



Frequently Asked Questions For Faculty

Q: Who is SMARTHINKING?

A: SMARTHINKING is a Washington, DC-based organization that provides people, technology and training to help schools and institutions offer outstanding online academic support to their students. SMARTHINKING is currently working with more than 300 institutions supporting eight different subject areas, including an online writing lab for all courses in all subject areas.

SMARTHINKING's management team is comprised of professionals with extensive backgrounds in education, technology and business. Bios of the SMARTHINKING team can be found online at www.smarthinking.com.

Q: What is SMARTHINKING's philosophy?

A: SMARTHINKING is a student-centric service that supplements on-campus courses and academic support systems. Using the SMARTHINKING service, institutions will be able to create a true on /off-campus hybrid educational model that addresses a range of student needs and learning styles. SMARTHINKING provides academic assistance in the same manner its clients do on campus. Our tutors do not give answers or rewrite / edit papers.

Q: What tutoring services will my students receive?

A: The SMARTHINKING online tutoring service is designed for students who are taking core academic courses. Online learning assistance is available from our tutors or yours in mathematics (from basic math to calculus II), economics, statistics, accounting, chemistry, physics, biology and writing for all subjects. See your campus contact for information on what services are being offered to your students.

Q: Who are the SMARTHINKING tutors ("e-structors")?

A: Unlike other online tutoring companies, SMARTHINKING e-structors are SMARTHINKING employees who are recruited, hired, trained, scheduled, managed and evaluated by SMARTHINKING's staff. SMARTHINKING e-structors 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 SMARTHINKING. Over 80% of our e-structors have a Masters degree or a PhD in their field and on average our tutors have 8 years of teaching experience.

Q: What kind of training and support does the e-structor receive?

A: To prepare e-structors to provide high-quality instruction, SMARTHINKING has developed a training program for online, one-to-one tutoring that has emerged as the industry model. Once an applicant passes a subject-specific test and matches SMARTHINKING's hiring criteria, s/he receives extensive training on effective teaching methods in an online environment, including student management, the SMARTHINKING technology and course-specific pedagogy.

Q: How does SMARTHINKING ensure quality?

A: SMARTHINKING is committed to ongoing quality assurance and effective educational pedagogy. This is reflected in SMARTHINKING's extensive training program for e-structors and dedication to ongoing professional development. All interactions between

students and e-structors are saved, which allows SMARTHINKING to provide the tutor with additional feedback and professional development.

Q: How do my students access SMARTHINKING?

A: Students log in to the SMARTHINKING web site (www.smarthinking.com) or a designated place on your school's Web site and use the institution's log in name and password (to be provided by SMARTHINKING) to set up their own accounts. The student can then immediately drop into a real-time, subject-specific tutoring "whiteboard" with a SMARTHINKING e-structor (tutor); submit a writing assignment to the online writing lab for review; pre-schedule time with an e-structor; or help themselves to a host of independent study resources.

Q: What are the technology requirements for my students?

A: All a student needs to get help from a SMARTHINKING e-structor is access to the Internet. SMARTHINKING has expressly designed its technology to accommodate a range of technological expertise, hardware and Internet connections. For the service to work properly, SMARTHINKING recommends the following **minimum** system requirements:

Processor: Pentium 100 processor (or Mac equivalent)

Browser: Netscape 3.01, Communicator 4.0, or Internet Explorer 4.0

Connection: 56K modem recommended (28.8 K modem acceptable)

Mac users with a Netscape browser will experience difficulties. Internet Explorer for Mac is recommended. SMARTHINKING provides technical assistance to users through both a toll-free number (1-888-430-7429) and e-mail (support@smarthinking.com).

Q: How does the Online Writing Lab work?

A: SMARTHINKING views writing as an act of communication between a writer and reader. A helpful way to enhance the writing of individuals at any level is to share it with others during the composing and drafting process. The SMARTHINKING Online Writing Lab provides asynchronous assistance with all types of academic writing, including help from technical writing, creative writing, and "English as a Second Language" specialists. Papers are critiqued and returned to a student's inbox on their homepage at SMARTHINKING usually within 24 hours. The SMARTHINKING Online Writing Lab e-structor is a supportive and critical reader poised to help students develop their writing, but will not give answers or rewrite papers. Tutor feedback will focus on larger issues (for example, thesis statements and overall organization). Surface-level features including grammar will be addressed as second order concerns. A tutor's written response to an essay is designed to improve the immediate draft but, above all, to improve a student's broader skills as a writer.

Q: What are the administration's responsibilities?

A: SMARTHINKING asks partner schools to provide a single point of contact within the school, encourage the students to use the service, and help to gain faculty support.

Q: What are the responsibilities of the faculty?

A: SMARTHINKING assists faculty by providing additional assistance to their students. The SMARTHINKING service is designed to ease the faculty's work, not add to it. Faculty are asked to help make students aware that the service is available to them. Students will receive usernames and passwords, instructions for use, customer service and technical support from SMARTHINKING.

- Q: How do I let my students know that our institution is using SMARTHINKING?**
A: SMARTHINKING will coordinate with the campus contact to develop the best method(s) of making students aware of the service. SMARTHINKING will provide student flyers and posters to put up around campus. In addition, SMARTHINKING representatives can make campus visits to orient the faculty and students to the service.
- Q: What if my students have problems with the service?**
A: SMARTHINKING provides a toll-free number (1-888-438-7429) and e-mail customer service and technical support to your students. Students can access a customer service representative from 8am to 6pm EST on Monday through Friday or can send e-mail to a representative at support@smarthinking.com. In addition, the SMARTHINKING Web site hosts an interactive demonstration of the service so students can learn how it works. There is also a menu of Frequently Asked Questions available online.
- Q: How does SMARTHINKING handle privacy issues?**
A: SMARTHINKING takes all reasonable steps to ensure the privacy of students using our service. We realize that our partner schools are bound by FERPA and SMARTHINKING posts a complete privacy policy on our site. SMARTHINKING does not disclose any information to outside vendors. SMARTHINKING does provide administrative access to one main contact on a campus to view student usage as well as aggregate and trend data of SMARTHINKING's services at their campus.
- Q: What is SMARTHINKING's Policy on Advertising?**
A: There is no advertising on the educational areas of the SMARTHINKING site. SMARTHINKING has a number of content partners whose sites may contain advertising.
- Q: A number of companies have tried to tell me that their platform can support tutoring. What's the difference?**
A: Indeed a number of commercial platforms can enable real-time, person-to-person interaction over the Internet. However, only SMARTHINKING's platform makes these interactions accessible to students at a later date. SMARTHINKING e-structors provide personal attention through one-on-one interactions with students, instead of using a chat room environment, and only SMARTHINKING qualified tutors are trained, hired as our employees, and available around the clock.