

# THE PORTFOLIO AS A LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR BACHELOR OF PSYCHOLOGY (B.PSYCH) STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

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## **Abstract**

*This paper examines the utility of the portfolio as a learning and assessment tool in the Bachelor of Psychology (B.Psych) program at the University of Botswana. The B.Psych. Portfolio provides an excellent opportunity for psychological counselors in-training to learn and develop competencies required for their personal and professional growth. It provides for learning for understanding such that a novice is gradually transformed towards expertise. Because the portfolio is made by students as part of course work, that helps to reinforce students' 'ownership' of learning and enhances the skills of analysis and reflection. In the process of reflection and analysis, the student becomes actively engaged as both a learner and a moment-by-moment assessor of her or his own work. The B.Psych. Portfolio has been a worthwhile tool that the Department of Psychology continues to use to enhance its accountability in the training of psychological counselors as it attempts to demonstrate its effectiveness in facilitating student readiness for professional practice in the community.*

## **Introduction**

The Bachelor of Psychology (B.Psych.) program is one of two programs within the Department of Psychology that endeavours to train and qualify learners to function as paraprofessionals within the profession of psychology. The objective of the program is to graduate students who in future can qualify for registration with the Botswana Health Professions Council (BHPC) as psychological counsellors. Graduates of the program are also equipped to pursue further internationally recognized professional training in psychology. Prior to the establishment of the B.Psych. program in 2004, an urgent need for psychological service delivery in Botswana was identified. In response to this need, the B.Psych. Program was established as a vehicle towards bridging the gap between the need for psychological service delivery and the scarcity of psychologists in Botswana (Plattner & Moagi-Gulubane, 2010).

Learning within the B.Psych program presents a trajectory of unique features which emphasize knowledge acquisition interfaced with learning through skills acquisition and competence development. While B.Psych students are expected to have the requisite theoretical knowledge base, it is imperative that they acquire core psychology competencies for their own personal and professional development and for the benefit of the communities they will be serving as graduates of the program. As opposed to the regular bachelors' degree program in psychology, B.Psych students complete a set of competency based courses as part of the curriculum. The evaluation of student competence is a fundamental aspect of training within the B.Psych. training model. As a psychology training program, the Department of Psychology has an ethical obligation to develop and evaluate students' personal and professional competencies in efforts to ensure the quality of graduates' clinical service (Lamadue & Duffey, 1999).

Admission into the B.Psych program is highly selective and takes place after successful completion of the second year of study. Students apply for admission through the Department of Psychology. Those meeting the minimum requirements are invited for an Assessment Center in which they go through a variety of rigorous activities intended to identify their fit for the profession. Hatcher and Lassiter (2007) underscore the need to provide "evidence of various personality characteristics and intellectual and personal skills at the outset of training, as the absence of these skills would put the student's fitness for the profession in question and possibly preclude the student from proceeding with training" (p. 51). It is through the Assessment Center that these foundational or baseline competencies are established so that applicants' suitability or fitness for training as a psychology paraprofessionals is established.

### **Teaching and Learning Processes for B. Psych. Competency Based Courses**

Competency entails the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values required to perform effectively and efficiently as a psychologist. Emphasis is initially focused on knowledge acquisition with performance and outcomes as the ultimate goal. Therefore, competency based education must "espouse a developmental sequence of competency acquisition and a concept of foundational or baseline competencies that are core to professional psychology" (Hatcher & Lassiter, 2007, p. 51). It is learner-centered, and emphasis is placed on students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes as the basis for learning. In addition, the focus of learning is on the acquisition of clearly defined competency domains, which are expected to propel the learner toward a developmental course of action that will facilitate the synthesis of knowledge with technical skills and professional values. From a developmental perspective, competency acquisition can be conceptualized as an ongoing process that incorporates progressively more complex and sophisticated content which involves moment-to-moment learning and assessment as performance continues to improve.

Courses within the B.Psych. program which are geared toward foundational competence include all psychology core curriculum courses and other psychology curriculum courses which introduce students to (a) the discipline of psychology and its scientific methods, (b) reflective learning and self-awareness, (c) ethical and legal standards in the practice of psychology, (d)

interdisciplinary collaboration, and (e) the importance of contextualizing to cultural and individual circumstances. The core psychology curriculum courses that incorporate these foundational competencies and which prospective B.Psych students are expected to pass therefore comprise of: PSY 101 (Introduction to Psychology); PSY 102 (Biological Basis of Behaviour); PSY 201 (Theories of Personality); PSY 202 (Social Psychology); PSY 208 (Statistics for Psychology); and PSY 209 (Research in Psychology: Methods and Design). These courses serve as the background for functional competencies.

Functional competence-oriented courses in the B.Psych. program include all clinical curriculum courses and two advanced research curriculum courses. Specifically, the clinical curriculum courses are PSY 301 (Abnormal Psychology I), PSY 302 (Psychological Testing and Psychometrics), PSY 306 (Psychological Counselling I), PSY 307 (Psychological Assessment), PSY 402 (Abnormal Psychology II), PSY 403 (Psychological Counselling II), PSY 404 (Psychotherapy), and PSY 408 (Internship). The research curriculum courses are PSY 312 (Research Proposal in Psychology) and PSY 401 (Research Projects). While there is a didactic component intended to enhance the students' acquisition of theoretical knowledge in all these courses, the emphasis is on the acquisition of hands-on practical skills that facilitate the development of competencies. Table 1 highlights the research curriculum, core psychology curriculum, clinical curriculum, and other psychology curriculum as competency evidence available for formative portfolios used to assess B.Psych Students.

**Table 1. Competency Evidence Available for Formative Portfolios Used to Assess Bachelor Of Psychology Students**

EVIDENCE	Competencies	Reflective Practice	Scientific Method	Relationships	Individual & Cultural Diversity	Ethical & Legal Standards	Professional Values	Advocacy	Intervention	Assessment	Research & Evaluation	Consultation	Formative Portfolios (FP)		
													Practicum	Internship	Post
<b>Research Curriculum</b>															
<b>PSY208</b> – (Statistics for Psychology) <b>PSY209</b> – (Research in Psychology: Methods & Design) <b>PSY312</b> – (Research Proposal in Psychology) <b>PSY401</b> – (Research Project)															

<b>Core Psychology Curriculum</b>	
<b>PSY101</b> – (Introduction to Psychology) <b>PSY102</b> – (Biological Basis of Human Behaviour) <b>PSY201</b> – (Theories of Personality) <b>PSY202</b> – (Social Psychology)	
<b>Clinical Curriculum</b>	
<b>PSY301</b> – (Abnormal Psychology I) <b>PSY302</b> – (Psychological Testing & Psychometrics) <b>PSY306</b> – (Psychological Counselling I) <b>PSY307</b> – (Psychological Assessment) <b>PSY402</b> – (Abnormal Psychology II) <b>PSY403</b> – (Psychological Counselling II) <b>PSY404</b> – (Psychotherapy) <b>PSY408</b> – (Internship)	
<b>Other Psychology Curriculum</b>	
<b>PSY203</b> – (Developmental Psychology of Childhood & Adolescence) <b>PSY204</b> – (History & Philosophy of Psychology) <b>PSY206</b> – (Developmental Psychology of Adulthood & Old Age) <b>PSY207</b> – (Psychology of Work & Labour Relations) <b>PSY303</b> – (Cognition & Learning) <b>PSY304</b> – (Health Psychology) <b>PSY305</b> – (Organisational & Personnel Psychology) <b>PSY309</b> – (Human Factors in the Work Environment) <b>PSY310</b> – (Consumer Psychology) <b>PSY405</b> – (Training & Human Resource Development)	

<p><b>PSY406</b> – (Psychological Challenges of HIV/AIDS)  <b>PSY407</b> – (Special Topics in Psychology)  <b>PSY409</b> – (Sensation &amp; Perception)</p>	
<p><b>Assessment by Others: sources, contexts, &amp; methods</b></p>	

**Domains of Competency in the Bachelor of Psychology Program**

Existing literature in the medical profession has defined competence as “the habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served” (Epstein and Hundert, 2002, p. 227). This definition resonates well with the objectives of professional training in psychology and highlights the impetus for learning and teaching in the B. Psych. program. It is therefore critical that domains of competency relevant to the B.Psych program are operationalised and very clearly defined so that the developmental process of learners can be determined throughout the course of training. In the quest to clarify domains of competency in the B.Psych. program, competency expectations highlighted in the B.Psych. curriculum were infused with existing professional psychology competency frameworks, paying special attention to the developmental level of B.Psych learners as paraprofessionals. (Table 2 presents the B.Psych. core competency domains and sub-domains). Overall, nine core competency domains were identified, including five at the foundational level and four at the functional level.

**Table 2. Bachelor of Psychology core competencies and essential components**

<p><b>FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES</b></p>
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<p><b>1. REFLECTIVE PRACTICE/SELF-ASSESSMENT :</b> Practices within the boundaries of competencies; demonstrates commitment to lifelong learning; engages with scholarship; capable of critical thinking; demonstrates a commitment to the development of the profession. (Practice conducted with personal and professional self-awareness and reflection; with awareness of competencies; with appropriate self-care)</p>
<b>1a. Reflective Practice</b>
<b>1b. Self Assessment</b>
<b>1c. Self Care</b>
<b>1d. Participation in Supervision</b>
<p><b>2. SCIENTIFIC METHOD:</b> Demonstrates respect for scientifically derived knowledge; understands research and research methodology; understands biological bases of behavior, cognitive-affective bases of behavior, and lifespan human development.</p>
<b>2a. Scientific Mindedness</b>
<b>2b. Scientific Foundations of Psychology</b>
<b>2c. Scientific Foundations of Professional Practice</b>
<p><b>3. RELATIONSHIPS:</b> Demonstrates capacity to relate effectively and meaningfully with individuals, groups, and/or communities</p>
<b>3a. Interpersonal Relationships</b>
<b>3b. Affective Skills</b>
<b>3c. Expressive Skills</b>
<p><b>4. INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY:</b> Awareness, sensitivity and skills in working professionally with diverse individuals, groups and communities who represent various cultural and personal backgrounds.</p>
<b>4a. Self as shaped by Individual and Cultural Diversity</b> (e.g., cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status) and Context
<b>4b. Others as shaped by Individual and Cultural Diversity</b>
<p><b>5. ETHICAL AND LEGAL STANDARDS AND POLICY:</b> Application of ethical concepts and awareness of legal issues regarding professional activities with individuals, groups, and organizations.</p>
<b>5a. Knowledge of ethical, legal and professional standards and guidelines</b>
<b>5b. Awareness and Application of Ethical Decision Making</b>
<b>5c. Ethical Conduct</b>
<b>FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCIES</b>
<p><b>6. ADVOCACY:</b> Actions targeting the impact of social, political, economic or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional, and/or systems level.</p>
<b>6a. Empowerment</b>

<b>6b. Systems Change</b>
<b>7. INTERVENTION:</b> Interventions designed to alleviate suffering and to promote health and well-being of individuals, groups, and/or organizations; integrates research and clinical expertise in the context of client factors (evidence-based practice; EBP).
<b>7a. Skills</b>
<b>7b. Intervention Implementation</b>
<b>7c. Progress Evaluation</b>
<b>8. ASSESSMENT:</b> Assessment and diagnosis of problems, capabilities and issues associated with individuals, groups, and/or organizations.
<b>8a. Knowledge of Measurement and Psychometrics</b>
<b>8b. Knowledge of Assessment Methods</b>
<b>8d. Assessment/Diagnosis in Sociocultural Context</b>
<b>8e. Conceptualizations and Recommendations</b>
<b>8f. Communication of Assessment Findings</b>
<b>9. CONSULTATION:</b> The ability to provide expert guidance or professional assistance in response to a client’s needs or goals, wherein the client may be an individual, group, or organization.
<b>9a. Role of Consultant</b>
<b>9b. Addressing Referral Questions</b>
<b>9c. Communication of Consultation Findings</b>
<b>9d. Application of Consultation Methods</b>

Note. Based on the Council of Credentialing Organizations in Professional Psychology (CCOPP, 2004) document titled “A Conceptual Framework for Specialization in the Health Service Domain of Professional Psychology”.

Foundational competency domains are the building blocks of what psychologists do and they are the platform upon which functional competencies are subsequently acquired by practitioners of psychology (Rodolfa, Bent, Eisman, Nelson, Rehm, & Ritchie, 2005). As noted by Newman (2010), foundational competencies comprise the broad concept of “professionalism,” such as adherence to ethical standards, a willingness to self-reflect and self-correct, cross-cultural sensitivity as it pertains to interacting with individuals, groups and other social systems, interdisciplinary collaboration, and maintaining a scientific stance. The B.Psych. program incorporates the following foundational competencies: (a) reflective practice/self assessment, (b) scientific knowledge and methods, (c) relationships, (d) individual and cultural diversity, and (e) ethical and legal standards and policy.

Functional competency domains on the other hand emphasize areas of professional functioning and “describe the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to perform the work of a psychologist” (Rodolfa et al., 2005, p. 351). They highlight specific knowledge and skills associated with psychological assessment, intervention, consultation, and actions targeting the

impact of social, political, economic, or cultural factors to promote change at the individual (client), institutional or systems level. The specific functional competencies included in the B.Psych. competency framework are: (a) advocacy, (b) intervention, (c) assessment, and (d) consultation. The B.Psych. domains of competency framework further emphasizes the students' developmental stage of training and experience, such that assessment of competencies will be commensurate with the students' experience level (e.g., pre-practicum student, practicum student, psychology intern, and psychology graduate).

Because competency development is a continual and an ongoing process, to determine whether students have acquired the necessary competencies, it is imperative that assessment procedures allow for both process and outcome evaluation. Indeed, Hanan, Mohamed, and van der Vleuten (2009) argued that traditional assessment tools such as multiple-choice tests and examinations, short answers etc., are not appropriate to evaluate competencies because they are not designed to provide formative evaluation. "Formative assessment is typically a continual and developmental process of assessing competence and giving feedback not only while an individual progresses through a training program...but also throughout his or her career, so that improvement will continue" (Roberts et al., 2005). Within the B.Psych. program, the portfolio is utilized to formatively evaluate the development of competencies as learners progress through different stages of competency acquisition.

### **Components of the B.Psych. Portfolio**

A portfolio is a "purposeful, [interrelated] collection of student works that exhibits [his or her] efforts, progress or achievements in one or more areas" (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991, p.60). The literature highlights the utility of the portfolio approach in propelling students toward reflective learning, responsibility for putting together and assessing evidence of their own learning, and use of various assessment modalities and authentic performance-based methods. According to Coleman (1996), there is need for the learner and the instructor to collaborate in determining the knowledge and skills that are important to acquire within a specific context. In this regard, well defined competencies are critical in guiding the students as they collect concrete evidence that demonstrates their competency within the predetermined set of criteria.

The portfolio of choice for the B.Psych training model is the developmental portfolio, sometimes referred to as the assessment portfolio. According to O'Malley and Pierce (1996), this type of portfolio includes work that demonstrates students' developmental course and progression towards mastery and competency from novice to a proficient psychological counselor over a period of time. Learning is advanced through ongoing feedback, appraisal, and evaluation of the final product by both the lecturer and the student. The developmental portfolio highlights the synthesis between didactic instruction, learning, and assessment (Cain, Edwards-Henry, & Rampersad, 2005).

In developing the B. Psych. portfolio, emphasis is focused on the evidence, including the portfolio productions. The evidence denotes all pieces of work that are included in the portfolio (Collins, 1992). The evidence must relate to the identified competencies required of a psychological counselor and it must clearly indicate the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies. The students reflectively select the material that they believe would best symbolize the evidence. Each piece of evidence is termed an entry. A portfolio entry may reflect evidence indicative of 1) artifacts, 2) reproductions, and 3) attestations.

An artifact in the B.Psych portfolio is any piece of work produced by students as a normal part of the teaching and learning process. For instance, over the years, students have included in their portfolios “the process model,” which is a course assignment for PSY 404 (Psychotherapy) and “personal theory of personality,” which is also an assignment in PSY 201 (Theories of Personality). In PSY 302 (Psychological Testing and Psychometrics) students have developed psychometric scales as part of the course requirements, the product of which has also been included in the B.Psych portfolio. As artifacts, these entries were originally developed as part of course work at different points in time. Inclusion of these artifacts in the portfolio affords the students the opportunity to reflect upon this work, receive further feedback, and polish the artifacts to the point that they demonstrate developmental maturity. Reproductions capture processes and outcomes that cannot be ordinarily captured, but those that occur during teaching and learning. Reproductions that have been included in B.Psych portfolios incorporate entries such as video tapes of work samples, client case studies, assessment reports, client case conceptualizations, transcripts of counseling sessions, and community outreach and workshop facilitation reports. Finally, attestations are testimonials of the portfolio developer and include entries such as awards and certificates, evaluation of students’ psychological counseling by clients, and evaluation of students’ clinical work by psychology trainers.

A fundamental component of evidence presented in the portfolio is what is referred to as productions. These are the ingredients that transform the collection of pieces of artifacts, reproductions, and attestations into a fully fledged portfolio. As noted by Coleman, Morris, & Norton (2006) “a portfolio is much more than a collection of the clinical work that a counselor performs” (p. 30). Productions then take account of a reflective component that is integrative and demonstrative of the learners’ journey toward competence development. It is that reflective stance that facilitates the synthesis of a particular skill into the counselor-in-training’s professional identity (Tuescher, 1997). The key elements of productions include the purpose statement, captions, and reflective summaries.

The purpose statement advises the audience what to expect with regard to the students’ acquired knowledge, skills, and competencies highlighted by the portfolio evidence. “The purpose statement gives the focus of the portfolio development process, and is a personal statement of the

intentions of the portfolio developer” (Cain, Edwards-Henry, & Rampersad, 2005, p.6). For example, in one of the B.Psych portfolios, a student wrote:

*“This portfolio shows how I have grown not only professionally, but personally as well—more than I ever thought I would in such a short period of time. I have discovered my strengths; I am warm and respectful.....I have obtained skills that facilitate competency in the dynamic field of psychology.....Skills necessary for effective counseling, writing research proposal, administering psychometric tests etc. I continue to learn where the two sides, the professional side and the personal side, meet to mould me into the psychologist I will become” (2013).*

Another important component of the production is the caption, which is a reflective statement that accompanies every entry in the portfolio. In effect, a caption offers students the opportunity to reflect and explain why they entered specific pieces of work that they decided to include in the portfolio as evidence. The caption affords students the opportunity to explain what each entry is about, the significance of each entry, how the entry is indicative of their understanding and abilities, and how each entry could be improved for further development. The caption warrants the type of reflective exercise that highlights the process that informed each portfolio entry and the meaning attached to each entry. In 2016, a portfolio assessed had this caption in one of the entries:

*This entry is about my process model, the model that helps guide me in my therapeutic work with clients I have been seeing in the Psychology Clinic. The process model is important in that a developing psychologist-in-training like myself needs a cognitive framework upon which to explore the maze of psychotherapy. This process model shows that my therapy with clients is not haphazard.....It shows that my work is theoretically grounded and how I strive to be effective as psychologist-in-training. This process model is work in progress, it will further develop as I grow and mature with more training and practical experience.*

The last component of the production is the reflective summary, which provides a comprehensive summary that is demonstrative of the interns’ development throughout the course of their training in the B.Psych. program. A reflective summary traces how the B.Psych trainee has “captured and portrayed growth, competencies, and context.....It gives some idea of the challenges encountered, how they were met, and some projection for the future in terms of the continued growth and development of the portfolio developer” (Cain, Edwards-Henry, & Rampersad, 2005). Following is a sample reflective summary from a B.Psych. portfolio:

*This summary is a reflection of my experiences in the B.Psych. program. It describes the influences the B.Psych program specifically had on my development as a psychological counselor. Developing this portfolio has helped me to expand, assess and evaluate my own style as a psychological counselor. The most influential aspect of the B.Psych program is that in supervision, being observed, and in making this portfolio, I have reflected on what it is I do in therapy with clients, why I do it, and if it is worth doing...I have become a more intentional psychological counselor-in-training than I had been in*

*the past. I think more about my goals and how to achieve them than I did before. In making my portfolio, I have had the opportunity to step back and look at the clinical work that I have done and why. In general, I feel that a lot of the techniques I employ are successful; clients are actively gaining from my interaction with them. There is, however, room for improvement... I hope to continue developing and improving my style as a psychological counselor-in-training so that I can continue to become an effective and efficient psychological counselor. (2008).*

### **Portfolio Assessment in the Bachelor of Psychology Program**

The B.Psych. portfolio assessment values knowledge as process rather than knowledge as an answer. What is important is to pay particular attention to the process by which specific competencies are developed, even though it may take time to fully develop such competencies. Consequently, within the framework of the B.Psych portfolio assessment model, there can never be any clear-cut right or wrong answers. As such, the portfolio assessment does not focus on whether answers are right or wrong as is the practice in traditional forms of assessments, but rather, the primary emphasis is on the degree to which the student is successful or unsuccessful in demonstrating specific competencies. It is then critical that evaluation of performance allows for the consideration of the varying degrees of success or proficiency (Cain, Edwards-Henry, & Rampersad, 2005). In this regard, the B.Psych. portfolio assessment utilizes the B.Psych. Portfolio Assessment Descriptors with Rubric (see figure 3), which is a rating system B.Psych. assessors use to determine the degree of proficiency a student can perform for each competency ranging from incompetent to expert.

Throughout training, there is regular interaction between students and lecturers. Such contact facilitates formative portfolio assessment in the sense that the lecturer is in a position to provide regular and on-going feedback to the student throughout the portfolio development process. This type of formative assessment is helpful in defining what the student knows and can do, and it facilitates the planning of further learning. The main advantage of this type of assessment is that it promotes critical thinking and encourages students to be accountable for their own learning. Assessment of the portfolio in the B.Psych. program is primarily formative in nature, requiring considerable commitment from both the lecturer and the student. As a guide, mentor, and teacher, the lecturer provides very clear and specific guidelines on the purpose, content, and structure of the portfolio from the very beginning. The lecturer is obliged to have a clear portfolio template to begin with, so as to show students examples of what is expected of them. Good assessment also entails giving students clear criteria for assessment with regular feedback and facilitating sessions.

At the end of B.Psych. training, the final outcome of the process of portfolio development, the portfolio document itself, is finally submitted to a panel of assessors for the portfolio examination, which is summative in nature. Ordinarily, three (3) assessors use an assessment instrument that has been developed to capture competencies in such a way that there is evidence

that the competencies demonstrated in the portfolio cut across psychology courses and level of training (see Table 3: The B.Psych. Portfolio Assessment Descriptors with Rubric).

**Table 3: The B.Psych. Portfolio Assessment Descriptors with Rubric**

<b>(4) Expert</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence selected for the portfolio is of outstanding and exceptional quality in all respects and surpasses the objectives of B.Psych.</li> <li>• The reflective statements demonstrate deep and original thinking, interpretation, critical thinking and synthesis. Cogent arguments are used and supported by well selected references.</li> <li>• The work is well structured, is expressed with flair and there is little or no redundancy.</li> <li>• The grade is an expression of the confidence in the ability of the trainee to progress as an independent practitioner.</li> </ul>
<b>(3) Proficient</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence selected for the portfolio surpasses the objectives of the B.Psych. and demonstrates a sound understanding of content.</li> <li>• Arguments are used in the reflective statements to support the trainee’s point of view and references are used appropriately.</li> <li>• The work is well structured, well organized, written fluently and correctly documented.</li> <li>• The grade is an expression of confidence in the ability of the trainee to progress with some supervision and guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>(2) Apprentice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence selected for the portfolio achieves the objectives of B.Psych., and demonstrates an adequate grasp of content , but is confined to the minimum requirement.</li> <li>• There is little evidence of independent reflection in the reflective statements and research is superficial with a minimum attempt at analysis and/or synthesis.</li> <li>• The work is poorly organized and the language is reasonably fluent but has some lapses in grammar and syntax.</li> <li>• The grade is an expression of confidence in the ability of the student to progress with normal supervision and guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>(1) Novice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence selected for the portfolio does not adequately meet the objectives of B.Psych.</li> <li>• The reflective statement is a simple recall of facts with little or no evidence of research or documentation. There is no effort to supplement evidence with own critical reflections.</li> <li>• The work is not well structured and the overall organization is poor and lacks consistency.</li> <li>• The grade is an expression that student may resubmit but will find higher-level work very difficult.</li> </ul>
<b>(0) Incompetent</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The evidence selected does not achieve the B.Psych objectives and demonstrates little understanding of the B.Psych. content.</li> <li>• The reflective statements make assertions without supportive evidence and arguments.</li> <li>• The work does not meet the minimum levels of presentation for B.Psych: there are major, frequent mistakes in written expression. The work does not address the stated requirements and is not organized in an obvious manner.</li> </ul>

Adapted from Bryant & Timmins (2002). “ Grade Descriptors with Rubrics”

## Conclusion

The B.Psych. Portfolio provides an excellent opportunity for psychological counselors in-training to learn and develop competencies required for their personal and professional growth. It provides for learning for understanding such that a novice is gradually transformed towards expertise. A good portfolio “contains work that shows the students’ progress towards mastery of set objectives for a topic, theme, or course of work, and provides evidence of his/her achievement over a period of time” (Rutgers, 2015). Because the portfolio is made by students as part of course work, that helps to reinforce students’ ‘ownership’ of learning and enhances the skills of analysis and reflection. In the process of reflection and analysis, the student becomes actively engaged as both a learner and a moment-by-moment assessor of her or his own work. The formative component of the portfolio development process is critical for providing a platform for continual learning and assessment while the summative component is critical in providing evidence of the quality of the students’ academic achievement, capability, and competence. The B.Psych. Portfolio has been a worthwhile tool that the Department of Psychology continues to use to enhance its accountability in the training of psychological counselors as it attempts to demonstrate its effectiveness in facilitating student readiness for professional practice (Hensley, Smith, & Thompson, 2003; Sexton, 1999; Vac & Charkow, 1999).

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