity to be actively involved in learning activities and to continuously monitor and enhance learning progress. This view is supported by Stowell and Tierney (1994) who perceive portfolio as formative assessment that can provide learners, teachers and parents with an on-going feedback that informs teaching and learning so that decisions regarding future instruction can be made.

Thirdly, the portfolios of learners of some interviewees who indicated that they were competent and confident in the use of portfolio were subjected to document analysis. The findings revealed that the implementation of portfolio varied from teacher to teacher. The three portfolios provided evidence of absence of uniformity in the documentation. For instance, in one portfolio there was evidence of tasks given and an assessment criterion. In another portfolio, it was only class and quarterly tests and quizzes that were documented, while another one was compilation of all learner's work which included all tasks, projects. Consequently, there was no consistency in how teachers used a portfolio as a learning and assessment tool. Mueller (2014) makes a caution that portfolio assessment should not be a file of a student's work that accumulates over a period of time but should be a purposefully selected subset of a learner's work that tell a particular story about that learner. Examinations Council and Newman (2012), state that portfolio should not be a selected sample of the

learners work but the whole learner's work which guides their learning and shows clearly the growth and progress of the learners and provides evidence of achievement.

Furthermore, there was also no evidence of self- reflection, or self –evaluation in the learners' portfolios. About 80% of the participants acknowledged that they never engaged learners in self-reflection. Some regarded self-reflection as a revision of the previous work in preparation for an upcoming test or task. Self- reflection, as argued by Altinay (2008), enables learners to construct their knowledge through reflection and critical thinking when examining the artefacts, they have produced. Bryant & Timmins (2002) echoed that by reflecting that learners are able to identify their learning needs, their abilities and interests, and this enhances teaching and learning. Most teachers (80%) also indicated they never engaged learners in the selection of entries of portfolio and decisions on how they could be assessed. This further highlighted the practice that was defiant to the constructivism theory on which the portfolio assessment is underpinned. Bryant and Timmind, (2002) indicate that learners' involvement in the development of portfolio is central to Growth Portfolio.

Although the researcher did not ask the participants whether or not they knew types of portfolio, no teachers' responses signaled the understanding or knowledge of portfolio for showcase or grading learners. Even the learners' portfolios also failed to support that because they contained no evidence of guidelines for the selection of best learners' entries to showcase their best work, and no assessment criteria and or rubric to judge individual entries or portfolio as a whole. The findings, therefore, confirmed Motlomelo's (1998), that knowledge on the use of portfolio in Lesotho is limited. The contents of the learners' portfolios revealed misalignment with the purpose of the portfolio development as envisaged by the policy. This, therefore, indicates that if implementation is not successful, intended results will not be attained.

### 5.3.3 Teachers' views of using a portfolio as an assessment strategy in the Lesotho classrooms

The study revealed that teachers were positive about the use of portfolio although they had some reservations about it. These were some of the positive views they had about portfolio:

They acknowledged that portfolio for assessment could improve teaching and learning because both the learners and teachers have the opportunity to refer to the artifacts in the portfolio to see where the strengths and weaknesses of the learners were. They indicated that it provided teachers with information of learners' styles of learning, as learners are provided

with a variety of tasks to demonstrate their abilities. As a result, teachers could adjust their instruction to suit learners' needs and style of learning. This is confirmed by literature that portfolio assessment can be used by a teacher as a technique to analyse the growth of learners and make decisions regarding future instruction (Goctu, 2016; Motlomelo, 2001).

Secondly, they indicated that it improves their way of teaching, by making them more of facilitators that instructors. For instance, the three interviewees indicated that they love portfolio because it provided them with opportunities to use the learner-centred approach, because learners were actively engaged and they (teachers) became just facilitators. They indicated that learners also like portfolio approach over other methods because they do things on their own, in their own style. They discuss and work at their own pace and that gives them a sense of ownership, achievement and freedom. This is affirmed by Mahasneh and Murad (2014) that portfolio has a positive impact on learners 'achievement and motivation.

Furthermore, all the interviewees concurred that during conferencing, parents also have an opportunity to see how their children were progressing and that would motivate them to take responsibility of the education of their children. They, therefore, advocated that teachers should be encouraged to use portfolio as it promotes cooperation among different stakeholders such as parents, teachers, learners and principals.

However, the participants also raised some concerns about portfolio which could make implementation of portfolio ineffective and difficult in the Lesotho classrooms and these were as follows:

The common challenge which emerged during the interview was that of robbery in the classrooms, whereby learners' files and projects tend to be destroyed or disappear. To overcome that, they encouraged learners to keep their portfolios at home and bring them when needed, but that also often posed a challenge missing information from learners' files, with various explanations. For instance, one teacher indicated that where the performance was not good, learners tend to remove that piece of work and claimed that the work could not be found.

Secondly, there were also the issues of time and resources. They gave an example of a case where the learners had to do projects and could not provide materials due to unaffordability. Some participants perceived portfolio as a time-consuming exercise in that it requires learners to explore, manipulate objects at their own pace and sometimes other learners get distracted and lose confidence in themselves when they see others doing things in a different way from

theirs. They also complained that it gives teachers of a lot of paperwork. This issue of time and resources is not unique to Lesotho teachers. Several studies, such as, Elango et al. (2005), in their study on Portfolio as a Learning Tool, found out that learners perceived portfolio as a good learning tool which is, however, very stressful and time-consuming.

The participants also raised the issue of ratio between the teacher and learners. They indicated their class sizes are big and this, therefore, discourages them from using portfolio. However, those who understood portfolio to be only documentation of learners' work did not see that as a problem.

## 5.4. CONCLUSION

The study had the following objectives to achieve a) to establish teachers' understanding of portfolio as an assessment strategy, b) to find out how they implement portfolio and c) what their views are on the use of portfolio.

Based on the findings of this study it can be concluded that teachers are familiar with the term portfolio. Some teachers know and use portfolio in Lesotho primary schools. Many of them are aware of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy's requirement that teachers should use a portfolio as one of the assessment strategies. It is, however, important to indicate that although the majority of the respondents appear to know and use portfolio, there are few who are not using it and also few who are not familiar with the term and even lack knowledge of the Education Policy requirements.

Furthermore, this study also concludes that although teachers have heard and been trained on the use of portfolio, their knowledge of how to use this strategy is limited and this was reflected in the learners' portfolios that were studied. Their interpretation and implementation of portfolio also varied from teacher to teacher. This, therefore, suggests that MoET is still faced with the challenge and task to equip teachers with necessary knowledge and skills to handle the new curriculum well. Raselimo and Mahao (2015) make a caution that if teachers are unable to implement continuous assessment well, that might pose a danger to the quality of educational assessment in the country. Portfolio assessment is one of the recommended strategies to promote CASS and should be well implemented, especially in the absence of PSLE where learners are no longer screened.

The study further revealed that the teachers expressed positive feelings about the use of portfolio, that it can improve teaching and learning. Despite this, they also acknowledged that

there some challenges, such as, time and resources. They attested to using portfolio in schools although understanding differed from teacher to teacher. They also displayed positive attitude towards portfolio.

## 5.5. LIMITATIONS

The findings of this study cannot be generalised, firstly because teachers who participated in this study cannot be taken to represent teachers in Lesotho primary schools for the following reasons: these teachers were selected from the schools around Maseru urban; the number of participants in this study was 20 and these numbers are considered far from significantly representing teachers in all Lesotho primary schools.  Also, the information produced by this study was gathered through a questionnaire, interview and document analysis (learner's portfolio). The participants were not observed doing their work relating to the portfolios in the classroom. Moreover, other groups such as parents, school administrators and learners were not included in this study. It is believed that if these limitations are taken care of, the study is likely to produce different results from those currently observed.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools for this study were based in the Maseru urban region. This was for the convenience of the researcher as they were accessible for administration of the research instrument. To produce better reliable data, the sample of teachers could have been increased and the geographical regions of the sample could have been expanded to include other regions of the country.

The National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) is also a key role player in the implementation of the curriculum that could provide valuable information, but because of limited time, the study did not cover that.

Teacher training institutions are also significant in that they train teachers who are going to implement the curriculum and assessment and can, therefore, provide information on whether the training courses they offer are aligned to what teachers are expected to do in the field. Their key role is to ensure that teachers entering the education system are fully up to date with current assessment thinking and practices.

The principals of the schools and learners should have also been considered because they have a key role in ensuring that assessment is well done and support teachers who are struggling

with these new assessment strategies. But these groups have not been contacted due to time constraints and shortage of resources. This could therefore be an area to further investigate.

MoET through the inspectorate department (District Education Managers, Inspectors and District Resource Teachers) also should have been contacted because their key role is to monitor and support teachers to deliver good assessment practices in classrooms. They should monitor and support teachers with regular in-service training to ensure that the teachers incorporate portfolio in their teaching to bring about effective learning results. MoET should also provide guidelines on the implementation of portfolio. Providing guidelines to teachers on portfolio development will enable teachers to plan and organise portfolio assessment in a way that will give learners a clear picture of what is expected of them. This will enhance the quality of learning. This will also provide reliable results which learners can use for progression or transfer from one school to another.

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# ANNEX 1:  QUESTIONNAIRE

*Please read this extract before responding to this survey. This survey aims to collect information on teachers' perceptions of use of portfolio as an assessment tool in primary schools in Lesotho. This study targets particularly teachers who are involved in the implementation of the integrated curriculum. The results that will be generated by this survey will be useful to the stakeholders of education in Lesotho, who are interested in the successful implementation of this new curriculum. Your participation in this study is, therefore, is highly valued. The questionnaire should take about 20 -30 minutes to complete. All the information that you and other teachers will provide for this survey will remain strictly <u>confidential</u> and will be used only for this study. Please also note that your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential*

**Instruction:**

1. This questionnaire has three sections

2. Please respond to all sections in this questionnaire where asked to do so.

**Section 1: - PERSONAL PROFILE**

*This section collects information about your personal and educational details. Please tick the appropriate option or write your answer in the space provided.***1.1 Biological traits**

1.1.1   Age: ❏20- 30 ❏ 31 -40 ❏ 14- 50 ❏51- 60  ❏61 -70

1.1.2   Gender:      ❏Male ❏Female**Educational Background**

1.1.3   Highest teaching qualification

❏Certificate ❏ Diploma in education ❏ B. Ed. ❏ BE. Hons. ❏ Master's degree

**Teaching background**

1.3.1    Years of Teaching Experience

❏ 1-2 years  ❏ 3-5 years     ❏ 6 and more

1.3.2   Which Grades do you teach?

❒ Grade 1      ❒ Grade 2      ❒ Grade 3

❒ Grade 4      ❒ Grade 5      ❒ Grade 6 ❒ Grade7

❒    Multiple grades, list them: ............................................................................

1.3.3   Which Learning Areas do you teach?

      L. Area 1:      -----------------------------------------------------------------

      L. Area 2:      -----------------------------------------------------------------

      L Area 3.      -----------------------------------------------------------------

      L. Area 4.      -----------------------------------------------------------------

      L. Area 5.      -----------------------------------------------------------------

1.3.4   What is the class size average: …………………………………….

  5.  Type of school you teach at:

      ❒Government ❒ RCC ❒LESCA  ACL ❒ Private❒

**Section 2: UNDERSTANDING OF PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT:**

| | *YES* | *NO* |
|---|---|---|
| 2.1.1 *Do you agree with the following statements?* | | |
| I have knowledge about portfolio as assessment tool | ❐ | ❐ |
| I learned about it from other teachers talking about portfolio as an assessment tool | ❐ | ❐ |
| I heard about portfolio as an assessment tool when it was mentioned in a formal school meeting by the principal and or head of department | ❐ | ❐ |
| I gained knowledge of portfolio as an assessment tool from the training which was organised by my school | ❐ | ❐ |
| I attended one or more work(s) organised by other government bodies such as ECOL and NCDC | ❐ | ❐ |
| I have seen other teachers in my school using portfolio | ❐ | ❐ |

**2.1 Knowledge about the curriculum recommendation**

2.2.1 Are you aware that the new curriculum recommends that teachers should use portfolio as one of assessment strategies?

❐     Yes          ❐     No

2.2.2 How did you know about this recommendation that portfolio should be used as one of the strategies in assessment? **Tick all that apply to you**

a)   Other teachers                ❐

b)   School principal and / or head of department.     ❐

c)   ECOL and NCDC                ❐

    d)   Reading Curriculum and Assessment Policy document.  ❐

### 2.3 Portfolio implementation

**(Respond to this section ONLY if you use portfolio in class.)**

2.3.1 Do you use portfolio assessment in your class?

❐Yes       ❐ No

2.3.2 How would you describe your knowledge of the use of portfolio as an assessment tool?

❐Very little ❐Beginner ❐ Intermediate    ❐Advance

2.3.3 How would you rate your confidence in the use of portfolio as an assessment strategy?

❐Low  ❐ average    ❐high

2.3.4 How do you use portfolio in teaching and learning? (**Tick all those applicable to you**)

To accumulate evidence to measure growth overtime of a learners' performance ❐

To only exhibit learners' achievement in one or more learning areas    ❐

To showcase only learners' best work      ❐

To grade learners      ❐

To demonstrate learners' progress and achievement to parents    ❐

### 2.4 Assessment Practices

Which of the following describes your assessment practices? (**Respond even if you are not using portfolio**) *(Please tick your appropriate)*

| Statements | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1. **I decide on when and how to assess learners I don't involve them in the decision-making** | ❐ | ❐ |
| 2. **I engage my learners in deciding when and how they should be assessed (assessment criteria)** | ❐ | ❐ |
| 3. **I use tests and examinations only, to assess the learner** | ❐ | ❐ |
| 4. **I match classroom tasks with learning outcomes** | ❐ | ❐ |
| 5. **I assess learners through classroom performance and projects** | ❐ | ❐ |
| 6. **I use only assessment packages from ECoL to assess learners.** | ❐ | ❐ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 7.  I begin by explaining to the learners the importance of filling their learning and assessment records. | ❐ | ❐ |
| 8.  I assess based on my knowledge about the interests and abilities of learners, (I prepare individualised assessment tasks for each learner) | ❐ | ❐ |
| 9.  I hold meeting with parents and learners to discuss learners' work | ❐ | ❐ |
| 10. I set aside time to work with learners on individual basis to reflect on their work. | ❐ | ❐ |
| 11. I encourage learners to keep record of their work | ❐ | ❐ |
| 12. I am the only one to manage and control what to be kept as record of learners' work | ❐ | ❐ |
| 13. I work with learners collaboratively to keep the record of their work | ❐ | ❐ |
| 14. I consider learners performance on ECoL assessment packages only | ❐ | ❐ |

**Section 3: YOUR VIEWS ABOUT THE USE OF PORTFOLIO AS AN ASSESSMENT STRATEGY**

*This section asks you about your experiences of, and views about the use of portfolio assessment in education. Please tick the appropriate box to indicate your response* (**respond to this section only if you use or have knowledge about portfolio**

| Belief statements | *Strongly agree* | Agree | Not sure | disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **16.** Portfolio facilitates student learning | | | | | |
| **17.** Portfolio demonstrates strength and weakness of learners | | | | | |
| **18.** Learners are able to apply knowledge in various ways | | | | | |
| **19.** Portfolio contributes to cooperation between me, parents and my | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| colleagues | | | | | |
| **20.** Portfolio contributes in making student work more active and problem-based | | | | | |
| **21.** Portfolio increases students' awareness of the importance of every piece of work they are assigned | | | | | |
| 22. Working with portfolio makes teaching and learning fun | | | | | |
| 23. Portfolio develops teachers' pedagogical ability | | | | | |
| 24. All teachers should know how to use portfolio as an assessment tool | | | | | |
| 25. It is difficult to use portfolio for assessment in the schools in Lesotho | | | | | |
| 26. lots of time and resources are required for teachers to use portfolio effectively | | | | | |
| 27. Portfolio changes teachers' role to be more of an instructor than a facilitator | | | | | |
| 28. Portfolio establishes a link between instruction and assessment | | | | | |
| 29. Portfolio promotes subject integration | | | | | |
| 30. Portfolio takes time away from other important school activities | | | | | |

# ANNEX 2: SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## Background information and views about portfolio assessment

**1ntroduction**

In this interview you will be asked about your views and experiences about the use of portfolio as an assessment strategy. Your responses to this interview will assist in understanding the teachers' needs in the classroom with regard to assessment. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential, and the interview should only take 10- 20 minutes to complete.

Would you feel comfortable with me recording our conversation so that I can concentrate on what you are saying rather than taking notes? (*N.B: If yes, I start recording*)**Part 1: Background information**

First of all, I would like to collect some background information from you, just as I did in the survey. As you know those were anonymous, so I can't separate your responses from the others.

## Section 1: - PERSONAL PROFILE

*This section collects information about your personal and educational details. Please tick the appropriate option or write your answer in the space provided.*

**1.1 Biological traits**

**2.3.1**   Age: ☐ 20- 30 ☐ 31 -40 ☐ 14- 50 ☐ 51- 60 ☐ 61 -70

**2.3.2**   Gender:        ☐ Male ☐ Female

**2.3.3   1.2 Educational Background**

**2.4**      Highest teaching qualification

☐ Certificate ☐ Diploma in education ☐ B. Ed. ☐ BE. Hons. ☐ Master's degree **1.3**

 **Teaching background**

 1.3.1    Years of Teaching Experience

       ☐ 1-2 years   ☐ 3-5 years    ☐ 6 and more

1.3.2   Which Grades do you teach?

☐Grade 1          ☐Grade 2          ☐Grade 3

☐Grade 4          ☐Grade 5          ☐Grade 6  ☐Grade7

☐   Multiple grades, list them: ...........................................................................

1.3.3   Which Learning Areas do you teach?

L. Area 1:      ------------------------------------------------------------------
L. Area 2:      ------------------------------------------------------------------
L Area 3.      ------------------------------------------------------------------
L. Area 4.      ------------------------------------------------------------------
L. Area 5.      ------------------------------------------------------------------

1.3.4   What is the class size average: ………………………………….

5.   Type of school you teach at:

Government ☐RCC ☐ LESCA ☐ACL ☐Private ☐

**Section 2. UNDERTSANDING OF PORTFOLIO AS ASSESSMENT**

**2.1 Your understanding of portfolio assessment**

a) Tell me about your knowledge of a portfolio in teaching and learning:

- What it is
- How you acquired knowledge on the portfolio in teaching and learning
- How much confidence you have in the use of portfolio?

**2. 2  Your use about portfolio**

Please tell me how use portfolio in your classroom by addressing the following:

- Purpose: when and why you use a portfolio uses and benefits
- Your decisions on the nature of the portfolio use in relation to:

- o the objectives of the portfolio (you can talk about responding to curriculum objectives and content)
- o learners' tasks: do you align them with the curriculum content or objectives
- o Learner's support: how a learner will be supported, and why
- o The stage at which you start engaging a learner
- o Learner engagement and participation: do you hold conferences with a learner? How do you engage a learner so that the learner is motivated to do self-reflection?

- Reasons for implementing a portfolio the way you do
- The subjects in which you use a portfolio:
  - o In which subjects do you mostly use portfolio? Why?
  - o Which subjects do you use portfolio less frequently? Why?

## 2.3 Your views about portfolio

What is your opinion about portfolio use with regard to?

*(Prompt):*

- How much you value the use of portfolio in your classroom?
  - o What are the benefits?
- What are the challenges in relation to the use of portfolio?

# ANNEX 3: OBSERVATION TOOL FOR LEARNER'S PORTFOLIO

## Observation tool for Learner's portfolio

This is a checklist to analyse a learner's portfolio. The researcher will either tick or fill in where appropriate.

1. Type of school
2. Name
3. Class
4. Container /folder/box/other (specify)…………………………….
5. The learning objectives assessed are:
    a. aligned with curriculum content/objectives
    b. reflected in the task instruments (learners' tasks broken into sub-tasks that are manageable)
6. Learner's instructions for each task are well-detailed, guiding and have scoring guide
7. The portfolio has evidence of:
    a. Learner's work which is filed or organised in relation to how the tasks and feedback were given to learner
    b. learner's work and feedback are arranged in such a way that the portfolio reflects:
        • learner's responses (including artefacts such as journals, essays, pictures, computer storage devices for pictures, audio and video clips) relating to a specific task,
        • teacher's feedback for a specific task
        • learner's evaluation of and self-reflection on the submitted work of a specific task,
        • learner's progress and academic growth
8. Where a portfolio contains more than one subject, the portfolio items are arranged according to such subjects.
9. Generally, the learner's portfolio is well-organised, comprehensive and easy to follow.
10. Where are the portfolios stored?

Others ……………………………………………………………

# ANNEX 4: SAMPLE OF LEARNERS' PORTFOLIOS AND THEIR CONTENTS

A)

B)

# ANNEX 5: SAMPLE OF SCORING RUBRIC FOR LEARNERS TASK

C)

Group 7

Grade 6    Creativity and Entrepreneurial Assessment    June 2018 Project

**Exploration of ideas**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Stated the sign or symbol | Stated the sign or symbol, provided a reason for intending to make such | Stated the sign or symbol, provided a reason for intending to make such; listed materials to be used | Stated the sign or symbol provided reason for intending to make such; listed materials to be used indicated the reason for choice of materials |

**Collection of materials**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Inability to collect the material within the given time. | Ability to collect appropriate material within the given time. | Ability to collect appropriate materials required within the shortest possible time. |

**Design and drawing**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Demonstrates low level of creativity in drawing. | Demonstrates moderate level of creativity in drawing. | Demonstrates high level of creativity in drawing. | Demonstrates highest level of creativity in drawing. |

**Creativity & originality**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Piece is finished but provides no evidence of creativity or originality. | Piece includes an idea, but lacks originality. | Piece includes some unique ideas and several materials were used. | Piece includes many unique ideas and creative use of materials. |

**Product**

**Construction-care taken**

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Construction appears careless or haphazard | Construction accurately followed the plan. | Construction was careful and accurate for the most parts. | Great care taken in construction process so that the structure is neat, attractive. |

**Constructed sign features**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Sign is poorly constructed, incomplete and inaccurate. | Sign construction is little sloppy and one or two features are missing. | Sign is well constructed and has clear accurate features and good proportion. |

**Overall attractiveness**

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| The sign is messy or poorly designed and not attractive. | The sign is acceptably attractive though it may be a bit messy. | The sign is attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness. High level of creativity. |

# ANNEX 6: A SAMPLE OF A CONSENT LETTER FOR THE PRINCIPALS

To: The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: RESEARCH STUDY**

My name is Lipuo Maryann Mothetsi, a student pursuing Master Degree in Education (M.Ed.) in the National University of Lesotho (NUL). I am carrying out a study on "**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE USE OF PORTFOLIO AS AN ASSESSMEN TOOL IN LESOTHO PRIMARY SCHOOLS**. The objectives of the study are to establish how teachers interpret and implement portfolio in the teaching and learning and what their views are about the use of portfolio assessment in schools

Following our discussion telephonically, I request your permission to conduct this research at your school. My research data collection involves the following:

- Administration of a short questionnaire
- An interview which will take 20 -30 minutes
- An observation of one learner's portfolio

I will appreciate if one teacher responds to these during their free time. In carrying out this activity I will abide by research ethics which include among others:

- Not to interference with the teachers' core business.
- Should for any reason, any teacher wishes to withdraw his/her participation in the research, they may do so without any fear
- Participants will be ensured anonymity and information will be treated in the greatest confidence.
- Participation is voluntary.

If you require more information, do not hesitate to contact me at **+266 63008835 (*lmothetsi@yahoo.com.au*).**

You may also contact one of my supervisors, **Dr Julia Chere-Masopha** at juliachere@gmail.com or Dr**. S. Motlomelo** at motlomelost@gmail.com

Should you require any information regarding the study, we are willing to provide it.

I thank you in advance for your time and support

Yours sincerely

…………………………..

L. M. Mothetsi (Student no. 199100181)

**Declaration of Permission**

I………………………………………, the principal, have fully read and understood the information of this document and the nature of the research project. I hereby permit/do not permit the researcher to conduct her study at my school. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw my permission in the study at any time should I so desire, without any negative consequence.

………………………………………………

**SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

# ANNEX 6: A SAMPLE OF A CONSENT LETTER FOR TEACHER

To: Research participant

Dear Participant

**RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN MY RESEARCH STUDY**

My name is Lipuo Maryann Mothetsi, a student pursuing Master Degree in Education (M.Ed.) in the National University of Lesotho (NUL). I am carrying out the study on "*Teachers' perceptions on the use of Portfolio as an Assessment tool in Lesotho Primary Schools,* as part of my studies. The objectives of the study are to establish how teachers interpret and implement portfolio in the teaching and learning and what their views are about the use of portfolio assessment in schools.

I, therefore, seek your participation in this study by:

- Responding to a short questionnaire which do so at your spare time.
- Responding to an interview which will take 20 -30 minutes. This will involve taking notes and tape recording during the interview by the researcher.
- An observation of one learner's portfolio will take 5 -10 minutes. This will involve taking of photos of learners' portfolios.

In carrying out this activity I will abide by research ethics which include among others:

- Not to interference with the teachers' core business.
- Should for any reason, any teacher wishes to withdraw his/her participation in the research, they may do so without any fear.
- Participants will be ensured anonymity and information that you will contribute into this study will be kept confidential and neither your name nor the name of your school will be used.
- Participation is voluntary.

If you require more information, do not hesitate to contact me at **+266 63008835 (*lmothetsi@yahoo.com.au*).**

You may also contact one of my supervisors, **Dr Julia Chere-Masopha** at juliachere@gmail.com or Dr**. S. Motlomelo** at motlomelost@gmail.com

I thank you in advance for your time and support

Sincerely

………………………..

L.M. Mothetsi

(Student no. 199100181)

**Declaration of Permission**

I……………………………………., (the teacher) have fully read and understood the information of this document and the nature of the research project. I understand the purpose of this project and my role to play in it. I understand that I have right to withdraw my participation in away during the session without any negative consequence. I, therefore, decline / accept to voluntarily participate in this research project conducted by Lipuo Mothiba from NUL.

………………………………………………

**SIGNATURE OF THE TEACHER.**