

THE OPEN STANDARD

The Newsletter of the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University

Fall Issue

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Stimulated Growth

A depressed economy and spurt in online education means growth for enrolments.

by Cameron Beddome, Chief Recruitment Officer

While the impetus is somewhat blurry, the tally is in and the numbers are showing that more students are continuing to take courses with Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL). This year through to the end of September, enrolments have increased by over 16% compared to the same period last year - an increase marking the second year of double digit growth.

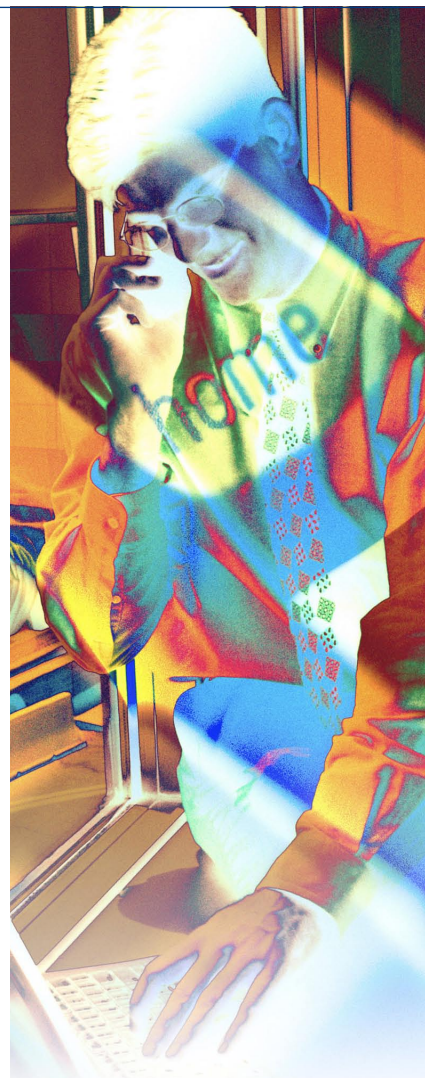
The forces driving this growth have both internal and external sources. While the resources and energies allocated by TRU-OL's recruitment department have successfully served to increase enrolments, there are other factors at play which are outside the realm of TRU-OL's internal controls. These factors, such as the current economic climate as well as the growth in online education, have a beneficial and sizable impact on TRU-OL enrolments.


During economic downturn, enrolments increase for academic programs that generally take two or less years to complete while four-year programs are generally not impacted. Two-year programs provide individuals the opportunity to quickly gain the skills necessary to become more employable or upgrade the education they already have. This is why two-year college and graduate programs across Canada are seeing a spike in enrolments. In fact, colleges across British Columbia are over-subscribed this fall.

Typically, TRU-OL students do not enrol in a complete traditional four-year program at TRU-OL. Instead, they tend to study toward a traditional two-year or less program. Students who do graduate from TRU-OL baccalaureate programs have either transferred credits they previously earned at other institutions or have had prior learning recognized through the Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process. Part of this year's enrolment growth is therefore a result of the reduced duration of study that students take part in through TRU-OL.

What once defined university students as "typical" no longer characterizes the majority of students on Canada's campuses. Today, only about 30% of students take five courses per semester in a classroom setting on campus. The remaining 70% of students are either taking reduced course loads or taking courses by distance. More campus students taking online and distance course is of great benefit to TRU-OL. Online and distance study is also growing as a result of more individuals studying part-time and once again, TRU-OL benefits from this.

TRU-OL is making sure to make the most of these current opportunities by continuing to advertise using media that has proven successful. Advertising serves as a way of making TRU-OL recognizable and highlighting



the unique benefits TRU-OL offers. This year, web advertising and the website's ability to attract visitors, has proven very successful. While much of the increase in inquiries and enrolments can be attributed to web-based activities, traditional media continues to provide a solid base of inquiries. 

THE OPEN STANDARD

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THOMPSON RIVERS
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Contemporary Contemplation

Courses evoke critical reflection and discussion of current topics.

Times are not only changing, they are also becoming more complex within each component of modern life. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to be unaware of the evolution of contemporary life. Sometimes we find ourselves stuck in a box with no peripheral view of issues that fall outside our area of specialty whether in study or in profession, which threatens to cause a vacuum in society's sense of responsibility and consciousness.

While the intent behind Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL)'s 399 course model is varied, its result is to encourage awareness as well as contemplation of contemporary issues.

"The focus of 399 courses is on contemporary topics that have broad societal interest," Michael Looney, Program Coordinator, Arts at TRU-OL, said further explaining that the 399 courses were conceived to increase the University's upper-level course offerings. Essentially, any third-year student, regardless of chosen discipline or major, can enrol in any 399 course (see list for all course offerings) as the only prerequisite is 60 credits.

According to Allan Fletcher, instructor for TRU-OL's FINA 399, Cultural Theory and Images course, the 399 courses take students out of their area of specialization, introducing them to ideas and materials they wouldn't normally encounter. "The 399 course model is beneficial for students because it puts them in touch with other students in different programs and disciplinary areas which promotes exciting discussions that go off in unexpected and surprising directions," Fletcher said. "The courses encourage transdisciplinarity by encouraging and validating connections between distinct ways of thinking."

In addition, Fletcher explained that the 399 courses are specifically beneficial to distance students as they counter feelings of isolation by building a student community.

Ken Lum, instructor of TRU-OL's PSYC 399, Psychology of Human Resilience course, explained that the 399 courses require conference-based discussion

between students which distinguishes the model from other courses.

"Students need to be able to interact with maturity, to be self-motivated in finding the information they require and to adequately prepare for and participate in online discussion seminars," Lum said. "This allows them the flexibility and independence, yet responsibility, that reflects the maturity and competence that seasoned upper-level students bring to their study."

Looney explained that the 399 curricula follow a consistent model which begins with a foundation module introducing the subject followed with three or four units of specialized content. The learning outcomes, he explained, are achieved through online discussions, research and writing and a project exam.

Linda Sheehan, instructor of TRU-OL's GEOG 399, Global Climate Change and Regional Impacts course, said that the unique 399 model inherently encourages critical reflection and research.


Essentially, Sheehan, also a Geography instructor at North Island College, explained that at the end of each of the three or four modules of specialized content, students engage in their own research and then discuss this and their peer's research, through a required Blackboard discussion. "The 399 courses are dynamic as they include discussions and the courses are structured to provide students with foundational material on the subject areas," Sheehan said.

This "ingenious template" as Fletcher described the 399 course model, is beneficial for both the course developer and the student as it gives the developer a framework to place content into and means the process is sped up bringing the courses to students faster.

399 COURSE LIST

COURSE CODE	COURSE TITLE
BISC 399	Plants and Society
ENST 399	Environmental Studies: Sustainability
FINA 399	Cultural Theory and Images
GEOG 399	Global Climate Change and Regional Impacts
HIST 399	Environmental History
HUMN 399	Issues in Science and Society
POLI 399	Globalization and its Discontents
PSYC 399	Psychology of Human Resilience
SOCI 399	Sociology of Diversity

Most recently added to TRU-OL's 399 consortium of courses is HIST 399, Environmental History. The newest kid on the 399 block is described as an online seminar course that examines the reciprocal relations between humans and non-human nature through a historiographic perspective. The course addresses the changing impact of human populations, their technology and their ideas, on the physical environment, as well as how climate, topography, plants and animals have enabled, constrained and altered the path of human societies. The course emphasizes the North American context.

As an upper-level course, students enrolled in HIST 399, and all other 399 courses, are expected to interact in the requisite course discussions with maturity. Students should be self-motivated in finding the information they require and are expected to adequately prepare for and participate in online discussions. The course requires thorough and critical engagement with course readings, videos, web research, independent work and conference-based discussion. The 399 courses are suitable for learners completing degrees in a number of discipline areas, including science, engineering, humanities, fine arts, social science, business, education and general studies. 

Marked Achievements

Work within the realm of Personal Education Numbers brings recognition to OL.

Ironic isn't it, that Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL), an online purveyor of education with tech tools like keyboards and kilobytes, is getting kudos from BC's Ministry of Education for its work with PENs? Not so ironic when PENs refer to Personal Education Numbers, unique identifying nine-digit numbers that each student, from kindergarten to grade 12 and post-secondary standing, in British Columbia is assigned.

In fact TRU-OL has done an exceptional amount of work with PENs, which follow a student through their education so that student mobility and success may be tracked. Kristine Smalcel Pederson, Associate Registrar, TRU-OL, explained that many TRU-OL students are older or are out of province, which requires OL staff to work very hard to track down and validate student information and histories in order to verify or assign PENs.

"Most people don't realize that it (TRU-OL's PEN work) is in place and what it is for ... it is a lot of work, particularly for OL as an adult-focused operation," Smalcel Pederson said, divulging that the BC Ministry of Education recently awarded TRU-OL two certificates in recognition of their work with PENs.

As a new institution TRU-OL has only been doing work with PENs since 2005, however PENs are not a new

initiative. Students who attended a BC school since 1993, or have written a provincial exam in BC since 1986, may have been assigned a PEN. However, many of TRU-OL's students are older adults or reside out of province and as such they do not have PENs. This means more legwork for TRU-OL staff, according to Cameron Beddome, Chief Recruitment Officer, TRU-OL.

"Meeting the requirements of the PEN process is particularly difficult for OL to manage because our Web Registration process allows students to register with incomplete or inaccurate information that is actually vital to meeting the requirements of admission," Beddome said. "A substantial amount of additional, manual work needs to be done by many."

Debbie Wasylyshyn and Sheryl Aselstyn, both TRU-OL Enrolment Services Officers, are responsible for the bulk of the PEN work implemented by OL's Office of the Registrar, according to Smalcel Pederson who explains that OL's PEN work has been very successful and recognized as such.

"The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (the post-secondary system) holds us accountable for having a very high verified PEN rate," Smalcel Pederson said. ☞

Pilot project brings OL to Caribbean students

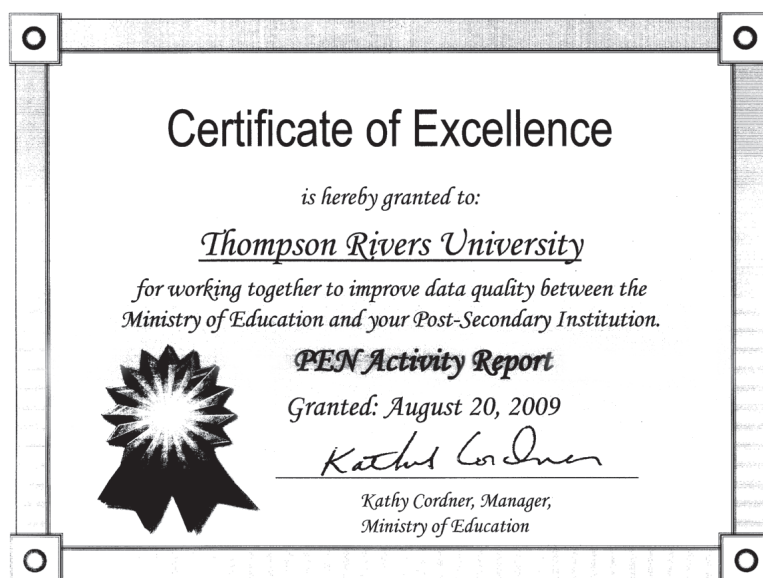
A Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) program has been selected for a pilot project funded by the federal government. The project, which is coordinated by the Canadian Virtual University (CVU), will provide scholarships to Caribbean students allowing them to complete Canadian distance and online programs while residing in their home countries.

TRU-OL's Certificate in Information Technology program was selected because it met the criteria set out by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In order to meet the criteria the program must be short, have continuous enrolment and not compete with online programs offered by the University of the West Indies.

"As high-speed Internet becomes more accessible around the world, it is becoming more feasible to deliver our online programs internationally," Dr. Gordon Tarzwell, Associate VP TRU-OL and member of CVU's Advisory Committee, said. "This project is a good opportunity for us to test and refine our systems and services for international students."

CVU is a collaboration of 10 universities working together to increase access to Canadian online education nationally and internationally. TRU-OL has been a member of CVU since its founding in 2000.

For more information, contact vickyb@cvu-uvic.ca. ☞





The Right Stuff

Despite personal challenges, one OL grad makes her situation prevail.

Fate is a funny thing that often seems to work against us, but those with a more sanguine disposition define fate as something that puts us at the right place even in the direst of circumstances. Such is Dawn Palmer's story.

Even in 1999, when Palmer first immersed herself in distance education her circumstances weren't completely conducive to a devoted educational endeavour. At the time, a single mother of two young children, Palmer needed to study from home.

"I have studied everywhere; in my car during soccer practices, at an ice rink waiting for my son's hockey game to start, on a bench prior to my daughter's field hockey game," Palmer said. "You have to be extremely creative and organized with your leisure time."

Through such creativity, Palmer was able to juggle her two children, two step-children, her extracurricular activities and a demanding full-time job with her studies despite the work related challenges she faced. But it wasn't until seven years into her distance education that Palmer encountered her most trying tribulation.

"The most difficult personal challenge that I faced was when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006," Palmer recalls.


Enrolled in a course and nearing the end of her Bachelor of Arts, General Studies degree through Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL), Palmer chose to make her circumstances work for her despite the severity of her situation. In order to complete her education through TRU-OL, Palmer extended her course which allowed her to get the work done while she underwent chemotherapy, a mastectomy and radiation. As a result of her perseverance, Palmer was able to complete the course by the end of her treatments in October 2007.

While for some, such health circumstances may have meant an inability to continue on with their educational goals such was not the case for Palmer who was able to make her situation as a distance learner work for her circumstances.

"I am incredibly grateful that I was able to obtain a course extension when I was undergoing breast cancer treatments," Palmer said. "I was determined not to quit and was able to complete the course, despite my medical challenges."

While completing her degree in July 2009 was a challenging venture, Palmer describes it as "one of the most rewarding experiences" in her life.

"Learning is never ending and being able to study at your own pace, with supportive tutors by your side, is an ideal way to achieve both career and educational goals," Palmer said.

And Palmer will continue to learn. Currently working as Director of Human Resource Consulting Services for the Provincial Health Services Authority, Palmer plans to pursue a Masters in Human Resources. 



Stellar Support

Any goal is attainable when given the opportunity.

Opportunities are boundless when flexibility and perspective are the guiding ethos. This is what Michael Drouillard discovered while studying at Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL); the fourth and “best” post-secondary institution he has attended.

“No other university I’ve attended has displayed such reasonableness and flexibility,” Drouillard said. “TRU-OL isn’t trying to squeeze funds out of its students opportunistically and it’s genuinely interested in having its students reach their educational goals.”

It was this institutional ethic and the distance education model offered through TRU-OL that helped Drouillard realize not only his path towards career advancement but also other personal goals.

“Thanks to the flexibility of Open Learning, I was able to work full-time and write a nationally published book, *Landlording in Canada* (see Drouillard’s interview with Global TV at barabus.tru.ca/mbbctv/mbbctv.html), while working towards a degree,” Drouillard reflects.

While working as a licensed realtor, Drouillard endeavoured to continue his education and eventually work towards law school. And so, in 2003 while working full-time for Sutton Group Medallion Realty in Surrey, BC, Drouillard began his jaunt with distance education at the University of British Columbia where he received a diploma in Urban Land Economics. After completing this credential, and while in the midst of starting his own business as an independent contractor supplying property management services and publishing his first book, Drouillard began working towards a Bachelor of Business in Real Estate through TRU-OL. However, his plan changed upon gaining acceptance into law school at the University of Victoria (UVic).

Unfortunately, Drouillard’s admittance into UVic Law School was conditional upon him either completing or withdrawing from a particular TRU-OL course. While the withdrawal deadline had already passed, Drouillard decided to present his case to TRU-OL’s registrar.

“It was agreed that my request didn’t violate the ‘spirit’ of the rules and I was allowed to withdraw from the course without having to wait for the course expiry date,” he said.


Once accepted into law school, Drouillard no longer needed to complete a degree and therefore chose to switch to a diploma program. Initially, he enrolled in the Diploma in Management Studies program but a family emergency prevented him from completing this. It was at this point that TRU-OL proved itself a stellar institution, according to Drouillard.

“Where TRU-OL really distinguished itself in my mind, was regarding its upper-level administration’s reasonable interpretation of University policies and regulations,” Drouillard said. “I asked for and was granted the right to change programs without having to pay another program admission fee... so I changed majors and received a Diploma in General Studies instead.”

Overall, Drouillard speaks to the stellar service at all levels of the institution from student services advisors and their prompt, individually tailored email replies, to course tutors.

“When I worked on a course at TRU-OL I felt like I was engaged in an open dialogue with the tutors and that we were working together towards a common goal.” Drouillard said.

“Receiving personal emails very much felt like I was working one-on-one with the tutor; you’d never know that the tutor is juggling other courses and hundreds of other students.”

“I’ve attended four post-secondary institutions and can honestly say that my experience with TRU-OL was the best by far.” 



New Reporting Structure

Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL)'s Instructional Design and Research Group (IDRG) recently implemented a new functional reporting structure. The review of the existing organizational structure was prompted by the June 2009 retirement of past Director, IDRG, Enid McCauley.

Shortly after McCauley's retirement Vice-President, TRU-OL Judith Murray issued a notice of the changes which included a reorganization of three departments within the OL Division (see Chart).

The position held by McCauley has been restructured and will now be Director, Instructional Design

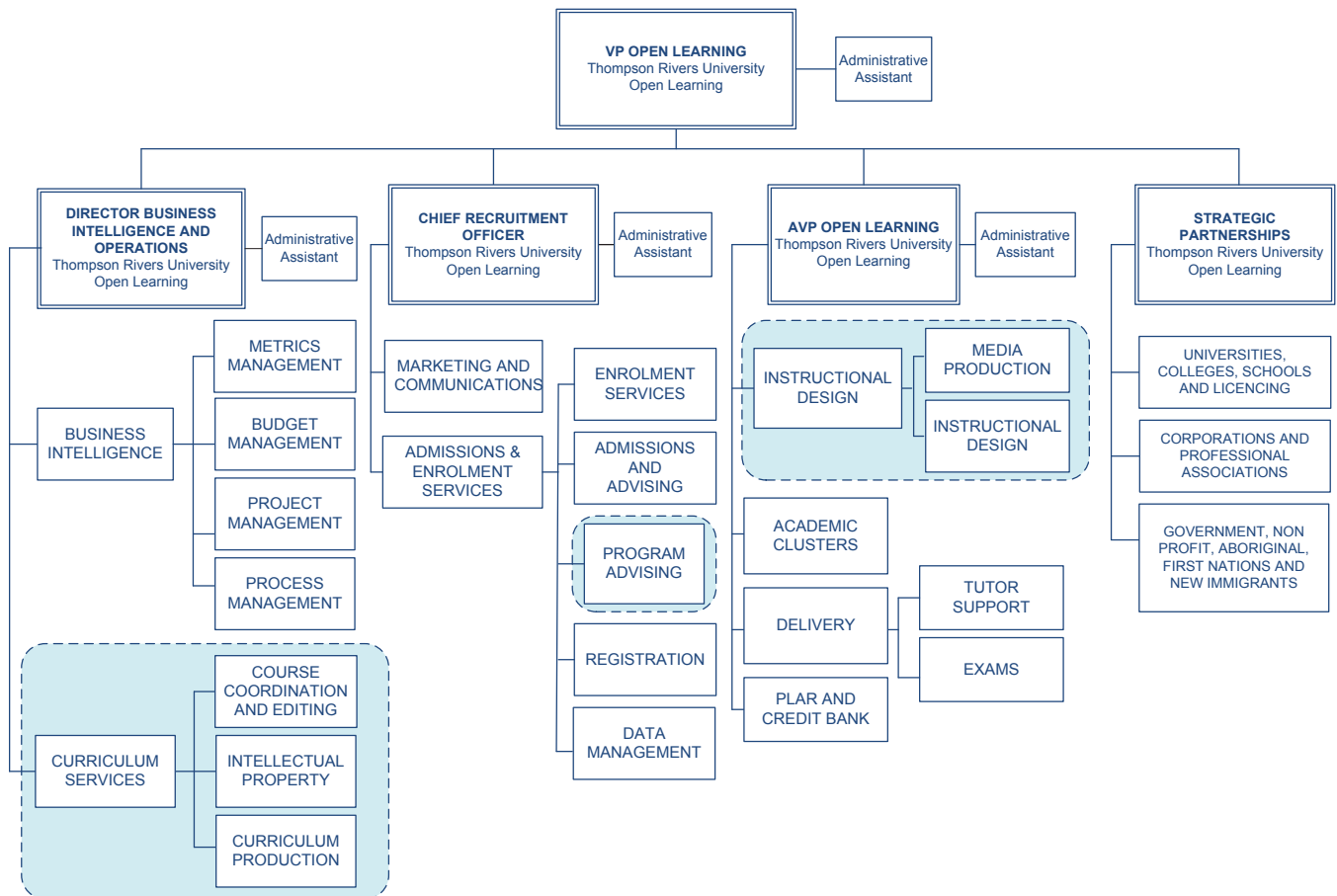
reporting to Associate Vice-President, TRU-OL Gordon Tarzwell. This position has been posted for hire.

Once a new Director is hired, TRU-OL's Media Team will be amalgamated with the new Instructional Design unit (see Chart).

The remaining areas of what was previously IDRG - namely Course Coordination and Editing, Intellectual Property and Curriculum Production - are now under the Curriculum Services department reporting to André Larouche (see Chart). To reflect Larouche's additional responsibilities, his title has been changed to Director, Business Intelligence and Operations.

Murray explained in her notice that "in order to further accommodate these changes, Program Advising will also change its reporting relationship and will now report to Kristine Smalcel Pederson under Enrolment Services" rather than reporting to the Associate VP.

"These moves reinforce OL's commitment to provide the best possible education and service to our students," Murray said in her email notice. "We thank you in advance for your ongoing support as we work through this transition."



The Computer Caveat

With the rise of computer-based jobs, comes the wrath of computer-related injury.

Since the advent of technology, increasingly the clicks and clacks of a computer-based career are causing the cricks and cracks of not so conditioned bodies. It's no longer just the heavy labour, high intensity jobs causing work related injury, now it's also the white-collar desk jobs creating the conundrum to good health. If you're a student, specifically a distant student who isn't benefiting from circuits of running from class to class, count yourself in on this high tech harm to good health.

The prolonged static posture inherently associated with working on a computer can be disastrous to the body. Damage can be specifically bad for overly focused workers who neglect to move and stretch for hours on end or simply for individuals who develop seemingly harmless habits in front of the big screen, such as slouching or other awkward positioning.

The reality is a healthy body can only tolerate staying in one posture for about 20 minutes. So, if you're not getting up and moving throughout the day, you could be facing an onslaught of health risks. A significant number of studies have been implemented to investigate the risks of computer-related work to the body. Some of the findings have indicated the following:

- Heavy computer users who are farsighted or nearsighted have increased risk for glaucoma according to a study conducted at the Toho University School of Medicine.¹
- Extended computer use can cause headache, eyestrain, joint pain, stiff shoulders, insomnia and fatigue according to a study conducted by Dr. Tetsuya Nakazawa of Chiba University.²
- Prolonged seated immobility may result in "e-thrombosis," a newly recognized variant of deep venous thrombosis, the formation of a blood clot in one of the deep veins within the body, according to a study by Dr. Richard Beasley, a professor at the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand.³
- Excessive computer use may result in Computer Vision Syndrome with symptoms including dry eyes, headaches, blurred vision, eyestrain and shoulder and back pain and other musculo-skeletal problems.
- Repetitive motions associated to typing and using the computer for extended periods of time can strain muscles

and tendons causing back pain, vision problems and carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) and other repetitive strain injuries like tendonitis. CTS causes nerve compression of the wrist and leads to a tingling or burning sensation in hands or wrists while Tendonitis is a result of repetitive motions which make the tendons become tighter until the fibres that frame the tendons start to tear.

Evidence and incidence of computer-related injuries is mounting, however students and employees can protect themselves from potential damage by taking preventative measures.

Workplace injury prevention is essential and Thompson Rivers University (TRU) is encouraging staff, faculty and students to make their workplace and workday safer. In a recent email notice, TRU encouraged its staff who "need reminders to stretch during their workday" (especially if working for long periods) to visit www.WorkSafeBC.com and download the new program entitled WorkSafe Sam.


WorkSafe Sam is a "Stretch Prompter" which is a "desktop tool that provides stretching tips to help reduce eye and muscle strain," according to WorkSafeBC.

There are also some changes you can make to your work area, and to your habits, that will help prevent computer-related injuries.

- Optimize your posture.
- Position your computer chair correctly. Adjust the height of your chair so your upper thighs are parallel to the floor and adjust the back so you have firm support and are angled slightly back with feet flat.
- Position your keyboard directly in front of your monitor so your eyes don't have to work so hard to refocus each time you look away from the monitor. Install a keyboard tray on the underside of your desk to bring your keyboard lower, and to a more ergonomic level.
- Use a computer mouse design that fits your hand and promotes neutral posture.
- Position your monitor at correct distance, height and angle. Make sure your monitor is positioned so the top of the screen is at eye level.
- Make sure your feet are flat on the floor or use an office footrest and a lumbar pillow. Get a good, adjustable office chair which allows you to keep your feet flat on the floor and provides lumbar support.



- Sit at least two feet away from the screen.
- Use a document holder. Make sure your documents are at the same plane and similar distance from you as your monitor, as this will improve your sitting posture and reduce the tendency to look down or to the side to read a document while typing.
- Rest your eyes. Take regular breaks, blink your eyes frequently, occasionally close your eyes for a few minutes and every 15 minutes or so, look away from the computer and stare at an object in the distance.
- Get up every hour or so, and stretch and move around for at least five minutes.

In addition to these preventative methods it is important to maintain good personal health. Strengthen muscles with exercise and fuel your body with good, healthy food and make sure to practice good protective methods in your work area and you will reduce the ergonomic risk factors that can cause pain and fatigue. 

¹ Tatemichi, Masayuki, et al. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. Possible association between heavy computer users and glaucomatous visual field abnormalities: a cross sectional study in Japanese workers. 2004; 58: 1021-1027.

² Nakazawa, Tetsuya. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*. Association between duration of daily VDT use and subjective symptoms. November 2002; 42; 421-426.

³ Beasley, Richard, et al. *European Respiratory Journal*. eThrombosis: the 21st Century variant of venous thromboembolism associated with immobility. 2003; 21[2]: 374-6.

CVU Welcomes New Chair



Dr. Lori Wallace, Third President and Chair of the Board of Directors of CVU-UVC Inc.

The Canadian Virtual University (CVU-UVC), an association of Canadian universities specializing in online and distance learning, appointed Lori Wallace, Ph.D., Dean of Extended Education at the University of Manitoba, as the new President and Chair of the Board of Directors of CVU this July. Currently, Dr. Judith Murray, Vice-President, Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL), is among the seven members of the CVU Board of Directors.

Dr. Wallace has served on the CVU advisory committee and board for the past nine years. She is the third president of the organization, replacing Denis Mayer, Associate VP, Student Affairs at Laurentian University. Dr. Dominique Abrioux, President Emeritus at Athabasca University, was CVU's founding president from 2000-2005.

Wallace has been a faculty member at the University of Manitoba since 1984, and Dean of Extended Education since 2006. She has worked in university distance education administration and instructional design since 1985, in training and development in the private sector and internationally as a distance education specialist. Wallace holds a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota.

"I'm honoured to take on this role," Wallace said. "I look forward to working with other universities committed to expanding student access to online courses and services across Canada and internationally and to collaborating on policy issues and research in online and distance education."

The Board of Directors governing CVU consists of presidents and directors of distance education at participating universities including Thompson Rivers University, Athabasca University, Laurentian University, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Nipissing University, Royal Military College of Canada, Télé-université, the University of Manitoba and the University of New Brunswick. CVU was founded in 2000 by the British Columbia Open University, which now operates as TRU-OL, and Athabasca University.

According to Kristine Smalcel Pederson, Associate Registrar, TRU-OL, CVU is the only official "virtual" group of universities in Canada and as such it is an integral partnership to maintain.

"The relationship affords us publicity and promotion, and puts us in the good company of many respected schools in Canada," Smalcel Pederson said. ☞

Communication of the Advanced Kind

TRU-OL is on the radar for communication advancement.



Getting caught on the radar may cause some to perspire with presentiment but no need to fear for the future when you find yourself under Open Learning's new RADAR.

Project RADAR, a Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) initiative, is an online internal communications tool. Currently in the development stages, this project will form an intranet for use by all TRU-OL staff in hopes of addressing the institution's growing communication needs.

The project is being implemented in two stages with the first stage completing the following steps:

1. Identifying what information must be communicated and how this is currently done.
2. Determining capabilities requirements and selecting technologies.
3. Structuring and designing an appropriate information structure.
4. Developing an implementation plan.

Meetings will be conducted with each individual TRU-OL department in order to identify unique information needs. As future users of this tool, TRU-OL employees are being asked to define what needs to be communicated in order to do their jobs.

In order to help determine what your departmental needs are, discuss with your coworkers and consider the following:

- What are the end results of your work?
- What information do you need to get these results?
- Where do you currently get that information from (i.e. websites, databases, people, committees, etc...)?

Questions about Project RADAR can be forwarded to the Business Intelligence department. ☞


Computer Advancement

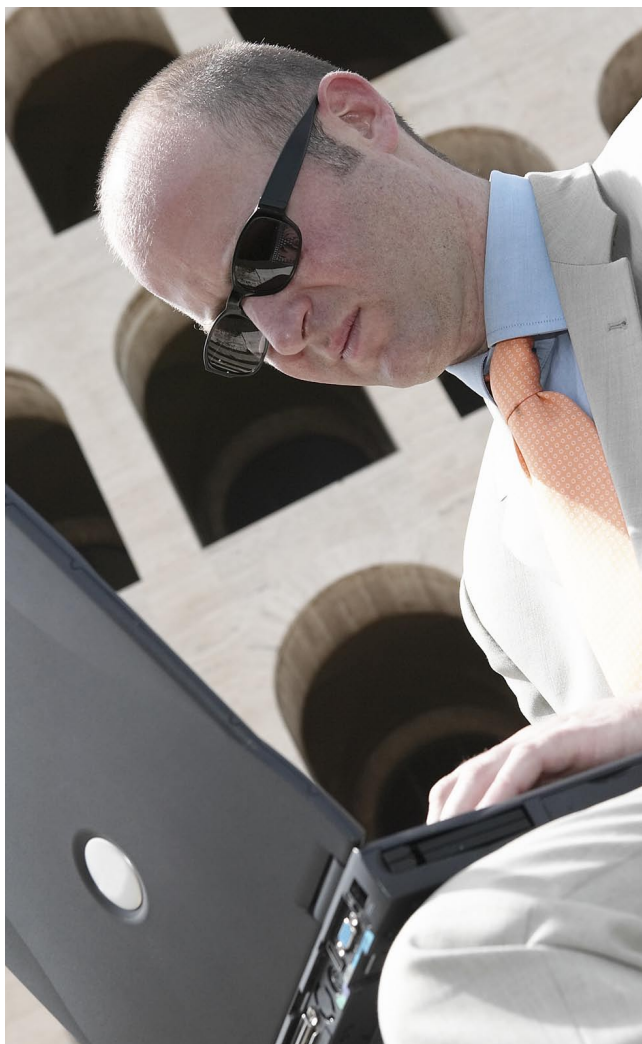
Course introduced to stay with the technological times

Growth in the ever advancing world of information technology, computers and their software means regular upgrades of both the hardware and education kind, are an absolute necessity if one is to stay up-to-date and knowledgeable. Such is the incentive behind a new course recently offered by Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL).

Recently added to TRU-OL's technology course offerings is ADMN 137, Management Information Systems.

ADMN 137 is a contemporary computer-oriented course which was just introduced online this year. It is an introductory course to computers and management information systems which addresses and clarifies the conceptual workings of computers and their place in the management environment.

The outcomes students can expect to take away from this course include practical computing skills related to operating systems, word processing, spreadsheets, electronic mail and the Internet. And the price of so much learning is right - it will cost students the same amount to take AMDN 137 as it will if they choose to take both CMPT 118 and 119. 



Share the Air


The Thompson Rivers University (TRU) Enrolment Health and Safety Committee in association with the University's Wellness Centre are publicizing their joint health promotion dubbed Share the Air, to the entire TRU Community.

The Share the Air website (www.tru.ca/wellness/sharetheair.html) advocates a Scent Reduced Environment, by encouraging staff, faculty, students and visitors to refrain from using scented personal care products.* The motivation behind this initiative stems from the impact scents can have on the health of others. According to a notice recently delivered by Disability Services, The Wellness Centre, Occupational Health and Safety and Human Resources, "there are several faculty, staff and students on campus with chemical sensitivities which can significantly impact their health." This year in particular, there is a student attending TRU's Kamloops campus who has severe Multiple Chemical Sensitivities and anaphylaxis. While eliminating all scents and chemicals in a public setting may not be possible, the notice does ask for the support of the TRU community in reducing or eliminating the use of scented personal care products.

Even if you are a remote student studying through TRU's Open Learning Division, it is important to note how scented products can affect your health and the health of others in non-campus settings and even in your own home.

Visit the Share the Air website for suggestions on unscented alternatives for personal care products.

*Personal Care Products are defined as:

- Perfume, cologne, aftershave lotion
- Deodorant
- Hair care products including shampoos, conditioners, gels, mousses, hairsprays
- Hand and body soap
- Hand and body lotions
- Makeup
- Shaving cream
- Sunscreen
- Laundry soap and stain removers
- Dryer fabric softener sheets
- Air fresheners, scented candles 

LIFE in OL

TRU-OL welcomes Dr. Valerie Peachey who will begin her new position as Director of Program Delivery, on October 5, 2009. Previously, Peachey has served for BC as the Director of Education Training and Development for the BC Ministry of Labour and Citizens Services as well as the Manager of Credentialing Initiatives and Acting Director for the Academic and Student Services department for the Justice Institute of BC. In addition, Peachey has also worked in the education sector in positions including the Manager of Programs and External Relations for Continuing Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and as a Contracted Manager for the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the North Vancouver School District and Kwantlen College. Peachey received her doctorate in Education Leadership and Policy and her Master of Adult Education from UBC. Her other credentials include a Professional Teaching Certificate from Simon Fraser University, a Bachelor of Arts, French/Sociology, degree from the University of Alberta and a TESOL Certificate.

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TRU-OL welcomes Dr. Patricia Neufeld who began as the new Academic Director of Education, on June 29, 2009. Neufeld brings to this position a rich CV which boasts a: PhD in Counselling and Educational Psychology from Kansas State University; Masters of Science in School Counselling and Masters of Music both from Emporia State University; and a Bachelors of Arts from Tabor College. Prior to joining TRU-OL, Neufeld served as Professor and Chair in the Department of Special Education and School Counselling at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas. Her accomplishments further include the creation and development of undergraduate and graduate programs in teacher education as well as the speciality areas of special education, school counselling and leadership. Neufeld is also a Licensed Professional Clinical Counsellor in Kansas and a licensed National Certified Counsellor (NCC).

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The Strategic Partnerships department welcomes Hilary Parsons to the position of Coordinator, External Agreements. Previously, Parsons served as an Enrolment Services Officer for Open Learning, a position which commenced in 2007. Prior to joining TRU-OL, Parsons worked for the British Columbia Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP) for 10 years. Parsons brings to her position with Strategic Partnerships a BA, Communications from California State University and over 25 years of experience with both private and public sector businesses. Before moving to Canada, this Los Angeles native worked in the Accounts Receivable and Payable departments of the San Francisco-based prosthetics company Hittenbergers. Once in Canada, Parsons worked in Accounts Payable for Kelowna-based Copytron and then, prior to moving to FMEP, as an Executive Secretary for Trevor Owen Architects in Kamloops.

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The Strategic Partnerships department also welcomes two new Directors of Strategic Partnerships: Lloyd Loveday and Peter Robertson. Loveday holds an MBA in Executive Management from Royal Roads University and a Bachelor of Science from the University of Regina. He has 20 years experience in financial planning, Human Resources and Operations, and was the Executive Director of Kamloops Immigrant Services. Robertson brings to this position an MBA from Athabasca University, an Advanced Graduate Management Diploma from Athabasca University and a Bachelor of Management from the University of Lethbridge. He has extensive marketing and sales experience, and has recently been employed as a Marketing Instructor for TRU in Chandigarh, India. Robertson will be concentrating his efforts on partnerships with Corporations and Professional Associations while Loveday will be concentrating his efforts on partnerships with Government, non-profit, Aboriginal, First Nations and new immigrants. Don Poirier will continue to focus on partnerships with universities, colleges, schools and licensing.

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The Business Intelligence group welcomes Sean Templeton to the position of Project Manager. Templeton's credentials include a Bachelor of Arts from Simon Fraser University and a Post-baccalaureate Certificate in Business Administration from TRU. In addition, Templeton is a Certified Associate in Project Management. Prior to joining TRU-OL, Templeton worked with Vector Aerospace Helicopter Services as the Coordinator, Business Improvement. He also has served with the Canadian Navy in the area of Project Management.

Business Intelligence would also like to welcome Joanne Saunders to the department as the new Business Analyst. Prior to joining TRU-OL, Saunders worked in the United Kingdom as a Business Analyst in the Offshore Life and Pensions industry. Saunders is a graduate of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland.

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Enrolment Services and Advising would like to welcome a number of new staff to their department: **Ann Scott** has joined the team as a half-time Enrolment Services Advising Assistant; **Mary Ann Peressini** has accepted a temporary, full-time position as an Enrolment Services Advising Assistant; and **Marianne Dietrich** has accepted a temporary, full-time position as an Enrolment Services Advisor until November 27, 2009. **Deb Cousineau** is a new Enrolment Services and Advising Assistant. Her position is a 50% position and she will be focusing on materials issues, the merging of student IDs and other special projects over the next few months. **Rosalind Holkestad** has left her Auxiliary posting in payroll to take the temporary position of Enrolment Services Advising Assistant. **Sherry Bedford** has also joined the Admissions and Enrolment Services area to work on various special projects. **Sharon Burchart** has joined the Records department to cover various staff positions.

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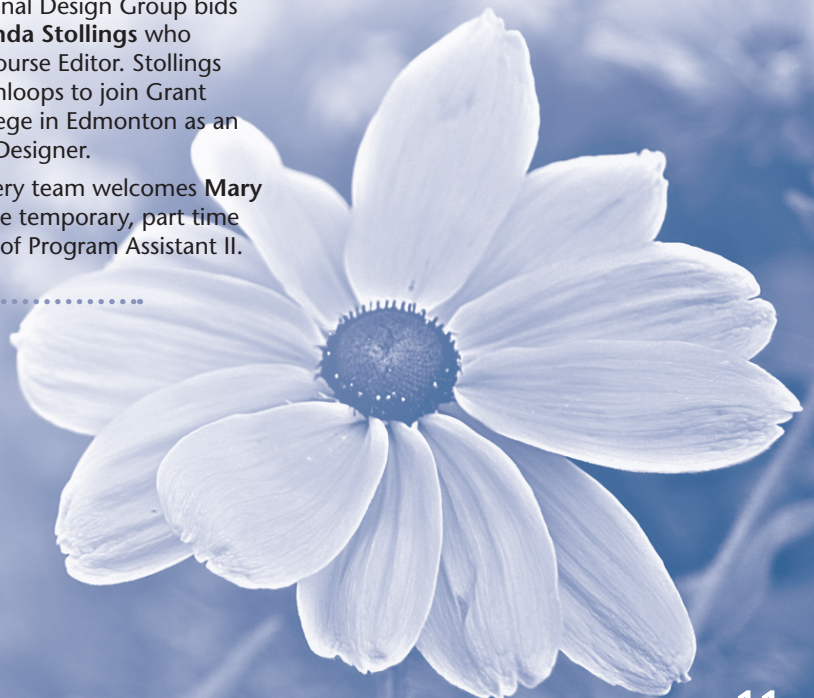
Enrolment Services would like to welcome Razu Mann, who left his position with IT Service Desk to serve a temporary position as Enrolment Services Officer. **Alison Dunn** is another new Enrolment Services Officer who left Enrolment Services and Advising to serve in the temporary position.

The Instructional Design Group bids farewell to **Linda Stollings** who served as a Course Editor. Stollings is leaving Kamloops to join Grant McEwan College in Edmonton as an Instructional Designer.

The OL Delivery team welcomes **Mary Gordon** to the temporary, part time appointment of Program Assistant II.

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In a fond farewell letter after leaving his position with TRU-OL as Director, Program Delivery, Jim Barmby expressed his pleasure at having worked with the staff and faculty at TRU and in the Open learning division. "My sincere thanks to Judith (Murray) and Gord (Tarzwell) for hiring me, and for all the opportunities that came from the excitement of the past two years," Barmby said in his letter. "My thanks to all who provided their collegiality, friendship and generosity of time and attention when I needed it." Barmby went on to give kudos to the "talented and dedicated" group of TRU-OL tutors as well as to the University's faculty and staff who he described as "steadfastly dedicated to student success" and the Kamloops community. "My biggest thanks of all, goes to Sarah Langlois," Barmby said. "Her incredible diligence, hard work and indomitable spirit are no small part of any success our group achieved. I have had the great pleasure of working with many distinguished people in my time, and she is among the best of them in every way." 



What's NEWS in Open Learning

In July 2009, US President Barack Obama made a speech at Macomb Community College in Michigan announcing a community-college assistance package which in part, proposed US\$500 million towards the development of an online education plan for community colleges. The plan would result in Web courses being available to colleges nationwide as well as to the Defense Department's distributed-learning network, through a free library. While few details of the online course plan have been released, Carnegie Mellon University's Open Learning Initiative has been cited as a potential model. This web-based learning model tracks student progress and provides virtual tutors for students. If the courses are used in combination with instructors, information will be fed to professors about where students are struggling.

The specific goal of the assistance package announced by the Obama administration was to have five million more Americans graduating from community colleges by 2020. The "American Graduation Initiative" will set aside US\$9 billion to create competitive grants offered to schools for the development of new programs as well as for the expansion of job training and counselling. Additionally, the plan designated US\$2.5 billion towards renovations of community college facilities.

The US\$500 million dedicated toward the creation of new online courses was a direct response by the Obama administration, to the fact that college is difficult for a section of the population who cannot attend college due to the associated high costs, conflicting schedules and an inability to travel.

According to a study recently released by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and the Sloan National Commission on Online Learning, professors are open to teaching online courses (defined in the study as courses where at least 80% of the course is administered on the Web), but do not believe they are receiving adequate support from their bosses. Respondents to the faculty survey rated public universities "below average" in seven of eight categories related to online education including: support for online course development and delivery; protection of intellectual property; incentives for developing and delivering online courses; and consideration of online teaching activity in promotion and tenure decisions. Despite this rating, more than a third of faculty respondents had developed and taught an online course. Neither seniority nor tenure status had significant bearing on whether a professor had developed or taught an online course. Nearly 70% of all professors claimed that extra effort is necessary to develop Web courses and defined this as a crucial barrier to teaching online. Most professors explained that they are still however motivated to develop and/or teach online courses because of their students' need for flexible access to course materials. The American Federation of Teachers report on guidelines for good practice in distance education acknowledges that it takes "anywhere from 66 to 500% longer" to prepare an online course than a face-to-face one, and "additional compensation should be provided to faculty to meet the extensive time commitments of distance education." The APLU study concluded by recommending that public universities not only institute policies that "acknowledge and recognize" professors' online education efforts, but also work to develop "mechanisms that effectively incorporate online learning into the fabric and missions of the institutions."



The government of India has approved an overarching education regulatory body that will subsume all existing regulators, including Distance Education Council, the UGC, All India Council for Technical Education and National Council of Teachers' Education. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed to the proposed National Council for Higher Education and Research that will derive its powers from the Constitution of India and asked the ministry to first evolve a consensus around the subject and then move forward with the modalities. One Indian newspaper reported that the in-principle approval had been given for bringing a constitutional amendment to create this new regulatory body. The matter was then moved for discussion at the 56th meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education.

Arguments for the establishment of the regulatory body rested on the need for the requisite powers to deal with policy issues in higher education, which would require a constitutional amendment to subsume many of the existing regulators that have been created in the past by the Acts of the Parliament. The council, when it is formed, would subsume 15 existing regulators in the sector and, while acting as the apex body in higher education, create an enabling environment for universities to become self-regulatory.

University College Falmouth's Masters in Professional Writing has been awarded £20k as part of a pilot scheme to release learning materials as Open Educational Resources (OERs). The move is in line with the government's drive to motivate universities to embrace new technologies and move towards an 'Edgeless University' model.

This comes as a report from think-tank Demos which warns British universities that they will not survive unless they adopt new modes of learning.

Open Educational Resources (OERs), as funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and run by the Higher Education Academy and the Joint Information Systems Committee, will give institutions and individuals' access to a wide range of learning resources created by academics.

The pilot scheme will see the development of a learning platform for delivering an online version of the screenwriting unit that forms part of its successful Professional Writing MA.



The Angolan public Agostinho Neto University (UAN) has created a distance education centre through the partnership of UAN and the Portuguese Development Support Institute. The distance education centre represents a cooperation program between the two countries.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Portuguese ambassador to Angola, Francisco Ribeiro Teles, highlighted the important role this centre will have in the development of Angola and also Africa.

Inaugurated by the Planning deputy minister, Pedro Luís da Fonseca, the centre comprises a video conference room with projection camera and interactive boards that will enable a real time teaching process inside and outside the country. The centre, which holds 50 people, also has production, multimedia and E-learning rooms.



In Early August, the Board of Education for Cheyenne, Wyoming rejected without discussion Fort Washakie Charter High School's petition to continue the operation of its online distance learning high school, the Wyoming eAcademy of Virtual Education. Fort Washakie is a charter high school on the Wind River Indian Reservation.

Thereafter, Board spokesman Mary Kay Hill said the district didn't need the waiver and can continue to operate the online school with the single waiver granted earlier to the Fort Washakie and the Arapaho charter highschools.

The Fort Washakie district, she said, will need to comply with the new distance education law passed by the Legislature in 2008.

The district's online high school was the first in Wyoming and now has about 120 students statewide.



The University of Illinois is eliminating the jobs of most staff members of its Global Campus, which served as an effort to create a major distance education unit that functioned largely as an independent division of the university's campuses. A new distance education effort is being planned in its place.



The UOC - Open University of Catalonia - The Global Online University, will commence a pilot course on Facebook this October in order to test an open learning model in an open virtual environment on the internet, based on the use of open educational resources and a methodology driven by interaction on social networks. It will be open to the whole of the social network community and last for two months. If there are positive results from the experience, the University will consider offering new subjects using social networks.

The plan is to create a Facebook group for a virtual course where students take part in a training process looking at a specific subject. This will let the University analyze the social knowledge building, and the advantages and disadvantages of its students' using a social network; determine whether these open-content social networks aid greater personalization and enrich the learning process; assess the possibilities offered by a system involving a high level of self-learning and basing learning support and assessment on a peer-to-peer structure and the students themselves, and evaluate the appropriateness of the different designs, tools and functionalities of social networks, and their reuse at the UOC.

This course will allow for the evaluation of the possibility of using a social network as a forum for training and, thus, will be decisive when it comes to looking at the possibility of offering subjects using social networks. It will also serve to evaluate the possibilities offered by a system which, alongside the key teaching role, also offers a high level of self-learning and bases part of the support and assessment on peer-to-peer relations with the rest of the community. 