

CASE STUDY: Guelph Public Library



Meeting the Community's Need for Tutoring

In 2006, Guelph Public Library in Ontario, Canada sought to find a scalable tutoring solution for their patrons. “We had numerous parents contact us about tutoring opportunities,” says Lisa Cunningham, Marketing & Communications Coordinator. “We knew that an in-house tutoring program for a library of our size would require considerable staff time and effort to coordinate all of the logistics and quality control. We chose to partner with Tutor.com since they take care of everything for us.”

Parents were thrilled when the library began offering one-to-one, personalized online tutoring from Tutor.com for free for their patrons. “The cost of traditional one-to-one tutoring is not reasonable for the average family,” notes Cunningham, “When we started offering Tutor.com, it added so much value to the benefit of having a library card. Our patrons really understood that we are there for them; we’re not only about books.”

“A huge benefit from using an online service is that we can help our patrons even when the library is closed,” says Cunningham. “Family schedules are so packed these days. When kids get home from hockey practice, their part-time jobs, etc., the library is closed. But Tutor.com is still available to help.”

There is another, often overlooked, benefit to online tutoring that Cunningham says is invaluable. “There’s anonymity with online tutoring, and that makes students feel comfortable,” she says. “They might be hesitant to ask their friends for help for fear of looking incompetent. When they use Tutor.com, they don’t have to worry that someone they know will know they are struggling. They can just get the help they need.”

Program Details

Guelph Public Library

Location:	Ontario, Canada
Partner Since:	2006
Population:	121,668
# of Sites:	6

“Offering Tutor.com for our patrons promotes a very positive message about technology and libraries, which benefits us, too. We’re not your grandma’s library!”

— Lisa Cunningham, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Online Tutoring a Success for Guelph Public Library Patrons*

99%

are glad Guelph offers this service

98%

would recommend this service to a friend

98%

say Tutor.com helps them complete their homework assignments

97%

say Tutor.com helps them improve their grades

97%

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



What Guelph Public Library Patrons Are Saying About Tutor.com*

“My tutor was wonderful. He really helped me understand what I had to do and brought up some marvelous suggestions. This was very helpful, thank you for offering this service. :)”

- College Student

“Like always, an amazing service. I recommend this to my friends constantly- it has helped me so much to better do my homework and score higher test marks! :)”

- 11th Grade Student

“I love this site. The tutors are very helpful, and the platform is very user friendly, so it’s easy to show the tutor (and for your tutor to show you) the work.”

- 10th Grade Student

“It really helped when she kept asking me after every step if I was clear on it or not. That way it helped me to understand each step better. Thank you Tutor.com for making math easy!”

- 10th Grade Student

“He helped me so much with problems I was really struggling with!!! It definitely made me more confident with my physics homework.”

- 11th Grade Student

“I use this program quite often and what really makes it special is your tutors- they offer such a personal attention and really help out. This is a wonderful program for students!”

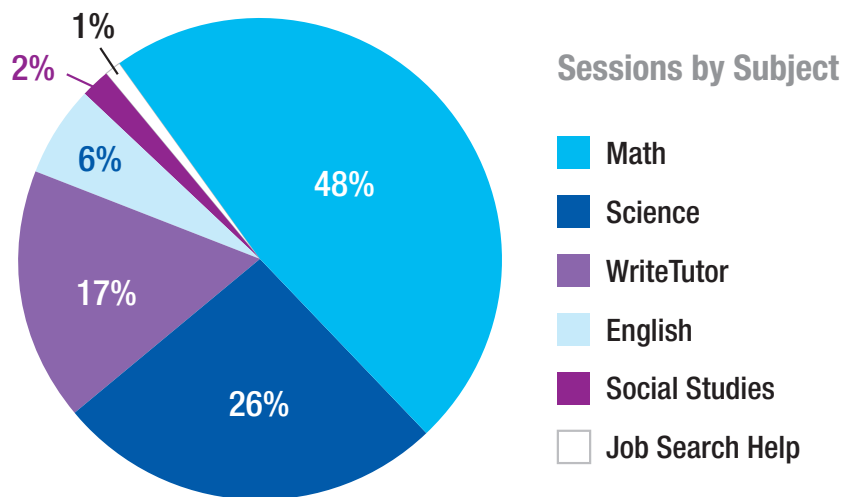
- 11th Grade Student

From Building Awareness to Creating Long-Term Success

Guelph Public Library’s Tutor.com program has been successfully running and growing for 8 years. According to Cunningham, the program is now so well-known in the community that promotion is fairly easy.

“In the very beginning,” she says, “we put Tutor.com bookmarks in every school package at the beginning of the year. Every library branch had in-house displays and posters. I gave presentations to school boards and every guidance department. We worked with teachers to speak to their classes. We did outreach at our community groups including city recreational facilities, parent-teacher councils, homeschooling associations, Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, the YMCA, sports teams, etc. We promoted the program in every way we could think of.”

“After that initial blitz,” Cunningham, notes, “our usage was doing so well that we’ve generally been able to stick with lower-key promotions ever since. We have a few ongoing promotional programs, like our Teen Advisory Group, teen email distribution list, railroad bridge banners, e-resources outreach, and circulation desk televisions that display digital advertisements. A staff retraining every few years also helps keep it in the forefront of staff’s minds.”



Helping the Library Stay Relevant

Providing innovative online programs helps your library stay relevant to your patrons. “Students currently graduating from high school have never known life without the internet!” says Cunningham. “For them, something like Tutor.com just makes sense, and that helps keep us current. Offering Tutor.com for our patrons promotes a very positive message about technology and libraries, which benefits us, too. We’re not your grandma’s library!”