

# 8 myths about online tutoring

Students today have more complex needs than ever before, often balancing competing demands such as work, school, and family life — which can lead to extra pressure and stress. Personalized support services, such as Pearson's online tutoring service, help learners build their confidence so they're more likely to continue on with their chosen major and towards degree completion.

Pearson is focused on partnering with institutions to drive student success by improving retention and engagement, supporting equity and affordability, and empowering acceleration and advancement.

Here, we break down eight myths about online tutoring from a Pearson partnership perspective.



**?** **MYTH:** *Online tutoring services compete with our institution's existing face-to-face student support services.*

**✓** **REALITY:** Online tutoring services do not compete with on-campus tutoring services but instead provide a means to extend your resources. Many faculty and onsite help services are already stretched thin and appreciate the supplemental support, especially outside of campus hours. Online tutoring gives learners access to live, expert tutors whenever they need it, day or night, and can provide learners support right from their many devices.

**?** **MYTH:** *Online tutors make it too easy for students who should be working harder to solve problems on their own.*

**✓** **REALITY:** Online tutors, from services such as Smarthinking, don't "hand out answers" but instead teach problem-solving strategies so that students learn to engage with content, breakdown problems, and build the skills to succeed on future assignments on their own. Online tutoring encourages learners to ask for help when they need it and raises their confidence to do so. This is particularly important as, oftentimes, those most in need find it difficult to ask for help.

**?** **MYTH:** *College students should be able to go it alone.*

**✓** **REALITY:** Today's students often have competing demands from work, school, and family life which can lead to extra pressure and stress that can cause them to fall behind. Learning to seek out support services and leverage resources is an important skill, in and of itself, and can help students succeed in both college and their careers.

**?** **MYTH:** *All students must participate in tutoring even though not all of them need help.*

**✓** **REALITY:** In most cases, the decision to include online tutoring options is at the course level, for example, providing this service for courses with lower pass or completion rates. Within a course, faculty members can decide whether or not tutoring should be a course requirement but there's compelling evidence that embedded tutoring, in comparison to optional tutoring, leads to increased graduation rates.



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 **MYTH:** *It's impossible to measure the ROI of online tutoring.*

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 **REALITY:** Some tutoring services, such as Smarthinking, provide actionable data (such as alerts about different student challenges that faculty can then address) that helps students come to class better prepared, improve learning outcomes, and work towards their career goals. Data transfer is available into many data warehouses or retention platforms to enable accurate measurement of the ROI of online tutoring.

 **MYTH:** *Online tutoring is a distraction for students during class.*

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 **REALITY:** There is **supporting data** that shows increased student engagement and confidence as a result of having access to an online tutor. Since tutoring is usually initiated by the student when they encounter difficulty, have a question, or wish to have their work reviewed, it's not something they initiate when they're supposed to be doing something else — and, quite often, is initiated outside of campus hours.

 **MYTH:** *Online tutors can't possibly know enough about my specific course or see what specific problems the student is struggling with.*

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 **REALITY:** Faculty members know their course materials best but don't always have the time to work with individual students who are falling behind. In the case of the Smarthinking tutoring service, faculty can easily share the assignment goals, writing prompt, or other course details so that tutors can contextualize their instructional assistance with learner outcomes in mind. Students who use Smarthinking tutors will be working with an expert (over 90% of Smarthinking tutors have a master's degree or higher; average 12 years of teaching experience; and are available in over 150 subjects in virtually all key disciplines) who can, in many cases, view the same question the student is working on in real-time, using the 2-way screen sharing/whiteboard capability of Smarthinking.

 **MYTH:** *Online tutoring can't benefit students who don't realize they need help and/or don't know how to contact a tutor.*

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 **REALITY:** With tutoring services such as Smarthinking, faculty can directly message a student, recommending they have a specific tutoring session and containing a link to open that tutoring session. Many courses also contain a "Connect to a Tutor" button that easily allows students to initiate a tutoring session.

**Smarthinking** combines 24x7 academic support in core subject areas, professional guidance for improving students' writing, and actionable data that help administrators and faculty optimize their engagement strategy with students. This personalized support helps students grow their confidence, build on their skills, and improve engagement, retention, and completion rates.

[pearson.com/smarthinking](https://pearson.com/smarthinking)



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