

LEARNING CURVE

GETTING IN THE ONLINE GROOVE

Private educational institutions hope online lessons can become the norm

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THE Movement Control Order (MCO) brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic has over the past year prompted private educational institutions nationwide to look beyond traditional methods of teaching.

Hampere by the inability to teach students in physical classrooms, private universities and colleges have been forced to adapt to the new normal by going fully online.

One year on, after considerable investment in hardware, software and content development to deliver lessons online during the pandemic, these colleges and institutions are hoping that online lessons can become the norm instead of serving as a temporary system.

Associate Professor Dr Brian Imrie said many students, especially working professionals, seeking to upgrade their qualifications became accustomed to online learning.

"Malaysia should grasp this new openness to online learning to enhance access to higher education."



The Education Ministry is expediting the grading and release of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia examination results. **THE PRC**

"The respective institutions should be allowed to determine the percentage of a programme content that should be delivered online as they are best placed to understand their students' needs," he told the *New Straits Times*.

The delay in the release of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia results, he said, could negatively impact new enrolments in the first half of this year.

"This will place some local private colleges under financial stress, since the month of March is when major intake for foundation and diploma programmes usually happens."

"The situation may be more challenging as the March 2020 intake was completed before the first MCO was enforced."

"But we are pleased with the Education Ministry's efforts to expedite grading and release of SPM examination results, which will limit disruption to student enrolment."

"In fact, we have been pleasantly surprised at the strength of our new enrolments for the current semester."

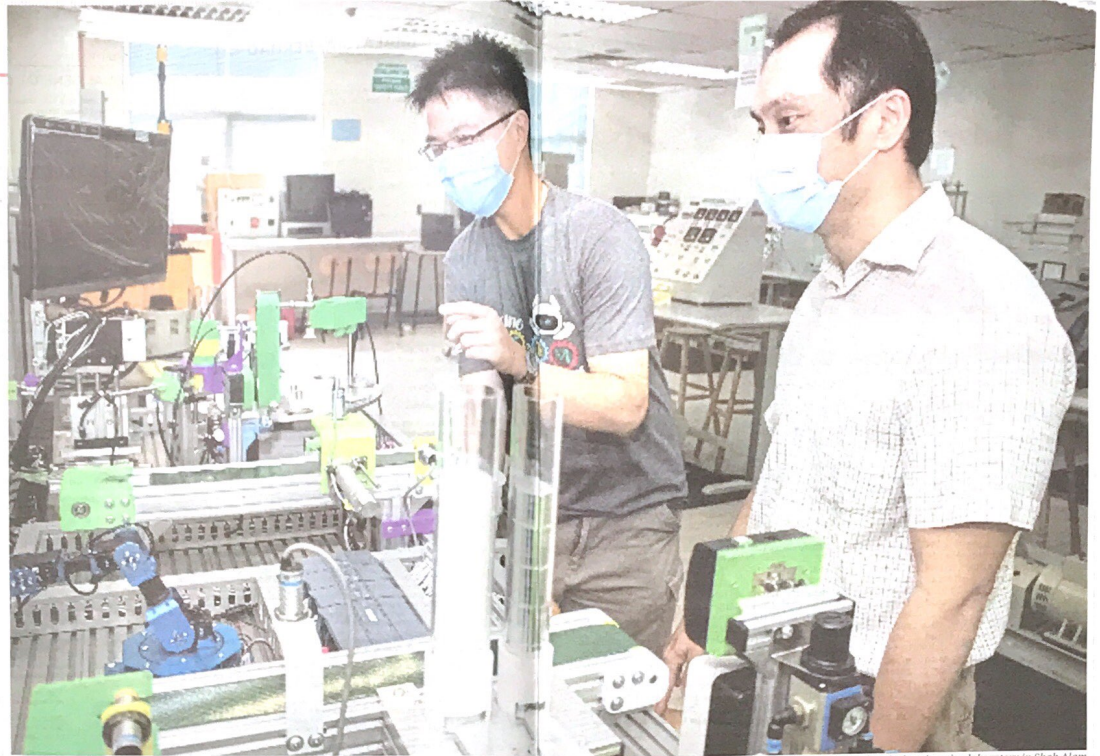
"Equally, we have been fielding a number of enquiries for forthcoming semesters from students currently pursuing their national examinations."

"We attribute this to the growing strength of UOW Malaysia KDU's reputation which, as part of the top one per cent of Australian universities, is attracting students who previously deferred overseas study plans."

"They are now enrolling in foreign-owned university-level education with the intention of later transferring offshore," he said.

Imrie, who is UOW Malaysia KDU deputy vice-chancellor (Engagement), also suggested the ministry consider alternatives for students who did not take the SPM trial examinations to facilitate their early enrolment in colleges.

Taylor's University Placement Service director Michelle Lim Lee Munn said the university had been working closely with all parties to ensure smooth manage-



A practical class being conducted in a UOW Malaysia KDU electrical engineering laboratory in Shah Alam recently. **THE PRC**

ment of students' admissions to universities abroad.

"We advise students on the various steps and processes that they need to complete and even arrange workshops, talks and mock interviews for them."

"Many overseas universities have enabled online learning for international students due to border closures."

"Local students accepted to pursue their degree in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada were still able to go overseas to study, but those who were accepted into Australian and New Zealand universities have begun following classes online while waiting for those

countries' borders to open."

"In fact, some students have opted to study at our university first and then transfer to partner universities later through twinning programmes."

Lim said Taylor's had made available over 500 articulation partners for students to choose to transfer for their twinning programme.

"They are given the liberty to choose their pathway in doing a twinning programme, such as completing a year in Taylor's and two years in the partner universities, or vice versa."

"We even offered 15 years of studies in Taylor's and to complete the rest of their semester in partner universities

and vice versa, depending on the programme and suitability offered by the articulation partner universities chosen," she said.

Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities president Datuk Dr Parmjit Singh also thanked the government for allowing private higher education institutions to enrol students using forecast results.

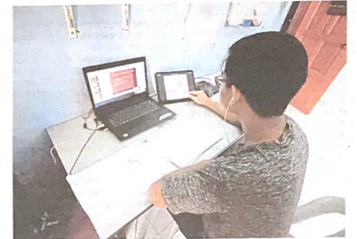
"Nevertheless, students using forecast results are enrolled on conditional acceptance, which will be reviewed when their actual results are out."

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Datuk Dr Parmjit Singh **THE PRC**



Volgograd State Medical University student Ahmad Ashraff Haqul Ahmad Zaki, 19, attending online classes from his home in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year. **THE PRC**