

ONLINE TUTORING



A ROADMAP TO SUCCESS

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1. Online Tutoring – The Opportunity



Once upon a time, private tutoring was a person-to-person kind of business. Teachers and graduate students with time to spare helped out neighbourhood children with their studies, and received a modest 10-12\$ per hour. Tutors mostly taught subjects such as mathematics, science and English. The tutoring methodology remained the same month after month, student after student.

Fast forward to the digital age and things could not be any more different. Online tutoring is revolutionising the way tutors teach and reach out to their students.

Today for a tutor with the right skills and teaching experience 'the world is a stage'. A tutor can be based anywhere from Tamil Nadu (India) to Texas (USA) and remotely teach students in their home country or in lands across the sea. Online tutors are using myriad online tools to aid the remote teaching process.

It's not just your average school-going student that is seeking online tutoring services. Graduate and postgraduate students as well as professionals are increasingly looking to improve their technical skills and industry expertise with the help of online tutors. Apart from traditional school subjects, higher education and management subjects such as logistics and supply chain management, competitive exam preparations, business administration, accounts and finance, lean and six sigma, human resources, project management, and language courses (especially TOEFL and IELTS coaching) are being tutored online.

Not surprisingly then that the average online tutor can earn anywhere between \$10 to \$100 an hour (or even more) depending on their academic qualifications, experience, and technical expertise.

The private tutoring industry continues to experience exciting growth rates. In 2007, education research firm EduVentures estimated the size of the tutoring industry at \$5 billion to \$7 billion a year. Just five years later, a 2012 "Private Tutoring: A Global Strategic Business Report" by market research firm Global Industry Analysts (GIA), estimated that the global private tutoring market will reach US \$102.8 billion by the year 2018. The online tutoring market is estimated to be worth more than US \$12 billion.

As per the GIA study, 90% of the demand for private tutoring services is accounted by United States, Europe and Asia-Pacific countries, mainly Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and China. India has emerged as a leader in e-tutoring services at affordable rates (especially mathematics), with the US serving as its biggest customer base.

The online tutoring industry is increasing rapidly because of the failure of the academic system to cope with the needs of the students, and the desire of parents to provide the best possible education for their children. Slashing of public school budgets in many countries has worsened teacher-student ratios. In some countries, the vast curriculum has made it necessary for parents to enlist the services of private tutors. Other reasons for the explosion of online tutoring in recent years include poor school infrastructural facilities, unprecedented competition (especially for coveted courses such as engineering), and the need for young tech savvy professionals to constantly upgrade their skills.

In fact, despite the 2008 global financial crisis, private tutoring grew by 7% between 2009 and 2010. The demand for online tutoring services will continue to rise as global conditions slowly improve and unemployment rates decrease.

The growing number of online tutoring platforms and technologies has substantially bolstered the online tutoring market by making it easier for tutors to reach students. Let us look at some of the web applications used by online tutors and training organizations.

2. Top Online Tools for Tutors and Tutoring Companies



Online tutoring allows students to find the right tutor at the right price, regardless of where the tutor is located. For individual tutors and training organizations, online tutoring throws open an immense business opportunity.

However, online tutoring presents its own sets of sets of challenges, such as the lack of 'human interaction' and difficulty in managing remote student sessions. Thankfully, while online technology poses a problem, it also offers the solution. There are several software applications, which improve the learning experience and streamline the tutor and the student interaction.

Here are 5 of software tools for improving and managing your online tutoring business:

1. Skype

Skype is a great free tool for video and voice chatting. The best part is that almost everyone who has a computer or a smart phone has used Skype at some point. The application offers multiple benefits for online tutors -

- ✓ Schedule Skype tutoring sessions with students as per your convenience
- ✓ Share your screen, without giving control to the other person
- ✓ Share files with your students
- ✓ Take screenshots of the video session
- ✓ Type messages during the video session
- ✓ Use emoticons to add a fun touch to an online session



2. Online Whiteboards

Virtual whiteboards work pretty much like the physical whiteboards you see in most training rooms. Everything that you write or draw on the virtual whiteboard is visible to your students. Combining the use of a virtual whiteboard and Skype does a good job of simulating the classroom experience. [IDroo](#), is one online whiteboard application which works perfectly in sync with Skype. There are several free online whiteboard apps you can choose from, such as [Sketchlot](#), [AWW](#), [PixiClip](#), [Stoodle](#), [Scribblar](#), and [Realtime Board](#).

3. Cloud Storage - [Dropbox](#) and [Google Drive](#)

Free cloud storage services such as Dropbox and Google Drive allow you to store, update, and share your training resources with students at anytime, from your home or office. These online storage websites offer the following advantages -

- ✓ As long as your students have an account, adding, updating and sharing content is a breeze. For instance, students can submit their assignments on Dropbox and share the file with you by simply sending a link.
- ✓ Share only the folders you want students to access
- ✓ Easily share videos and images with your students
- ✓ Students can access these shared files no matter which device they use
- ✓ Collaborate with your students in real time. Google Drive allows more than one person to work on one document simultaneously.
- ✓ These websites also act as data backup for your digital training resources.

4. [YouTube](#)

Apart from conducting online-personalized sessions through Skype, tutors and training organizations are using YouTube to share educational resources for existing and potential students. Create your own YouTube channel and upload videos recorded by you on your subject of expertise. The [Khan Academy](#) for instance has uploaded 33,856 educational videos and has over 2,100,000 subscribers on YouTube. Apart from giving anytime, anywhere access to educational content to your students, this is a great way of establishing your online brand as a tutor and training organization.

5. Business Management Software

In addition, to enhancing the teaching experience, you can also use applications to manage the business and administrative aspects of your tutoring business. Comprehensive business management software such as [Teachworks](#) and [TutorPanel](#) can help you with the following -

- Scheduling tutoring sessions
- Managing training calendars
- Automating session reminders
- Reconciling training sessions and invoicing students
- Automating billing and payment receipts
- Business expense and revenue reports for a better understanding of your business

Using these and other online tools of your choice, is a great way to offer a consistently high quality experience to your students, whilst making it so much easier to manage your business.

3. Getting Started - Online Tutoring Platforms

Online tutoring platforms make it easy for you to teach effectively outside the traditional classroom environment. **There are two types of online tutoring websites –**

- Those where you are teach academic curriculum to school and college students (such as Tutorvista and eTutorworld), and
- Those where you can market interactive online courses on academic, professional and lifestyle topics (such as WizIQ and Udemy)

There are several benefits to enrolling with an online tutoring platform –

- ✓ These websites offer one-on-one chat hosting as well as other technological tools to facilitate live interactions with your students.
- ✓ They provide you with information on international course curriculums
- ✓ You can reach potential students across the globe at no additional cost

- ✓ These platforms offer you a great opportunity to work part-time or full-time depending on your availability



However, there are some caveats. Many websites teaching academic curriculum require a weekly commitment on the number of hours you will work. Depending on your time zone, you may be working odd hours as many of the students using these tutoring websites are from the US and UK. Also, while most sites hire graduates for certain subjects and grades, there is a strong preference for tutors who have a Master's qualification.

Here are 7 online training platforms to help you get started with online tutoring.

1. [Tutorvista.com](https://www.tutorvista.com)

Tutorvista is one of the leading online tutoring platforms with 2000 tutors from India, United States, UK, Australia, China and South East Asia. It boasts of more than 6.5 million successfully completed online tutorials. They hire tutors to teach English, Math, Physics, Biology and Chemistry from Kindergarten to the undergraduate level. Fill their [contact form](#) to apply as a tutor.

2. [eTutorworld](https://www.etutorworld.net)

With e-Tutorworld, you can interact with your students using an online whiteboard, voice and web chat. The site covers Grades 3-12 (Math, Science and English) as well as AP and College Foundation courses. They hire tutors from all parts of India, with a minimum qualification of a graduate degree. Email them at contact@etutorworld.net for more information on available tutor opportunities.

3. [e-Tutor](https://www.e-tutor.com)

eTutor provides in-depth curriculum tutoring to students anywhere in the world. It offers e-tutoring services for Maths, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies for students in Elementary, Middle, or High School. To to be considered for a tutoring position you must have a Bachelors degree, experience in working with students of all ages, and complete a [lesson module](#) available on their website.

4. [Transtutors](https://www.transtutors.com)

Transtutors is a platform where students from different schools and colleges can get help on their homework, assignments, projects and essays, as well as one-on-one tutoring lessons from subject matter experts. The website assists students from grade 4 up to university and doctoral level programmes. You need to fill an [application form](#) to sign up as an expert with the website.

5. [TutorNext](#)

The website provides interactive training sessions on basic subjects such as geometry, algebra, statistics, probability, chemistry, biology, and physics, as well as help for students studying for standardized tests. They also offer an 'essay reviewing' service. Email them on info@tutornext.com for more information on signing up as a tutor.

6. [WizIQ](#)

This is a great website if you simply want to create and host interactive online courses on the topics of technology, business, language, music, and lifestyle and wellness. While the website offers a free plan, if you are a training organization you may be better off choosing the pro plan costing \$57 a month.



7. [Udemy](#)

Udemy is another great platform for teaching online courses. The website also offers a variety of tools for delivering content online. For instance, hold live online sessions through Udemy's virtual classroom platform. You can create and promote your courses on the website for free.

4. Finding Students for Your Online Tutoring Business



The online tutoring industry is extremely competitive, as you are literally competing with tutors from across the world. Apart from enrolling with online tutoring websites, you must actively promote your services.

The good news is you don't need big advertising budgets to promote your online tutoring business. Here are some easy ways to reach potential students on a limited budget.

4.1 Traditional Methods

The traditional methods of advertising your business include local newspapers ads, posters, flyers, and brochures.

The key to any successful marketing campaign is **finding the right target segment**, which in your case are parents and students. So if you are looking to place posters, handout brochures and flyers, where better to reach your target audience than these locations -

i. Schools and libraries

Some schools may give permission to pin your flyer or poster on the school notifications board. Speak to the school education counsellor to check if that is indeed possible. Otherwise, simply handout your business cards and promotional material as students and parents exit the schools.

ii. Community Centres

Community centres attract local crowds especially around specific days or occasions. Visit the offices of local community centres for permission to display / distribute your advertising material at the venue.

iii. Libraries

Check with public libraries as well. Most have bulletin boards for displaying local information resources, and your online tutorial poster could be one of them.

iv. Local coffee shops and popular student areas

Identify coffee shops popular with college students. Also, identify markets that students frequent (for instance for buying academic material, or for using services such as printing, Xeroxing and binding).

It is important to **be creative in your marketing strategy**. For instance, while advertising in newspapers and telephone directories is often expensive, your local newspaper deliveryman may be willing to distribute promotional flyers along with the newspapers at a nominal fee. Register your business with popular telephonic directories. You can often do this for free.



4.2 Digital Marketing Methods

It is highly likely that most of your potential customers are already searching online for tutoring help. **Here are 5 tips on improving your online presence to reach students and their parents.**

i. Have your own website

A website that details who you are and what your offer is simply a business essential. You don't have to hire an expensive website designer. Use blogging websites such as [WordPress](#) to create your own website complete with your contact information and customer testimonials.

ii. Blog

Having created your website, the next step is to showcase your expertise. And what better way to do that than blogging. You can add blog content on your own website as well as contribute content to blogs on other websites. Familiarise yourself with the concept of 'SEO' of search engine optimization. Incorporate SEO tactics such as using the right keywords and meta description to improve your website's rankings on search engines.

iii. Register with Online Directories



Registering with popular online tutoring directories is a great way to allow potential students to find you. For instance, if you are an online tutor in India, register with [My Private Tutor](#) to create a detailed online tutoring profile and receive queries from students anywhere in the country. You can also respond to online tutoring job requirements posted by students and parents on the website.

iv. Google Places Profile

Be found by customers using Google with Google Places, a free online local business listing service. Your students

can also show their appreciation for your help using the +1 button, and share your Google+ content across the web.

v. Email campaign

According to a [2012 McKinsey Survey](#), emails are 40% more effective at acquiring customers than social media (Facebook and Twitter). Assuming you have an email base of your likely customers, you can design and send thousands of emails for free or at minimal cost with email marketing software such as [Mailchimp](#), [ConstantContact](#), [AWeber](#) and [Infusionsoft](#).

It may seem difficult to juggle so many business promotion techniques all at once. Start with a few of these marketing techniques and gradually incorporate all the promotional elements. Business promotion has to be a continuous process. Be patient, and your efforts will pay off.

5. Differences in Face-to-Face and Online Tutoring

To succeed at online tutoring, it is important to recognize the difference between conducting face-to-face and online tutorials. Here is a quick look at the benefits and drawbacks of both tutoring methods.

Face-to-Face Tutoring

Advantages

Compared to online tutorials, face-to-face (FTF) tutoring allows for more **personalized interaction**. When you meet students on a recurring basis, chances are you will get to know more about them, such as their family background, hobbies and career goals. When students feel at ease they tend to be more communicative, which is essential for a successful tutor-tutee relationship.

In addition, during the FTF session it is **easier to spot the non-verbal cues exhibited by your students**. A frown on the face, scratching of the forehead, or looking elsewhere, may indicate that your tutee is perhaps not following the lesson. It becomes easier to identify when you need to change pace or teaching approach to match the student's level of understanding.

FTF tutoring **is more suitable for if you are teaching certain lower age groups** (e.g. elementary school), or **certain subjects** (for example linguistics and art).

Disadvantage

The main disadvantage of FTF tutoring is its inflexibility. Either you or the tutee has to travel to the place of teaching for the session. Therefore, your potential to teach a higher student base and increase your earnings is restricted by your geographical location.

Online Tutoring

Online tutoring presents its own sets of advantages and disadvantages for the tutor.



Advantages

The biggest advantage online tutoring is the greater scope for work. You can teach students in any part of the world. In addition to regular online tutorials, you can also provide real-time assistance to different students on their homework and project assignments.

Online tutoring can be provided at a lower cost than FTF tuition, which means more students can afford your services.

You are more approachable to your students. Apart from your scheduled sessions, your students can easily request for ad hoc tutorials from the comfort of their home. Your FTF students can continue to seek tutorials online even if they move to a different location.

With young people preferring to interact more and more in the online space, **'online tutoring' seems to be the more appropriate way staying relevant to your students.** You can share online files, videos, infographics, and other multi-media content in addition to the textual course material.



Disadvantages

Online tutoring is not for everyone. For instance, the child is not tech savvy or does not have access to a computer and internet at home.

Focussing on an online tutorial requires greater discipline from the student. The student needs to keep track of the tutorial sessions, log on in time, and stay attentive all through the remotely conducted session, which you have to admit, is not easy.

Regardless of its limitations, online tutoring is here to stay. If you want to succeed as an online tutor, you will need to make some changes to your tutoring approach.

Here are some tips to improve tutee involvement during online tutorials –

- ✓ Answer as many questions as you can orally.
- ✓ Share the tutorial discussion schedule with your students in advance. Ask the student to email partially completed work or question sheets in advance of the tutorial.
- ✓ Ensure that your computer has a webcam to facilitate video discussions.
- ✓ Use technology to simulate classroom teaching. For instance, online whiteboards.
- ✓ Use applications such as Teachworks and TutorPanel to automate tutorial reminders for your students and their parents.
- ✓ When teaching younger students, it's a good idea to schedule fortnightly or monthly online discussions with parents. Building a relationship with the parents is an important part of the tuition process.

Online tutoring holds exciting possibilities for both the tutor and the tutee. The onus is on you to use the latest techniques to make the session as engaging as possible for your students.

6. Additional Skills for Online Tutoring

Whether you are tutoring face-to-face or conducting an online session, the basic skills required to tutor are the same.



- ✓ In-depth knowledge of the subject
- ✓ Familiarity with the course structure
- ✓ An enthusiasm to teach
- ✓ Ability to deploy various resources effectively
- ✓ Good communication skills
- ✓ Being able to ask the right questions
- ✓ Listening to the students
- ✓ Flexibility in approach to match the needs of the student
- ✓ Ability to encourage students
- ✓ Ability to provide constructive feedback

However, a tutor who is adept at teaching in a classroom environment may not necessarily be successful at conducting online tutorials because

online tutoring presents its own set of unique challenges. An online session requires a great deal of planning, in terms of both the session content and the execution. **Here are three additional skills needed to be successful at online tutoring.**

1. Planning

You need to plan every aspect of your session. Here are some suggestions.

- Provide clear guidelines to your students, including course objective, teaching methodology, frequency of sessions, and assessment process
- Provide administrative support to students/ parents; for instance, you could provide a weekly schedule for topics, and send email/ text reminders with the session time and date.
- Plan how you intend to conduct each session. For instance, the method of communication (email, chat or video) will vary with the topic as well as the needs of the individual student.
- Use necessary technology to improve the learning process
- Incorporate end-of-session assignments to reinforce the discussion



2. Use latest technologies

Be willing adapt the latest technologies to make the learning process creative and interactive. Take the time to explain to your students how the technology will be used during the tutorials. Change is the only constant and nowhere is that more obvious than in the field of e learning. Online tutors, who fail to use new technologies and be innovative, will not survive for long in the business.

3. Be Responsive

The lack of face-to-face contact has to be substituted by greater communication between you and the student and parents.

- Check your e-mail once daily (at least).
- Respond to emails and texts from students promptly
- Respond in a professional, but in an easy to understand language
- Have someone else deal with your messages if you are away
- Organize your messages for easy reference

7. Mistakes to Avoid When Setting Up Your Online Tutoring Business

Setting up an online tutoring business is no small feat. There are so many aspects to consider. Are you using the right online tools? Have you made enough efforts to market yourself? Are you prepared to handle the challenges of online tutoring?

Uncertainty and doubt are part of the process of running your business. As you acquire students and conduct more online tutorials, you will discover answers to most of these questions.

However, it is important to avoid certain mistakes when starting out.

**Mistake 1. Spending too much money at the start**

You have to be careful with your money initially. All you need to get started are a laptop or computer with a webcam and a good headset. Instead of expensive gadgets, download free online tools (such as Skype) to interact with your students. To begin with, enrol with online tutoring platforms free of cost. Spend on print advertising after you have some money flowing in.

Mistake 2. Unclear terms and conditions

When you run your own business, time is money. Should sessions be prepaid or paid on completion? Will you levy cancellation charges for last minute session cancellations? Will you refund money if the student fails to achieve a certain grade in the subject? These are all aspects of your business you need to think about and document as part of your 'terms and conditions'. Share these with the students and parents before commencing the tutoring classes.

Mistake 3. Failing to price your tutoring services correctly

Tutoring is a highly competitive business. When you are starting out, it is common to feel pressurised to set a price lower than that of your competitors. However, competition is only one of the factors that should determine pricing. You possess a unique set of competencies, skills, experience, and qualifications. Consider those as well. On the other hand, overpricing could lead to failure of the business. Study the market and target audience to avoid overpricing your services.

Mistake 4. Failing to define a niche

While you may feel confident in being able to teach anything, it is important to define your expertise. Perhaps you can teach multiple subjects such as Maths, Literature and Science, but if your core qualification is in teaching English, then use that as a marketing point. The more you work in a certain area, the more you are able to help students. As you gain experience, you also get to charge a higher price.

Mistake 5. Failing to invest time and effort in online marketing

Today every business needs to have an online identity, which means having your website, blog, and social media pages. More young people are browsing and 'shopping' online. As alien as the concepts may appear initially, familiarize yourself with website design and search engine marketing. Get reasonably priced professionals to help with your website, through freelancing websites such as oDesk and Elance.

There is undoubtedly a lot to learn in the online tutoring business. As you start your career as an online tutor, you are unlikely to have all the knowledge and skills necessary to act as subject expert, coach, assessor and a proficient user of online tools. We hope that this report has given you more than a few insights to get started, on what could be a very exciting and rewarding journey. Wishing you every success in your online tutoring business!

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