STRENGTHENING HIGHER EDUCATION FOR A SUCCESSFUL WORKFORCE

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LEARNING E-PORTFOLIO: RECONCILING CONSTRUCTIVIST PORTFOLIOS WITH POSITIVIST PORTFOLIOS IN RESPONSE TO OUTCOME-BASED APPROACH TO LEARNING

Nuraini Mat Daud

Introduction

In the Malaysian National Higher Education Strategic Plan and National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010, seven thrusts are identified and these include: widening access and enhancing quality; improving the quality of teaching and learning; enhancing research and innovation; strengthening higher learning institutions; intensifying internationalisation; enculturation of lifelong learning; and reinforcing the ministry's delivery system. Many commended the plan for the bold move to transform the landscape of tertiary education in Malaysia (Chapman et al., 2007).

Quality seems to be the gist of the plan. Where quality programme is concerned the above goes hand in hand with the Malaysian Qualifications Framework which ensures that academic programmes and courses offered meet the required standards. One initiative taken by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education to improve the quality of learning is to encourage the adoption of outcome-based approach. This approach focuses on what the students will be able to do after they complete a course. The adoption of this approach has implications on curriculum planning and teaching methods. Spady (1988; 1993) states that the desired outcome will have to be selected first and the curriculum, instructional materials and assessment serve to support the intended outcome.

The assessment focuses on well-defined learning outcomes, and portfolio is said to be one of the suitable assessment tools for this learning environment. As there are many different types of portfolios, the one