

## **Enhancing Teaching and Learning in Post-graduate Social Work through Portfolio Assessment** **(Dr. Pauline Sung, APSS)**

### Activities carried out during this reporting period and their impact on improving teaching and learning, where appropriate

*Before August 2004, data collection for the project is completed. From September 2004 to April 2005, we have completed the analysis of SPQ, transcribed the interview of focus groups. Between April to July 2005, a coding scheme based on SOLO taxonomy was developed and the subsequent analysis was completed.*

*The impact of these activities in improving teaching and learning:*

*A total of 21 students were asked to submit a portfolio consisting of four reflective journals of which they only selected two for assessment, and one final reflective paper. The first journal paper and final reflective paper were coded with a rating scale developed from SOLO taxonomy. Pre-and post SPQ tests were given to the students to measure their change in learning attitude. Focused group interviews were conducted with 19 students to inquire into their perception on the portfolio as an assessment method and the usefulness of various teaching-learning activities.*

*It was encouraging to observe that all students had made satisfactory progress as they progressed through the 14-week course. In the first portfolio, the mean score of the class is only 2.8, which is approaching grade C. It indicated that most of the students were able to move beyond the capacities of elaborating the discussion of content and acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of the selected educational approaches with articulated discussion. In the final portfolio, the mean score rises to 3.8, with over 50% of students were able to achieve the level of relational (38.1%) and extended abstract (23.8%).*

*Regarding the student's learning orientation, over the course, the students moved slightly away from the deep approach, especially in terms of deep strategy, and remained almost the same in the score of surface approach. There is a lack of sufficient data to support a conclusive statement to interpret the significance of the pre- and post- SPQ results. For example, there is an absence of a comparable norm without which we cannot conclude whether the slightly drop of deep strategy is significant or not. In spite of the "insignificant" SPQ results, many students find that portfolio assessment allowed them to pursue a deep approach to learning.*

*There are a number of themes emerging from the coding of qualitative data. These themes are further organized under three categories, namely portfolio as an effective feedback system; portfolio as an effective tool in promoting a genuine interest in students' quest for a deeper and reflective learning; and portfolio as a tool for enhancing students' critical thinking ability.*