JUNE 2014/ISSUE **41**

MIGRATING TO THE NEW MYVLE

TCX41 takes a peek at OUM's new myVLE (virtual learning platform) which will be rolled out in the coming September semester. The first article is an interview with Prof Mansor Fadzil, OUM's Senior Vice President, on the university's online initiative; while the second is an interview with Jimmy Teo who spearheaded the design of the new myVLE.

http://tcx.oum.edu.my

ABOUT TCX

TCX (Tutor Connexxions) is a non-profit OUM e-newsletter that provides a dedicated link between the University and its tutors. It serves as a channel for news and updates on tutor-related events and as a platform for the sharing of views, experiences and tips on best practices in university teaching and learning.

TCX is published electronically once every semester.

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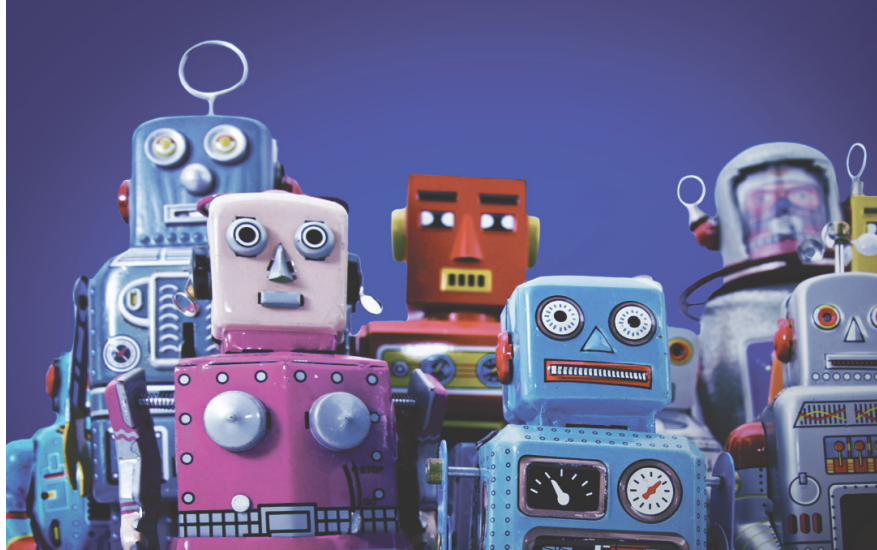*Desktop Publisher*
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Imagine, if you will, the robots on the cover as the digital codes coming together to constitute the new myVLE, the focus of this issue of TCX.

Tutors who have been with OUM for a while would know that the existing myVLE has been in use for many years. While the existing myVLE has served us all well, it is time for it to be spruced up, or rather, redesigned to make it an even better platform for online teaching and learning.

This issue of TCX offers readers a sneak peek at the new platform which has been pilot tested since January 2014 and will be rolled out to replace the old myVLE in the coming September 2014 semester.

We hope you'll enjoy this issue of TCX and we wish you a productive semester ahead.

Best

AP Dr David CL Lim
Chief Editor

IMPORTANT DATES

Tutorial 1	Existing Learners: 16-18 May 2014 New Learners: 30 May-1 June 2014
Tutorial 2	Existing Learners: 30 May-1 June 2014 New Learners: 13-15 June 2014
Tutorial 3	Existing Learners: 13-15 June 2014 New Learners: 27-29 June 2014
Assignment Deadlines	24 June - 6 July 2014 (Tutors should remind their learners to use the special assignment template and to submit their assignments online. This applies only to courses that require learners to submit their assignments online.)
Tutorial 4	Existing Learners: 27-29 June 2014 New Learners: 21-23 July 2014
Tutorial 5	Existing Learners: 21-23 July 2014
Final Exams	9-26 August 2014

CONTACT INFO

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F2F Tutor Issues & Concerns	Learning Centre Directors, OR ITLA Staff: 2773 2490/2493/2301, OR Email: aznam@oum.edu.my
Assignment Online Submission Queries	Email: assignment@oum.edu.my
myVLE Technical Issues	myVLE Helpdesk: 2772 2283, OR Email: mylms_admin@oum.edu.my or aznam@oum.edu.my

FOR E-TUTORS

REMINDERS

1. All e-tutors must be visible in their respective forums.

2. Log in to the Forum at least 4 times a week.

3. Respond to learners' postings regularly. Do not ignore requests for help from learners.

4. Post questions and redirect questions to learners to encourage and stimulate discussions.

5. Post additional content-related resources (web links, videos, articles, etc.) to stimulate interest and spark discussion.

6. If there is an e-schedule for your course, please refer learners to the e-schedule to help guide them with weekly activities for the course. The e-schedule appears within the course on the left sidebar menu of myVLE.

7. Forums are monitored daily. Regular reminders will be sent by ITLA staff, e-tutor mentors and the Head of e-Learning whenever necessary.

8. Please inform the Head of e-Learning at ITLA of any prolonged absence and inability to facilitate forum.

9. All e-tutors are required to use their OUM email account. Communication related to e-tutor matters will be made through your OUM email.

10. Email Notifications – When learners post in the forum, email notifications will be sent to your OUM mailbox. You can reply to the email, and your response will appear in the forum. Your responses via email will count towards your total number of postings and your number of logins into myVLE forum will be accounted for as well. Please do check your OUM mailbox often.

11. OUM Expectations:
    • Enter myVLE and check the forum every other day at the minimum
    • Put up at least 8 postings a week
    • Check OUM mailbox regularly for email notifications of forum postings

For F2F tutors

Tutors are reminded **NOT** to:

1. Attend tutorial session unprepared.

2. Reschedule the allotted tutorials.

3. Cancel tutorial sessions.

4. Arrive late for tutorials.

5. Arrive late but record an earlier sign-in time.

6. Leave tutorials before designated time.

7. Read from module directly instead of highlighting or discussing the subject matter.

8. Discuss non-academic matters during tutorials.

On e-Tutor FB Group

If you have an FB account, do request to join the e-tutor group on FB. Please email AP Dr Safiah at safiah_mdyusof@oum.edu.my.

On Assignments

For courses with assignments:

1. Assignments, Assignment Rubrics and Assignment Templates for Learners have been uploaded to myVLE.

2. On online submission of assignments, do note that there are different deadlines for existing learners and new learners.

3. No late submission of assignments will be accepted.

4. Do remind learners to start working on their assignments early and not wait until the last day to submit their assignments online.

5. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on assignments is available on the left sidebar menu on myVLE.

6. F2F tutors and e-tutors can only provide guidance on completing the assignments based on the rubrics given. Please do not give any confirmation of marks for the assignments as the assignments will be graded by the e-graders.

ON iFEED

1. iFEED – Please note that selected courses have an iFEED link on myVLE. Learners can use iFEED to pose questions on content related to the module. The iFEED robot will respond to simple knowledge-based questions.

   One of the main functions of iFEED is to help e-Tutors to focus more on initiating and responding to higher-level questions following Bloom's Taxonomy.

   iFEED postings do not count towards e-tutor logins and postings, and subsequently e-tutor payments. Your claims are still based on your own postings and responses to learners.

2. LESSON-PLAN LINK – Some courses have a lesson-plan link which allows learners to access tutorial lesson plans. Learners and tutors may use these lesson plans as reference and guide for tutorials and forum discussions.

3. ONLINE TRAINING FOR E-TUTORS – e-tutor training is now being conducted fully online for existing and new e-tutors. The objective of the online training is to upskill e-tutors in online facilitation. Participants who successfully complete the training will receive a certificate of completion to help them secure future e-tutor appointments.

ON F2F & e-TUTOR COMMUNITY AREAS

Tutors are encouraged to log in to the F2F Tutor Community and e-tutor Community forums for continued support and development. The forums also give tutors and e-tutors the opportunity to exchange and share experiences with other tutors/e-tutors.

THE ONLINE INITIATIVE

INTERVIEW WITH PROF MANSOR FADZIL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT (mansor@oum.edu.my)
By AP Dr David CL Lim (david@oum.edu.my)

Prof Dr Mansor Fadzil

In Issue 40, TCX featured an interview with Prof Mansor Fadzil, OUM's Senior Vice President, who laid out his four strategic thrusts for 2014 which pivot around curriculum design, learner assessment, assessment processing, and online learning. In this issue, we catch up with Prof Mansor for an update on the online initiative.

Dr David Lim: In the January 2014 semester, eight courses were trialled as full online offerings without face-to-face tutorials. How did that go?

Prof Mansor Fadzil: I must say the outcome has been very encouraging. Our Assessment and Examination Department conducted an initial study on the results of our learners who took the eight full online courses in the January semester. We found that a majority of these learners did as well, if not better than other learners who, in the past, followed the eight courses in blended [i.e., online and face-to-face] mode. This affirms our belief that our learners are not only ready but able to thrive in full online mode. Of course, we're still studying the trial from various angles to verify our initial findings. There are bound to be gaps here and there that need to be plugged with improved support services. Overall, however, we see great future in full online courses.

> **" ... our learners are not only ready but able to thrive in full online mode."**

Dr David Lim: A number of courses were also offered in full online mode in the May 2014 semester. Any feedback so far from our learners on that?

Prof Mansor Fadzil: The May semester has just started, so we'd need to let it unfold to see how the online initiative goes. We're monitoring closely our online support services. So far the learner feedback we've received has been positive. While we are vigilant, we're also positively encouraged.

Dr David Lim: Where full online courses are concerned, what can e-tutors and learners expect in the near future?

Prof Mansor Fadzil: If all goes well, e-tutors and learners can expect to benefit from the introduction of more full online courses over the next few years. All the faculties are now working full steam ahead to produce an array of learning materials to support present and future full online courses. Another set of courses will be offered in full online mode in the September 2014 semester, all on the new myVLE platform. All these courses are equipped with iLecture support, pre-posted discussion questions for the online forum, self-tests, online progress tracking, and so on. So, yes, our learners and e-tutors can look forward to exciting times ahead.

"e-tutors and learners can expect to benefit from the introduction of more full online courses over the next few years."

Dr David Lim: What targets have you set for our course offerings? How many percent of courses will eventually be offered in full online mode, and how many in blended mode?

Prof Mansor Fadzil: Our target for the first phase of the online initiative is 20 percent full online and 80 percent blended. Some courses are more amenable to full online offering than others, so we have to be mindful of that when we plan and produce supporting online learning materials. Down the line, we might even offer up to 80 percent full online courses, with 20 percent of courses offered in blended mode. But we'd need to tread carefully and evaluate our progress continuously to ensure that our learners attain the set learning outcomes.
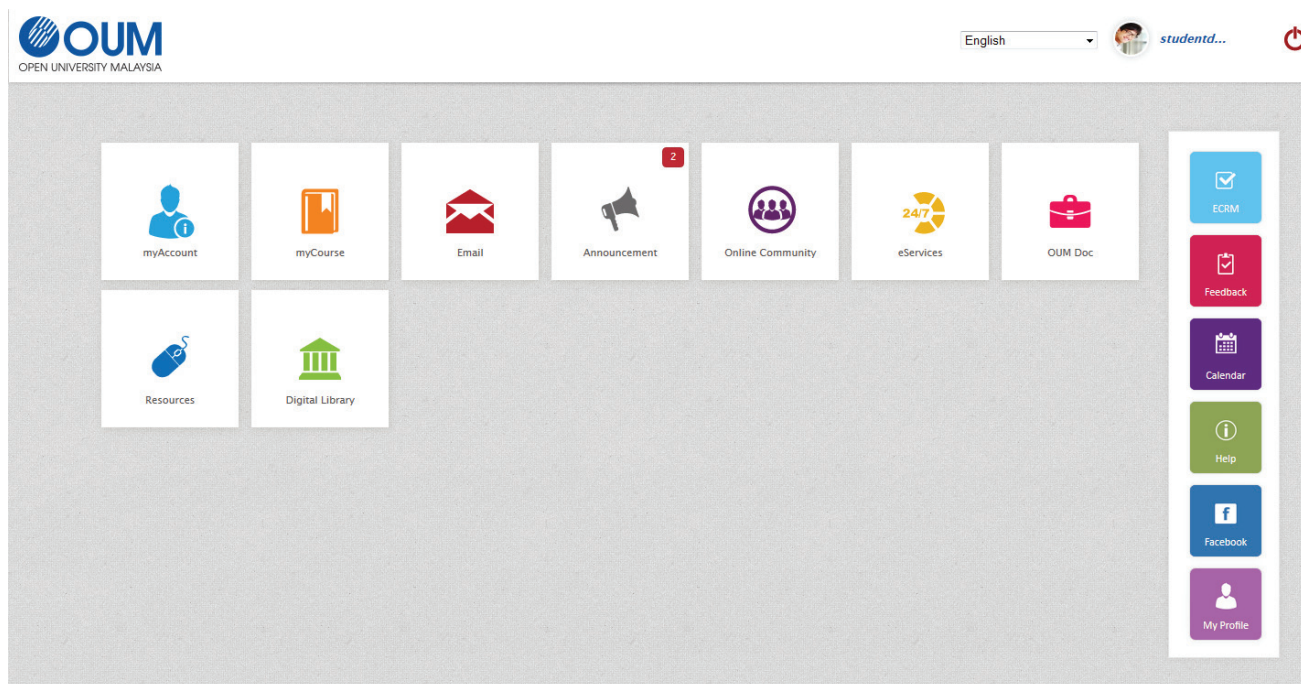
Dr David Lim: Any last words on the online initiative for the moment?

Prof Mansor Fadzil: To all our e-tutors, we hope that you are as excited about the full online courses are we are. You will have the opportunity to join training sessions on facilitating these courses on the new myVLE platform, if you haven't already gone through them. We hope and we know you will give your best as e-tutors. To be sure, with your support, our full online learners will reap the full rewards of OUM's online initiative. TCX

MIGRATING TO THE NEW MYVLE

INTERVIEW WITH JIMMY TEO HUI THIAN (jteo@oum.edu.my)

By AP Dr David CL Lim (david@oum.edu.my)

The simple and clean home page of the new myVLE

Since the January 2014 semester, OUM has been trialling a new version of myVLE, the university's virtual learning platform, with a small selection of courses. When the September 2014 semester begins, the new myVLE is expected to entirely replace the old version. TCX interviews Jimmy Teo, the academic who designed and is overseeing the project's rollout, to find out more about the new myVLE and how it will benefit e-tutors and learners alike.

Dr David Lim: Can you tell us the rationale behind the new myVLE?

Jimmy Teo: The new myVLE is a special project developed under the office of OUM's Senior Vice President, Prof Mansor Fadzil. The old myVLE has served our learners well over the years. However, Prof Mansor felt that it could be improved upon by simplifying the available features and, at the same time, by adding on some new useful features.
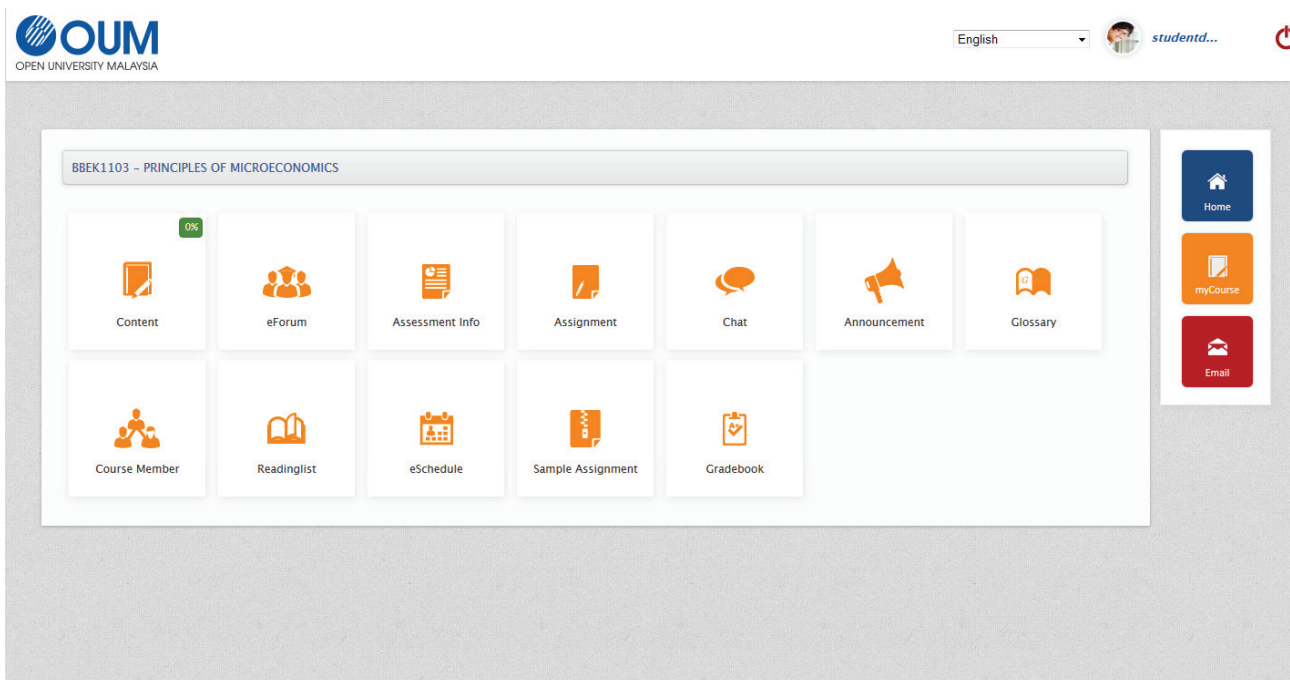
> **"The new myVLE has been completely redesigned to provide not only an improved user interface (UI) but also a totally new user experience (UX)."**

Dr David Lim: In what ways will the new myVLE be different from the old one?

Jimmy Teo: The new myVLE has been completely redesigned to provide not only an improved user interface (UI) but also a totally new user experience (UX). It has an un-cluttered interface and icon-driven navigation, enabling learners to access course content and resources more intuitively, all in one window and with fewer clicks. All courses will be using the new myVLE come September 2014, irrespective of whether the courses are offered in full online mode, or in blended mode.

(Continued on next page)

The simple and clean design of the new myVLE is iterated in the course page for easy navigation

Dr David Lim: What are some of the new features on the new myVLE?

Jimmy Teo: Three main new features will be available for selected courses. The first is 'Pre-posted Discussion Questions'. For each topic in a course, ten key questions will be pre-posted in the discussion forum. These questions will be made available and ready to engage learners the moment they enter the discussion forum at the start of the semester. Second, the new myVLE will have the 'Track My Learning' feature. As the name suggests, this feature enables learners to track their learning progress in terms of percentages of successful completion. Third, we've included in the new myVLE an 'Active Reading List' for selected courses. Each relevant item in the Reading List will be hyper-linked to OUM's digital library, making it convenient for learners to access their learning materials.

Dr David Lim: If a given course is tied to a module as the main learning material, will the module be available in softcopy too on the new myVLE come September 2014?

Jimmy Teo: Yes. If a course is tied to a module, instead of a textbook, then the module will be available on the new myVLE in HTML5 format. Learners will have the option of printing out the module in PDF format. If the course has a translated module, that, too, will be made available online.

"All courses will be using the new myVLE come September 2014, irrespective of whether the courses are offered in full online mode, or in blended mode."

Dr David Lim: If the new myVLE is to replace the old one from the September 2014 semester, does it mean that postgraduate learners and their facilitators who also manage the online forums too will get to use and benefit from the new myVLE? Or will they still be using the old myVLE?
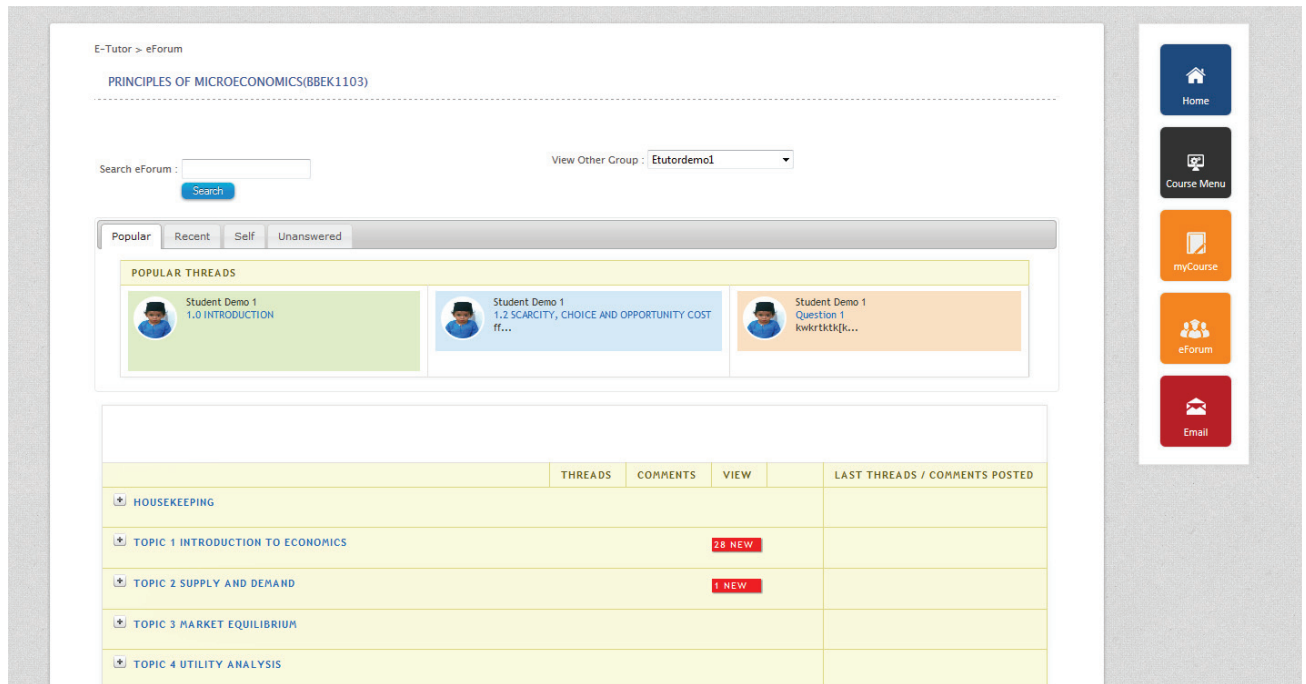
Jimmy Teo: Currently we are focusing on the undergraduate level. We anticipate that the new myVLE will only be introduced at the postgraduate level in the January semester of 2015. But we might introduce it sooner if all goes well.

Dr David Lim: As preparation for the full launch of the new myVLE, will e-tutors and learners receive training to familiarise them to the platform?

Jimmy Teo: I have been working closely with OUM's Institute of Teaching and Learning Advancement (ITLA) to provide country-wide training to batches of e-tutors as well as learners on the new myVLE. We've made good progress so far and there'll be more training sessions to come in the lead-up to the launch of the new platform.

The newly redesigned forum page now features the three most active trending thread

Dr David Lim: How has it been like working on the new myVLE?

Jimmy Teo: Overall it has been rewarding, especially when I get to work closely with many of my colleagues, particularly those from Group Information and Communication Technology Services (GICTS) and ITLA. The challenging part was perhaps putting so many things together without cluttering the page and providing faster access to content. Also, I have learnt a lot personally, researching into the various aspects of the VLE. TCX