

# **The use of myUnisa as a learner support tool to enhance the throughput in Economics 1A (Microeconomics): A case study**

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## **Abstract**

In 2005 I joined Unisa as part of the merger between the former Unisa, Technikon Southern Africa (TSA) and Vista University for distance education (Vudec). I became a member of the Economics 1A team since I was involved in the teaching of Economics I and II at the former Technikon Southern Africa. When I joined Unisa the pass rate for Economics IA had for a number of years not been above 25% per semester. I became the module leader for Economics 1A (ECS1501) in 2009. Knowing the subsidy formula has changed to a greater emphasis on so-called “through-put” rates, that the strategic vision of the University of South Africa was to incorporate technology more as a learner support and tuition tool as part of Open Distance Learning (ODL), and lastly, the given low pass rates, I decided to use the myUnisa platform extensively in an attempt to improve the pass rate for Economics 1A. The purpose of this paper is to indicate how the use of the myUnisa announcement function, the additional resources function, the discussion forum and the tutor project site, have assisted in improving the pass rate for Economics 1A. Indirect benefits of using the myUnisa platform to communicate with students and tutors were also the reduction in telephone calls and e-mails that were sent to the Economics Department. Using myUnisa enhanced the ability of students to understand more general questions regarding module content and administrative matters. Furthermore, the involvement of tutors in the summative assessment also contributed not only to the improvement of attendance at tutorial classes and discussion classes of lecturers, but also the number of visits to the Economics module website. The general conclusion is that electronic intervention in a ODL environment, such as myUnisa, contributes to the delivering/tuition model of Unisa. This type of interventions will play a more profound role at Unisa in the future.