



# How Effective Program Promotion Drives Usage and Student Success

A case study of Surry Community College (SCC) and Tutor.com  
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**SURRY**   
*Community College*

**tutor.com**<sup>™</sup>  
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## The goal: Go from good to great

Seeking to improve outcomes and offer students enhanced academic support resources, Surry Community College (SCC) partnered with Tutor.com in 2014.

By spring 2020, when the pandemic upended education for so many, SCC was an established partner with more than five years of program administration experience and a track record of successfully supporting students studying virtually.

Engagement levels were good, and outcomes had improved. In the words of Alan Unsworth, Associate Dean of Instructional Support: **“The more students used Tutor.com, the better they did.”**

## The challenge:

To maximize impact, the College needed to build awareness and drive usage.

## The solution:

College leaders implemented strategies for **effective program promotion.**

## Institution Snapshot

### Enrollment:

3,200 students earning certificates, diplomas, or degrees

### Tutor.com Partner Since:

2014

### Institution Type:

Two-year community college serving the counties of Surry and Yadkin in North Carolina

### Most Popular Subjects:

Essay drop-off review  
Statistics and statistical methods  
Precalculus  
Algebra  
Chemistry

### Access:

SCC includes a Tutor.com link at the top of every webpage in Moodle™, its learning management system (LMS). Students may access Tutor.com anytime, 24/7, via single sign-on.

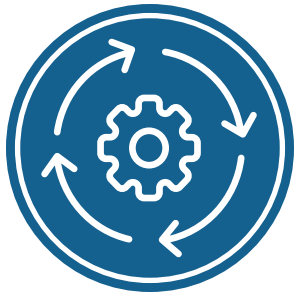
# Effective Promotion Methods

Unsworth identified four key promotion methods to support the growing number of Tutor.com sessions per year:



## I. Link Placement

Prominently displaying the Tutor.com program link in a fixed position on every Moodle page



## II. Recurring Campaigns

Conducting regular schoolwide outreach featuring Tutor.com information and graphics



## III. Targeted Outreach

Sharing tutoring information with students in high-enrollment courses as well as those who may be struggling, both at the start of term and on an ongoing basis



## IV. Faculty Guidance

Acquainting (and reacquainting) faculty members with the program at annual meetings



## I. Link Placement

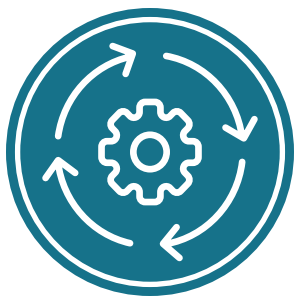
Tutor.com operates 24/7, so students can get support whenever their schedules permit. In a post-session survey response, one chemistry student explained, “I work part-time after class, so after college, I don’t have much time to go to the writing lab and schedule and wait for appointments. **This [service] allowed me to accomplish what my professor wanted in my free time without having to drive back to the campus.**”

As this student’s comment attests, the availability of help was not the blocker—awareness was. To increase knowledge of the program, SCC leaders leveraged the school’s LMS, which students regularly visit.

**“The course page is one place where we know students need to engage, so gaining prominent real estate on the LMS pages has been critical to increasing our student body and faculty member awareness of the program.”**

— Alan Unsworth  
Associate Dean of Instructional Support

Single sign-on ensures ease of access, and for students, seeing Tutor.com repeatedly in the same location increases recognition and encourages them to incorporate sessions into their help-seeking routines.



## II. Recurring Campaigns

Availability and link placement are necessary—but not always sufficient—for building program utilization. Ongoing education is also needed. Unsworth shared, **“Our experience has been that the Tutor.com program link (presented without explanation) can leave students and faculty confused. Many were wondering, ‘What does this link actually do for me?’ So, there was still a need to educate our campus about the resource.”**

To build awareness across multiple channels, SCC changes its Tutor.com social media graphics and messaging three times per semester; the College publishes periodic posts about Tutor.com’s drop-off writing review service and no-cost webinars, as well.

**“We also included promo graphics and explanatory text in our college’s eNewsletter, posted signs on campus bulletin boards, and left Tutor.com business cards on tables in classroom buildings.”**

— Alan Unsworth  
Associate Dean of Instructional Support

Displaying program information in these high-traffic areas helps increase the likelihood that students see, understand, and take advantage of academic support resources.

“I absolutely love this service! It is extremely helpful when I am in a bind and in need of extra help. I would not have been able to make it through my math classes without it!”

— SCC statistics student



### III. Targeted Outreach

As data in the next section demonstrates, **repeated Tutor.com use correlates with greater success.**

By targeting outreach to students in high-enrollment courses, SCC multiplied the reach of its communication efforts. For instance, academic support coaches assigned to 100-level online English and math courses posted about tutoring services in the “Course Announcements” section of Moodle on the second day of class.

Regular program utilization has benefits beyond improved grades and persistence. For example, students who participate in multiple sessions can identify their favorite tutors and opt to work with them again.

“I left and came back to another session with the same tutor, and she remembered me and the session we’d had earlier.... It was fantastic and really helpful.”

— SCC math student

SCC also uses Tutor.com early-alert notifications to provide just-in-time support for students requiring additional assistance, following up to refer them to Tutor.com or on-campus tutoring.



## IV. Faculty Guidance

Faculty members serve as a vital source of trusted information for students.

**“We know that buy-in from faculty is absolutely key to sustaining robust support services. We encourage faculty to promote the Tutor.com service to their students and require or incentivize the use of on-demand tutoring sessions and asynchronous essay review.”**

— Alan Unsworth  
Associate Dean of Instructional Support

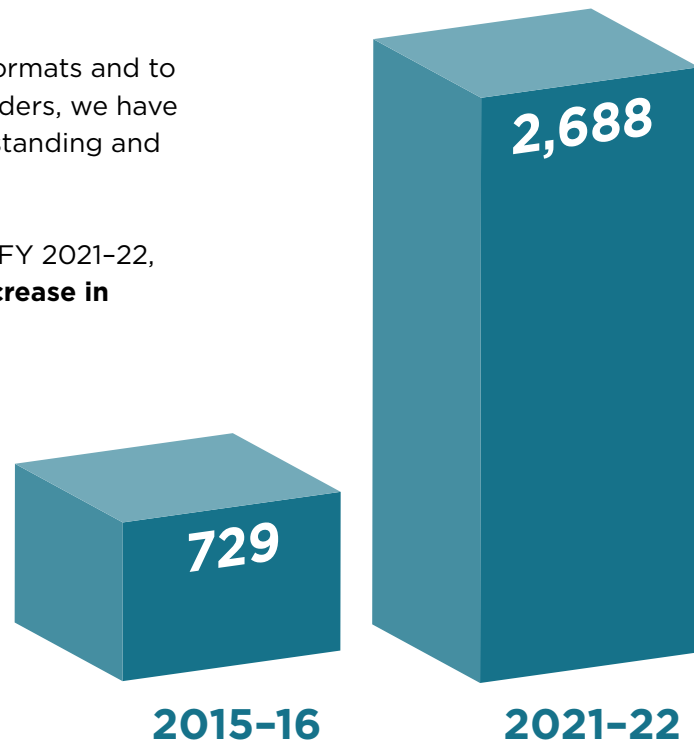
Tutor.com offers 24/7, 1-to-1 student support in subject areas tailored to SCC courses. The College additionally provides online resources for faculty members, including an instructional video, helpful PDF guides, an outline of Tutor.com’s writing support methodology, and answers to frequently asked questions.

By educating faculty and showcasing program benefits, SCC has developed a model for achieving sustained multilevel stakeholder engagement.

# Exceptional Results: More Usage, Better Grades

“By promoting Tutor.com in a variety of formats and to a variety of college affiliates and stakeholders, we have been able to dramatically increase understanding and usage,” Unsworth noted.

In fact, when comparing FY 2015-16 with FY 2021-22, the College witnessed a **250+ percent increase in Tutor.com sessions**.



About students' grades, Unsworth explained, “**We have found that if we can get students to visit Tutor.com just one time per semester, we see a 90% success rate.**”

The spring semester of 2022 is a case in point: Ninety percent of students who used Tutor.com one or more times passed their classes with a C or better. This is around **16 percentage points higher than the average overall SCC student success rate** for fall 2018 through spring 2021.

**“I can’t get to the school for tutoring.... This English class was worrying me that it would bring down my GPA, but now that I have found this help, it is not a concern.”**

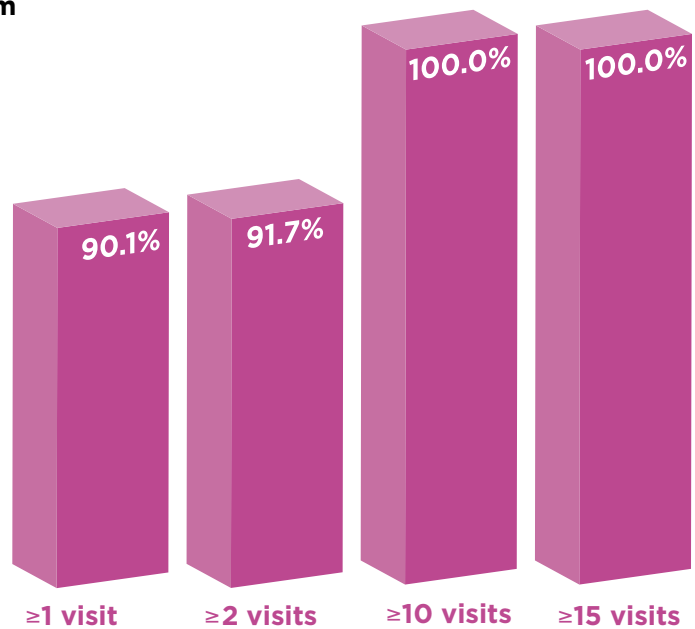
— SCC live writing help student



More striking still is the **100 percent success rate seen when students visited Tutor.com 10 or more times.**

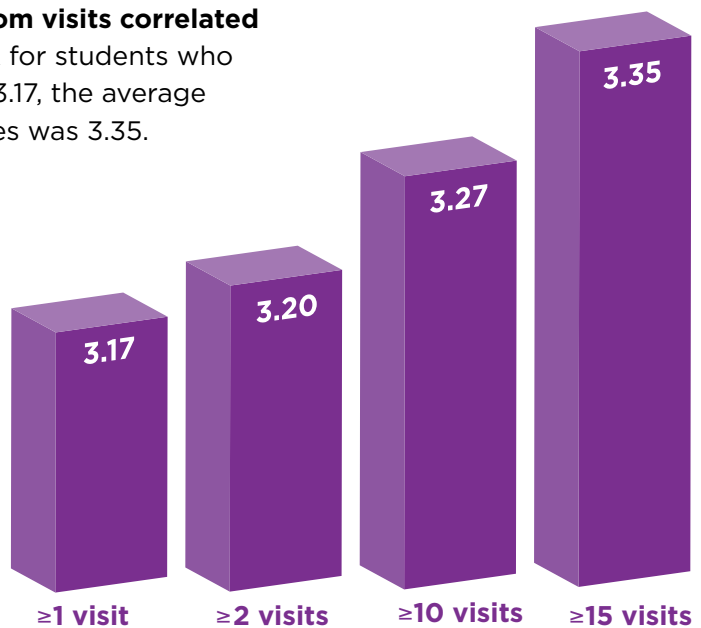
### Success Rate\* of Tutor.com Users (Spring 2022)

\* Grade of C or better



Additionally, a **greater number of Tutor.com visits correlated with higher GPAs.** While the average GPA for students who visited Tutor.com one or more times was 3.17, the average GPA for those who visited 15 or more times was 3.35.

### Average GPA of Tutor.com Users (Spring 2022)



**SCC and Tutor.com demonstrate that purpose-driven partnerships, accompanied by powerful awareness-building efforts, promote student success—and the numbers prove it.**

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