

Towards Improving E-tutors' Effectiveness

- Observations and Suggestions -



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OUM National Colloquium in T&L 2015

The Situation - Do we have a problem?

	Message Posted By Tutor	Message Posted By Student
1	718	523
3	646	97
4	617	165
5	548	323
6	492	61
.	.	.
.	.	.
.	.	.
281	10	14
282	10	5
283	9	10
284	9	2
285	9	17
286	9	11
287	9	4
288	8	8
289	8	0
290	8	5
291	8	20
292	8	12

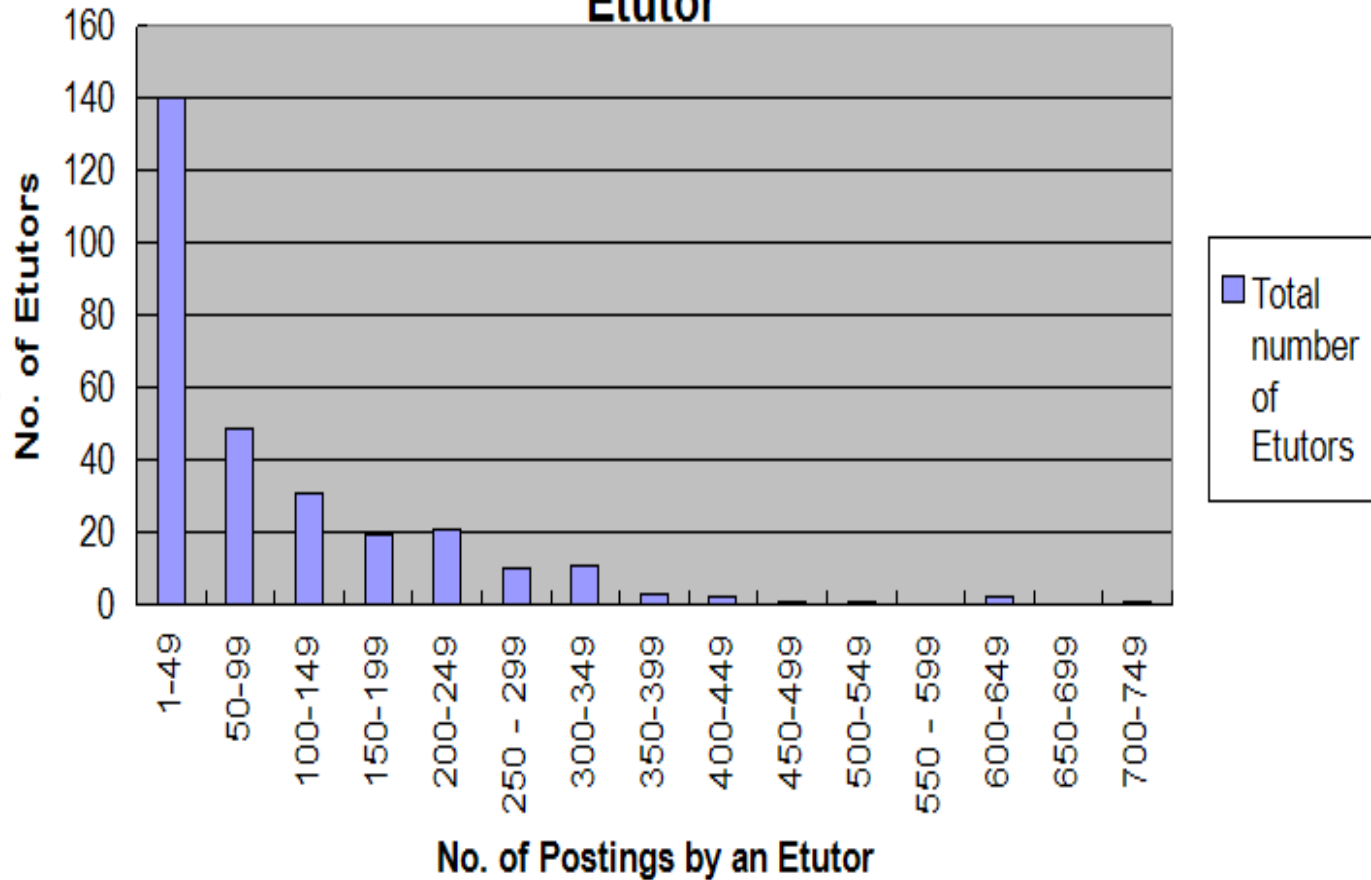
Jan. 2015 semester (UG courses)

291 etutors with > 7 postings per semester.
Big range from 8 to 718 postings by each etutor.

106 etutors with 0 to 6 postings per semester.

For 397 with > 0 posting per semester,
Avg posting per etutor = 76 per semester
Avg. posting per etutor / wk. = 5.4 posting/wk.
OUM's expectation is 8 posting per wk.

No. of Etutors VS. No. of Postings by An Etutor



No. of Postings	No. of Etutors
1-49	140
50-99	49
100-149	31
150-199	19
200-249	21
250 - 299	10
300-349	11
350-399	3
400-449	2
450-499	1
500-549	1
550 - 599	0
600-649	2
650-699	0
700-749	1
	291

OUM's expectation - 8 postings /week.
 $8 \times 14 = \underline{112}$ postings per semester.

Some factors that affect Etutor's Effectiveness

Total no. of etutor's postings / no. of logins

Quality of postings

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Students' participation

Monitoring and enforcement

MyVLE & other technical problem.

Etutor's attitude is the KEY



How many should we post?

The More the Merrier ?

High posting rate

- Etutors made 300-400 postings in Jan. semester.
Good? Let's see the details.

Feb. 10 - 33 one-line postings in one login.

Feb. 19 - 13 postings.

Feb. 20 - 27 postings.

Mar. 26 - 51 postings.

Mar. 27 - 123 postings.



247 in 5 logins!

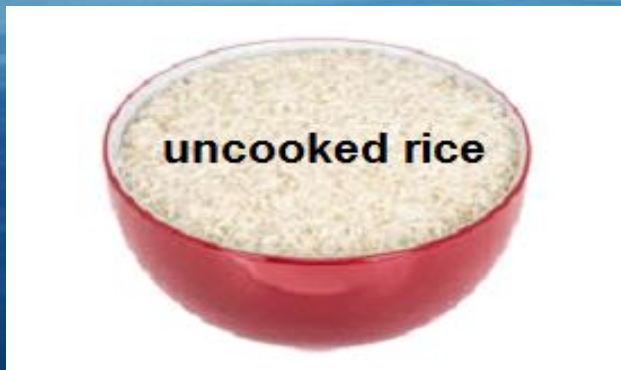
Please don't 'suffocate' students with very high number of postings per day.

Student's Participation is Important

No. of msg by etutor	No. of stdnt	No. of msg by stdnt	Avg. No. of msg per stdnts who posted.	% of stdnts who posted	Two Highest stdnt msg
350	318	229	12.7	5.7%	115, 95
55	219	145	7.3	9.1%	98, 7
124	210	119	5.7	10.0%	25, 25
56	212	61	4.4	6.6%	30, 8
258	43	40	4.4	20.9%	13, 6
7	78	10	1.4	9.0%	3, 2
85	22	59	6.6	40.9%	12, 11

Make your forum like a mamak store

- Forum shouldn't be a cold place.
- It should be warm, welcoming place where students love to go.
- Make it like something students have to login at least once, else they feel something is missing.



Which do you serve?



Welcome message

- **Key** - to make your customers **feel that they are welcome** to the forum.
- No welcome message or **message short/lengthy & 'dry'**
- Message **lacks the necessary info** - etutor background, contact info, invitation to post self-intro.

Suggestion: list **some simple guideline** to help students post welcome messages.

A graphic is worth more than a tahlil of gold.

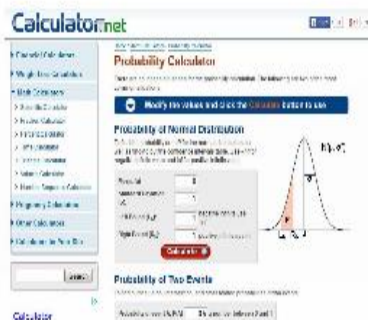
Do you know that, our computer comes with a brilliant calculator too???



If you CLICK on the link, you will come to the PROBABILITY CALCULATOR ...

Something like below ... Selamat belajar!

(click on the image to enlarge the display)



Compare Feedbacks

hai..

Good answer.
Tq

Hai..

Good answer.
Tq

Hai..

Good answer.
Tq

Hi..

Yes..you are correct.
Tq

MESSAGE

Nice to meet you [redacted]. Hope you have a nice weekend.
Yes, i will try my best.

[redacted] you are in field now? In private or government sector?

[redacted], nice to meet you here.

[redacted] the assignment questions not yet been release rite? I am still waiting for it.
I will discuss the assignment questions first, after that will discuss the past year questions. Dun worry, i will try my best to guide you all for this subject and hope we can learn from each others. See you again.

Your sincerely,

[redacted] i think they have uploaded the assignment this morning. (the system was unstable when i tried to access myvle this morning).

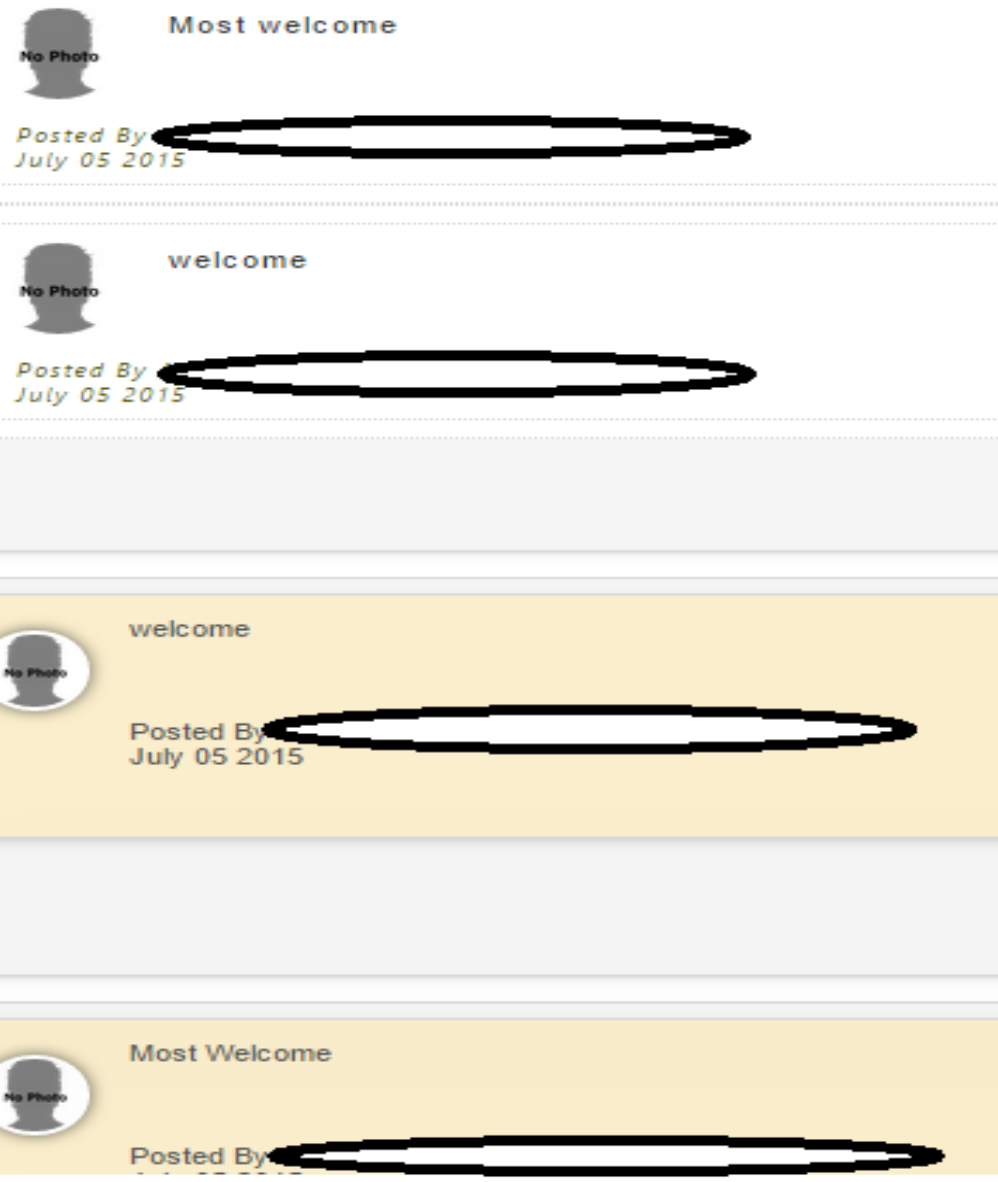
Yes, i will create a folder for assignment and we can start to discuss the assignment questions now.

Thanks for your remind, [redacted]

Hi [redacted] nice to meet you here. Please try to do your assignment and if face any problem, let us discuss here.

Avoid stereotyped, monotonous, curt and short reply.

Which one will you fall for?



Glad the reply is useful to you.


You are most welcome. Sharing is caring.

Do ask if you have other questions.

Thank you too for asking a good question.



Encouragement and Feel Good Factor

- Great to see your reply. 
- Hope to see your next posting soon.
- Waiting for your next posting.
- I believe your friends would like to hear from you again.
- Use "Good morning", "How are you?", Not straight-to-the-point type of curt and dry intro or reply.

Some Suggestions

- Try to be the first to post welcoming message.
- Reply every posting.
- Login every/alternate day.
- Post not only info., but also questions.
- Avoid cut-and-paste. Value add.
- Try to slowly increase HOTS questions.
- Encourage participation and peer interactions.
- Inform ITLA and students if going away.



What can etutor post (1) ?

- reply to student's question
- guides on answering assignment -skeleton draft, literature search, referencing format, common mistakes, plagiarism, work schedule and planning.
- weekly expectation.
- guiding questions /hints/solutionsto stimulate students to study course content.
- reminder about important dates and events
- encouragement and motivational posts - saying, poems, graphics, even self-recorded audio/video etc.
- examples of past year exam. questions and hints/solutions

What can etutor post (2) ?

- **summary of course content**
- **notes, F2F tutorial presentation**
- **useful web links**
- **useful youtube or other videos**
- **musics and songs**
- **issues related to course for debat/discussion/brianstorming**
- **festive/birthday greetings.**
- **translations of relevant material**
- **short test, quizzes, riddles**
- **jokes, stories, cartoons,**
- **scenarios and cases for discussion to develop HOTS skills.**

Avoid Feeding, try stimulating/inviting

NO	DATE POSTED	MESSAGE
201	April 04 2015 20:13:07	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
202	April 04 2015 20:13:21	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
203	April 04 2015 20:13:32	http://www.slideshare.net related=2 http://www.slideshare.net related=2
204	April 04 2015 20:13:45	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
205	April 04 2015 20:14:01	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
206	April 04 2015 20:14:14	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
207	April 04 2015 20:14:44	http://www.slideshare.net http://www.slideshare.net
208	April 04 2015 20:15:09	http://www.academia.edu/ http://www.academia.edu/

In 2 minutes posted 8 articles.

347 postings from etutor, but only 9 from 44 students. Postings well distributed over all the topics., but nearly all is notes, weblinks & videos. No question.

Encourage HOTS-type of questions

- E-tutors' questions mostly on what, which, when and how-type of questions (name, state, list, identify, etc.)
- Need more why, why not, what if, imagine that, summarise, comment on, apply, integrate, etc.
- Encourage thinking, deeper understanding and critical thinking rather than passive acceptance of knowledge.

Comparisons

Info of 7 Etutors for the same subject in Jan. 2015

Msg by etutor	Msg by students	No of students (Jan)	Additional Info (May Sem til 9 Jul.)
375	194	374	223 msg (etutor), 9 msg by students. 30 stdnt in forum.
53	12	59	23 msg (etutor), 11 msg by students. 93 stdnt in forum.
3	5	37	May 2015 not etutor
161	0	15	316 msg (etutor), 45 msg by students. 95 stdnt in forum.
68	12	50	May 2015 not etutor
35	27	36	56 msg (etutor), 25 msg by student. 89 stdnt in forum.
0	0	6	May 2015 not etutor

**Reduce to 2 or 3 performing etutor?
Better one to be given more students?**

More Comparisons

Semester Jan 2015	Total postings by <u>Etutor</u>	Total postings by students	No. of Students
Same Subject - Tutor A	25	8	45
Same Subject - Tutor B	305	169	92
Same Subject - Tutor C	65	25	95

Performance difference can be quite big.
Should make full use of etutors who have good performance.

Where have all the students gone?

- **En masse invitation email to students.**
How? See next slide.
- **How many times? When is suitable?**
- **What to write in the email?**
- **SMS to students. When? How often and what to write?**
- **Call? Your decision.**

Seize the opportunity.
Keep the conversation going.

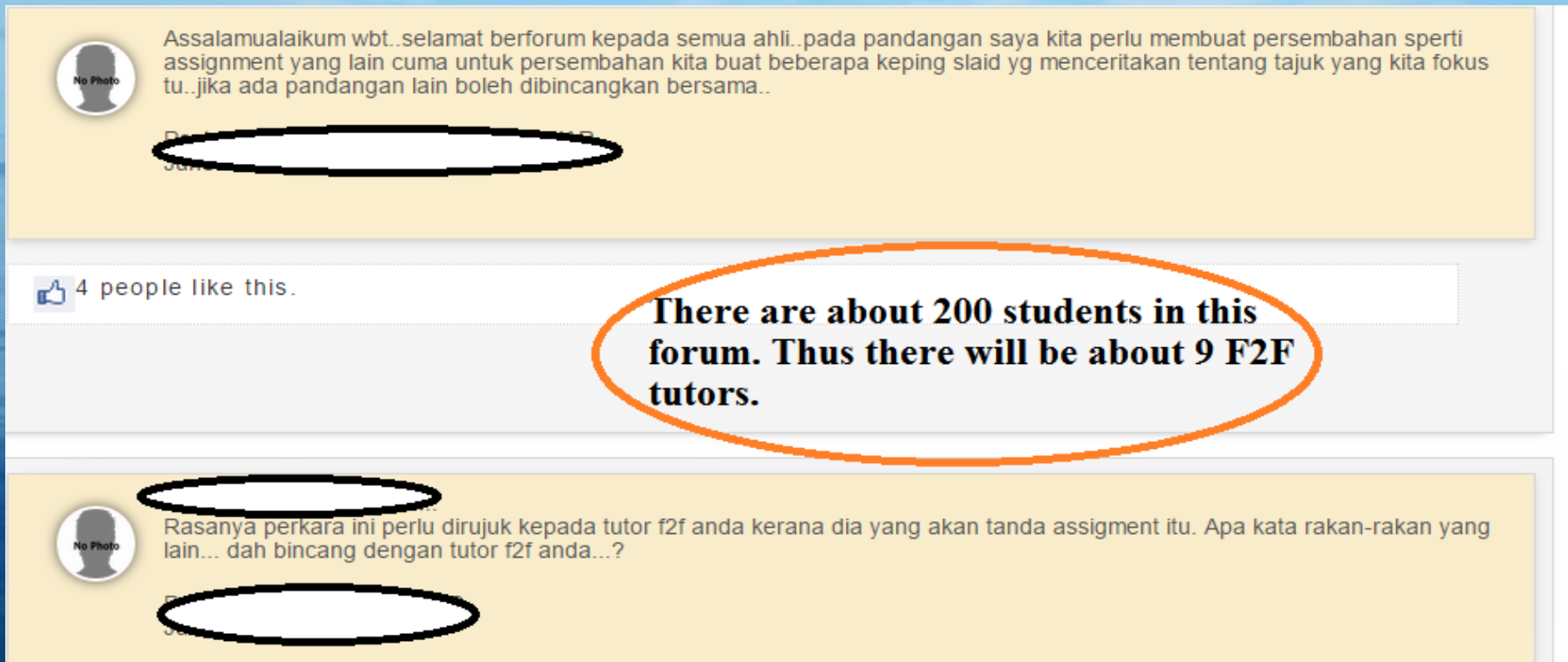
- tutor's **role is not just to answer/reply** student postings.
- when student post (even just a 'thank you'), **seize the opportunity to continue** the conversation.
- build on what student said. At the end of your reply **say something to encourage the continuation of the communication.**
- How? examples....

Do not focus only on the assignmen. This screen capture was done on Week 7. There is no posting on the content topik. At least 38 students visited the content folder, disappointed and left. Very few of them will return. There are about 400 plus students in this forum.

ASSIGNMENT		57 NEW		
INTRODUCTION		27 NEW		
TOPIC 1				
TOPIC 2				
Topic 2	0	0	40	No Message Posted
TOPIC 3				
Topic 3	0	0	38	No Message Posted
TOPIC 4				
Topic 4	0	0	38	No Message Posted
TOPIC 5				
Topic 5	0	0	38	No Message Posted
TOPIC 6				
Topic 6	0	0	38	No Message Posted
TOPIC 7				
Topic 7	0	0	38	No Message Posted
TOPIC 8				

No Irrelevant/unhelpful reply

- one of an etutor's roles is to help the students in their assignment. So do **avoid asking students to find out from the F2F tutor.**
- If there is any doubt, contact OUM to clarify.



The screenshot shows a forum post on a light yellow background. At the top left is a circular profile picture with the text 'No Photo'. To its right is the text: 'Assalamualaikum wbt..selamat berforum kepada semua ahli..pada pandangan saya kita perlu membuat persembahan sperti assignment yang lain cuma untuk persembahan kita buat beberapa keping slaid yg menceritakan tentang tajuk yang kita fokus tu..jika ada pandangan lain boleh dibincangkan bersama..'. Below this text is a large black oval redaction. Underneath the post is a white bar with a thumbs-up icon and the text '4 people like this.'. To the right of this bar, a white box with a black border contains the text: 'There are about 200 students in this forum. Thus there will be about 9 F2F tutors.', which is circled in orange. Below this is another forum post on a light yellow background. It starts with a circular profile picture with 'No Photo' and the text: 'Rasanya perkara ini perlu dirujuk kepada tutor f2f anda kerana dia yang akan tanda assignment itu. Apa kata rakan-rakan yang lain... dah bincang dengan tutor f2f anda...?'. Below this text are two large black oval redactions.

Assalamualaikum wbt..selamat berforum kepada semua ahli..pada pandangan saya kita perlu membuat persembahan sperti assignment yang lain cuma untuk persembahan kita buat beberapa keping slaid yg menceritakan tentang tajuk yang kita fokus tu..jika ada pandangan lain boleh dibincangkan bersama..

4 people like this.

There are about 200 students in this forum. Thus there will be about 9 F2F tutors.

Rasanya perkara ini perlu dirujuk kepada tutor f2f anda kerana dia yang akan tanda assignment itu. Apa kata rakan-rakan yang lain... dah bincang dengan tutor f2f anda...?

Posting questions is not the end, it is the means

For questions posted for students to try earlier, **do not just leave the question alone** if there is no response from students. Follow up by

- post a hint / additional info
- post an example of similar nature,
- post appeal for participation,
- post a similar question simpler in nature;
- and then finally post a brief/full answer.

In this way question posted will not be wasted and students will benefit from the question.

Tell them earlier that "No answer will be provided if there is no response from any student".

Help students to overcome language problem.

 salam sejahtera tuan, dimanakah saya boleh dapatkan modul  ni dalam bahasa melayu? lecturer saya suruh dapatkan sebab beliau kata lebih mudah memberi penerangan.tq.

Posted By 
20 hours ago [Delete](#)

Possible way to reduce language problem?


Alternatives: 1. post in the language they understand best. **Weakness:** long term dependence.

Alternatives: 2. post bilingual message. **Weakness:** students most probably will just read the BM version.

Alternatives: 3. post in BI but insert BM translation for terms and difficult words. **Strength:** Students force to read BI, understand the meaning of the message and improve BI



Students first learn about vocabulary (perbendaharaan kata) used to describe the attribute (sifat) of volume of liquids (isipadu cecair) before they learn to measure (mengukur) volume of liquid. This stage (peringkat) is often called pre-measurement (pra-pengukuran), since no numbers are involved as yet. Can you list (senaraikan) some vocabulary used in pre-measurement stage (peringkat pra-pengukuran) for volume of liquid?

Posted By 
1 minutes ago [Delete](#)
[Edit](#)

Suggestions: Pace your posting

- First week for familiarization, house keepings.
- During assignment writing period focus more on assignment but do not neglect course module content.
- 2nd week onwards post guiding questions to help student study course content - 1 topic per week. Post The Week's Expectation to focus discussion.
- 12th week onwards overall revision to prepare student for final exam.
- 1 (or 2) question per day on avg. `

Improving quality of assignment

- Check for assignment uploading. Remind OUM if no uploading.
- Go over the question and rubric to clear doubts and misunderstanding. Translate if relevant or necessary.
- Encourage student to come up with a skeleton draft with main and sub-headings
- Encourage students to come up with a work shedule that plan for submission about 1 week before deadline.
- Highlight the seriousness of plagarism.
- Post messge to explain briefly with example what is literature search, citation, reference (APA or others).
- More frequent login during assignment preparation period.
- Highlight possible mistakes or misunderstandings.
- Post reminder.
- Assist but not checking students assianment.

Nurture the communication.

Positive Reinforcement

- Great comment!
- Thanks for your thoughts!
- Interesting comment!
- Thanks for sharing your point of view!
- Thanks for sharing that story!
- Thanks for sharing that experience!

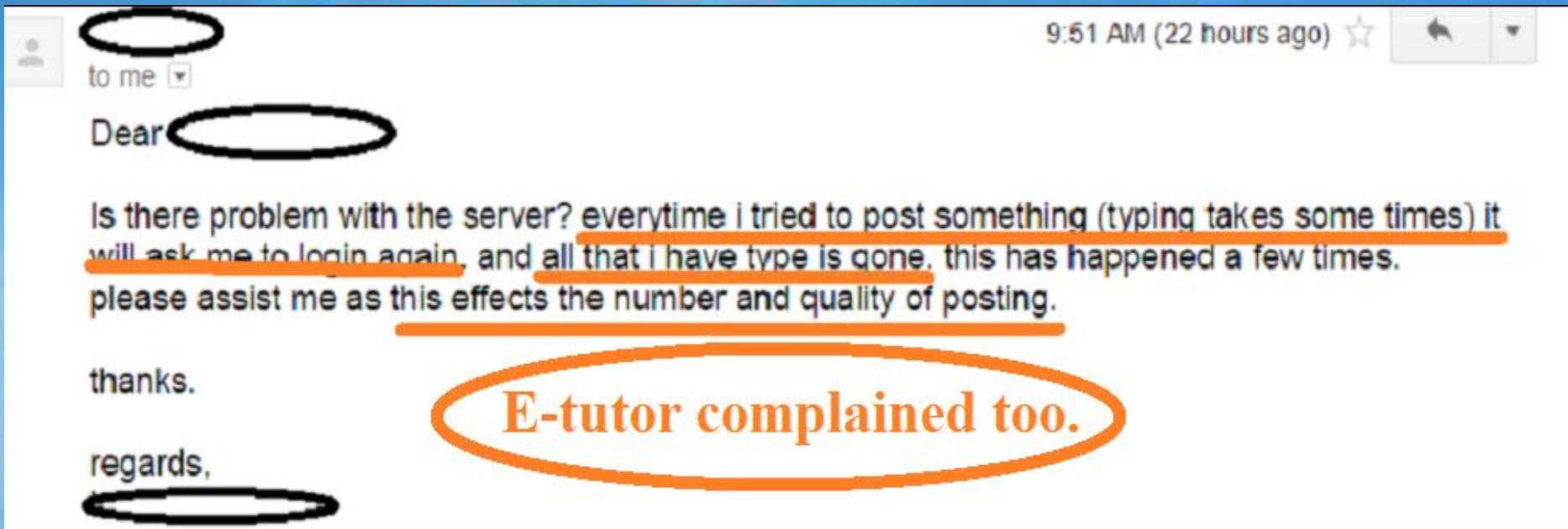
Including the Group

- What do the rest of you think?
- Do the rest of you agree or disagree?
- Anyone have a different experience?
- Anyone have a similar experience?
- Does anyone have a different opinion?
- Anything else to add?
- Did we miss anything?



Some MyVLE technical problems

Etutor logout of forum problem



Annoying level: 10/10.

Suggestion: Alert user 10 seconds before logout OR auto-save whatever user have typed in comment box before auto logout

Etutor's Own Posting Flagged as NEW

Etutor's own posting is sometime (on and off) flagged as NEW. This cause etutor to wasting searching for this new posting.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL oumvle.oum.edu.my/eforum/index/listetutorforum/courseid/HBMT2103_V2/groupid/4561/sem_id/55/vmode/view. The page displays a list of forum topics, each with a red 'NEW' badge indicating the number of new posts. The topics and their counts are as follows:

Topic	New Posts
THAT BRINGS SMILE TO OUR FACE AND WARMTH TO OUR HEART.	2 NEW
OTHER EDUCATION-RELATED MATTERS	1 NEW
USEFUL RESOURCES - POST MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL, DOCUMENTS OR WEB-LINKS	2 NEW
ANNOUNCEMENT AND OTHER MATTERS	21 NEW
ASSIGNMENT	1 NEW
TOPIC 1: NUMBERS TO 1000	12 NEW
TOPIC 2: ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION WITHIN 1000	1 NEW
TOPIC 3: MULTIPLICATION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES	10 NEW
TOPIC 4: DIVISION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES	17 NEW
TOPIC 5: MONEY	7 NEW
TOPIC 6: TIME	6 NEW
TOPIC 7: LENGTH	20 NEW
TOPIC 8: MASS	11 NEW
TOPIC 9: VOLUME OF LIQUIDS	9 NEW
TOPIC 10: THREE- DIMENSIONAL AND TWO- DIMENSIONAL SHAPES	9 NEW

At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: ©2013 Group Information And Communication Technology Services. All right Reserved. On the right side, it says: Best viewed with Google Chrome, Internet Explorer 9.0 and above.

Problem of Expanded Category Automatically Closed

- After I have expanded a category, posted a comment in a title (folder), and then clicked the BACK button to return, the whole category will be closed. I have to reopen the category to access the titles and post another comment. This is time consuming and irritating.

TOPIC 4: DIVISION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES				
4.0 INTRODUCTION	1	0	34	
4.1 PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	4	1	7	
4.1.1 Meaning and Use of Division				3
4.1.2 The Basic Facts of Division				3
4.1.3 The Basic Properties of Division	0	0	3	
4.1.4 The Computational Procedure for Division	0	0	2	

Opened category
to post comment.

TOPIC 3: MULTIPLICATION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES	
TOPIC 4: DIVISION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES	
TOPIC 5: MONEY	

Category
automatically closed.

Some categories have too many titles

TOPIC 4: DIVISION WITHIN 2, 3, 4 AND 5 TIMES-TABLES				
4.0 INTRODUCTION	1	0	34	
4.1 PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE	4	1	7	
4.1.1 Meanings of Division	0	0	3	
4.1.2 The Basic Facts of Division	0	0	3	
4.1.3 The Basic Properties of Division	0	0	3	

(This category has 14 titles. Only 5 shown here)

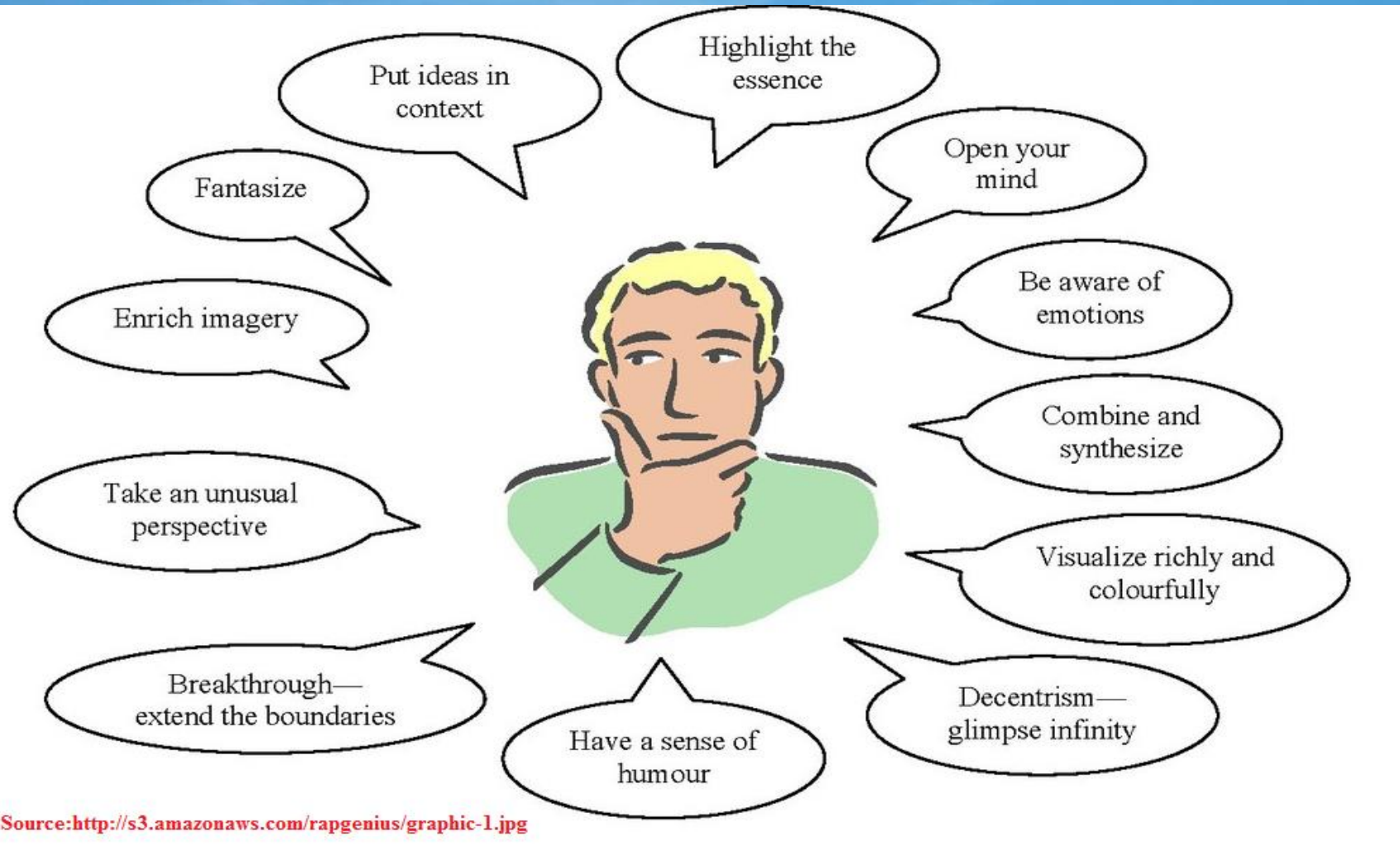
TOPIC 1 STRAIGHT LINE				
Topic 1 Straight Line	1	12	92	
TOPIC 2 DIFFERENTIATION				
Topic 2 Differentiation	1	13	68	

(These 2 categories have only a title in each.)

Other Problems/Suggestions

- Need to refresh for comment posted by etutor to appear. (comment to a posting by student) This is not consistent. Sometime message appaer without the need for refreshing.
- Can't find a course or document if there is a trailing or preceding space(s) attached to the search string. Should program it so that trailing and preceding spaces are truncated.
- Please adjust the spacing between paragraphs when in Equation Editor mode.
- "..dari OUM Alor Star,bukan kami tidak nak aktif dalam forum,kami mendapati adalah sukar untuk masuk ke forum disebabkan ia telah tukar ke pattern yang baru dan agar sukar nak connect masuk ke forum ini." - student's feedback.
- When posting in forum, we cant paste graphic. Have to save graphic as a file then insert it using File function in MyVLE. Time consuming,
- Most etutor's name is list as the 1st entry in Admin E-forum Monitoring, but not all. Hope be consistent.

Etutor = "Omni-boleh"?



Source: <http://s3.amazonaws.com/rapgenius/graphic-1.jpg>

Knowledge is nothing if not used.

Attitude is the key!

Thank you

Any question/feedback?