TCX
TUTOR CONNEXXIONS

EDITOR'S NOTE

A lot of compliments came our way from various quarters when we released TCX 18. Some of you wrote in to say that you liked the new look and that the newsletter was interesting, professional, a welcome change and a source of information on tutors' views and activities. This pat on the back means a lot to us. We are now even more driven to make each issue of TCX a fulfilling treat for you.

Of course, the fact remains that we did not accomplish this success on our own. A lot of work by many people went into the publication of this newsletter. We don't believe that too many cooks spoil the broth. We believe this makes it a whole lot better! One person could accomplish a lot if he or she is tenacious but a group could accomplish much more. So, please do contribute to TCX. Drop us a line at tcx@oum.edu.my.

This issue of TCX focuses on exams. It touches on both traditional and alternative forms of assessment. This is relevant because in 2010, the Education Ministry plans to introduce a new curriculum for primary schools that emphasises school-based assessment. Such a radical shift from exam-oriented education at the primary school level warrants similar change in higher levels of study as well. This is especially so in the case of our University, which strives to produce holistic graduates who will excel in both traditional and alternative forms of assessment. Currently, part of the marks are given for examinations while the remainder come from assignments and online participation. OUM is also embarking on the move to introduce recognition of prior learning as a way of assessing potential learners.

Some learners might respond to the idea of exams with a tinge of anxiety, similar to that of the figure in the Edvard Munch painting, "Scream," featured on the cover. In contrast, there are learners who are actually motivated by exams and look forward to performing well in them. Consequently, they come out with flying colours.

Exams are neither good nor bad. Whether they are viewed positively depends on the learners. The key concern is to help learners to derive more meaningful learning from exams. But how do we achieve this?

This is a question which may receive diverse answers. We will need to assess the current situation, the resources available, the challenges, obstacles, gains and benefits before we can make up our minds on which way to go. This issue of the TCX aims to initiate dialogue on some of these concerns.

We hope what we present here will get you thinking out of the box about assessments, whether they be traditional or alternative.

Regards,
Azeezah Jameelah
Editor