

# HELPING STUDENTS PASS AT UCSI



Students with friends during the PASS session.

**U**CSI University employs various structured support systems to ensure students understand their lessons and excel in their education. Supporting this cause at the university is the Centre for Learning Excellence (CLE).

The centre aims to promote student centred teaching and learning experiences by supplementing classes with relevant academic skills. The centre also runs the Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) programme that provides students an avenue to work together to develop effective study strategies. This programme is recognised internationally.

Every semester, qualified PASS Supervisors train student leaders for the programme before the sessions begin. Students who have gone through these sessions would develop the ability to understand group dynamics, develop effective probing skills, and improve their presentation and communication skills.

PASS is an academic assistance programme based on Supplemental Instruction (SI) that was developed by Dr Deanna Martin at the University of Missouri in the United States, in the early 1970s. Since then, SI has spread to more than 30 countries around the world.

The PASS programme targets traditionally difficult academic subjects i.e. those with a high failure rate and withdrawals or subjects that are perceived by the students as being very difficult. It provides regularly scheduled, out-of-

class, peer-facilitated sessions. It is open to all students in the subject and is attended on a voluntary basis.

UCSI University's PASS programme has been proven to not only increase the number of students who passed a subject; but also increased the quality of the passing grades. Students who have gone through the programme say that PASS leaders presented them with the simplest way to guide them to resolve issues.

UCSI University's Centre for Learning Excellence also emphasises on using Web 2.0 tools for teaching and learning. Lecturers who are trained by the centre are encouraged to connect with students through blogs, podcasting and social networking tools to ensure better understanding of lessons taught in class. This resulted in positive learning outcomes among the students.

According to the University's Centre of Learning Excellence's director, Dr Irene Tan, going online and connecting with students is important. "Teachers and lecturers need to remember that the generation of students they are teaching and facilitating today are more tech savvy. They need to know students' interests, and use those interests to better connect with them."

The centre often delivers talks, seminars and workshops to teachers from secondary schools to hone their teaching and learning skills. To find out more about the programmes, drop by UCSI University and talk to their counsellors. You can also call 03-9101 8880 or visit [www.ucsi.edu.my](http://www.ucsi.edu.my).