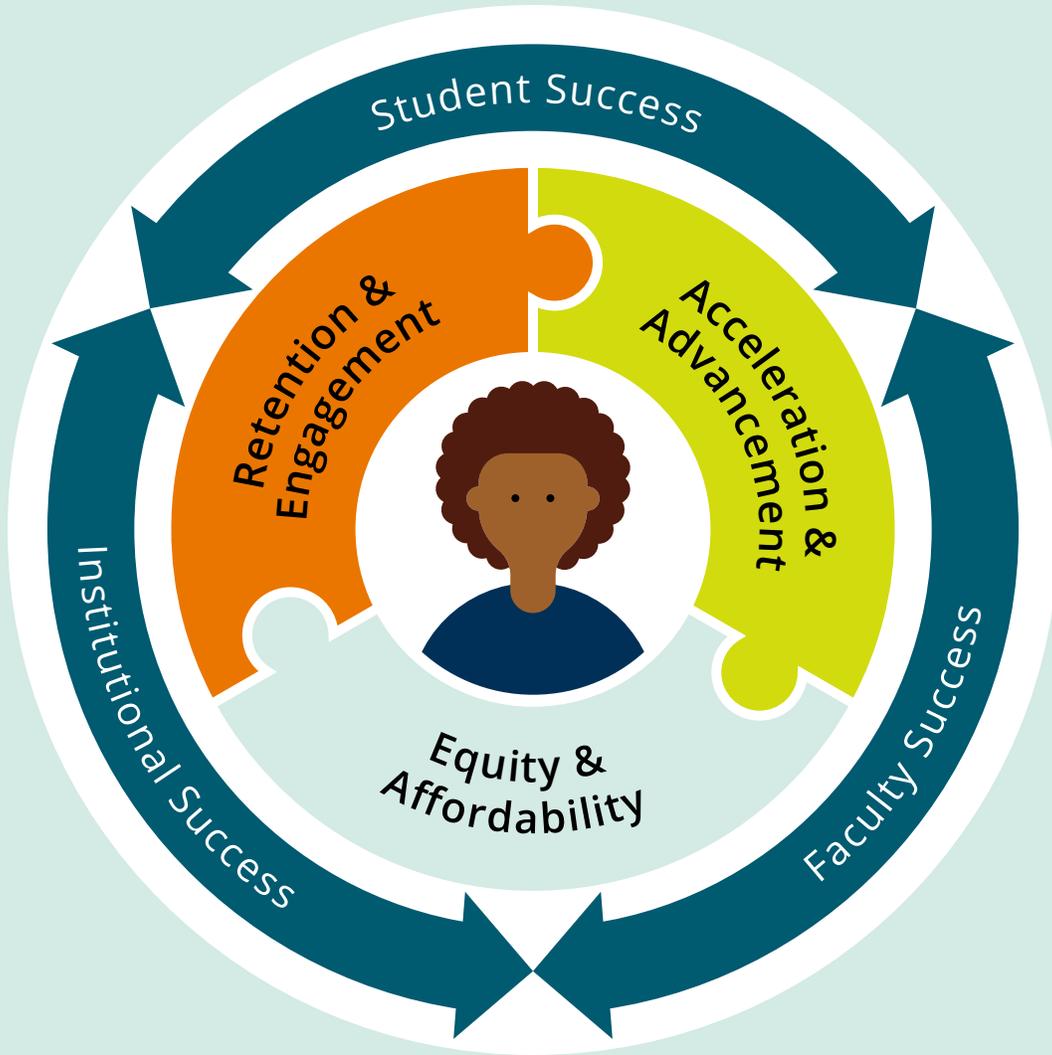




Student success starts  
with on-demand,  
personalized support



Pearson



## Today's digital learner

Students today have more complex needs than ever before, often balancing competing demands like work, school, or family life — which leads to extra pressure. Simply knowing that personalized support services, such as online tutoring, are accessible at anytime and from anywhere, can help alleviate this stress and allow your students to focus on what truly matters — their success.



## Challenges and opportunities

### Promoting retention and engagement

Online tutoring enables your faculty and tutoring center to extend their reach, offering personal one-on-one support when each student needs it most. An expert instructor is always available to help students master key concepts or skills that are standing in their way — so they're less likely to fall behind, disengage, or withdraw.

### Supporting equity and affordability

Online tutoring is a meaningful way to help level the playing field. It ensures that support is available to everyone — including those who are working full-time, can't be on campus when your tutoring center is open, or can't afford private tutors. Some instructors may even require students to use tutoring services, helping to establish the habit of reaching out for assistance when they need it.

### Empowering acceleration and advancement

Online tutoring can help you reach and impact the digital learner in many positive ways. By creating more individual, student-centric learning experiences, students become more confident in their skills and are more likely to continue on with their chosen major and towards degree completion.

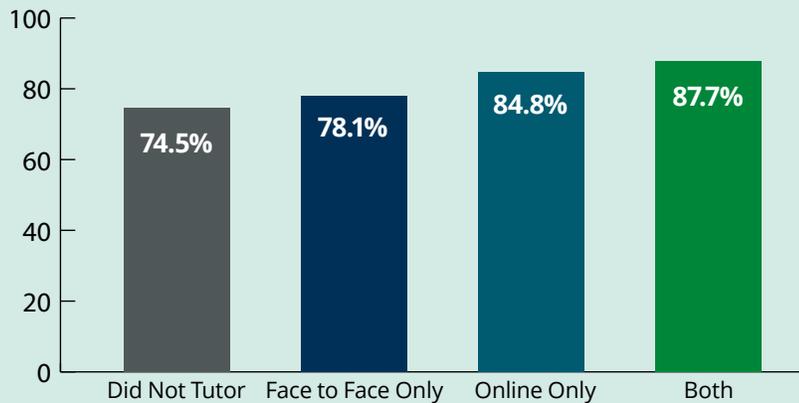
## Results

The best way to evaluate online tutoring's strategic value is to explore its outcomes. The following pages summarize experiences with online tutoring at multiple institutions, offering quantitative and qualitative insight into how it can promote engagement and retention, support equity and affordability, and help students advance towards their academic and career goals.

## Greater retention

As part of a commitment to continuous improvement, **Valencia College** thoroughly evaluated all aspects of tutoring, including face-to-face tutoring, campus writing centers and math labs, along with online tutoring. They found that:

1. Students who used both face-to-face and online tutoring had the highest success rates (figure 1).
2. Students who used tutoring appeared to be more likely to be retained while students who used both types of tutoring appeared to have the highest rates of retention term-to-term and year-to-year, suggesting that online and in-person tutoring can complement each other well.
3. Students identified the prompting of an instructor as the most influential factor in their seeking tutoring assistance.



**Figure 1.** Valencia College Success Rate Fall 2014–Fall 2016 (N=263, 246)



## Increased student confidence

Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia wanted to assess which students benefit most from online tutoring and under what circumstances, in order to generate the strongest possible outcomes, improving retention and helping students advance more directly towards their goals.

Returning adult students specifically noted online tutoring's benefits in strengthening their rusty math and writing skills. Administrators and faculty noted that promoting online tutoring early in a student's academic journey, helps form a healthy habit of accessing support services.



An end-of-term student survey found:

- **75% of students reported more confidence** in their academic skills after working with online tutors.
- **100% would access online tutors** for other courses.

## Better course performance

Morgan State University attracts students primarily from Baltimore City Schools, and its students arrive with widely varying writing strengths and weaknesses. To promote its mission of equity and opportunity, the university adopted online tutoring as a new way to support students and promote their success. The university specifically investigated its impact in writing-intensive courses where students submit multiple drafts before a final grade is assigned, and were required to submit at least one draft to online writing tutors for feedback.

Key findings included:

- Instructors reported that students' writing skills improved as a result of interaction with online tutors. Said one, "Good writers improve significantly with the intervention. Poor writers improve as well but need more than just one or two tutoring sessions to bring their writing up to par." The professor intends to adjust the timing of assignments to allow for a second round of face-to-face draft review, so online and in-person tutors work together with individual students.
- Students expressed appreciation for the expert online tutoring help they were now receiving: 69% said they liked having a second source of instruction to turn to for help; 62% liked the opportunity to incorporate the tutor's feedback before turning in an assignment for grading; and 89% said they'd use online tutors in future courses.



## Higher grades, retention, and graduation rates

Gadsden State Community College (GSCC) recognized that students most in need of academic tutoring often find it difficult to ask for help, and that students who form a habit early in their college career of accessing resources/services perform better and feel a greater sense of belonging and ownership of their learning. The college adopted online tutoring as a key element of its strategy of encouraging students to ask for help, and making it easier for them to do so. A subsequent impact study confirmed that online tutoring support led directly to higher rates of retention and completion.



GSCC researchers found that:

- **Graduation rate among students who accessed online tutoring is 47.5%** compared to Gadsden State's Right to Know graduation rate of 20%.
- **Average GPA of students who accessed online tutoring is 2.8242** compared to an average 2.2679 GPA for all students enrolled in fall 2016.

*“I feel strongly that requiring students to access online or direct tutoring assistance is a very healthful exercise. Because it was a course requirement, we had 100% participation. If it had been a mere recommendation, far fewer students would have ventured outside their comfort zones to access tutoring help. Students in the pilot formed a new habit of seeking assistance — and that new habit may help them survive and thrive throughout their college experience.”*

— Heather Greene, GSCC Instructor

## Increased enrollments

In connection with its initiative to increase Virtual College enrollment, Fort Hays State University complemented on-campus academic writing support services with online tutoring that provided high-quality services adapted for the online environment and available at all hours.

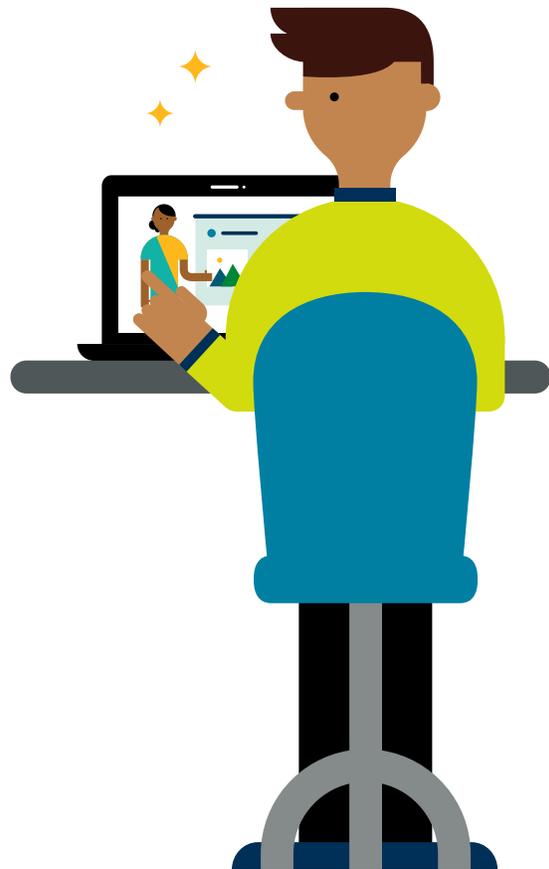
They have used online tutoring to support their Virtual College program which has grown sevenfold in the last 16 years.

As an online program grows, paying attention to retention is critical. Online tutoring has proven especially valuable for retention at Fort Hays' Online MBA program, where MBA graduate coordinator Rachel Dolechek regularly includes it in her advising process. At times, students who are struggling come to Dolechek and say, "I don't know what to do. Should I drop this class?" She recommends online tutoring and the results are often impressive. She asked one new graduate what her most useful piece of advice had been. The answer: "You introduced me to online tutoring. That's the only way I got through Finance."

## Anytime/anywhere support to hard-to-reach subgroups

Although many students were benefiting from the face-to-face tutoring service at West Texas A&M University (WTAMU), subgroups of students (including non-traditional and student athletes) who faced impossible scheduling and logistical conflicts, struggled to get the support they needed. In addition, student interest in online classes was growing, so the time seemed right for WTAMU to add an online tutoring solution.

Since adoption, the number of students using online tutoring grew from 479 to 713 students per year. Students call the service a success. When asked if they would recommend it to a friend, 89.7% said yes, and 95.3% would recommend its writing review services.



# Promoting student success throughout the college experience

These schools prove that implementing personalized support services, such as online tutoring, can be game changers for students. Pearson can also be your partner in fostering the success of every student, every faculty member, and your entire institution. Smarthinking online tutoring (a Pearson offering) offers expert academic support in over 150 subject areas, developmental level through graduate and professional school and beyond. In most subjects, tutors are available 24x7 and can supplement any on-campus tutoring service or centers.

Discover how Pearson can be your partner in driving student, faculty, and institutional success.

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



Research shows students who use online tutoring:

- average **higher grades**<sup>1</sup>
- are **20% more likely to complete courses**<sup>2</sup>
- **would recommend** it to a friend<sup>3</sup>

#### Endnotes

1 [Valencia College evaluates the impact of Smarthinking online tutoring on student success and persistence](#)

2 [College & Career Readiness Efficacy implementation and results 2014](#)

3 [West Texas A&M Success Story](#)