

What is Smarthinking?

Smarthinking (ST) is an online tutoring service designed for students who are taking core academic courses. Online learning assistance is available from tutors in mathematics, business, science, Spanish, and writing for all subjects. A detailed list of subjects and topics covered can be found at Smarthinking.com under Services and Subjects/Subjects.

Who are the tutors?

ST tutors are ST employees who are recruited, hired, trained, scheduled, managed, and evaluated by ST staff. These tutors are recruited from a variety of sources, including graduate students, trained college peer tutors, community college faculty, and high school teachers. Only tutors with strong backgrounds in tutoring/teaching in their respective fields are hired by ST. Over 90% of tutors have a master's degree or a PhD in their field, and on average they have 9+ years of teaching experience.

How do students access Smarthinking?

Southwestern Community College (SCC) students must access and use ST via Blackboard (Bb); thus, even if you don't teach online, you should *make at least one of your Bb courses available so that your students will have access to ST's online tutoring services*. Each student is awarded 240 minutes free of charge each semester; this allows for five essay submissions with some "change" left over for live tutoring. (About 99% of SCC students use ST to submit essays.)

How can students get help?

Writing Center – Students can submit essays, across the curriculum, and receive a thorough critique from a ST tutor, usually within 24 hours. *Students retrieve their returned essays from their Archives within their ST account*. At the same time, ST now also emails students to alert them that their report and essay have been returned.

Drop-In Tutoring – Students can work live with a ST tutor simply by selecting their subject. The schedule of live tutoring is available at Smarthinking.com. Math subjects are available for live tutoring 24/7.

Scheduled Tutoring – Students can also make appointments to meet with a tutor. Sessions with audio can be scheduled within this area.

Offline Questions – Instead of working with a tutor live, students can submit questions offline and receive a response from a tutor, usually within 24 hours. Note that students should plan to submit early at mid-term and in the final couple weeks of classes to avoid delays.

Academic Resources – Within this area of student accounts, ST provides access to 1,500 mathematics tutorials, other math resources, an accounting study guide, and a Writer's Handbook.

Will the tutors give students the answers?

No! As is the case with Learning Consultants in the SCC Learning Assistance Center (LAC), ST tutors will not provide answers but will assist students in learning how to work through their problems. Tutors provide feedback, reminders, examples, and encouragement, but students are required to perform the work and arrive at the answer themselves. For essay submissions, students will receive a Response Form with information to improve their writing. They also will have notes and questions from the tutor throughout their paper, but it is up to the student to make any changes to the essay. Sample sessions, both live and written pieces, can be found on Smarthinking.com under Services and Subjects/Sample Sessions.

What are my responsibilities?

As mentioned earlier, you must make at least one of your Blackboard courses available so that your students can access and use online tutoring. ST assists faculty by providing additional assistance to students. The service is designed to ease faculty work, not add to it. *Faculty also are asked to help make students aware that the service is available to them and remind students of the 240-minutes-per-semester limit.*

How can I make my students aware of Smarthinking?

*Mention ST in your syllabus when discussing the resources available to students. Include a reminder at exam time or when projects are due.

*Ask the SCC LAC/Smarthinking Coordinator (ext. 4325) about setting LAC/orientation sessions for your classes. Along with discussing information about LAC services, students will be shown how to access ST, the ways in which it can be used, and the ways in which it can help them to succeed. When possible, students will log on to the service and begin using it.

*After a pre-test, review session, or exam, send students to ST to work with a tutor on concepts they do not understand or questions they miss. Correcting misunderstandings when they occur will help students to get back on the path to successful course completion.

*Remind students that they have access to archives of each of their Smarthinking tutoring sessions. Archives can be used to review the content of a tutoring session or as the starting point for follow-up sessions with a tutor.

Can I see what my students are doing with a tutor?

Absolutely! All interactions with a tutor are stored within students' ST account (under Archives). You can ask them to show you the work they have done with a tutor by logging into their account and printing the session, or they can save and email it to you. Some instructors require students to turn in a copy of the ST report with their final paper.

How can I learn more about Smarthinking?

Your on-campus Smarthinking coordinator (Toni Knott) will email you with information about upcoming webinars. Your coordinator also can request a faculty demo account so that you can preview the service.

Please visit www.smarthinking.com for more information.