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Dr. Dawn Hodges
Vice President Academic Affairs,
Southern Crescent Technical College

An LSI Case Study

Southern Crescent Technical College

*Promoting Student Success
on the Technical College
Campus with the NetTutor[®]
Online Tutorial Service*

Client: Southern Crescent Technical College

Challenge: Reinforcing the learning process with online support in regionally-based technical schools.

Southern Crescent Technical College (SCTC) is a two-year school in the Atlanta Metro area and a member of the Technical College System of Georgia. SCTC faces the challenge of reaching a large number of students from diverse backgrounds with a wide variety of learning goals. To address these challenges, SCTC decided to use online tutoring to provide support in core course areas around the clock and both on- and off-campus.

SCTC serves students in and around Atlanta, the major population center of the southeast United States. The college was formed through the merger of Flint River and Griffin technical colleges to the south of Atlanta; today, SCTC includes these two campuses, centers in Butts, Jasper and Taylor Counties, an additional community development center, and the Henry Academy—over 5000 students in ten separate counties. In discussing the online tutoring option, Dawn Hodges, the SCTC Vice President for Academic Affairs explains, “We intend to provide yet another means for students to receive the math, reading, and writing tutoring that they need when they need it.”

Solution: SCTC investigated the use of third-party vendor support in its distance education programs. In order to reach students at remote locations and after the hours of its on-campus learning centers, SCTC chose the Link-Systems International (LSI) NetTutor® Online Tutoring Service to provide

online tutoring support. The school based the decision to adopt NetTutor on several key features that make the service well-suited to the needs of SCTC students.

Most important, the NetTutor service is completely customizable. A full-time staff of tutors is available twenty-four hours a day, year round. The tutors hold degrees in the subjects they tutor. The training they receive has proven effective in communicating learning methods and objectives online. Research shows that the use of NetTutor tutoring encourages persistence, retention, and achievement.

As is frequently the case in today’s economy, cost considerations played a role in the decision to select NetTutor. LSI develops and maintains its own software, hosts tutoring on its servers, and furnishes statistical data in the format requested by SCTC as part of the services it offers to the school. In addition, NetTutor operates on-shore, with all of its tutors and its full-time tutor management team working in its Tampa, Florida headquarters. At NetTutor, the tutoring and the student experience is consistently above-par, since NetTutor uses LSI’s research-supported WorldWideWhiteboard® interface and since all tutoring is reviewed continuously and directed towards definite pedagogical aims in line with modern learning theory.

Finally, SCTC found added value in the customer service of NetTutor. A trained team of specialists is ready to answer students’ technical inquiries at any time of the day. The college chose to make online tutoring available free of charge to its students in math, science, writing, and other subjects through the NetTutor online tutoring service.

Result: The customization provided by NetTutor has led to highly personalized tutoring programs at SCTC. The great concern of the Distance Learning team at a school, according to Dr. Hodges, is that “it’s always difficult to identify and reach the particular students who most need the help. Some may need you, but you are not reaching them with your message; once you reach them, you may not be getting them to express their real needs.” This is where an online and on-demand tutoring service can assist. However, Dr. Hodges emphasizes that it is more than that. “Again,” she says, “the customized nature of the service is its best feature.”

NetTutor worked with SCTC to design special tutoring guidelines. These guidelines enable NetTutor tutors to help learners using the same textbooks and the same approaches as their instructors. NetTutor personnel work with campus representatives to resolve issues quickly when they arise. SCTC participated in the design of customized reports that show how much tutoring took place, the tutors and students involved, and the subjects that are most in demand each month.

Testimonials: “We have found the LSI product so effective that we are now working with the company to pilot new initiatives in our math curriculum, such as the MyAcademicWorkshop online-homework and skills improvement software. That is really the best thing about Link-Systems: we know the sales people, we talk with the programmers, we meet with the supervisors of the tutors, and we are on a first name basis with the CEO. Doesn’t happen with other similar projects and services!” – **Dr. Dawn Hodges, Vice President for Academic Affairs**

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