



# Support For Non-Traditional Students



Black Hawk College serves all or part of nine counties in northwestern Illinois with a population of more than 225,000 residents. Operated as one college with two campuses and several outreach sites, Black Hawk offers more than 40 liberal arts and science curricula in the transfer area and more than 100 career track programs leading to degrees and certificates. The college also offers a wide range of special purpose and community service programs.

The college serves nearly 20,000 credit and non-credit students in 56 degree and 48 occupational certificate programs. Black Hawk serves more people than any other institution of higher education in the Quad-Cities area.

## The Challenge: Serving Diverse Students On and Off Campus

Black Hawk serves a diverse student body that includes first generation college students, non-traditional students and international students. The average age of a Black Hawk student is 27 years old. Students enter their first semester of coursework with varying levels of preparation and yet they all need to learn the same content.

“I have just 50 minutes of class time to cover a topic,” explains Christian J. Roldan Santos, Mathematics Instructor. “My students have to spend time on their own to do the work and learn. The challenge is getting students the help they need with study skills as well as subject content and it has to fit their schedules.”

*continued*

## Program Details

- Client:** Black Hawk College
- Enrollment:** About 20,000\* students
- Structure:** 2-year college
- Partner Since:** 2008
- Access Points:** The on-campus tutoring center and remotely from home computers
- Hours:** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Subjects:** Math, Science, English, Writing and Business

\* Includes students enrolled in both credit and non-credit courses

*“We originally selected Tutor.com to support our students taking online and hybrid classes, but we quickly realized that Tutor.com was beneficial to all our students.”*

- Dick Vallandingham, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students

## Black Hawk Survey Results\*

**99%**

Are glad Black Hawk offers this service

**99%**

Would recommend this service to a friend

**97%**

Say Tutor.com helps them complete their homework assignments

**94%**

Say Tutor.com helps them improve their grades

**97%**

Say Tutor.com helps them be more confident about their school work



\*Compiled from post-session surveys during the 2011-2012 academic year.



## What Black Hawk Students Are Saying About Tutor.com

*“Thank you for offering this. It isn't possible for me to be at the tutoring center everytime I need it, and as long as math is part of my schedule I will need it often! This is a huge help... Thanks again!”*

*“I really appreciate the help I have been given here. My tutor has really helped me, not only get through homework but help me understand my assignment more. It means a lot to me that I can learn even more about my work here when I have questions on my homework. I would like to thank you very much for the help.”*

*“Once again, my tutor went out of her way to explain the subject I was seeking help on. 10 out of 10!”*

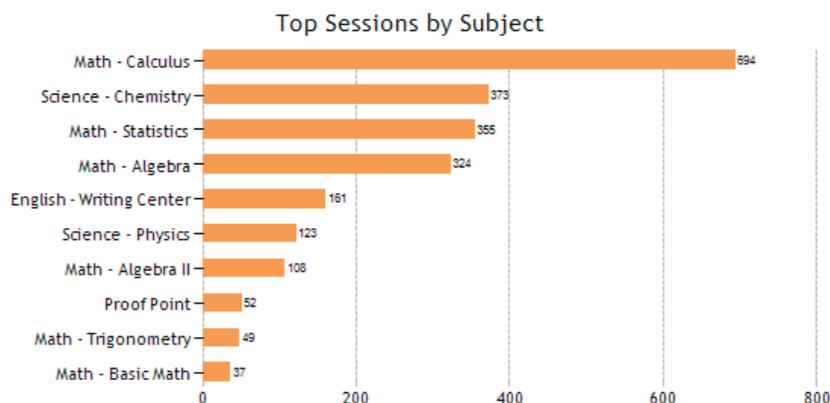
*“Wonderful!!!! It was just like having someone here with me to help me at a pace that wasn't rushed, so that I could understand!”*

*“My tutor was extremely helpful in solving a chemistry equation I was having trouble with. Not only did he help me arrive at the answer, but took the extra time to explain HOW I get the answer. He went further to provide multiple examples. VERY satisfied. THANK YOU!”*

Kari Koster, Student Success Center Director, faced three additional challenges related to operating onsite tutoring: funding, space and continuity. State funding has decreased, she says, so they don't have money to try and sustain new programs. Their open area can get noisy if math and writing tutoring are going on simultaneously. And, peer tutors leave after two years, so it's difficult to maintain consistency in the tutoring program.

## Tutor.com's Solution: 24/7 On Demand, Mobile Tutoring

Koster says Black Hawk College is moving toward offering entire Associate's degrees online. Initially they looked at online tutoring as a way to support their growing base of online courses, but they've found that Tutor.com meets the needs of students on and off campus. “Tutor.com expands what we do here at the Success Center,” she says. “The tutors are available during hours when we are not and they cover all the upper level classes that are difficult for us to staff. We are also able to individually track the students using Tutor.com and about 80% of students getting tutoring passed their classes. We are very pleased with that.”



Roldan Santos reinforces Koster's perspective. “With Tutor.com, students can log in and get help at any point, any time, and that instant connection is very important,” he says. “Students like to work late at night. If they send me an email at midnight, I won't reply to it until the next day and by then they have moved on. Tutor.com gives the students' the assurance that there is always someone there to help.”

Koster says the value of Tutor.com is demonstrated in the responses they get from students about the service. “We didn't fully realize the degree to which student needs weren't being met. Being able to offer a 24-hour service is priceless for students. Tutor.com fills the gaps for students who don't fit into traditional schedules and meets the needs of students across a diverse population.”