

# school**matters**

## Quality control

A look at National Professional  
Standards for Teachers

## Improving tomorrow

Highly effective teachers  
share their habits



Department of  
Education



# Online homework centre



01



- 26 Online tutors available until 10.00pm six days a week are making a real difference to students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. **Maria D'Agostino** reports on this innovative homework centre.

**Student:**  
Hi, I'm not sure about the introduction and conclusion in my essay.

**Tutor:**  
Sure thing, send me the file and we can look at what you have written so far.

**S**usan sits at a table at home late in the evening struggling to finish the assignment that is due tomorrow. She just needs to better understand one concept. She taps on her computer and is connected to a tutor. She relaxes, knowing that help is at hand.

It's a scenario many students face – and until recently only those families able to afford private tutors could give this kind of support to their children.

Now, around 2000 individual tutoring sessions are conducted each month for students in schools fitting the profile for the Australian Government's Higher Education Participation and Partnership Program.

Under this program, each of these schools gets a customised website and every student is given a card to sign in. It's aptly called yourtutor because that it what it gives

**“We help students from low socioeconomic schools that traditionally have not had large numbers of students going on to tertiary education.”**

students – instant access to a tutor online from 3.00pm to 10.00pm from Sunday to Friday.

Sixteen public schools in Western Australia are now working with yourtutor including Balcatta Senior High School, Bunbury Senior High School, Greenwood College and Manea Senior College.

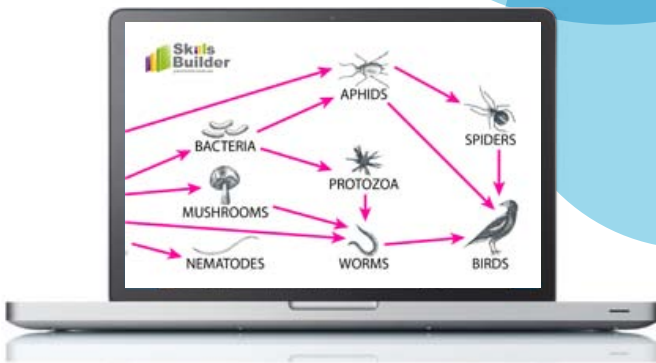
“We help students from

low socioeconomic schools that traditionally have not had large numbers of students going on to tertiary education,” says Jack Goodman, founder and chief executive of yourtutor.

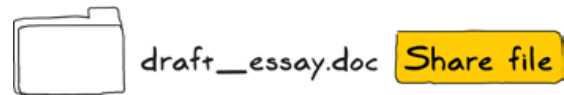
“We know that only about 28 per cent of students in these schools go on to complete tertiary degrees. We want to increase this to 40 per cent.



“We build capabilities as opposed to aspirations.”



|                  |     |       |     |       |     |       |     |       |
|------------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|
| English          | 37% | 25/30 | 37% | 25/30 | 56% | 25/30 | 56% | 25/30 |
| Business Studies | 37% | 7/9   | 37% | 25/30 | 56% | 25/30 | 56% | 2/10  |
| Biology          | 56% | 25/30 | 70% | 25/30 | 86% | 25/30 | 85% | 25/30 |



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“For students who want to know how to learn something, we have built an online learning experience so they can get connected to a tutor for one-on-one sessions.”

After connecting with one of hundreds of expert tutors, the student chooses their year level and subject they need help with before asking questions.

There are even drawing facilities for diagrams and pictures, and files can also be shared.

The partnership program provides funding to universities to improve access to undergraduate courses for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and improve their retention and completion rates.

Butler College principal Armando Giglia was instrumental in getting yourtutor started in WA when he was principal at Mirrabooka Senior High

School from 2001 to 2011.

He says usage was consistently high across all learning areas and year levels.

“It really helped students develop a better grasp of concepts and complete set tasks,” he says. “An intrinsic benefit was how they developed confidence and a belief in themselves as they improved their understanding of subjects.”

There is no need for appointments, travel or expensive fees.

“One of the reasons students love yourtutor is because it is anonymous. Students don’t hold back – they’re not afraid of being judged and there is no embarrassment. It’s also online and immediate,” says Jack.

A highlight for teachers is the SkillsBuilder component which compliments yourtutor. Through SkillsBuilder, teachers set tasks for



students, mark their work and track the outcomes so they know exactly what areas need improvement. [sm W: yourtutor.com.au](http://www.yourtutor.com.au)

**01** Jack Goodman.

**02** Yourtutor is an online homework centre connecting students who need help after hours to a teacher or tutor who can help them.

