RECOMMEND <u>that the District Board of Trustees for North Florida College</u> <u>reviews the</u> <u>sample</u> <u>agreement with Brainfuse as an informational item only.</u>

ATTORNEY REVIEW STATUS: <u>N/A NFC is not required to sign an agreement with Brainfuse.</u>

THIS RECOMMENDATION: <u>will provide NFC students with online 24/7 tutoring services</u> <u>from May 1, 2024 through April 30, 2025.</u>

ONLINE TUTORING SERVICES
FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

PREPARED BY:

Brainfuse, Inc.
271 Madison Ave.
New York, New York 10016
1.866.BRAINFUSE
requests@brainfuse.com
www.brainfuse.com

2024

ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RE: Brainfuse Online Tutoring Services for Your Institution

To Whom It May Concern:

Attached is our online tutoring services proposal for your institution. Our Director of Accounts, Troy Weiman, is our authorized official. He is able to bind Brainfuse legally and may be contacted to clarify the information contained in our proposal.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR OUR AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

Troy Weiman, Director of Accounts
Phone: 917.338.3229
Email: tweiman@brainfuse.com

BRAINFUSE'S CORPORATE DETAILS:

Brainfuse was founded in 1999, and is headquartered in the State of New York.

Company Legal Name:	Brainfuse
Principal Address:	271 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016
Email Address:	requests@brainfuse.com
Telephone Number:	(Toll Free) 866.272.4638
Fax Number:	212.504.8184

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE:

Brainfuse employs a team of over 4,000 tutors, 20 managers, and 18 support staff members.

COMPANY HIGHLIGHTS:

o **Financial Stability:** Brainfuse is the only major tutoring company to have maintained the same ownership and academic management since our inception – underscoring our clarity of purpose, and ability to commit to stable pricing and long-term projects with our clients.

o **Growth Rate:** Brainfuse has been in business since 1999 and has grown at an average rate of 10-15% per year for the past ten years. It is worth noting that Brainfuse has experienced revenue growth in every single one of its 23 years in business.

o **Singular Focus on Institutional Clients:** While many providers also offer direct-to-consumer tutoring, we believe there is an inevitable pedagogical conflict between market pressures to provide assignment answers and edit writing assignments with an institution's educational objectives. Managing these competing interests is virtually impossible. As such, we have avoided entering the consumer market and focus our efforts on serving educational institutions exclusively.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & OVERVIEW:

Since 1999, we have completed millions of tutoring sessions for students throughout the country. Our longevity is due, in large part, to high-quality tutoring, research-based writing lab assistance, and a highly-customizable platform that integrates with, extends, and enhances an institution's academic support efforts. Please see our "SUMMARY OF SERVICES" section for details.

- **20+ Years of Experience Nationwide:** Brainfuse provides online tutoring to over 250 higher education institutions nationwide, including statewide community college programs in Kentucky, West Virginia, and Virginia; major universities such as the University of New Hampshire, UNLV; and large community college systems such as Maricopa County Community College District (AZ), Alamo Colleges, and Austin Community College. Please see our "PARTIAL LIST OF CURRENT CLIENTS" section for details.

- **Highly-Qualified Tutors:** We employ a team of approximately 4,000 highly-qualified tutors. All of our tutors undergo a rigorous training process that exceeds Level 3 College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) standards. Please see our "ABOUT OUR TUTORS" section for details.

- **Tutoring in Virtually Any Language:** The Brainfuse classroom features an AI-based translation engine that enables tutors and students to communicate in over 100 languages.

- **Millions of Effective Sessions:** Brainfuse tutors have completed millions of one-to-one online tutoring sessions. Post-session surveys consistently yield over a 96% satisfaction rate among the college students we serve. A recent third-party study shows that students who received Brainfuse tutoring were significantly more likely to remain in college than students who did not. Please see our "EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS" section for details.

PROVEN EFFECTIVENESS SERVING HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS:

According to a study conducted by a third-party research firm, the retention rates for students who received Brainfuse Online Tutoring were 11% higher than the rates of students who did not. It should also be noted that retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. Put differently, as online tutoring dosage increased, so did retention rates. Such findings are reinforced by post-session surveys that showed a 97% of students were satisfied with their sessions, 93% reported that Brainfuse tutoring had positive impact on their grades, and 90% credited Brainfuse for increasing their academic confidence. Please see our "THIRD-PARTY RETENTION ANALYSIS OF BRAINFUSE" section for details.

ABOUT OUR UNIQUE QUALIFICATIONS:

Our versatility, customization, and experience sets us apart from other tutoring providers. These distinctions have become even more apparent during the COVID-19 crisis, where we have been selected by municipalities nationwide to provide online tutoring while schools and colleges are closed:

- **Full Integration/Customization:** We designed our platform to fully integrate with and extend the reach of an institution's existing tutoring program. Institutions can easily craft customized, hybrid options that feature both Brainfuse and campus-based tutors.

- **Faculty Dashboard:** Our Faculty Dashboard allows faculty to assign tutoring and writing lab assistance to struggling students, or to schedule an online review session for their entire class. Please see our "SUMMARY OF SERVICES" section for details.

- **Deep Analytics:** Our Proactive Assistance™ feature provides an institution's leadership, faculty, and student support staff with key insights into how students are faring, both individually and aggregately.

- **Integrated Content:** Our comprehensive library of lessons and practice tests is designed to build and reinforce critical academic skills and includes complete tutoring support from our online experts.

Thank you for your interest in our online tutoring services. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Gianni Lecciso
Program Director
Brainfuse
Phone: (Toll Free) 866.272.4638
Fax: 212.504.8184
Email: requests@brainfuse.com

BRAINFUSE COST PROPOSAL
FOR YOUR INSTITUTION

Brainfuse will offer its online tutoring services to your institution (as described in our proposal) at a rate of **$22.80** per hour:

SERVICE	COST	TERM
Online tutoring services as described in our proposal	$22.80 per hour	Entire contract
All other services and content described in our proposal not involving interaction with a tutor	$0 (no extra charge)	Entire contract
Set-up, support and future updates/features	$0 (no extra charge)	Entire contract

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING REGARDING OUR PRICING:

o   There are *no* additional fees associated with Brainfuse services.

o   Brainfuse charges hourly rates which are **all-inclusive** (includes taxes and any other associative costs).

o   There are *no* administrative and startup/setup costs with Brainfuse.

o   All upcoming services, upgrades and enhancements will be included *at no* charge.

o   Brainfuse only charges for interactions involving a tutor. All other content and services described in our proposal (including, but not limited to, our Test Center, Skillsurfer, flashcards, eParachute, MEET, Brainwaves, reporting features, and TutorMatch) are provided at *no* extra charge.

o   Unused hours *do not* expire, and they can be rolled-over to the subsequent academic year at no extra charge.

o   For live sessions, we bill in one-minute increments.

o   Other pricing options and service combinations are available upon request.

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BRAINFUSE SUMMARY OF SERVICES

Brainfuse will provide your institution with our HelpNow online tutoring services (as described below).

Years of research, millions of tutoring sessions, and feedback from students, faculty, and administrators have produced a powerful combination of mutually-reinforcing services, designed to provide students opportunities to seek assistance in a variety of ways without impediments to institutional needs or preferences. The HelpNow Support Suite includes:
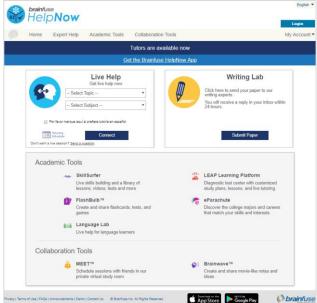
1. **EXPERT HELP**
2. **STUDY TOOLS**
3. **COLLABORATION TOOLS**
4. **DATA & REPORTING**

1. EXPERT HELP

Students enjoy live, on-demand one-to-one tutoring, skills building, and expert writing assistance in a variety of college subjects. Moreover, we designed the expert tutoring portion of our service to integrate seamlessly with your institution's tutoring program.

LIVE ONLINE TUTORING: HelpNow features live, on-demand homework help from Brainfuse-certified tutors in a variety of Higher Ed subjects, customized for your institution. Tutors and students communicate in real-time through the Brainfuse Online Classroom. Whatever a student types, draws, or shares on the screen, the tutor sees, and vice versa. Our platform records all sessions for later review by students, faculty, and staff (if your institution's privacy policy allows for it). Audio is also available through VoIP and a toll-free conference bridge, and video is available.

- **Tutoring in Virtually Any Language:** Brainfuse offers tutoring in Spanish from U.S.-based Spanish-speaking tutors. In addition, our classroom features an AI-based translation engine that enables tutors and students to communicate in 100+ languages.

- **Skills Workshops:** Our Skills Workshops -- unique among online tutoring providers -- offer unprecedented integration between tutoring sessions and course objectives. Faculty schedule workshops for their entire class by selecting the topic(s) they want to be covered and providing the Brainfuse tutor with instructions/supporting materials. A typical online workshop session begins with a tutor reviewing a skill or concept, followed by an opportunity for students to ask questions through the Brainfuse Classroom. Students can participate in live workshops or view archived sessions.

ONLINE WRITING LAB: As an organization, we have devoted considerable resources to building an exceptional writing lab program. Our writing lab supports students during all phases of the writing process, with an emphasis on structure, voice, word choice, content, and sentence fluency. Brainfuse writing tutors employ research-based methodologies to encourage students to revise their papers critically, develop a heightened sensitivity to their audience and, ultimately, become better writers. Students have the option of submitting papers to our Asynchronous Writing Lab or connecting with a live online writing expert.

- **Asynchronous Writing Lab:** Students submit their writing online through our secure messaging service. Within 12 hours, our writing specialists return the paper along with a detailed analysis and a customized analytic rubric. Rubrics focus on organization, voice, and thematic coherence. Students can share the rubric analysis with live tutors for more targeted assistance. Brainfuse can also customize its writing analysis based on your institution's evaluative preferences.

- **Live Writing Lab:** Students who are in the preliminary stages of the writing process (or who prefer more immediate feedback) have the option to receive live, one-to-one writing assistance from one of our writing experts.

- **Multiple Levels of Review for Every Submission:** Many institutions who switch from another provider to Brainfuse cite our superior writing lab service as one of the main reasons for their decision. To this end, we employ a comprehensive, multi-step process to ensure consistent, high-quality reviews:

  - **Writing Tutor Review:** When reviewing a submission, our tutors consider details provided by the student (or faculty member) regarding the nature of the assignment and any stated analytic priorities. Such information allows tutors to offer more individualized and targeted feedback.

  - **Writing Lab Monitor Review:** After a submission is completed by one of our tutors, our writing lab monitors thoroughly examine the feedback to confirm that it aligns with our rigorous standards. This second level of review helps students become better writers by providing them with consistent and actionable guidance. When examining the file, we review all aspects of the feedback, including the degree to which suggestions for revision are accurate, applicable, and specific. Upon reviewing the completed submission, our team provides detailed comments to the tutor. These comments allow us to support tutors proactively in maintaining high-quality reviews.

INTEGRATION WITH AN EXISTING TUTORING PROGRAM: Our online classroom, writing lab, and scheduling software allow your institution to integrate its existing tutoring services with Brainfuse online services. Such integration greatly expands a student's assistance options: From a single online portal, students can, among other things, schedule an on-campus tutoring session, connect with your institution's tutors or faculty members via the Brainfuse Classroom, or access a Brainfuse online tutor.

ABILITY FOR FACULTY TO ASSIGN TUTORING ASSISTANCE:
Our *Faculty Dashboard* allows faculty or administrators to assign customized online tutoring and writing lab assistance to specified students. This tool includes the ability for faculty to send special instructions to the online tutor, view tutoring sessions, access writing lab feedback from our tutors, and to track student progress. This feature is particularly effective in reaching those students who are unlikely to seek tutoring assistance on their own.
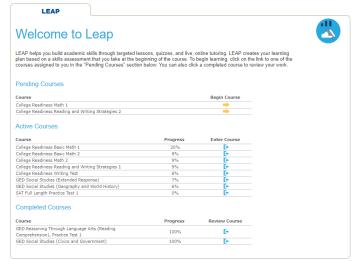

Assign Tutoring Assistance

Please select which tutoring task you would like to create:

Live Tutoring

Assign a student a live online tutoring session that focuses on a specific skill or subject

Writing Lab

Invite specified students to submit papers to the Brainfuse Writing Lab for expert analysis

Faculty Dashboard

2. STUDY TOOLS

HelpNow features a customizable library of assessments and lessons in a wide range of subjects. While we designed the content to hone skills through self-study, live tutoring support is always a click away. This tight integration between academic content and live tutoring addresses one of the most persistent problems with Q&A-based online homework help: students who need the most help often lack the requisite subject matter proficiency to formulate meaningful questions for their tutor. HelpNow eliminates this barrier: Since concepts covered in our lesson library can -- and often do -- serve as the basis for a tutoring session, even students with minimal knowledge can receive assistance.
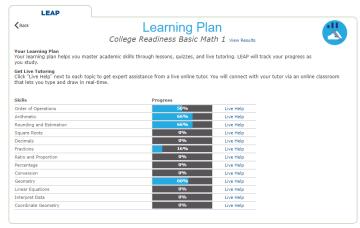
THE LEAP TEST CENTER: For over a decade, our LEAP Test Center has helped students build academic skills through accurate assessment, progress tracking, and targeted tutoring.

LEAP Test Center

- o **LEAP Tests:** The LEAP Test Center offers students unlimited access to our proprietary, ever-expanding library of online assessments and practice tests. Our Test Center supports a variety of tests, including:

  - o ACCUPLACER
  - o GRE Preparation
  - o Fundamental College Skills (including developmental education)
  - o ASVAB
  - o GED
  - o Academic Skills for Nursing and Pharmacology
  - o **Customized Tests:** Our Academic Team also aligns test questions and produces customized tests for clients as part of our standard service package.

o **Individualized Learning Plan:** Upon completing a test, students instantly receive results in the form of a learning plan that, based on the student's performance, identifies areas requiring additional attention. The learning plan is not just a list of skills; it is a dynamic learning platform that features a customized blend of video tutorials, written content, and practice test questions. And since our learning plan content is integrated with our tutor routing system, Brainfuse tutors are available to help students every step of the way. More specifically, a student can select the "Get Live Help" option from within any lesson and connect with a tutor who has access to that lesson, and who is an expert in the academic concepts covered by the lesson. In addition, the tutor can – with the student's permission – view that student's test results and customize the session accordingly.

o **Live Tutoring:** While most online academic skills programs amount to little more than quizzes and software, we believe that there is no substitute for the responsiveness of live, one-to-one instruction. Live tutors are a vital component of our Test Center's effectiveness by supplementing lessons with in-depth explanations and personal guidance.

LEAP Progress Tracking

o **Progress Tracking:** Our graphically rich dashboard shows students which skills they have mastered, and which skills require additional attention.

SKILLSURFER LESSON LIBRARY: Our SkillSurfer Lesson Library features hundreds of captioned video lessons and practice tests prepared by the Brainfuse Academic Team in a variety of core subjects. In addition, any student who requires additional assistance while using SkillSurfer can simply click "Get Live Help" from any lesson and immediately connect with a live expert. SkillSurfer covers a wide range of standardized tests and academic subjects, including:

o Mathematics (including calculus and statistics)
o English Composition and Reading
o Career Enhancing Skills
o GRE
o GMAT
o TOEFL
o CLEP
o Nursing Entrance Exams (TEAS and HESI)
o Computers and Technology
o Business/Career Writing
o Job Resources and Resume/Interview Preparation

SkillSurfer Video Lesson

ABILITY FOR AN INSTITUTION TO ADD CONTENT TO LEAP AND SKILLSURFER: Faculty members or academic support staff can use our platform to author/upload practice tests, URLs, writing resources, study tips, or any other useful content for students.
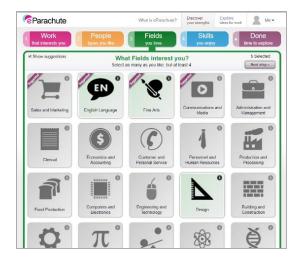
SESSION PLAYER: For purposes of study and review, students can play back their past tutoring sessions from any desktop or mobile device. In addition, students can view, print, and email transcripts of past sessions.

FLASHBULB FLASHCARDS: While online tutoring is an effective way to help students master academic concepts, using live online tutoring sessions for merely memorizing information is not a cost-effective use of an institution's tutoring funds. As a result, we developed Flashbulb – a versatile, comprehensive learning tool that enables students to easily create flashcards and games for self-study from any desktop or mobile device. Students also enjoy 24/7 access to an extensive library of online flashcard sets in virtually every college subject.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LAB: Our foreign language lab features on-demand tutoring support and a robust vocabulary builder for students learning a foreign language:

- **Live Foreign Language Tutoring:** We offer tutoring in Spanish as part of our standard configuration. French, Italian, and German support are also available by request.

- **Vocabulary Builder:** We created WordLayer to help students build vocabulary through quizzes, lessons, and drills that incorporate audio from native speakers. Produced with the help of professional language instructors, WordLayer is suitable for learners at varying levels of proficiency and aligns to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. WordLayer features Catalan, Danish, Dutch, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Swedish, and we will soon launch additional foreign languages (including support for ESOL students).

ePARACHUTE: Since many students who visit HelpNow are also actively considering their academic and career options, we offer eParachute, a powerful self-discovery tool that is a perfect complement to students as they navigate our online tutoring and content offerings. Created by the author of "What Color is Your Parachute?" eParachute helps students match their skills and interests with viable academic and career paths. Since its launch over six years ago, thousands of students have used eParachute, and we receive many comments about how it has helped them derive greater clarity of academic purpose – an important component in our effort to improve retention and persistence rates.

3. COLLABORATION TOOLS

MEET™ Online Meeting Room: The MEET™ online meeting room is an easy-to-use academic collaboration platform. MEET allows students, among other things, to use our online classroom to schedule live, online study groups, work together on class projects, and share information with fellow students. In addition, faculty can use MEET to hold virtual office hours.

Brainwave™: Brainwave allows users to take notes on the Brainfuse Classroom for later playback. It is an ideal tool for recording solutions to math or science problems, class projects, or any other concept involving motion, sequence, or animation. Users also have access to the Brainwave library, consisting of user- and professionally- created Brainwaves in virtually every academic subject.

4. DATA & REPORTING

THE BRAINFUSE DASHBOARD: Our Dashboard is one of the most comprehensive and customizable data aggregating tools offered by an online tutoring provider. The Brainfuse Dashboard provides stakeholders with the essential information to, among other things, track usage, view remaining hours, measure program effectiveness, monitor student progress, and identify students who need additional assistance.

The Brainfuse Dashboard

PROACTIVE ASSISTANCE ™ DATA REPORTING:
Our Proactive Assistance™ reporting system identifies struggling students early -- even before they have taken a test, submitted a paper, or received a grade. It also provides a course-by-course view of the academic obstacles that are leading students to seek tutoring in the first place. The Proactive Assistance system includes the following elements:

- **Early Identification of Struggling Students by Tutors:** Brainfuse tutors flag sessions when students evidence particular struggle with a concept. In such cases, tutors also supply details regarding the nature of the academic issue. This information becomes available immediately to designated individuals within your institution for timely follow-up.

- **Customized Alerts**: Our platform allows your institution to customize automated alerts when students exhibit usage patterns (such as high frequency of use or consistently long sessions) that might indicate a need for additional academic support beyond online tutoring.

- **Actionable Analytics:** Our dashboard details the skills and questions covered during tutoring sessions. By granularly identifying the academic concepts that students struggle with most, institutions gain valuable insights regarding course design efficacy, clarity of instructional materials, and the overall student experience.

SUPPORTING EXISTING SERVICES

We designed our proprietary platform with ease-of-use and consistency in mind. At *no additional cost*, your existing campus tutoring services can integrate with our online classroom, writing lab platform, and scheduling feature to provide efficient online and offline academic support.

TUTORMATCH: TutorMatch seamlessly integrates your institution's existing tutoring services with our online services. With TutorMatch, students enjoy a single access point for a variety of tutoring options and an intuitive scheduling calendar featuring days and times of availability for specific tutors and subjects.

- **o** **Integration with Existing Writing Lab:** Our proprietary writing lab platform is available for your on-campus writing tutors to use. Among other things, our writing lab platform allows designated writing tutors to receive specific types of papers and allows administrators to view writing lab feedback and to monitor workflow to ensure that papers are returned in a timely fashion.

- **o** **Integration with Existing Live Tutoring Services:** Your tutors can use our online classroom and scheduling software to tutor students. In addition, tutor administrators can play back/view sessions, evaluate tutor performance, track student usage, and manage subjects offered and hours of availability.

- **o** **Full Training and Support:** While our TutorMatch system is intuitive for students to use, we will provide full training and support to your tutors, program faculty, and program coordinators in how to use our TutorMatch system. Training can be provided on campus by Brainfuse representatives, via webinar, and through pre-recorded video tutorials. Ongoing 24/7 training, technical, and customer support will also be provided.

CUSTOMIZED INTEGRATION: In addition to the above integration areas, our development team is able, upon request, to customize other integration options.

TUTORING SUBJECTS

Brainfuse will provide online tutoring in the following subjects (from basic to advanced levels). Additional subjects are available upon request:

MATHEMATICS

- Advanced Statistics
- Algebra
- Basic Math
- Calculus (Single Variable)
- Differential Equations
- Discrete Mathematics
- Geometry
- Liberal Arts Math
- Linear Algebra
- Multivariable Calculus
- Pre-Algebra
- Pre-Calculus
- Statistics
- Trigonometry

LANGUAGE ARTS

- English for Academic Purposes
- ESOL Writing Support
- Live Writing Help
- Reading (Reading Fluency, Comprehension Strategies & Analysis, Vocabulary Development & Usage Application, ESL Topics/Issues)
- Writing, All Courses (Customizable Writing Lab; standard services include Writing Skills, Paragraph Reviews, Process Paper Reviews, Expository Essays, Research Papers, Profile Essays, Fictional Writing, Career Writing, Resumes, etc.)

BUSINESS

- Accounting
- Advanced Accounting
- Auditing
- Corporate Tax
- Cost Accounting
- Economics
- Finance
- Governmental/Not-for-Profit Accounting

- o Individual Income Tax
- o Intermediate Accounting
- o Payroll Accounting

SCIENCES

- o Biology
- o Chemistry
- o Environmental Science
- o Earth Science
- o Human Anatomy & Physiology
- o Microbiology Chemistry
- o Organic Chemistry
- o Physical Science
- o Physics

COMPUTER SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- o A+ Certification
- o Adobe Creative Suite
- o C++
- o Cloud Computing
- o HTML5/CSS
- o JAVA
- o JAVA Script
- o Linux+
- o MS Office Suite
- o PHP/My SQL
- o Security+
- o Windows

NURSING/ALLIED HEALTH

- o Allied Health Occupations
- o Emergency Care
- o Medical Assisting
- o Medical Terminology
- o NCLEX-PN
- o NET
- o NLN PAE
- o Nursing
- o Nursing Administration
- o Nursing/Allied Health Essay Review
- o Nursing Anatomy and Physiology
- o Nursing Care Plans

- o Nursing Medical-Surgery
- o Nursing Pathophysiology
- o Nursing-Pharmacology
- o Oncology
- o Pediatrics
- o Pharmacy Math and Dosage
- o Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing
- o TEAS
- o Women's Health

OTHER - SOCIAL SCIENCES

- o Government
- o History
- o Psychology
- o Sociology

OTHER - LANGUAGES

- o Chinese
- o English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- o French
- o Italian
- o Spanish

OTHER - MISC.

- o General Study Skills

PLEASE NOTE:

- o Additional subjects are available upon request
- o ESOL tutoring is available for all subjects

ABOUT OUR TUTORS

Brainfuse employs a team of over 4,000 tutors. It should be noted that our higher education tutors undergo a rigorous training process that exceeds Level 3 College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) standards for tutors. While our tutors hail from a broad range of backgrounds, all of our higher education tutors possess the following credentials:

CREDENTIAL/QUALIFICATION	PERCENTAGE
Bachelor's Degree in the area they tutor	100%
Graduate Degree (MA, MS, MEd, PhD, etc.) in the area they tutor	96%
At least a 90% performance on relevant Brainfuse-administered subject matter test	100%
3+ years teaching or tutoring experience	100%
Over 30 hours of supervised training in pedagogical techniques	100%

TUTOR TRAINING: Brainfuse Higher Ed tutors undergo a rigorous training and certification process, ensuring they have the necessary credentials to assist students effectively. This training includes field-tested pedagogical techniques that Brainfuse has developed for live, online tutoring environments. More specifically, our tutors are trained to employ a range of techniques (inspired by CRLA-designated principles), current research, and best practices that have been specifically adapted to online tutoring, including:

- o Definition of tutoring and tutor responsibilities
- o Basic tutoring guidelines (do's and don'ts)
- o Techniques for successfully beginning and ending a tutor session
- o Adult learners, learning theory, and/or learning styles
- o How to work with difficult students
- o The importance of role modeling
- o Helping students set goals and planning
- o Online communication skills

- Active observation, listening, and paraphrasing during a tutoring session
- When to refer students to seek additional help from their school
- Helping students develop study skills
- Helping students think critically
- Academic integrity issues, sexual harassment, and/or plagiarism
- Helping a student learn through modeling
- Use of probing questions
- Working with special needs students
- Working with students from diverse backgrounds and target populations
- Identifying and using resources
- How to tutor in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of a student's on-campus instructor and their on-campus learning center
- How to provide a structured online tutoring session
- Scaffolding
- Differentiation
- Using the whiteboard tools to elicit student participation
- Using various prompts to determine whether a student has mastered a concept
- Marshalling Brainfuse's lesson library to provide students with additional problem sets and reinforcement

TRAINING TO GUIDE STUDENTS RATHER THAN PROVIDE ANSWERS: Brainfuse tutors are trained to guide students rather than simply providing answers or directly editing student papers. To accomplish this, tutors employ a variety of techniques, including working through analogous problems and then asking the student to try to solve the problem on their own. In this way, students learn when and how to apply various problem-solving strategies.

- **Academic Integrity:** We take academic integrity seriously. Tutors are required to notify our 24/7 monitors if they suspect that a student is seeking answers to a test or is submitting plagiarized written work. Tutors are trained to politely inform the student of the concern and not complete the task until the issue is resolved. In addition, we notify our clients of any suspected breach in academic integrity (in accordance with your institution's reporting requirements).
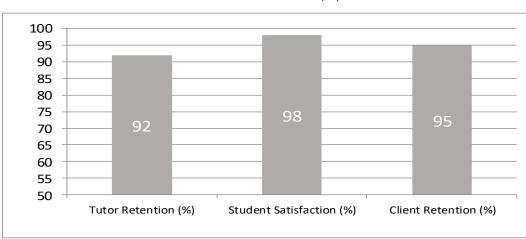
ESOL TUTORING: Brainfuse provides customizable tutoring to ESOL students. ESOL tutoring is available 24/7 by appointment and may also be made available for instant access tutoring, depending on student demand. When working with students, Brainfuse ESOL tutors are trained to utilize research-based principles and best practices, including:

- **Explicit skill instruction**: When working with ESOL students, tutors are trained to employ explicit instruction strategies. Elements of explicit instruction include overtly setting and articulating learning goals, illustrating or modeling how to complete a task, and assessing student understanding and ability to complete the task independently. The routines and consistent language used in explicit teaching provide ESOL students with clear, specific, and easy-to-follow procedures as they learn not only a new skill or strategy but also the language associated with it.

- **Adjusting instructional language:** Our ESOL tutors are trained to adjust their level of English and vocabulary during a session in order to scaffold the student's acquisition of new strategies and skills (including English language skills). Two ways in which tutors can modify their language to enhance instruction are to adjust the level of the vocabulary that is used and to use language consistently.

ABOUT OUR TUTOR MONITORING AND REVIEW SYSTEM: Our rigorous monitoring and review system is unique among online tutoring providers:

- **Live Monitoring:** We are the only online tutoring company to staff a full-time monitoring team. Monitors provide tutors with real-time assistance with respect to instructional strategies and also assist students with special tutoring requests. In addition, our monitors review session transcripts daily and provide management with summary reports of the day's activities.

- **Ongoing Tutor Evaluation:** We evaluate our tutors regularly based on session performance (as determined through students' post-session surveys, client feedback, live monitoring, and review of session transcripts). During periods of low use, monitors log on as students to further evaluate tutor performance. Tutors are rated on a scale of 1-5. This rating serves as a major factor in determining staffing and compensation.

- **Quality Control Software:** We employ a proprietary algorithm to identify inappropriate language or potentially unacceptable exchanges of personal information (such as phone numbers, addresses, etc.). Our live monitors are then able to view the transcript in greater detail to determine whether the issue warrants additional attention.

- **Ongoing Professional Development Through Tutor Managers:** Our tutor managers serve as both supervisors and mentors to tutors. Their role is to monitor performance and share best practices and constructive comments with tutors through private correspondence and regular conference call meetings.

- **Monitoring Tools Available to Clients Using Their Own Tutors:** Clients who decide to staff their own tutors using our platform can take advantage of the same monitoring tools that we use for our own tutors.

HIGH SATISFACTION AMONG TUTORS: Based on virtually every relevant metric, we have some of the most satisfied tutors in the industry. Our tutors work online, can set their own hours, and have a transferable skill that makes it easy for them to switch over and work for another tutoring provider. Since the nature of their position makes is very easy for a tutor to end his/her working relationship with us, tutor retention is perhaps the best metric to judge overall satisfaction. We work with an active and vibrant community of tutors who have many opportunities to provide feedback, set the terms of their work, receive mentoring, and advance within the company. The result has been a 92% retention rate among our tutors (many of our tutors have been with us for over 10 years). It is worth noting that our high tutor retention rate mirrors other qualitative indicators within the company, with over 90% student satisfaction (based on post-session surveys), and 95% annual retention of our clients. While we cannot affirmatively establish a causal link, we believe that tutor satisfaction contributes high student satisfaction and client retention.

ANNUAL SATISFACTION LEVELS (%) 2011-2022

DATA COLLECTION & REPORTING FEATURES

BRAINFUSE PROACTIVE ASSISTANCE ™ DATA REPORTING

Our Proactive Assistance™ system provides institutions with timely, actionable information to gauge program effectiveness, and identify and assist struggling students.
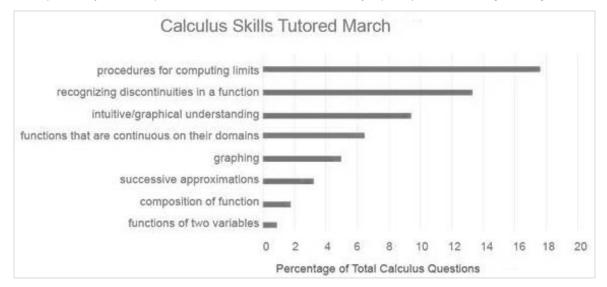
o **Early Identification of Struggling Students:** At the end of each session, our tutors will send your institution an instant notification if they believe that a session requires additional attention. This feature can also assist systems that already review session transcripts to do so more efficiently by highlighting particular sessions. And unlike some reporting systems that merely "flag" students without further explanation, our Proactive Assistance System provides institutions with the reason(s) *why* the tutor flagged the session.

o **Integration with Faculty Dashboard:** One of the many unique features of our data reporting system is the ability to integrate with our Faculty Dashboard. The Faculty Dashboard allows faculty or other administrators to directly assign tutoring assistance to students via your institution's LMS. This combination of being able to identify struggling students and assign them assistance within the same administrative system is unique among online tutoring companies.

EXAMPLE OF TUTOR NOTIFICATIONS: *In the example below, our usage reporting system has notified school administrators of four students who have struggled during tutoring sessions. In addition, administrators or faculty members have the ability to click on the "View Session" link to view the session transcript in order to determine whether additional action is warranted.*

Campus	Student ID	Subject	Session Date	Session Transcript	Tutor Notification
Finley	**FL18903809**	Calculus	1.23.16	View Session	**Did not seem to understand fundamental concepts of assignment.**
Finely	**FL48092890**	Writing	2.7.16	View Session	**Expressed frustration with course. Says that wants to drop out of class.**
Jefferson	**JF80928393**	Biology 101	2.12.16	View Session	**Lacked background skills for completing assignment.**
Jefferson	**JF82048903**	Chem222	2.17.16	View Session	**Student did not understand basic terminology from course.**
Jefferson	JF83910318	Econ 122	2.21.16	View Session	
West Conley	WC8931093	Algebra	1.22.16	View Session	

o **Customized Data Delivery and Starfish Integration:** We will work closely with your institution to align our data collection practices with your goals and objectives. We are also able to integrate our data reporting with systems such as StarFish and other student retention systems in order to provide your institution with early and actionable data regarding student needs.

o **Actionable Analytics:** Our Actionable Analytics ™ reports help you see which questions are being asked most frequently at a granular level. Such data can provide faculty and school administrators with valuable information regarding course design, textbooks, and other course materials.
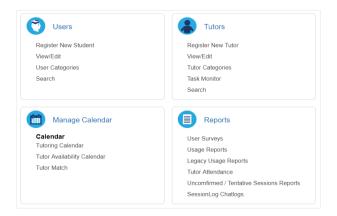
Below is a portion of a Skills Report that shows which skills were most frequently covered during tutoring sessions:

Calculus Skills Tutored March

o **LMS Integration:** Brainfuse can integrate with all major learning management systems and institutional databases, including Blackboard, D2L, Canvas, Moodle, and more. This integration allows for quick, secure correlation of Brainfuse usage data with other student data points such as grades or retention. We also staff a full technical team that can provide customized integration solutions to systems that maintain student databases that require additional integration efforts beyond mere compatibility with a standard LMS.

o **Analysis of Program Effectiveness:** We are able to correlate usage data with grades, retention rates, demographic data, and any other academically significant information provided by the institution. Our academic team is also able to provide all necessary information and support to the institution (or third parties hired by the institution) to analyze our program's effectiveness.

o **Assigning Tutoring to Struggling Students via the Brainfuse Dashboard**: Our Instructor Dashboard allows faculty or administrators to assign customized online tutoring and writing lab assistance to specified students. This tool includes the ability for faculty to send special instructions to the online tutor, view tutoring sessions, access writing lab feedback from our tutors, and track student progress. This feature is particularly effective in reaching those students who are unlikely to seek tutoring assistance on their own.

DATA REPORTING

Comprehensive reports are available online through a password-protected portal for designated staff at your institution. In addition, Brainfuse will provide comprehensive reports to your institution on a monthly basis (or at any interval determined by your institution).
In addition to on-demand access, reports can also be emailed or sent in hard copy to the program manager(s) and other designated staff at regular intervals.

DATA THROUGH THE BRAINFUSE DASHBOARD: The Brainfuse Dashboard provides stakeholders with all essential information regarding tutoring activities within their institution, including the necessary information to measure program effectiveness, monitor student progress, and target students for additional assistance. Data reporting covers all major areas of usage, including total tutoring usage, usage of our platform (by individual feature). Reporting is available on a per-student, per-course, and per-college basis.

The dashboard includes the following data. Other data and reporting formats are available upon request:

STUDENT INFORMATION

- o Usage by student name
- o Usage by student ID number
- o Student's college by course
- o Student performance (post-session notes) and attendance data (both individual and aggregate)
- o Course code and section number
- o Instructor

BUDGET MANAGEMENT DATA

- o Hours used
- o Total number of sessions by campus, zip code, and/or remote usage (according to institution preference)
- o Usage by course
- o Usage trend analysis (within a time period you specify)
- o Amount of budget used
- o Online writing lab submission and response statistics

SESSION INFORMATION

- o Total number of sessions
- o Type of tutor used
- o Tutor name/ID
- o Average session length
- o Type of session
- o Session date
- o Start and stop time of session
- o Session transcripts
- o Playback of session recordings
- o Tutor's writing analysis of student papers
- o Topics covered by each session
- o Number of sessions by topic
- o Number of students served
- o Average number of sessions per hour of the day and day of the week (in order to determine usage trends)
- o Post-session satisfaction surveys indicating user satisfaction and user comments
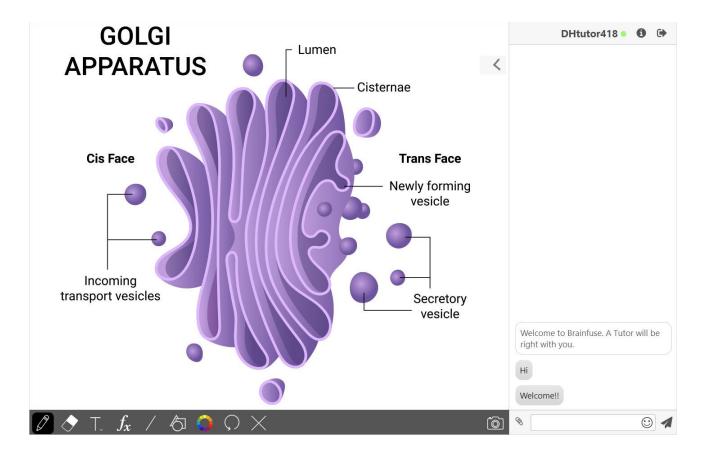
CUSTOMIZATION OF SURVEY DATA: Brainfuse surveys are entirely customizable. Our system allows institutions to customize the nature and number of questions, as well as inserting text fields for comments. As a result, our system can accommodate the type of surveys contemplated by this solicitation in order to gather survey data regarding, among other things:

- o Ease of use

- o Accessibility and availability when needed

- o Tutor Competency

- o Impact of tutoring on a student's course grade

- o What the student liked most or found most helpful from the session

- o What the student liked least or found least helpful

- o Recommendations for improving the service

- o Willingness to recommend the service to other students

ABOUT OUR ONLINE CLASSROOM & MOBILE APP

BRAINFUSE'S SYNCHRONOUS CLASSROOM (BRAINFUSE ONLINE CLASSROOM)

Field-tested and refined for over twenty years in the low-bandwidth environments of rural and inner-city institutions, the Brainfuse Online Classroom epitomizes ease-of-use and accessibility (it is even accessible through dial-up modems). The Brainfuse Classroom allows for instant, robust communication between tutors and students. Features include, among other things, freehand drawing, text editing, instant messaging, screen-printing, real-time file sharing, advanced math/science symbols, emoticons, copy/paste, and web-content sharing.

o **On-demand and prescheduled sessions:** Our on-demand system features smart routing and advanced dynamic staffing algorithms to connect tutors and students with virtually no waiting time. Prescheduled sessions provide students with a detailed calendar and a sophisticated matching system to provide students with a range of session options to accommodate their schedules.

o **Tutoring in Virtually Any Language:** This year, we introduced an AI-based translation feature for our online classroom, enabling tutors and students to communicate in virtually any language.

- **Dynamic workspace:** Our whiteboard automatically expands to accommodate additional content from tutors and students, so students can work through lengthy problems.

- **Equation Editor:** Many equation editors require students to master a difficult input language such as LaTeX. By contrast, we built a user-friendly equation editor that allows students to write – without any advance training -- complex formulas/equations through a simple online keyboard.

- **Application Sharing:** Our application/screen sharing feature allows tutors and students to simultaneously view and share web-content, browser-based tools, and software applications. With this feature, students or tutors, can incorporate into their tutoring session the wealth of content and tools available from their respective devices. This allows, among other things, for tutors and students to:

  - Display and edit documents together

  - Use an online graphing calculator during a session

  - Edit *and* run computer code

  - Work with common musical notation editors

- **New Features: Graphing Calculator, Code Editor, and Text Editor:** In addition to the flexibility of sharing work via screen sharing, students will be able to use a built-in code editor (for computer science courses), a full-featured graphing calculator, and an enhanced text editor.

- **Secure Document/File Sharing:** Files in all major formats (.pdf, .html, .txt, .xls, .jpg, .gif, MS Word, etc.) may be downloaded using our secure file-sharing feature that allows easy transfer of documents while ensuring that *tutors never have access to student email addresses or any other personal information.*

- **Print/Archive Past Sessions:** Students may cut and paste session transcripts or print out a screen shot of the online classroom. Students may also import saved sessions into current sessions, review archived session transcripts, or use our session player to record and play back entire sessions for future reference.

- **Snap-n-Send**: Snap-n-Send allows users to snap a picture via their mobile device and send the picture to their desktop whiteboard in real-time. Such a feature would greatly expand input options for users – they could snap pictures of their handwritten notes, textbook pages, equations, and send them to their desktop whiteboard during a tutoring session.

- **Audio/Video:** Our online classroom includes full two-way audio and video capabilities. Both are available via any web browser. In addition, students who wish to speak with tutors on the phone during their tutoring session can call a dedicated toll-free number (no personal numbers are used), enter the special PIN (generated specifically for the session), and connect with the tutor via phone while working on the whiteboard.

ACCESSIBLE LEARNING PLATFORM:

The Brainfuse Online Classroom represents the most accessible learning platform among online tutoring providers. It is Mac and PC compatible, supports all standard web browsers, and is available from virtually any smartphone or tablet. In addition, our HTML5 platform requires no plugins such as Flash, or Silverlight. And by judiciously incorporating new features, we have ensured that the Brainfuse Online Classroom is still capable of accommodating users via dial-up modem.

COMPATIBILITY:

Windows

- o Windows 95 or above
- o 64 MB of RAM
- o Active Internet connection 28.8 Kb/s (dial-up accessible)

Mac

- o Mac OS X and above
- o 64 MB of RAM
- o Active Internet connection 28.8Kb/s (dial-up accessible)

iOS

- o iPhone (via Apple App Store)
- o iPad (via browser or Apple App Store)

Android

- o Smartphones (via Google Play app store)
- o Tablets (via browser or Google Play app store)

BRAINFUSE'S ASYNCHRONOUS PLATFORM: Our asynchronous platform gives students the option to submit papers to our writing lab or questions to our other tutors from virtually any computer or mobile device. For instance, students who wish to submit a paper to our writing lab have the option of taking a photo of the paper with their smartphone and submitting it through our Brainfuse Mobile App.

Once an item is submitted to our asynchronous platform, our task management system ensures that it is assigned to the appropriate expert. The system tracks the submission and sends reminders and alerts to Brainfuse staff to ensure that the submission is returned to students within 24 hours. Some responses are sent in the form of a file. Other responses, when appropriate (such as Math questions), are sent in the form of a recording of the tutor working through the concept on the Brainfuse whiteboard. The recording resides on the Brainfuse server and does not require additional downloads to play back.
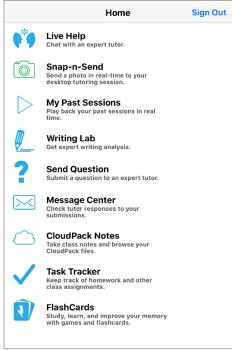
It should be noted that our system does not require that we store student email addresses and other personal information. All routing is done through a student's Blackboard account or Brainfuse username and password. Students receive responses via the Brainfuse message center.

THE BRAINFUSE MOBILE APP: PROVIDING MOBILE ACCESS TO HELPNOW

The Brainfuse Mobile App has been designed to enhance HelpNow by providing anywhere access to live help, learning materials, and study tools. In addition, our application helps students bridge the gap between classroom instruction and online tutoring sessions. Our mobile app is free and is available in both the iOS (Apple) and Google Play (Android) stores. It is designed to work on both smartphones and tablets. Most of the features of our mobile app are unique among online tutoring providers and are designed to provide a user with complete homework support.

FEATURES OF THE APP INCLUDE:

o **Live Help:** Connect with a tutor to receive live tutoring from any smartphone or tablet.

o **Snap-n-Send**: Snap-n-Send allows users to snap a picture via their mobile device and send the picture to their desktop whiteboard in real-time. This feature greatly expands input options for users since they can snap pictures of their handwritten notes, textbook pages, equations, and send them to their desktop whiteboard during a tutoring session.

o **Writing Lab:** Our mobile writing lab provides students with an easy way to submit handwritten papers and other written work by simply scanning their documents through their mobile device's built-in camera or sending a document directly from CloudPack (HelpNow's cloud storage feature). Brainfuse is the only online tutoring provider to offer a mobile, asynchronous writing lab.

o **Class Notes and Documents**: The Brainfuse Mobile App allows students to take class notes, organize them by course subject, and access them through virtually any mobile device. Students can also upload classroom content, such as homework assignments, worksheets, and handwritten notes to share later with a tutor during a live session.

o **Set Study Alerts**: Students can also convert notes to "study tasks" and set reminders to study the notes at a later date.

o **Homework Tracker:** We developed a mobile homework assignment tracker and task manager to help students stay on top of their assignments.

o **Question Center:** Allows users to submit questions to Brainfuse tutors asynchronously.

o **Mobile Flashcards**: Users enjoy access to thousands of flashcards, including card sets that they created through HelpNow's desktop platform.

o **Session Player:** Users are able to play back previous tutoring sessions (that took place on their mobile or desktop) using our session player.

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ADDITIONAL FEATURES OF THE BRAINFUSE PLATFORM

The Brainfuse Learning Platform also includes learning tools that are designed to help students go beyond homework help:

TESTING PLATFORM: Our approach to testing is unique among online tutoring providers in that we do not merely post links to third-party, freely-available, tests. For over a decade, we have developed a proprietary test library that has been completely integrated with our tutor routing and lesson library. The result is a testing platform designed for systematic skills acquisition through the following features:

- **Diagnostic Testing:** Users take a diagnostic test to determine areas requiring extra attention.

- **Learning Plan:** Following the diagnostic test, our platform prepares a customized learning plan that contains lessons, quizzes and video tutorials.

- **Live Tutoring:** Live tutoring is always available as a student works through the learning plan.

- **Progress Tracking:** Our testing platform makes it easy for users to track their progress until they have achieved mastery.

SKILLS PLATFORM: Our Skills Building feature is built on a proprietary platform that includes lessons, video tutorials, and quizzes in a wide variety of elementary through college-level subjects. A "Get Live Help" button accompanies each lesson so users can easily connect with tutors for additional assistance.

DIVERSE AUTHENTICATION METHODS: The Brainfuse Learning Platform is compatible with a variety of authentication methods to protect against unauthorized access and ensure a seamless experience for students and faculty. Brainfuse supports full integration with all learning management systems, including Blackboard, Canvas, Desire2Learn, Moodle, and more. In addition, Brainfuse supports many additional authentication methods, and our dedicated support team will work to ensure seamless integration with your institution's preferred authentication method.

SUPPORTING EXISTING SUPPORT: Through Faculty Dashboard and TutorMatch, Brainfuse provides instructors and on-campus tutors access to proprietary features that support your existing tutoring/academic support efforts, including the ability to assign students tutoring sessions (either live or via the writing lab), schedule virtual office hours, or arrange a group tutoring session.

ADA-COMPLIANT: We devote considerable resources to accommodate students with accessibility challenges. Our services conform to Section 508 Standards and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative.
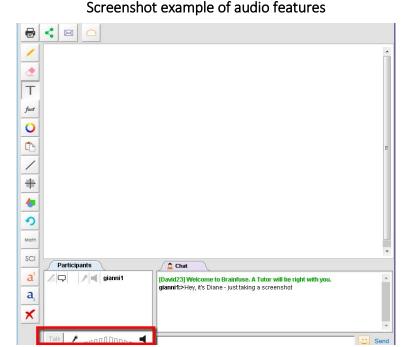
ABOUT OUR ADA & FERPA COMPLIANCE

BRAINFUSE'S ADA COMPLIANCE

Brainfuse is ADA compliant. Students with disabilities will have the following services available for their convenience:

- A secure toll-free number to help assist students with sight impairments.
- An audio tutoring option.
- ADA-Compliant platform (described in further detail below) that does not require users to select a special "accessibility mode".

ADA-COMPLIANT PLATFORM: Brainfuse services conform to Section 508 Standards and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative. For example:

- Brainfuse's live tutoring includes audio features for the vision impaired, including the ability to receive tutoring over a secure phone bridge.

- Our platform allows for multiple communication methods, including keyboard, freehand drawing, an equation editor, VoIP audio, phone, and importing scanned images of a user's handwritten content.

- Brainfuse content is compatible with all available screen readers.

Screenshot example of audio features

- All Brainfuse images and graphics have an alt tag or long description.

- Brainfuse uses alt tags for image maps and for graphics associated with the image map so that a person using a screen reader will have access to the links and information.

- Text links are carefully described to clearly indicate what the link is supposed to do.

Screenshot example of alt tags

WORKING WITH SCREEN-READING SOFTWARE: Brainfuse works with major screen-reading software programs (such as JAWS). Please note that whiteboard graphic elements are not supported by screen reading software and we therefore accommodate blind (and some vision-impaired) students by giving them the option of receiving Brainfuse tutoring by phone through our proprietary tutor-matching system.

In addition, Brainfuse has been designed to work with those screen readers that are built into operating systems. Our system is designed to support full keyboard navigation. As a result, there is no need for a mouse to be able to navigate various areas in the Brainfuse service. In addition, we avoid using drop-down menus on the student side of the service. However, in cases where drop down menus are being used, they are fully accessible using the keyboard so that a visually-impaired individual can still navigate them.

WORKING WITH TEXT-TO-SPEECH SOFTWARE: Our website works with text-to-speech software. As mentioned above, it must be noted that since our whiteboard graphic elements are not supported by text-to-speech software, we try to accommodate blind (and some vision-impaired) students by giving them the option of receiving Brainfuse tutoring by phone through our proprietary tutor-matching system.

USING HOT KEYS TO ALLOW NAVIGATION WITHOUT USING A MOUSE: Brainfuse works mouse-free with hot keys, with magnification software, and with text-to-speech software.

CAPTIONING FOR VIDEOS: We include captioning for many of our videos (and designate them as such). In addition, virtually all of our new videos created by our development team are captioned.

HOW BRAINFUSE CONFORMS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT
(as amended in Section 1194.22 paragraphs a-p)

§1194.22 (a) Offer Text Equivalents: Brainfuse provides a text equivalent for every non-text element. In addition, all audio content from our upcoming SkillSurfer service includes caption. While we do not present charts and graphs on our website, if we do, we shall use the longdesc attribute and/or in-line text to describe such images.

§1194.22 (b) Present Synchronized Multimedia: Our upcoming multimedia SkillsSurfer provides synchronized captions. In addition, all whiteboard interactions allow the possibility of live text messaging and text annotation to accompany any whiteboard content.

§1194.22 (c) Remain Independent of Color: Our web content has been designed (including the use of font, special characters, alt-text) to be independent of color for conveying essential information.

§1194.22 (d) Stay Independent of Style Sheets: Our content is readable without requiring an associated style sheet.

§1194.22 (e) Provide Redundant Links for Server-Side Maps: We provide text links for each active region of a server-side image map.

§1194.22 (f) Use Client-Side Image Maps: Whenever possible, Brainfuse provides client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps.

§1194.22 (g) Label Row and Column Headers: When data tables are displayed, we identify row and column headers.

§1194.22 (h) Use the Headers Attribute in Complex Tables: We do not currently display such tables, but are aware of this requirement.

§1194.22 (i) Supply Frame Titles (attributes and elements): When frames are displayed, we title them with text to assist in frame identification and navigation.

§1194.22 (j) Reduce Flicker: Our pages have a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz to avoid screen flicker.

§1194.22 (k) Offer a Text-only Alternative: We are aware that if we are unable to achieve compliance of the 508 Standards, through other means that we will provide a text-only page.

§1194.22 (l) Write Accessible Scripts: For those pages that use scripting, we provide functional text that is readable by assistive technology.

§1194.22 (m) Specify Accessible Applets and Plug-ins: When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, we provide a link to a plug-in or applet.

§1194.22 (n) Design Accessible Forms: Our online forms allow assistance technology to help users complete such forms.

§1194.22 (o) Offer Skip Navigation: Our navigation logic allows users to skip repetitive navigation links.

§1194.22 (p) Alert Users to Timed Responses: Brainfuse does not include timed responses for users but we are aware of this requirement.

ABOUT OUR FERPA COMPLIANCE

Brainfuse maintains strict FERPA compliance in the following ways:

o Brainfuse does not solicit a student's personal information and does not require it in order to provide tutoring services. In the rare instance that an institution would provide us with personal information, it is our policy to never share such information with third parties nor to retain such information beyond the time frame of its original purpose.

o Our secure file sharing feature eliminates the need for emailing and ensures that tutors never have access to a student's name or email address.

o Our unique live monitoring protocol helps ensure tutor compliance with our anonymity policy during sessions. Our monitoring team observes sessions in real-time, reviews session transcripts and maintains archives of past sessions.

o NO SOLICITATION OF ADDITIONAL CONSUMER SERVICES TO STUDENTS: Though not a FERPA requirement, it should be noted that *Brainfuse does not offer a for-pay version of its service to consumers.* Brainfuse "HelpNow" is our premium online tutoring service to which we devote all of our development efforts and tutor staffing resources. As such, students who go to our homepage will not be directly or indirectly solicited to subscribe to additional premium services or to pay for additional tutoring time.

BRAINFUSE IMPLEMENTATION & SUPPORT PLAN

PROCEDURES FOR COMPLETING WORK REQUESTED IN THIS SOLICITATION:

We have vast experience serving institutions of all types, including statewide, multi-campus, and culturally-diverse institutions. Our approach is to work closely with all stakeholders in order to ensure a smooth rollout and to remain proactive and responsive throughout the service period. Though no two programs are alike, our typical implementation timeframe is 10 business days. In general, our procedures for working with clients involve the following steps prior to launch:

INITIAL CONSULTATION	ALIGNMENT	TECHNICAL INTEGRATION	INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION
• Needs Assessment • Developing specifications for program. • Introduce Brainfuse Account Manager • Establish primary points of contact at the institution (faculty, staff, technical staff, etc.)	• Developing a subject offering that aligns with your course offerings. • Promotion/Branding • Tutoring services coordinated with insitution's academic schedule. • Usage Caps (if necessary)	• Customizing reporting data • LMS integration • Faculty Dashboard customization (if necessary)	• Develop plan to integrate tutoring into the college's overall student support efforts. • Develop online/on-campus strategy for promoting service. • Staff training

INITIAL CONSULTATION: We will discuss usage report preferences, customized collateral, general collateral, set training dates, and other student outreach strategies. We will also assign an account manager to coordinate pre- and post-launch activities.

ALIGNMENT: Among other things, we ensure that all materials, tutoring subjects, and lessons are aligned with the institution's courses and educational objectives. In addition, we make sure that branding and promotional efforts are coordinated with the school. The availability of tutoring services is customized to synchronize with the institution's academic calendar and we develop customized usage caps (if the institution requests it).

TECHNICAL INTEGRATION: Our technical staff will work with your technical staff to integrate services with your LMS and/or remote authentication system. At this point, we also ensure that we are able to collect customized data for your institution and deliver it in the formats you prefer. Customized logos/banners for identifying our service are also provided in compatible format for posting on our homepage, your LMS, and other portals.

- o **Institutional Integration:** We believe that it is essential for program success for our service to align to your institution's academic goals and objectives.

- o **Integrating with Existing Tutoring Efforts:** We will work closely with your school to ensure that our online tutoring efforts are aligned with your existing tutoring efforts.

- o **Onsite and Online Staff Training:** Brainfuse provides on-campus training to faculty and staff, and also live online webinars. Training videos also provided to staff who are unable to attend training sessions. Follow-up/refresher training is available for existing/new support staff throughout the term of the contract, and is included in our price.

- **Marketing and Promotional Support:** Our Client Support Team offer institutions a range of advertising collateral, including posters, bookmarks, and flyers of a mutually agreed-upon design and function at *no* additional cost. Such collateral is available in customizable, print-ready formats. In addition, we have prepared video demos of our service for student outreach and training purposes. Brainfuse will also work closely with the institution to develop strategies for maximizing student awareness of our tutoring, including:

  - Print Collateral
  - Web Graphics
  - Social Media Promotional Assistance
  - Promotional Presentations
  - PSA Creation and General Announcements

- **Onsite Assistance During Launch:** Upon request, Brainfuse staff can be present at various sites to provide assistance during the launch period.

COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION:

Many clients who have switched to Brainfuse have noted our smooth launches and responsive customer support. This is due, in part, to assigning each program a dedicated account manager who represent a singular, always-available point of contact for our clients. Our account manager is responsible for coordinating program launches, customizing service features, resolving issues, training staff, and coordinating the development and rollout of new features.

- **Communication Prior to Launch:** Prior to launch, our account manager will assemble coordinate all necessary communication between your staff and our individual departments (tech, academic, and promotional).

  - **Onsite/Phone/Webinar Communication:** Most communication will take place via conference call/webinar, but there will often be an onsite visit.

- **Communication Following Program Launch:** Following program launch, we stay in regular communication with the client.

  - **Account Manager Availability:** Our account manager is available via phone or email throughout the service period. We respond to all inquiries within the same day that they are received.

  - **Periodic Onsite Visits:** We generally visit our clients on a yearly basis to discuss the existing program and to plan together the development/implementation of new features and improvements.

  - **Technical Support:** Technical support is available via phone and email 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In addition, Brainfuse will designate a Professional Services Manager for this account.

PARTIAL LIST OF HIGHER EDUCATION CLIENTS

Below is a partial list of postsecondary institutions currently using Brainfuse:

1. Alamo Colleges, TX
   - 5 campuses throughout San Antonio
   - *Awarded through a competitive RFP process*
2. Cape Cod Community College, MA
3. Central Carolina Technical College, SC
4. Chowan University, NC
5. Clarendon College, TX
6. Cleveland Community College, OH
7. College of Westchester, NY
8. Community College of Beaver County, PA
9. Concordia University, MN
10. Crowder College, MO
11. Eastern Gateway Community College, OH
12. Elms College, MA
13. Flathead Valley Community College, MT
14. Florence-Darlington Technical College, SC
15. Florida State College at Jacksonville, FL
    - Approximately 50,000 students enrolled
16. Gateway Technical College, WI
17. Georgia Highlands College, GA
18. Indiana University Southeast, IN
19. Howard Payne University, TX
20. Jacksonville University, FL
21. Kentucky Community and Technical College System, KY
    - *Contract awarded through a competitive RFP process*
22. Lansing Community College, MI
23. Lone Star College, TX
    - Among the fastest growing community college districts in the nation
24. Madison Area Technical College, WI

25. Manhattan Area Technical College, KS

26. Maricopa County Community College District, AZ

    o 10 colleges throughout Maricopa County

    o *Awarded through a competitive RFP process*

27. Marymount University, VA

28. Mid-Plains Community College, NE

29. Mid-State Technical College, WI

30. New Mexico State University-Carlsbad, NM

31. New York Institute of Technology, NY

32. Northwest Arkansas Community College, AR

33. Orange Coast College, CA

34. Penn State Abington, PA

35. Purdue University, IN

36. Rasmussen College, MN

    o 23 campuses nationwide

37. Reinhardt University, GA

38. Roanoke-Chowan Community College, NC

39. Texas Southern University, TX

40. Texas Southmost College, TX

41. United States University, CA

42. University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, AR

43. University of Oregon, OR

44. University of Pennsylvania, PA

45. University of South Carolina-Palmetto, SC

46. University of Tennessee-Knoxville, TN

47. University of Wisconsin-Stout, WI

48. West Virginia Community Colleges, WV

    o 10 colleges throughout West Virginia

    o *Statewide contract awarded through a competitive RFP process*

49. Vaughn College, NY

50. Virginia Community College System, VA

    o *Statewide contract awarded through a competitive RFP process*

BRAINFUSE COMPARISON CHART
INCLUDES ADDITIONAL REASONS TO CHOOSE BRAINFUSE

	BRAINFUSE	OTHER LEADING PROVIDERS
EXPERIENCE & OWNERSHIP: Over 23 years of online tutoring experience with the same ownership/management structure	YES	NO. While most established providers have been purchased by large media/publishing companies, we have chosen to maintain our educational independence. This has allowed us to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain a singular vision to best serve our clients.
MONITORING: Real-time monitors that review sessions for completeness and pedagogical effectiveness	YES	Most providers do not monitor sessions on a live basis
INTEGRATION: Ability to integrate an institution's existing tutors and writing lab instructors into our scheduling platform and online classroom	YES	NO. No other provider offers an integration solution as comprehensive as Brainfuse's
FACULTY FEATURES: Ability for faculty to assign tutoring or writing lab support for students and to schedule virtual office hours using our platform	YES	Most providers do not offer this feature
SIMPLE PRICING: Simple, transparent pricing, with an all-inclusive hourly rate. Unused hours that *do not* expire, and that can be rolled-over to the subsequent academic year.	YES	Most providers include extra fees and/or other restrictions and rollover penalties in their pricing
SKILLS BUILDING & SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION: College skills building via a dedicated diagnostic testing platform. Full integration of online tests, customized lessons, and online tutoring.	YES	NO. Some offer practice tests but do not offer diagnostic skills tests and lessons that are integrated with live tutoring assistance. Most providers license or link to freely-available third-party content.

INSTANT TUTORING: Intelligent staffing system for shorter wait times & cost control	**YES**	NO
ACCESSIBILITY: Mobile access to writing lab and asynchronous tutoring through Android/iOS apps	**YES**	Most do not offer an Android *and* iOS app

ADDITIONAL REASONS TO CHOOSE BRAINFUSE

While there are multiple reasons for choosing Brainfuse, the following are some of the reasons most cited by our clients:

MORE COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES: We offer a comprehensive tutoring solution that goes beyond mere homework help:

o   Extensive lesson and practice test library.

o   One-of-a-kind faculty dashboard that allows faculty members to assign tutoring or writing assistance to struggling students.

o   Hybrid tutoring allows an institution to integrate its own tutors with Brainfuse tutors (both online and offline through our unique scheduling system). Institutions can also use the Brainfuse online classroom and scheduling platform to operate their own online/offline tutoring programs.

o   We offer no direct-to-consumer service in order to avoid the inevitable pedagogical conflict of interest between direct-to-consumer tutoring (that emphasizes answers and editing papers) with the educational objectives of the institutions we serve. In addition, unlike many providers who offer a direct-to-consumer component, we do not use any student information for data-mining purposes.

o   Intensive tutor training, and a unique quality control system using live monitors, ensure high-quality tutoring and strict adherence to an institution's academic integrity standards. Please see our "ABOUT OUR TUTORS" section for details.

BETTER PRICING: We are committed to providing innovative support at an affordable price:

o   There are *no* additional fees associated with Brainfuse services. Brainfuse charges hourly rates which are **all-inclusive** (includes taxes and any other associative costs).

o   There are *no* administrative and startup/setup costs with Brainfuse.

o   All upcoming services, upgrades and enhancements will be included *at no* additional charge.

o   Brainfuse only charges for interactions involving a tutor. All other content and services described in our proposal are provided at *no* extra charge.

o   Unused hours *do not* expire, and they can be rolled-over to the subsequent academic year at no extra charge.

o   Bilingual tutoring is available at *no* additional cost.

o   **Pricing Stability:** The ability to maintain a consistent pricing structure is an important performance indicator and is closely related to our success in retaining clients. This necessitates a sophisticated tracking system, a low-error platform, a well-run tutor training program, and effective tutoring sessions. Put simply, stable pricing requires a stable, scalable service.

SHORT WAIT TIME TO CONNECT WITH A TUTOR: One of our service's strengths is our ability to quickly connect students with tutoring assistance. As such, we have devoted considerable resources to developing a tutor staffing and routing system than ensures students are able to receive help precisely when they need it. We check average wait times on a system-wide basis each month to ensure consistently responsive service. As the data below show, wait times have remained remarkably stable over the years. This performance indicator is so important to us, that we measure it in seconds, not minutes:
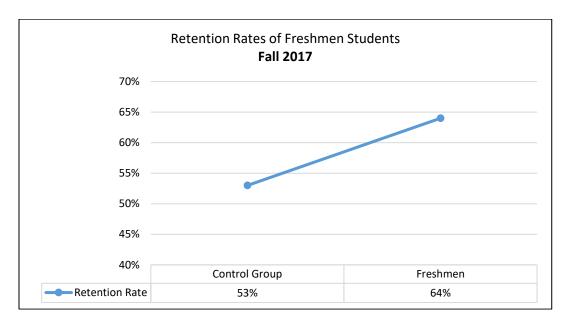
BRAINFUSE'S AVERAGE WAIT TIME TO CONNECT WITH A TUTOR:

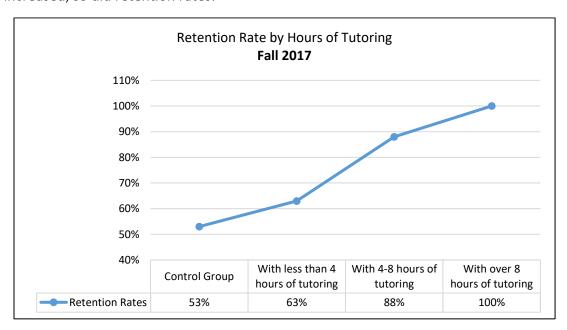| YEAR	WAIT TIME (SECONDS)
2022	18 seconds
2021	19 seconds
2020	19 seconds
2019	22 seconds
2018	24 seconds

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

PERFORMANCE DATA:

THE KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

According to a 2020 study conducted by Sophia Magis consulting, in which KCTCS participated, retention rates for KCTCS students who used Brainfuse services were 11% higher than the retention rates of KCTCS students as a whole:

Retention Rates of Freshmen Students
Fall 2017

	Control Group	Freshmen
Retention Rate	53%	64%

Retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. As online tutoring hours increased, so did retention rates:

Retention Rate by Hours of Tutoring
Fall 2017

	Control Group	With less than 4 hours of tutoring	With 4-8 hours of tutoring	With over 8 hours of tutoring
Retention Rates	53%	63%	88%	100%

POST-SESSION STUDENT SURVEYS KCTCS

At the end of each session, students can take a post-session survey. The year-to-year aggregate responses of KCTCS students are as follows:

QUESTION	YES	NO
o Were you satisfied with this session?	97%	3%
o Would you recommend this service to a friend?	97%	3%
o Are you glad your organization offers this service?	99%	1%
o Is this service helping you improve your grades?	93%	7%
o Is HelpNow helping you be more confident about your schoolwork?	90%	10%

PERFORMANCE DATA: COLLEGE SYSTEM IN WISCONSIN *
*Name is available upon request, pending institutional permission.

Retention rates for students who utilized Brainfuse services were 12% higher than the retention rates of students as a whole:

Retention Rates of Freshmen Students
2017 - 2018

	Control Group	Freshmen
Retention Rate	68%	80%

Retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. As online tutoring hours increased, so did retention rates:
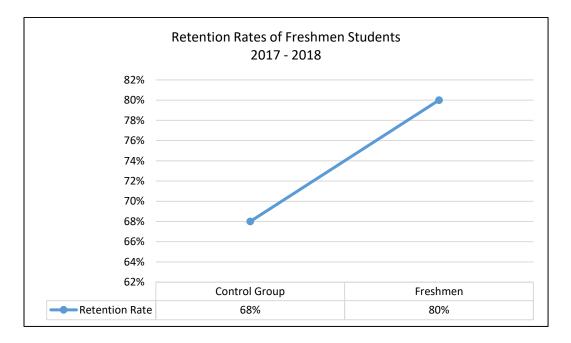
Retention Rates by Hours of Tutoring
2017-2018

Retention Rate	Control Group	With less than 4 hours of tutoring	With 4-8 or more hours of tutoring	With 8-12 hours of tutoring
Retention Rate	68%	80%	83%	100%

PERFORMANCE DATA: UHCC STUDY

The following can be found in UHCC's study, "Impact of Online Tutoring on Retention, Success and Graduation Rates at the University of Hawaii Community Colleges: Summer 2013 - Fall 2015":

Retention Rate	Control Group	Students with Brainfuse tutoring	With 4 or more hours of tutoring	With 8 or more hours of tutoring
Retention Rate	58%	69%	79%	83%

1. Retention rates for students who utilized online tutoring were 11% higher than the retention rates of students as a whole.[1]
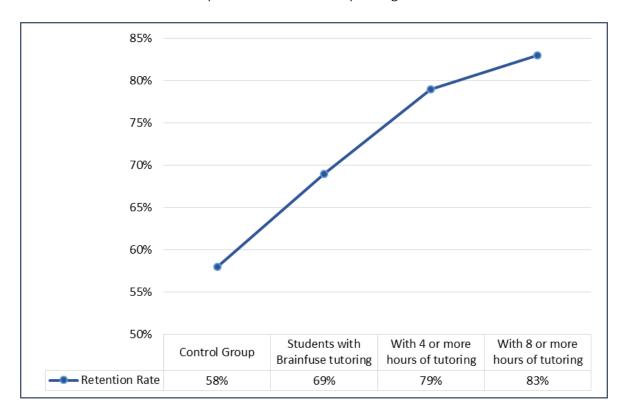
2. Retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. As online tutoring hours increased, so did retention rates.

3. For students who utilized online tutoring, on average, an additional 193 students were retained each year, compared to the retention rates of college students as a whole.[2]

AGGREGATE PERFORMANCE DATA: COLLEGE-LEVEL USERS

DATA SOURCES: The following data have been drawn from usage over the course of the past nine years (from 2009-present) from college-level students who have received Brainfuse tutoring. Data has been sourced from institutions willing to share student data, formal surveys, and student feedback.

SUBJECTS TUTORED: Data collected during this period was based on tutoring in the following subjects:

- Accounting
- Economics
- Finance
- MS Office (Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Windows)
- College Reading
- Writing
- Calculus
- College Algebra
- Geometry
- Liberal Arts Math

- Multivariable Calculus
- Pre-Algebra
- Pre-Calculus
- Trigonometry
- Statistics
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Organic Chemistry
- Physics

Over the past 9 years, Brainfuse has completed over 4,000,000 tutoring sessions for college level students. The following information has been gathered from both institutional sources and user surveys.

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[1] The retention rate for the college was 58%. For college students who used Brainfuse, it was 69%.

[2] An 11% increased retention rate translates into an additional 186 students being retained one year later from the Fall 2013 cohort of students who utilized Brainfuse (1,696 students utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2013). An 11% increased retention rate translates into an additional 200 students being retained one year later from the Fall 2014 cohort of students who utilized Brainfuse (1,822 students utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2014). The average of those two cohorts is 193. In other words, an average of 193 additional students were retained each subsequent fall term when compared to the retention rates of the College as a whole.

STUDENT SATISFACTION:
(post-session surveys conducted over a period of 9 years with over 10,000 college level students)

Online Writing Lab

o   96% of students who used the Brainfuse Writing Lab say that they would use it again.

o   77% of students who used the Brainfuse Writing Lab say that it has helped improve their grades.

Live Tutoring

USER RATINGS: At the end of each session, students submit post-session surveys. The following table summarizes our survey responses from over 10,000 college-level users for the past 9 years:

POST-SESSION SURVEY	
Were you satisfied with this session?	98%
Would you recommend this service to a friend?	97%
Did this service help you complete your assignment?	96%
Is this service helping you improve your grades?	86%
Is this service helping you be more confident about your school work?	97%

FACULTY AND COLLEGE SATISFACTION:

During the past year, approximately 93% of faculty that have used our service have been satisfied with its quality. As for college satisfaction, our renewal rate among our higher education clients is over 95%.

ACADEMIC IMPROVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE STUDENT LIFECYCLE:

One of the reasons for our service's effectiveness has been a focus on students throughout their academic career. Many students who we tutored in elementary school are now receiving tutoring from us in college. We believe that effective tutoring of college level students requires an understanding of their academic backgrounds. It is relevant, therefore, that we have been a leader among tutoring providers for primary and secondary school students. For instance, Brainfuse has topped effectiveness surveys conducted by educational entities including the Los Angeles Unified School District and the State of Colorado Department of Education.

PERFORMANCE DATA: RASMUSSEN COLLEGE

Rasmussen College is a large, multi-campus institution of higher education, serving over 14,000 students throughout the country. A recent study conducted by Rasmussen highlighted the significant and positive impact that Brainfuse online tutoring has had on student grades. More specifically, 73% of students that used Brainfuse tutoring experienced a grade increase in (n=1,153) from one semester to the next in subjects for which tutoring was provided, higher than when compared with students who did not receive tutoring in those same classes/subjects (n=13,214).

CLIENT RECOGNITION

Receiving recognition from a client is another indicator of a program's success. Such recognition from clients can be expressed through positive comments and success stories, or through more formal means. For instance, one of our clients, Rasmussen College, an institution serving approximately 14,000 students, comprising 24 campuses throughout the United States, recently named us the "2018 Partner of Distinction" for our work in providing a customized service that integrated Rasmussen online tutors with Brainfuse tutors within our delivery platform. This honor was particularly significant because of the large number of educational partners who were considered for the award.

An Analysis of Effective Online Tutoring in Higher Education

April, 2020

Emily O'Connor

Sophia Magis Consulting

Does Effective Tutoring Support Academic Success? An Analysis of Brainfuse Online Tutoring Use and Student Retention in two Higher Education Institutions

Abstract

Tutoring is a key resource for students in higher education, supporting immediate needs, bolstering confidence, and building critical learning skills applicable across courses and beyond the degree. Quality online tutoring provides students with proactive and point-of-need expertise in a tool-rich environment. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact that Brainfuse Online Tutoring services may have had on the retention or academic success of students who used its services at University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). Results indicated that the retention rates for students who utilized Brainfuse Online Tutoring were higher than the rates of college students as a whole. Additionally, retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. As online tutoring hours increased, so did retention rates. Results also indicate that students in the early stages of their degree progress utilized Brainfuse Online Tutoring at a much higher rate compared to students in later stages of their degree progress.

I.   Introduction

In recent years, higher education institutions have faced growing demands for rapid innovation in order to slow student attrition, while also leveraging technology to increase efficiencies and serve our evolving knowledge of why and how students learn. The distinct paths of these initiatives occasionally and fortuitously cross when technology can be leveraged to make learning more efficient and also more effective as a retention asset; the development of personalized, multimedia-rich hybrid and online classrooms are well-documented examples of innovations to the students' 'classroom' learning experience.

Tutoring, specifically face-to-face or online peer tutoring, is often both pointed to by higher education practitioners and sought out by students as a critical resource outside of the classroom as a key contributor to student performance (Hanover Research, 2014a; Koening, 2019; Navarra-Madsen & Ingram, 2010; Vance, 2016). However, far less attention is given in literature to the innovations of online tutoring and the impact of effective tutoring – especially effective online tutoring – on student academic success. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact that Brainfuse Online Tutoring services may have had on the retention or academic success of students who used its services at University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS).

II.   Literature Review

Tutoring is frequently recognized in the literature as a key resource in higher education. A sampling of the literature identifies a variety of ways that tutoring supports

academic success, including but not limited to developing writing and subject-matter

expertise, improving literacy and subject skills, and boosting student confidence (Arco-

Tirado, Fernández-Martín, & Fernández-Balboa, 2011; Hanover Research, 2014b; Nelson

Royes, 2018; Pugatch & Wilson, 2018; Santee and Garavalia, 2006). The report *Increasing*

College Opportunity for Low-Income College Students identified tutoring as a critical

resource for students entering college and completing remedial courses upon college

admission (2014, The Executive Office of the President).

Tutoring for students in higher education occurs in a variety of modalities. While

most of the literature focuses on face-to-face professional (faculty/graduate student) and

peer tutoring, fewer studies were found on online peer tutoring (De Smet, Van Keer, &

Valcke, 2009; Fox & MacKeogh, 2003; Sansone, Ligorio, & Buglass, 2018), despite the fact

that online tutors are often a critical bridge between online students and higher education

institutions (de Metz & Bezuidenhout, 2018). The study of professional tutoring services

(online or otherwise) for college students is largely absent from the literature. Despite this

gap, however, long-existing best practices serve to inform professional/student

interactions in online tutoring environments.

Benjamin Bloom (1984) identified that group instruction had the potential of being

as successful as one-to-one tutoring if institutions "find ways of improving students'

learning processes, the curriculum and instructional materials, and the home

environmental support of the students' school learning" (p. 17). In modern tutoring

environments, the scope of the curriculum and instructional materials are within the

purview of the institution. However, learning processes and environmental support are still

key elements of tutoring. Ripamonti, Galuppo, Bruno, Ivaldi, & Scaratti (2018) echo Bloom's

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research by describing the role of tutorship as one that supports critical reflexive practices that drive the learner to higher order thinking. Tutors help students build critical reflexive practices by using different techniques to introduce increasingly challenging material that require students to adapt and build new learning behaviors. Techniques may include varying the tutoring style, using a variety of open-ended interview questions, and providing detailed feedback are all examples of methodologies that help students feel comfortable while engaging them beyond knowledge retention (Sturman, 2018). These techniques – and accompanying tools – are especially effective for supporting learners who seek tutoring since their use are highly adaptable depending on the skill of the tutor and the learning needs of the student.

Additionally, the development of a positive relationship between tutor and tutee is also a key best practice. Studies indicate that positive tutor-student relationships enhance student well-being and confidence (Kara & Can, 2019; Matthewman, Jodhan-Gail, Nowlan, OSullivan, & Patel, 2018). Students want to engage with tutors who understand the difficulty of their transition into academic writing, validate their existing and growing skills, and build relationships through detailed and repeated interactions (Denny, Nordorf, & Salem, 2018).

The literature paints a clear picture: student use of tutoring in combination with the use of effective tutoring techniques leads to student academic success in peer-tutoring modalities. The purpose of this study is to identify how Brainfuse Online Tutoring may impact student success through an analysis of student use data and features of the platform that may contribute to tutoring effectiveness.

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III. Study Participants

Brainfuse Online Tutoring initiated the study and provided the tutoring data corresponding to the information provided by the higher education clients who participated in the study: The University of Wisconsin – Stout, and Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

1. Brainfuse Online Tutoring

Brainfuse Online Tutoring provides one-to-one tutoring sessions, writing feedback, test preparation, study aids, and career services for college students at all types of higher education institutions. Brainfuse offers live online tutoring in subjects where students frequently show higher need for support outside of the classroom including: Math, Writing, Reading, Computers and Technology, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Health Professions, Business, History, Science, and Spanish. Students and tutors communicate through a multimedia-rich online interface that includes file sharing, screen sharing, graphing, and other drawing tools in addition to chat and optional audio/video functionality. Tutors are based in the United States and hold a minimum of a master's degree in the subject in which they tutor.

2. University of Wisconsin - Stout

University of Wisconsin – Stout (UW-Stout) is a public university in Menomonie, WI, enrolling over 9,500 students. Designated as "Wisconsin's Polytechnic University" in 2007, UW-Stout offers undergraduate and graduate programs in six fields of study: art, design, and graphics; business and management; education; human and social sciences;

<center>4</center>

information technology and communications; and science, engineering, and math (Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin, 2019).

3. Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), comprised of 16 institutions, enrolls over 100,000 students, more than 40% of all undergraduate students in Kentucky (2020, Office of Research & Policy Analysis). KCTCS offers associate degrees, diplomas, and/or certificates in 111 programs designed for workforce preparedness or four-year degree completion.

The tutoring use and retention data of 512 students from UW-Stout and 373 students from KCTCS were included in this study, in addition to the aggregate retention rate of each respective institution. Information was not made available for both institutions regarding students' ethnicity, gender, or program distribution.

IV. **Methodology**

In early 2019, an email invitation (Emily OConnor, personal communication, March 10, 2019) was sent to participating institutions to provide data for an effectiveness study. As a result of mutual consultation, the participating institutions agreed to provide the following data:

- Raw student retention data from students who were enrolled as freshman in 2017.
- Retention rates as a whole for their institution (for control/baseline).

- Optional: Individual student enrollment data for Brainfuse users – otherwise, Brainfuse would match the institutions' data to Brainfuse's own records to identify those users and calculate retention for these students separately.

Once Brainfuse received raw student retention data from participating institutions, the retention data was matched to student tutoring use data from Brainfuse. The data sent was then analyzed and the retention data of students who used Brainfuse online tutoring was compared to the retention rates of all students enrolled in the same timeframe (KCTCS) or the retention rates of all students enrolled the year prior (UW-Stout).

V. Ethical Considerations

Participating institutions, the author, and Brainfuse worked to ensure student data was ethically handled, used, and protected. Participants were given the option to abstain or withdraw from the study at any time. Individual student information maintained by Brainfuse is protected and managed according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Participating institutions were asked to send corresponding retention records for students who both used and did not use tutoring. Institutions were given options for secure data transfer. Data was sent to and managed only by Brainfuse employees who already had access to student tutoring data. Once student tutoring use data from Brainfuse was matched to retention data from the institution, raw data findings were returned to the institutions and all data sent to Brainfuse from participating institutions was destroyed.
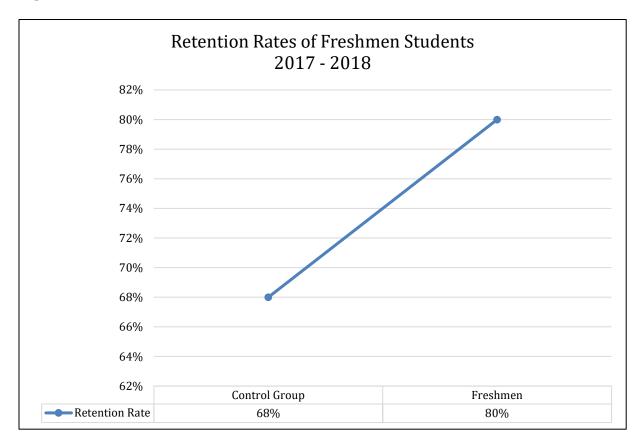
VI. Key Findings

1. **The retention rates for students who utilized Brainfuse online tutoring were higher than the rates of college students as a whole.**

    Retention rates for UW-Stout students who utilized Brainfuse online tutoring were 12% higher than the retention rates of UW-Stout freshman students as a whole, which served as the control group (see Figure 1 – UW-Stout). Retention rates for KCTCS college students who utilized Brainfuse online tutoring were 11% higher than the retention rates of KCTCS college students as a whole (see Figure 2 – KCTCS). These results align with those of multiple studies indicating positive correlation between tutoring and retention. Furthermore, these findings match those from Sunday and Rascon (2016), Satyanarayana, Li, and Braneky (2014) and Civitas Learning (2019) indicating that college student who use tutoring retain at a rate of 9% or more than the retention rate of college students who do not use tutoring.

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Figure 1 – UW-Stout

Retention Rates of Freshmen Students 2017 - 2018

	Control Group	Freshmen
Retention Rate	68%	80%

*The Freshmen retention rates above were calculated by looking at the number of students who utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2017 and were retained by the College in the subsequent fall term. The Control Group retention rates are based on the retention rates published by the College for freshmen students who enrolled in the College fall 2016. Retention rates for College students who utilized Brainfuse services were 12% higher than the retention rates of College students as a whole.

[Retention rates were not compared to freshmen students who utilized Brainfuse in fall of 2016 as the number of students were statistically insignificant.]
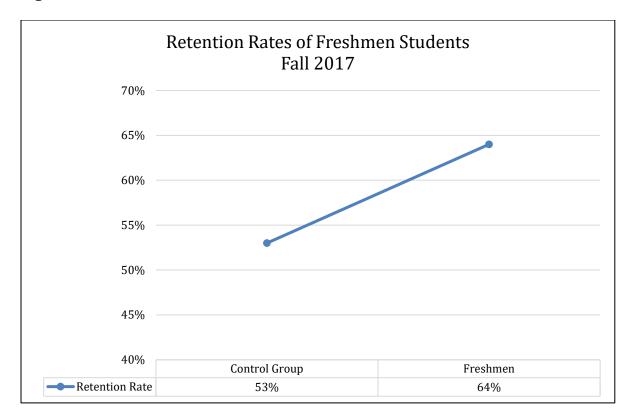
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Figure 2 – KCTCS

*The Freshmen retention rates above were calculated by looking at the number of students who utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2017 and were retained by the College in the subsequent fall term. The Control Group retention rates are based on the retention rates published by the College for freshmen students who enrolled in the College fall 2017. Retention rates for College students who utilized Brainfuse services were 11% higher than the retention rates of College students as a whole.

**College did not provide raw number of students enrolled as Freshmen during the fall 2017 semester

2. **Retention rates increased in a linear fashion relative to hours of tutoring utilized. As online tutoring hours increased, so did retention rates.**

    The data from both UW-Stout (Figure 3 – UW-Stout) and KCTCS (Figure 4 – KCTCS) indicate that students who used more tutoring hours had a greater likelihood of academic success than students who used fewer hours of tutoring or no hours of tutoring (control).

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As previously discussed, students' use of tutoring and other support services correlates to their academic success. However, unlike the findings of Coladarci, Willett, and Allen (ND) and Vance (2002), this analysis suggests that students who use a greater number of tutoring hours have a higher likelihood of academic success than students who use fewer or no hours of tutoring.
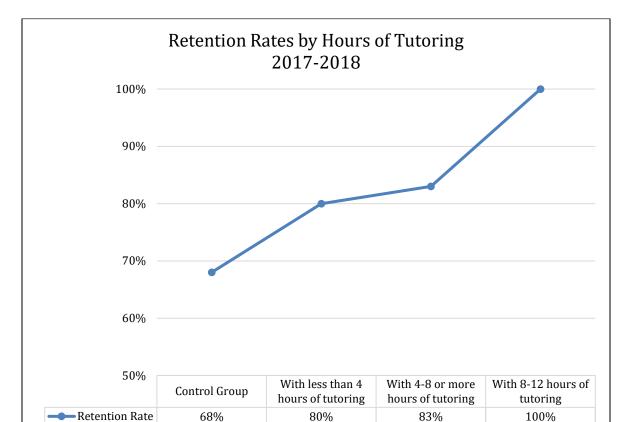
Figure 3 – UW-Stout

Retention Rates by Hours of Tutoring 2017-2018

	Control Group	With less than 4 hours of tutoring	With 4-8 or more hours of tutoring	With 8-12 hours of tutoring
Retention Rate	68%	80%	83%	100%

* Retention rates above were calculated by looking at the number of students who utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2017 and were retained by the College in the subsequent fall term. The Control Group retention rates are based on the retention rates published by the College for freshmen students who enrolled in the College fall 2016.

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Figure 4 – KCTCS

Retention Rate by Hours of Tutoring
Fall 2017

	Control Group	With less than 4 hours of tutoring	With 4-8 hours of tutoring	With over 8 hours of tutoring
Retention Rates	53%	63%	88%	100%

* Retention rates above were calculated by looking at the number of students who utilized Brainfuse in the fall of 2017 and were retained by the College in the subsequent fall term. The Control Group retention rates are based on the retention rates published by the College for freshmen students who enrolled in the College fall 2017.

3. **Students in the early stages of their degree progress utilized Brainfuse online tutoring at a much higher rate compared to students in later stages of their degree progress.**

At UW-Stout, undergraduate students, on average, used online tutoring at a higher rate than graduate and doctoral students (Figures 5 and 6 – UW-Stout). Similarly, freshmen students at KCTCS utilized Brainfuse online tutoring at a higher rate compared to non-freshmen students (Figure 7 – KCTCS). When coupled with other key findings in this study and outside scholarship, this data suggests that higher education institutions should encourage students to use Brainfuse online tutoring early and often in their programs to

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increase their likelihood of academic success and graduation. This data also points to opportunities for future research on the impact of tutoring on graduate student retention as well as the impact of tutoring on students who use tutoring services over most or all of their undergraduate and or undergraduate and graduate coursework.

Figure 5 – UW-Stout

Brainfuse Users by Grade Level 2017-2018

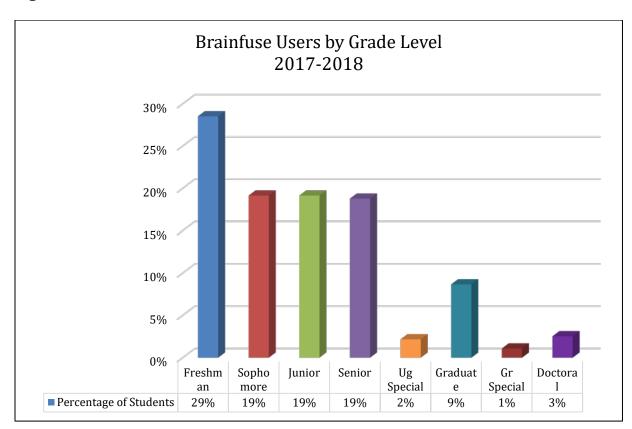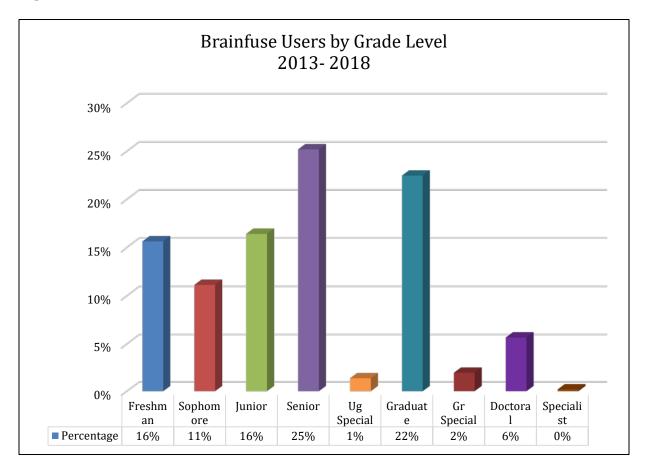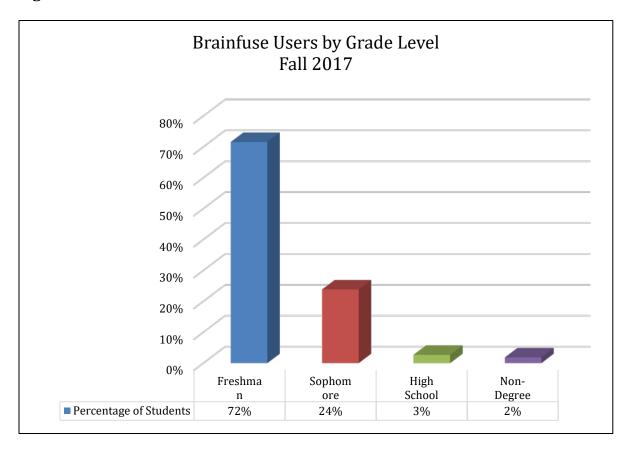|	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Ug Special	Graduate	Gr Special	Doctoral
■ Percentage of Students	29%	19%	19%	19%	2%	9%	1%	3%

*The chart above displays the Grade Level breakdown of College users who utilized Brainfuse services in the 2017-2018 academic year.

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Figure 6 – UW-Stout

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Ug Special	Graduate	Gr Special	Doctoral	Specialist
■ Percentage	16%	11%	16%	25%	1%	22%	2%	6%	0%

*The chart above displays the Grade Level breakdown of College users who utilized Brainfuse services in the 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 academic years.

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Figure 7 – KCTCS

Brainfuse Users by Grade Level
Fall 2017

	Freshman	Sophomore	High School	Non-Degree
■ Percentage of Students	72%	24%	3%	2%

*The chart above displays the Grade Level breakdown of College users who utilized Brainfuse services in the fall 2017 semester.

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VII.   Additional Findings

In addition to the data provided by both the UW-Stout and KCTCS analyzed above, KCTCS (Figure 8 – KCTCS) also provided Brainfuse with a breakdown of Brainfuse Online Tutoring users by Pell Grant eligibility status. While use of tutoring by Pell grant-eligible students is not correlated with academic success in this study, free access to tutoring services at their higher education institution may provide students with needed academic support that they may not otherwise be able to afford.

Figure 8 – KCTCS
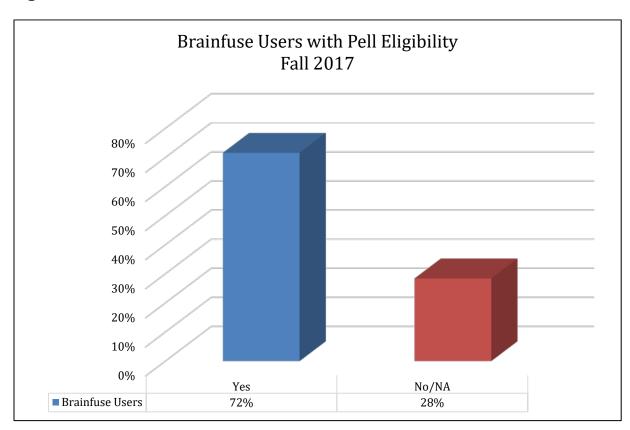

Brainfuse Users with Pell Eligibility
Fall 2017

	Yes	No/NA
Brainfuse Users	72%	28%

*The chart above displays the eligibility status of College users who utilized Brainfuse services in the fall 2017 semester.

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Although this study primarily focuses on the impact of the use of online tutoring on student academic success, the impact of student satisfaction with online tutoring must also be considered. Several studies, including those of Fantuzzo, Dimeff, & Fox (1989); Hendriksen, Yang, Love, & Hall (2014); and Kim & Hahn (2017) indicate that satisfaction with tutoring services or with an overall program that included tutoring services corresponded with overall student success in a course or program.

Brainfuse collects satisfaction survey data from students at the end of each tutoring session (completion of the survey is optional). Brainfuse collated its satisfaction survey data from participating institutions from 2017 – 2020, which overlaps the timeframe of tutoring usage and retention data collected and analyzed for this study for participating institutions. Over 90% of the students who participated responded positively that Brainfuse Online Tutoring helped them improve their grades and that they were satisfied with their session(s).

Table 1: Brainfuse Online Tutoring Satisfaction Survey Results, UW

Question	Survey Results
Were you satisfied with this session?	97%
Is this service helping you improve your grades?	92%
Is this service helping you be more confident about your school work ?	88%
Are you glad you school offers this service?	96%

Table 2: Brainfuse Online Tutoring Satisfaction Survey Results, KCTCS

Question	Survey Results
Were you satisfied with this session?	95%
Is this service helping you improve your grades?	94%

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Is this service helping you be more confident about your school work ?	**90%**
Are you glad you school offers this service?	**96%**

These results indicate a high level of satisfaction with Brainfuse Online Tutoring services. Brainfuse recently redesigned its satisfaction survey to gauge satisfaction in a one-to-one tutoring session (since students may also be using other services, such as the Writing Lab, Study Center, or online collaboration tools available through the Brainfuse platform). Additionally, new survey questions also ask students to self-assess confidence, a key indicator in self-efficacy correlated to academic performance **(**Putwain, Sander, & Larkin, 2013**)**. Future research opportunities include the analysis of this new satisfaction survey data and how it may relate to the use of Brainfuse Online Tutoring services and student academic success.

VIII. Discussion

Sembiring (2018) found that an effective online tutoring program is most impacted by the learning strategies introduced by a tutor to their tutee, followed by the program's access and ease of use. These findings align with those of Sabatino (2014) and Chibani (2014) that the development of student learning strategies through the tutoring or writing feedback process were key factors in the effectiveness of overall support. Brainfuse Online Tutoring works broadly with its higher education clients and specifically with individual students to introduce learning strategies that best meet the needs of each learner. Institutions are invited to partner with Brainfuse to customize Brainfuse content in order to match with

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course learning objectives and writing standards; Brainfuse also provides diagnostic tools that align with common curriculum in developmental English and math courses.

In addition to the development and alignment of robust content across supported subject areas, Brainfuse also trains its tutors to develop effective, supportive relationships with tutees during tutoring sessions. Again, although most scholarship about tutoring best practices is written about peer tutor-tutee environments, most of the practices carry over to professional tutor-tutee best practices: establish a welcoming environment for the tutee (Matthewman, Jodhan-Gail, Nowlan, OSullivan, & Patel, 2018); ask open-ended questions that encourage discovery; and use demonstrations and practice to affirm learning and set goals (Sturman, 2018). As current and former educators and field practitioners, Brainfuse tutors use these best practices to engage learners in each tutoring session, which is recorded and accessible for students to view later for their own reference.

IX.   Conclusion

Tutoring provides support to students seeking clarity and feedback on assignments. Online tutoring leverages virtual environments to support those learners who, for whatever reasons, may be reticent to seek out in-person tutoring and at times and in places where support may otherwise be unavailable. Effective online tutoring creates a custom, welcoming learning environment that helps each student identify and achieve learning goals while also building valuable learning skills that, over time and combined with other factors, lead to academic success. The tutoring use and retention data analyzed in this study indicate that Brainfuse provides effective online tutoring: students who use tutoring also retain at a higher rate than students who do not use tutoring. Furthermore, students

who use more hours of tutoring services are more academically successful than students who use fewer or no hours of tutoring. The majority of students who took advantage of tutoring were early in their degree programs, suggesting that institutions have an opportunity to promote the value of tutoring in early courses to increase the likelihood of students' academic success and early adoption of key lifelong learning practices. Findings also suggest that students who might benefit from tutoring are also students who may not otherwise have access to professional tutoring services. Both the student satisfaction survey data and retention findings indicate that Brainfuse Online Tutoring provides critical and valued academic support to students outside of the classroom, providing trusted learning partners and content in timely, relevant, and accessible ways that support retention across programs and institutions.

X. References

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BRAINFUSE REFERENCES

Below are 10 current Brainfuse clients that are serving as references for our proposal. Additional references are available upon request:

REFERENCE 1

Reference Name & Scope	**Rasmussen College** (23 campuses nationwide)
Address	8300 Norman Center Drive – Suite #400, Bloomington, MN 55437
Contact Person & Title	Jon Mladic, Dean of Library and Learning Services
Phone Number	(815) 316-4878
Email Address	Jon.Mladic@Rasmussen.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2010)

REFERENCE 2

Reference Name & Scope	**Alliant International University** (6 campuses throughout California)
Address	10455 Pomerado Rd, Bldg. M-8, San Diego, CA, 92131
Contact Person & Title	Richard Gardner, Director Student Learning Support Services
Phone Number	(858) 635 – 4642
Email Address	rgardner@alliant.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2010)

REFERENCE 3

Reference Name & Scope	**Concordia University** (5,000 + hours of tutoring per year)
Address	1282 Concordia Ave., St. Paul, MN 55104
Contact Person & Title	Wendy Vargas, Director of Student Success
Phone Number	(651) 603-6216
Email Address	vargas@csp.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2013)

REFERENCE 4

Reference Name & Scope	**Florida State College at Jacksonville** (approximately 50,000 students)
Address	4501 Capper Road, Jacksonville, FL 32218
Contact Person & Title	Youlanda Henry, Director of Tutoring Services
Phone Number	(904) 766-6765
Email Address	y.m.henry@fscj.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services

REFERENCE 5

Reference Name & Scope	**Blue Ridge Community & Technical College** (part of a statewide West Virginia Community College contract)
Address	13650 Apple Harvest Dr., Martinsburg, WV 25403
Contact Person & Title	Anna Mary Walsh, Program Specialist, Student Academic Success
Phone Number	(304) 260-4380 x 2343
Email Address	awalsh@blueridgectc.edu

Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2013)

REFERENCE 6

Reference Name & Scope	**Pierpont Community & Technical College** (part of a statewide West Virginia Community College contract)
Address	1201 Locust Ave., Fairmont, WV 26554
Contact Person & Title	Linda King, Director (Tutorial Services)
Phone Number	(304) 367-4081
Email Address	Linda.king@pierpont.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2013)

REFERENCE 7

Reference Name & Scope	**University of Wisconsin-Stout** (approximately 9,500 students)
Address	121 10th Ave E, Menomonie, WI 54751
Contact Person & Title	Noelle Chaltry, Business Manager, Learning & Information Technology
Phone Number	(715) 232-2264
Email Address	chaltryn@uwstout.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2014)

REFERENCE 8

Reference Name & Scope	**Lesley University** (approximately 3,000 students)
Address	99-1 Brattle St., Cambridge, MA 02138
Contact Person & Title	Randi Korn, EdD, Assistant Provost for Academic Success
Phone Number	(617) 349-8596
Email Address	rkorn@lesley.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2016)

REFERENCE 9

Reference Name & Scope	**University of Wisconsin-Superior** (approximately 2,500 students)
Address	Swenson 1024A, Superior, WI 54880
Contact Person & Title	Courtney Dietsche, Bridge Program Manager
Phone Number	(715) 394-8090
Email Address	cdietsc4@uwsuper.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2013)

REFERENCE 10

Reference Name & Scope	**West Virginia University at Parkersburg** (part of a statewide West Virginia Community College contract)
Address	300 Campus Dr., Parkersburg, WV 26104
Contact Person & Title	Janice McCue, Program Coordinator (Student Success Center)
Phone Number	(304) 424-8278
Email Address	janice.mccue@wvup.edu
Description of Service	Online tutoring services similar to those described in our proposal
Years of Service	Currently providing services (client since 2013)

<u>**AGREEMENT**</u>

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, 2024 by and between Brainfuse, LLC, a limited liability company organized and existing under the laws of the State of Delaware (hereinafter, "Brainfuse"), and College of Central Florida, an institution organized and existing under the laws of the State of Florida (hereinafter, "the College").

W I T N E S S E T H:

WHEREAS, Brainfuse is engaged in the development and provision of educational technology, services and content; and

WHEREAS, the parties desire to supply College students with an online tutoring services program pursuant to the terms set forth herein.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises of each party to the other contained herein, it hereby is mutually agreed as follows:

<u>**ARTICLE I - PURPOSE**</u>

Brainfuse shall provide web-based technology and online tutoring to the College pursuant to the terms set forth herein.

<u>**ARTICLE II - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES**</u>

Section 2.1 <u>**Responsibilities of Brainfuse**</u>

a. Brainfuse shall prepare and provide instant access live help for College students in core subjects (hereinafter, the "Brainfuse Program").

b. The Brainfuse Program shall serve all eligible students. The asynchronous portion of the Brainfuse Program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The access to the live, online tutors shall be for all eligible students Monday through Sunday during mutually-agreed upon times. The Brainfuse Program shall commence on _____.

c. Brainfuse shall make its online tutors available through any compatible computer to participating students, both within and without the College facility.

d. Brainfuse shall provide all necessary training to appropriate College staff for the Brainfuse Program.

Section 2.2   <u>Responsibilities of College</u>

        Technical support staff from the College shall cooperate in good faith with Brainfuse to ensure that the Brainfuse Program is accessible from College computers.

ARTICLE III - LIABILITY

Brainfuse shall not be responsible or liable for any disruption, pause or cessation of the Brainfuse Program or Software caused by actions or events beyond Brainfuse's immediate control, including, but not limited to, Internet disruptions, the College's computers, hardware malfunctions, firewall restrictions, browser incompatibilities, other systems problems, or the failure of students to attend sessions.

ARTICLE IV - COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

Section 4.1   <u>Compensation</u>

The College shall pay to Brainfuse a fee of $_____for _____ hours of live tutoring at $22.80 per hour with writing submissions metered at 35 minutes per submission. Additional tutoring hours can be added to the account with no minimum purchase requirement during the term of this agreement as provided herein or by any subsequent addendum hereto. The program will automatically renew and unused hours will rollover free of charge to the subsequent academic term. Invoices shall be paid within 30 calendar days from receipt of invoice. Brainfuse reserves the right to withhold service pending processing and payment of invoices by the College.

Section 4.2   <u>Expenses</u>

Except as provided otherwise herein, the parties to this Agreement shall be responsible for their own expenses, including taxes and general administrative expenses. Brainfuse shall not be responsible for providing the necessary hardware or software (including, but not limited to, computers, speakers, microphones, Internet access, as well as browsers and firewall modifications) for the proper operation of the Brainfuse Program or Software.

ARTICLE V - TERM OF THE AGREEMENT

This Agreement shall remain valid through _____ and may be renewed on an annual basis by the parties upon the written consent of both Brainfuse and the College. Such mutual consent to renew shall take place at least 15 days prior to the expiration of the Agreement.

ARTICLE VI - NOTICES AND LEGAL ADDRESSES OF THE PARTIES

Section 6.1   **Legal Addresses** All notices or other communications required or which may be given hereunder shall be addressed and forwarded as set forth herein. Any such notice if sent to College shall be addressed as follows:

> College of Central Florida
> 6000 Cinderlane Pkwy
> Orlando, FL 32810

Any such notice if sent to Brainfuse shall be addressed as follows:

> Alex Sztuden
> Managing Director
> Brainfuse, LLC
> 271 Madison Avenue
> Third Floor
> New York, New York 10016
> Telephone: (212) 683-5212

Section 6.2   **Electronic Transmissions** Any notice, invoice or other communication hereunder shall be deemed to have been properly transmitted when sent by telegraph, telecopy, cable transmission, or any other form of electronic communication, and shall be deemed to have been given on the date of receipt thereof.

ARTICLE VII - GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 7.1   **Survival** The representations, warranties, general covenants, and indemnities contained herein shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

Section 7.2   **Applicable Law** This Agreement shall be construed in accordance with, and governed by the laws of the State of Florida.

Section 7.3   **Entire Agreement** This instrument contains the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all other prior negotiations, undertakings, notes, memoranda, and agreements, whether written or oral, concerning the specific subject matter hereof, and may only be modified, altered, changed, or amended by agreement between the parties in writing.

Section 7.4   **Waiver** No waiver, alteration, amendment, or modification of this Agreement, or any covenant, condition, or limitation contained in this Agreement is valid unless in writing and duly executed by the party to be charged therewith.

Section 7.5   **Illegality/Unenforceability** In the event that any provision of this Agreement is declared illegal or unenforceable in any respect under applicable law, rule, or court decision, (1)

the validity, legality, and enforceability of the remaining provisions hereof shall not in any way be affected or impaired, and (2) this Agreement shall be construed so as to effectuate as nearly as possible the intent of said provision and the intent of the parties hereto.

Section 7.6 **Successors and Assigns** This Agreement, and the rights and benefits under this Agreement, shall not be assignable, without the written consent of each of the parties hereto.

Section 7.7 **Facsimile Signatures** The parties agree that facsimile signature of this Agreement shall be deemed to be valid, binding, and legally enforceable.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have set their hands as of the date above written.

College of Central Florida   Brainfuse, LLC

By: _____   By: _____
Name: Name: Alex Sztuden
Title: Title: Managing Director

BRAINFUSE TUTORING SUBJECTS

MATHEMATICS
- Algebra
- Basic Math
- Calculus (Single Variable)
- Differential Equations
- Discrete Mathematics
- Geometry
- Liberal Arts Math
- Linear Algebra
- Multivariable Calculus
- Pre-Algebra
- Pre-Calculus
- Statistics
- Trigonometry

LANGUAGE ARTS
- English for Academic Purposes
- ESOL Writing Support
- Live Writing Help
- Reading (Reading Fluency, Comprehension Strategies & Analysis, Vocabulary Development & Usage Application, ESL Topics/Issues)
- Writing, All Courses (Customizable Writing Lab; standard services include Writing Skills, Paragraph Reviews, Process Paper Reviews, Expository Essays, Research Papers, Profile Essays, Fictional Writing, Career Writing, Resumes, etc.)

BUSINESS
- Accounting
- Economics
- Finance

SCIENCES
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Environmental Science
- Earth Science
- Human Anatomy & Physiology
- Microbiology
- Organic Chemistry
- Physical Science

- Physics

COMPUTER SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
- Adobe Photoshop
- C++
- Cloud Computing
- HTML5/CSS
- JAVA
- JAVA Script
- Linux+
- MS Office Suite
- PHP/My SQL
- Python
- Windows

NURSING/ALLIED HEALTH
- Dental Hygiene
- Emergency Care
- Medical Assisting
- Medical Terminology
- NCLEX-PN
- NET
- NLN PAE
- Nursing
- Nursing Administration
- Nursing/Allied Health Essay Review
- Nursing Anatomy and Physiology
- Nursing Care Plans
- Nursing Medical-Surgery
- Nursing Pathophysiology
- Nursing-Pharmacology
- Oncology
- Pediatrics
- Pharmacy Math and Dosage
- Phlebotomy
- Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing
- Radiology
- Sterilization Techniques
- TEAS
- Women's Health

OTHER - HUMANITIES

- Philosophy
- Art History

OTHER - SOCIAL SCIENCES
- Government
- History
- Psychology
- Sociology

OTHER - LANGUAGES
- Chinese
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- French
- Italian
- Spanish

OTHER - MISC.
- General Study Skills

ABOUT OUR ADA & FERPA COMPLIANCE

BRAINFUSE'S ADA COMPLIANCE

Brainfuse is ADA compliant. Students with disabilities will have the following services available for their convenience:

- o A secure toll-free number to help assist students with sight impairments.
- o An audio tutoring option.
- o ADA-Compliant platform (described in further detail below) that does not require users to select a special "accessibility mode".

ADA-COMPLIANT PLATFORM: Brainfuse services conform to Section 508 Standards and adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines developed by the Web Accessibility Initiative. For example:

- o Brainfuse's live tutoring includes audio features for the vision impaired, including the ability to receive tutoring over a secure phone bridge.

- o Our platform allows for multiple communication methods, including keyboard, freehand drawing, an equation editor, VoIP audio, phone, and importing scanned images of a user's handwritten content.

- o Brainfuse content is compatible with all available screen readers.

Screenshot example of audio features

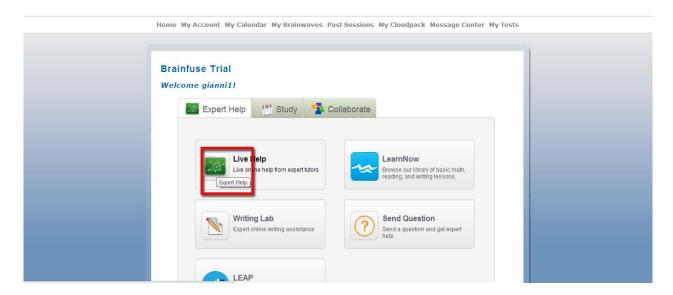- o All Brainfuse images and graphics have an alt tag or long description.

- o Brainfuse uses alt tags for image maps and for graphics associated with the image map so that a person using a screen reader will have access to the links and information.

- o Text links are carefully described to clearly indicate what the link is supposed to do.

Screenshot example of alt tags

WORKING WITH SCREEN-READING SOFTWARE: Brainfuse works with major screen-reading software programs (such as JAWS). Please note that whiteboard graphic elements are not supported by screen reading software and we therefore accommodate blind (and some vision-impaired) students by giving them the option of receiving Brainfuse tutoring by phone through our proprietary tutor-matching system.

In addition, Brainfuse has been designed to work with those screen readers that are built into operating systems. Our system is designed to support full keyboard navigation. As a result, there is no need for a mouse to be able to navigate various areas in the Brainfuse service. In addition, we avoid using drop-down menus on the student side of the service. However, in cases where drop down menus are being used, they are fully accessible using the keyboard so that a visually-impaired individual can still navigate them.

WORKING WITH TEXT-TO-SPEECH SOFTWARE: Our website works with text-to-speech software. As mentioned above, it must be noted that since our whiteboard graphic elements are not supported by text-to-speech software, we try to accommodate blind (and some vision-impaired) students by giving them the option of receiving Brainfuse tutoring by phone through our proprietary tutor-matching system.

USING HOT KEYS TO ALLOW NAVIGATION WITHOUT USING A MOUSE: Brainfuse works mouse-free with hot keys, with magnification software, and with text-to-speech software.

CAPTIONING FOR VIDEOS: We include captioning for many of our videos (and designate them as such). In addition, virtually all of our new videos created by our development team are captioned.

HOW BRAINFUSE CONFORMS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT
(as amended in Section 1194.22 paragraphs a-p)

§1194.22 (a) Offer Text Equivalents: Brainfuse provides a text equivalent for every non-text element. In addition, all audio content from our upcoming SkillSurfer service includes caption. While we do not present charts and graphs on our website, if we do, we shall use the longdesc attribute and/or in-line text to describe such images.

§1194.22 (b) Present Synchronized Multimedia: Our upcoming multimedia SkillsSurfer provides synchronized captions. In addition, all whiteboard interactions allow the possibility of live text messaging and text annotation to accompany any whiteboard content.

§1194.22 (c) Remain Independent of Color: Our web content has been designed (including the use of font, special characters, alt-text) to be independent of color for conveying essential information.

§1194.22 (d) Stay Independent of Style Sheets: Our content is readable without requiring an associated style sheet.

§1194.22 (e) Provide Redundant Links for Server-Side Maps: We provide text links for each active region of a server-side image map.

§1194.22 (f) Use Client-Side Image Maps: Whenever possible, Brainfuse provides client-side image maps instead of server-side image maps.

§1194.22 (g) Label Row and Column Headers: When data tables are displayed, we identify row and column headers.

§1194.22 (h) Use the Headers Attribute in Complex Tables: We do not currently display such tables, but are aware of this requirement.

§1194.22 (i) Supply Frame Titles (attributes and elements): When frames are displayed, we title them with text to assist in frame identification and navigation.

§1194.22 (j) Reduce Flicker: Our pages have a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz to avoid screen flicker.

§1194.22 (k) Offer a Text-only Alternative: We are aware that if we are unable to achieve compliance of the 508 Standards, through other means that we will provide a text-only page.

§1194.22 (l) Write Accessible Scripts: For those pages that use scripting, we provide functional text that is readable by assistive technology.

§1194.22 (m) Specify Accessible Applets and Plug-ins: When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, we provide a link to a plug-in or applet.

§1194.22 (n) Design Accessible Forms: Our online forms allow assistance technology to help users complete such forms.

§1194.22 (o) Offer Skip Navigation: Our navigation logic allows users to skip repetitive navigation links.

§1194.22 (p) Alert Users to Timed Responses: Brainfuse does not include timed responses for users but we are aware of this requirement.

ABOUT OUR FERPA COMPLIANCE

Brainfuse maintains strict FERPA compliance in the following ways:

o   Brainfuse does not solicit a student's personal information and does not require it in order to provide tutoring services. In the rare instance that an institution would provide us with personal information, it is our policy to never share such information with third parties nor to retain such information beyond the time frame of its original purpose.

o   Our secure file sharing feature eliminates the need for emailing and ensures that tutors never have access to a student's name or email address.

o   Our unique live monitoring protocol helps ensure tutor compliance with our anonymity policy during sessions. Our monitoring team observes sessions in real-time, reviews session transcripts and maintains archives of past sessions.

o   NO SOLICITATION OF ADDITIONAL CONSUMER SERVICES TO STUDENTS: Though not a FERPA requirement, it should be noted that *Brainfuse does not offer a for-pay version of its service to consumers.* Brainfuse "HelpNow" is our premium online tutoring service to which we devote all of our development efforts and tutor staffing resources. As such, students who go to our homepage will not be directly or indirectly solicited to subscribe to additional premium services or to pay for additional tutoring time.