Assignment/portfolio approach and notes:

1. It is important for us that you gain a broad understanding of the e-learning research field. For this reason, a portfolio approach is followed.

   > A portfolio is an alternative method of assessment. At postgraduate level, and in this module, it requires students to provide evidence that they are able to think independently, are able to find/use, analyse and interpret a variety of formal knowledge sources, has the ability to synthesize material and knowledge, formulate convincing arguments, and has good presentation and documentation skills. This implies that some portfolio tasks are open-ended i.e. there are no "correct" answers or solutions available. Rather, students must ensure that they are comfortable with their efforts before they submit their portfolio for marking.

2. Students are encouraged to make use of a discussion forum available at http://osprey.unisa.ac.za/phorum to discuss the portfolio tasks. Note that each portfolio remains an individual effort i.e. no group work is to be submitted. The lecturer will monitor the forum and guide the discussions where necessary.

3. To complete the portfolio tasks, you are required to search for and make use of relevant **formal peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers**. **Note that you may not,** *unless specifically directed in a portfolio task***, make use of the general internet to source information– you** **must** **make use of Google Scholar (https://scholar.google.co.za).** You should strive to source articles no older than 7 years (i.e. published from 2011 – 2017/18). Remember to log in to the Unisa library before you use Google Scholar. This way, access to most articles is an automatic process. Sometimes you will need to search for the article using the library's electronic resources facility. That is, you search for the journal, access it, and then search for the article on the journal site (http://libguides.unisa.ac.za/howtosearch/search_library_resources).

   > One cannot use the general internet as a reliable resource. A blog or a personal website is not necessarily scientific i.e. statements made (except if citations to valid research articles are provided) have not been submitted to, nor published in, a scientific journal where it was subjected to rigorous peer review, and where data was collected and analysed using acknowledged research methods.

4. **You may not copy and paste information directly from any article.** You need to rewrite the information in your own words and sentences. **Information that is copied and pasted will not be marked.**

5. Where you refer to your source of information in completing a task you must cite the source from which you drew information. The simplest way to do this in the body text is to provide the author/s last name and the year of publication, e.g.

   > The sun always shine during the day (Clarke, 2001).
   > or
   > Clarke (2001) reported that the sun always shines during the day.

   In addition, when you simply have to use the exact words from the article/paper (as in providing a definition), you need to enclose the sentence in double quotes, as well as list the exact page number where the words appear in the article/paper e.g. An appropriate definition is provided by Clarke (2011, p. 18): "The sun is a star that always shines during the day".

6. **At the end of each answer/task**, provide the full bibliographic details of each article/paper you have cited in alphabetical order. Make use of the HARVARD notation (see below). If available, provide the download link for each source. **Failure to provide the full details will disqualify your answer**.

   > The reference for a conference paper must be in the following format:

van der Merwe, T.M. and van Heerden, M.E. (2013). **Ease of Use and Usefulness of Webinars in an Open Distance Learning Environment: An Activity Theory Perspective.** Annual Conference of the South African Institute for Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT 2013). East Londen. 262-270. Downloaded on dd/mm/yyy from http://xxxxxx.xxx

The reference for a journal paper must be in the following format:

van der Merwe, T.M., van der Merwe, A.J. and Venter, LM. (2010). **A Model to Direct Online Continuous Professional Development Opportunities for Mathematics Teachers in the South African Context of Disparities.** African Journal of Research in SMT Education. (14) 3, 65-80. Downloaded on 11/08/2015 from http://xxxxxx.xxx

7. When not citing the sources, one flirts with plagiarism. This holds true even when using your own words to describe the information provided in the source. Perhaps the following paragraph will make it clearer:

   ANY time you incorporate information into your assignment that is NOT your own idea, thoughts, or research, you need to indicate, with in-text citations and a formal bibliography, where you found that information. See http://oxford.library.emory.edu/research-learning/citation-plagiarism/citing.html for more information.

8. E-Learning is not limited to higher education institutions only. For this reason, and except where specifically stated, you may refer to, or use as a case, any entity (e.g. primary/secondary schools, companies etc.) that makes use of e-learning for educational purposes.

9. The rubric below provides a guide of what the markers look for when they mark a task that requires the use of the research literature, and where the number of articles required are not explicitly stated.

	KNOWLEDGE	ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION	RESEARCH SKILLS
80%+	Ability to source and synthesise an exceptional range of relevant* research literature.	Exceptional level of focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation.	An exceptional ability to engage in sustained and independent research.
70 – 79%	Ability to source and synthesise a wide range of relevant research literature.	A high level of focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation.	A demonstrated ability to engage in sustained and independent research.
50 – 70%	Ability to source and synthesise a range of relevant research literature.	A demonstrated level of focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation.	An ability to engage in sustained and independent research.
< 50%	An inability to source and synthesise a range of relevant research articles/.	A failure to maintain an acceptable level of focused analysis, critical use of sources and insightful interpretation.	Evidence of an inadequate ability to engage in sustained and independent research.

* Here, range refers to the extent or scope of your review of literature. The more you read (not necessarily use as a source) the better informed you will be and the better your answer will be. You need to ask yourself:
- What exactly will I need to read?

- How comprehensive will it be?
- How long? How many citations will I use?
- How detailed? It was stated earlier that you should try and limit the scope of literature to the last six years, but an article/paper that was written 20 years ago may well be seminal (e.g. an article that is regularly referenced to this day).
- Will I broaden my search to seek literature outside e-learning in order to provide a holistic view?