



Inside this issue...

| | |
|---|---|
| 2011 in Review | 1 |
| Tutoring: Can Students Afford Not To Have A Tutor? | 2 |
| ATA Membership Fees | 2 |
| ATA National Tuition Survey Final Results | 4 |
| Global News - Australia | 5 |
| Global News - Europe | 5 |
| Global News - Canada | 5 |
| Global News - USA | 7 |
| Global News - England | 8 |

2011 in Review

The Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) has had an excellent year in terms of consolidation and growth. In his AGM Report, ATA President Chris Druett said that, "At this time of year it is pleasing to be able to review our year and to dwell on the achievements of the last 12 months. It is also an opportunity to look forward and plan for what we'd like to attain over the next year.

Our industry continues to grow and prosper. Federal Government data indicates that some 36,000 people now claim tutoring as their primary source of income. This does not include tutors who work part time or casually in the industry. Those with an understanding of the tutoring sector would look to doubling that number for a conservative estimate for the total number of tutors working in our industry. The Commonwealth Governments Jobs Outlook data suggests that these numbers have grown over 38 per cent in the last five years. This growth when taken in the context of where the economy has travelled as a whole is even more impressive. The industry appears to be doing something right.

The ATA was originally envisioned as an industry representative group that, through self-regulation, would provide an umbrella framework for ethical businesses to operate under minimum industry standards. It was hoped to unify our industry. Our code of conduct has delivered on that vision. Our membership base continues to grow and further we are being continually recognised by both federal and state government departments such as Fair Trading, Education and Child Protection for comment and dialogue. The same thing could be said for the press who continue to approach us for industry position and observation.

This year we have begun to appeal to the wider tuition community. Businesses in the sector servicing niche areas like photography, languages and those offering specific training courses like first aid have begun to apply for membership. This again can only be seen as a positive. The greater our membership base the stronger we can be.

2011 is the first year we have been financially strong enough to be able to employ a permanent manager. Our CEO Mohan Dhall has been able to direct our part time office administrators through a hands on role. We have established Facebook, Twitter and Posterous accounts to help in better communicating and we are working on redeveloping our website for a similar purpose.

A major achievement for our members this year is the design and launch of the National Tuition Survey. Despite our ever increasing profile and growing workforce there has been an historical "black hole" when it came to specific industry data. We are attempting to begin to fill in some of that missing information. By asking for customer feedback on things like average spend per week, average age of students when first undertaking tuition, parental attitudes to taxation and school co-operation, most popular forms and academic areas of tutoring. We are now in a position of having collected a significant sample size response to the survey and can begin to use this data for lobbying and creating more informed industry position.

2011 in Review *continued*

The ATA has continued to be recognised and have dialogue with internationally associated industry bodies. This year our CEO was invited to present a paper in Vienna to the annual ENESCO conference – European Network of Educational Support and Concern. We continue to believe that comparatively we remain at the very front of what is happening in tuition worldwide.

There is still much to achieve. Our number one focus continues to be our membership. We would like this to continue to grow and have put in place targets and processes that help our administration team realise this. We remain committed to making sure that members feel well represented and receive both the reputational and associated benefits that come from membership. We are continuing to look at models that may allow for an industry recognised training accreditation for tutors. Further we are exploring ways in which our members may benefit from the introduction of new technology, specifically through the NBN.

Tutoring: Can Students Afford Not To Have A Tutor?

Research has shown that a growing number of parents are hiring private tutors in an attempt to ensure their children get off to a flying start in life. JO EARP looks at a changing learning landscape.

Private tutoring is big business in Australia — according to early results of a new survey, parents who subscribe to an online scheme or hire face-to-face help are spending an average of \$50 per week, and some are forking out an incredible \$10,000 plus each year.

The Australian Tutoring Association survey also found the average age at which children are first exposed to tuition is 10, and it highlighted a surprising spike in usage as students hit Year 4 and 5. So, why are an increasing number of parents turning to tutors to supplement their child's learning in the classroom? Louise Watson is a professor of educational policy at the University of Canberra and says private tutoring is now a worldwide phenomenon.

“It's interesting in what it says about the public education system and the way we assess students and there's certainly some evidence that countries which have a lot of high stakes testing points, either for entrance to universities or entrance to selective high schools, tend to have high rates of private tutoring.”

Watson points out the situation in Australia is a little more complex, as parents can buy subsidised private schooling, but there are several factors as to why private tutors are becoming more popular.

“There's an increasing awareness of the importance of educational attainment, which is fuelled by economic reality as well as the government's increased publicity around testing and publication of test results,” Watson explains. “The evidence in New South Wales is that parents definitely spend money on private tutoring to get their children through exams for selective public schools. And, where there are those high stakes tests and you get a clear benefit from them, there's evidence that middle class parents will allocate resources to get their kids across the line. It's an economic decision, really.”

She adds parents are also increasingly aware that educational attainment has more of an impact on lifelong earnings than it did in decades gone by, and families also have higher levels of disposable income to spend in this area. Watson's study of Australian Bureau of Statistics data found private tutoring and spending additional resources on education is predominantly an activity of the middle and upper classes. So, is tutoring helping to skew high stakes testing results and muddy the waters between the input of teachers and additional hired help?

ATA Membership Fees

The ATA has had no change in its membership fees since its launch in 2005. At the final meeting of Directors in 2011 it was resolved that a nominal rise in membership fees for those taking out insurance was appropriate given the huge savings on insurance with the AAMI deal. The rises also affect associate members. The old and new fees are listed below:

No Insurance

Category A membership, no change: still \$198 per annum
 Category B membership, no change, still \$198 per annum
 Associate membership, rise from \$49.50 to \$66 per annum

With Insurance

Category A membership, rises from \$132 to \$154 per annum
 Category B membership, rises from \$132 to \$154 per annum
 Associate membership, rises from \$44 to \$55 per annum

Well, Watson says this inequity is more likely to play out in the rankings for tertiary entrance at the end of Year 12 than in the NAPLAN results that have thrust individual schools into the spotlight. “Given that expenditure on private tutoring is linked to socio-economic status, and income, then the schools that might be doing well as a result of private tutoring or other factors associated with high SES populations are compared with similar schools catering to students from similar backgrounds.”

Meanwhile, universities are increasingly linking up with schools in low SES areas to help provide tutoring to at risk students, and those who are in danger of falling behind national benchmarks.

Schools are also signing students up to online tutoring projects like Mathletics and the one-to-one targeted learning model continues to be used by teachers and support staff.

“There are a range of intervention programs, such as reading recovery, which have been proven to work by withdrawing the child and giving them one-on-one tutoring,” Watson says.

“There are also numeracy programs that use that model, it just gives the child a bit of extra tuition and a chance to catch up. So it’s a well-established pedagogical approach. The fact that universities are offering to help schools with this sort of provision is just one of the benefits of the government’s policy initiative to make universities more responsible for attracting a more diverse student population through activities with kids from low SES communities.”

In the US state of South Dakota the Irene-Wakonda school district has taken tutoring one step further. The district is the latest to adopt a four day week, tagging an extra 30 minutes onto the daily timetable, in a bid to save money. Every Friday students can either stay at home or take advantage of tutoring sessions run by teachers at school.

So, should tutoring be left up to schools to organise and do teachers make the best tutors?

Mohan Dhall teaches business studies, legal studies and economics at Presbyterian Ladies’ College, Sydney, and is also chief executive officer of the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA).

“The best mentors do not have to be teachers, the best mentors are the ones who can communicate and inspire and know their subject matter well, use a variety of techniques and so on. So it should not be assumed that teachers make the best tutors, although they do have an advantage.”

Dhall runs a centre employing 45 tutors and says it’s important that they work together with teachers and parents. “[In our National Tutoring Survey] we asked lots of questions about why parents hire tutors and generally speaking they’re saying ‘It gives my child confidence’, ‘It supports the individual needs’ and ‘It supplements schoolwork’.

“So, it’s not about an indictment of schools. Schools are doing a great job. We would never say schools are failing, that’s not true. What we do say is that parents are saying ‘We value education and we’re prepared to invest more in it. We want to take control of our outcomes.’”

The ATA’s survey found the hourly rate for a tutor can vary wildly, from \$20 to \$120, depending on experience and location. However, Dhall points out the mark of a good tutor is someone who seeks to make themselves redundant by helping students become independent.

“You can’t create a market if there’s no demand; parents are telling us that they want it. Then, it’s the mainstream sector that has to say ‘What are we doing about it and how do we engage?’”

And if you think that means high schools, think again. Dhall says interim findings of the first 600 survey responses to the ATA survey showed a spike in tutoring interest around Year 4 and 5. “There are primary schools that offer gifted classes [at that age] and I suspect that’s one reason [for the spike], because there are tests to get into those classes. There are also NAPLAN tests in Year 5 ... and in Year 6 the private school entry tests run by ACER down in Victoria, so there’s also a spike for preparation in those as well.”

There is another spike in Year 10 and 11 as parents look to get their children ready for university, and it doesn’t make any difference if they’ve already spent \$20,000 a year on private schooling. “I’ve tutored kids who are in private schools who have tutors for every single subject and they are doing it for two reasons: One, yes other kids are getting tutored, rank is important ... for a university place; Two, it’s an investment in a scholarship at university.”

Dhall says, given more and more parents in Australia are willing to make the investment, it’s time schools and tutors started working together.

This article has been reproduced with the kind permission of Australian Teacher Magazine and Jo Earp.

ATA National Tuition Survey Final Results

The ATA conducted the first national tuition survey canvassing parents for their views and experiences of tuition. Nearly 1000 responses have been received nationally. The survey officially closed on 30th Dec 2011 and though parents can still contribute to the survey the final results are as follows:

- Parents with 1 child (54%) or 2 children (56%) tend to take up tuition in Primary School but as family sizes increase the 3rd child (62%) and 4th child (43%) start tuition earlier (in Pre-School). Parents report that they 'learn from the earlier children not to leave things too late. Intervention must be early to make the biggest difference to my child'.
- 62% of children obtain tutoring from 12-years of age or younger with a spike at age 10 (Year 5). There is a secondary spike at age 17-years (Year 11).
- 31% used tutors for 2 years or longer with their child thus it was seen as both a short term and long term intervention/support.
- 42% of parents pay between \$41 and \$60 per week for tuition. 89% pay more than \$41 per week for tuition and 28% pay more than \$91 per week for tuition.
- Nearly half (48% prefer face-to-face one-to-one tuition) and the second most popular form of tuition was small group (45%). Only 7% opted for personal online tuition.
- Almost exactly half of all parents (51%) use computer-based tuition mainly for mathematics (68%) and pay less than \$100 for the service. 46% use free software.
- 92% of parents say that tuition boost the self esteem or confidence of their child and caters for their individual needs.
- 94% of parents say that finding the right tutor and having confidence in the tutor are crucial.
- 86% of all parents surveyed want tuition costs to be tax deductible.
- The most sought after subjects for tuition were English (87%) and Mathematics (92%).
- Sports coaching (47%), Music (43%), Dance (22%), Writing (20%) and Speech Therapy (15%) were other forms of supplementary coaching services used.
- Word-of-mouth (45%) and the personal recommendation of friends (39%) were by far the most used forms of sourcing tutors.
- 88% of all parents wanted tutors to work with mainstream schooling.

These results are very significant and reveal the value and importance of academic tuition to families and children, and also to mainstream schooling. Mohan Dhall, ATA CEO said, "Parents value education and realise the importance of early intervention and support". The Commonwealth government's Jobs Outlook data indicates that this market has grown by over 38% in the past 5 years. Employment for Private Tutors and Teachers to 2015-16 is expected to grow very strongly. Employment in this large occupation (34 600 in November 2010) rose very strongly in the past five years and rose strongly in the long-term (ten years). (Source: <http://joboutlook.gov.au/pages/occupation.aspx?search=alpha&tab=prospects&cluster=&code=2492>)

Global News

Australia

The significant news in Australia includes the following:

- Final results of the National Tuition Survey of Parents released (see earlier article)
- The use of tutors and importance to rural and remote families – see article below:

Australian Farmers Foundation News - Volunteers for Isolated Students Education (VISE) - Queensland

Volunteering is the heart of VISE. No one receives any remuneration for their work either as an administrator or as a volunteer worker in the field. There are now more than 300 volunteers in the mainstream VISE program. These volunteers work in the wide variety of VISE programs and spend between six and twelve weeks each year in the outback assisting a large number of families and others in rural Australia. Parents living in remote situations frequently worry that they are not providing the right kind of help and guidance in supporting their children's education. The positive, constructive feedback and guidance from VISE Tutors on how they are filling their role is appreciated. This program is continual as families request a placement based around the other demands of farming life. For example a tutor may be required to take on the teaching duties at peak times on the property in order to release the mother for other duties e.g shearing or mustering.

Source: <http://www.aussiefarmersfoundation.org.au/news/vise-queensland.htm>

Europe

In late October 2011 the European Network of Educational Support and Concern, ENESCO, held a meeting in Vienna, Austria. Invited participants represented associations from Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Germany, the USA, Australia, France and Portugal. This meeting had the principal aim of creating an overarching tuition body for Europe. A secondary aim was to seek agreement from participating nations for the creation of a global body. Both goals were achieved and George Hagitegas from Greece reported in early January 2012, "Finally, the statute of the European Confederation is almost ready. The signature will be put on March in Istanbul in a special conference (probably the second or the third weekend of March)".

This is a significant initiative and indicates that the growth and formalisation of the tuition sector in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and in Europe is consistent globally.

Canada

The following article comes from Canada. The ATA has a member from Canada – Tutor Doctor – and also has a member with subsidiary operations in Canada: Nam Quang Tuition.

The new trend in tutoring: studying to get ahead, not catch-up,
by ANITA LI From Friday's Globe and Mail, 11.08.11

While other kids are out playing in the sprinkler or attempting to watch all seven Harry Potter movies in one day, Brydon Pires is mulling over fractions and decimals. Every Wednesday and Saturday, he heads to the Kumon of Mississauga-Lisgar, a learning centre, to bone up on his math skills. Brydon, a bright and inquisitive 10-year-old, is part of a growing trend. Increasingly, Canadian children are attending tutoring classes – not to catch up at school – but to get ahead.

A 2007 report by the Canadian Council on Learning shows that 33 per cent of parents hired a tutor for their child, even though a majority of them have children with grades in the A or B range. The report, which surveyed more than 5,000 Canadians, suggests that "parents are increasingly involved in doing whatever they can to position their children in the best possible way for success in their working lives."

"I have noticed that more and more families are coming in specifically because they know their children are doing well, and they want to do more," says Michelle Kolozetti, owner of the Mississauga centre. "Probably about 30 to 40 per cent of my student population is working ahead of grade level."

Like other tutoring centres such as Oxford Learning and Sylvan Learning, Kumon offers academic programs in reading and math. The company says it fosters independent-learning skills by encouraging its students to study on their own (through homework assignments) with the support of an instructor. These centres are proving so popular that children who haven't even entered the school system are being signed up for "premedial" lessons.

Maureen Arellano's four-year-old son Marko has been enrolled in Junior Kumon since the spring. Acquaintances have criticized Ms. Arellano's decision, saying Marko is too young to attend classes. She counters that she's simply preparing him for school.

"I'm keeping [Marko] ahead in terms of math or English and [his] interest in studying," she says. "It's more that attitude toward studying ... getting him interested early on."

Marko cried during the first two weeks of attending Kumon, but has since accepted his math drills as part of the regular routine. Ms. Arellano says she can tell "it's not something enjoyable" for him, but thinks it's worth it.

Diana Pires, Brydon's mother, enrolled her son in Kumon's enrichment program last September because she also wanted to be pro-active in preparing him for the future.

"We were not parents who want to put pressure on our kids, but at the same time I'm trying to explain to [Brydon] about him wanting to fulfill his dreams and how this would help him," Ms. Pires says, adding that her son aspires to be an astronaut.

Ms. Pires finds that the lessons are particularly useful during the summer, because instead of "putting him in front of the TV every day," she can help Brydon maintain an academic schedule until he returns to school in September. She emphasizes that Brydon himself wanted to continue attending Kumon throughout July and August, and even asked for more homework.

"I didn't know it would be this much of an education. I just thought it would be simple math, but it's reaching heights that I won't reach very early," Brydon says. "Now I'm able to do math that almost nobody in my class can do."

Not everyone agrees, however, that more lessons are always the best medicine. Calgary-based parenting expert Judy Arnall stresses that children need time to relax and play: "Research supports that the brain needs downtime, so kids need to be spending their days doing whatever they want to do that's not structured, not micromanaged by adults, not classes – they have enough of that all year."

Playtime enhances creativity and problem-solving, and helps children learn communication skills, she adds. The school system already provides a solid education. Tutoring companies tend to play on parents' fear of their child not getting into university, Ms. Arnall says. For instance, Oxford Learning informs parents on its website that "it's extremely competitive to get into post-secondary education," and that they need a "competitive edge" to succeed.

She says parents should get the consent of their child before enrolling him or her in a tutoring program: "It's okay to want your child to get ahead, but the child has to want to get ahead."

Angela Marseglia, owner and director of two Toronto-area Oxford Learning centres, agrees that children should have a say in whether or not to enroll, but takes issue with the "misconception" that tutoring is not fun.

"If a child is not on board, the program is not going to be effective," she says. "[But] if you have a child who's truly showing interest in wanting to do some enrichment, would you deny that child?"

Anju Dhawan, mother of eight-year-old twins Alaina and Jillian, says a well-rounded child is "paramount." While her daughters are high academic achievers and attend enrichment classes outside of school, she emphasizes they also do a variety of sports and play with friends.



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The enrichment programs cultivate discipline through rote learning, Ms. Dhawan adds, but they also help children develop confidence by giving them the skills to perform well at school.

“As long as they’re learning something and they continue to want to do it, I’ll keep them in it.”

When the need is real

Although there’s some debate on the usefulness of tutoring services, these are signs that your child may benefit from enrolling in a remedial or enrichment program:

- Grades begin to drop
- He develops low self-esteem and thinks negatively of his academic performance
- She loses interest in learning and resists doing school work
- He misbehaves in class
- The teacher sends notes home, recommending parents assist with homework, or suggesting remedial help
- The child is a gifted student or advanced learner and wants to be challenged with enrichment classes
- She’s preparing for exams or university/college applications

Some tutoring options include:

- Retired teachers
- Recent university and college graduates (especially those with Bachelor of Education designations)
- Teachers who want to earn extra money
- Centres such as Kumon, Oxford Learning and Sylvan Learning

Editor’s Note: Marko Arellano has been taking tutoring sessions since the spring.

Source: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/education/learning/the-new-trend-in-tutoring-studying-to-get-ahead-not-catch-up/article2126859/>

United States of America

‘America’s tutor boom’: By the numbers

By The Week’s Editorial Staff | The Week – Thu, Oct 13, 2011

Public schools may be suffering, but the private tutoring business - a \$5 billion industry - is growing like gangbusters. Times may be tough for many Americans, but, as the quality of public education grows shakier, it still pays to be a tutor - or at least a corporate tutoring firm. While the rest of the economy has sputtered and stagnated, the “supplemental education” sector has grown tenfold over the last decade. Here, a brief guide, by the numbers to “America’s tutor boom”:

- \$5 billion: Estimated size of the “supplemental education” sector

- \$500 million: Estimated size of the “supplemental education” sector in 2001, according to Michael Sandler, the founder of education consulting firm Eduventures
- More than 1,400 Number of Kumon Math and Reading Centers across the country, making it the nation’s largest tutoring chain. That’s “nearly as many as familiar chains like Popeye’s and Denny’s,” says Missy Sullivan at SmartMoney.
- 240,000 Number of Kumon students tutored annually
- \$95 to \$150 Cost for one month of Kumon tutoring in a single subject
- 200 Number of drill sheets that Kumon students must master to complete the math program. The sheets start with basic arithmetic and end with basic calculus. Learning to ace all of them can take five years, according to Joe Nativo, Kumon’s chief financial officer. Some have criticized Kumon’s methods, dubbing them “mind-numbing” and “kill ‘em and drill ‘em.”
- 1 Percentage of Kumon students who complete the entire math program, according to Nativo
- 3 to 5 Age range for the Junior Kumon program. “There’s a table in the back of the Kumon center where preschool aged kids can learn vocabulary, reading and math, seemingly getting a leg up on their future fellow competitors, er, classmates,” says Liz Moyer in The Wall Street Journal.
- More than 50 Number of franchised tutoring firms in the country.
- More than 50 Amount, in percent, that the tutoring industry has grown since 2008, despite the economic downturn, according to Eduventures
- \$450 Cost, per hour, for one-on-one test prep from one of the Princeton Review’s “premier” tutors, the company’s most elite and expensive academic helpers.
- 34 Number of states that have cut spending for K-12 education since 2008, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. “The tutoring field is increasingly centralized... and corporate,” says Sullivan.
- \$45 to \$60 Average cost, per hour, of tutoring at the major chain firms. Tutoring is typically not private; rather a tutor usually works with three students at once, coming around to each student intermittently in a “round-robin style.” “We’re somewhat recession-resistant,” says Kumon’s Nativo. A mere “private” tutor can be had for just \$115 an hour. “Perhaps outside-of-school tutoring wouldn’t be a \$5 billion industry if parents could relax and trust their schools to do the educating,” says Moyer. “But who does that nowadays?”

Sources: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Council for American Private Education, Kumon, SmartMoney, Wall Street Journal

<http://news.yahoo.com/americas-tutor-boom-numbers-142500664.html>

News from England

Rise of the tutor as parents lose faith in classroom teaching,
By KATE LOVEYS, 5.9.11

More parents are hiring private tutors for their children as fears grow about slipping standards in the classroom.

- Almost a quarter of pupils aged 11 to 16 have received hired help to boost exam results, a sharp rise since 2005, a study has found.
- In London, this increases to almost four in ten children – a trend which reflects the scramble for places at leading schools in the capital.
- Help: Almost a quarter of pupils aged 11 to 16 have received hired help
- In some secondary schools it is thought as many as 65 per cent of pupils will benefit from a tutor at some point.

The findings suggest successful schools are climbing exam league tables thanks partly to the work of private tutors. And with prices for such teaching sessions set at up to £60 an hour, children from affluent families are more likely to get a boost than those from a disadvantaged background.

In the study, market research company Ipsos MORI polled 2,739 children between the ages of 11 and 16 in England and Welsh state schools and compared findings with a similar poll in 2005. It found the proportion sent to tutors had increased from 18 to 23 per cent. It is believed the increase in tutoring among 16 to 18-year-olds was prompted by unprecedented competition for scarce university places this year, which is the final year before fees hike to £9000.

Advantage: Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said private tuition 'does give well off families an advantage'.

The study follows recent evidence of a surge in the number of children as young as three receiving private tuition. Asian and black families are the most likely to hire private tutors, with 42 per cent of Asian children and 38 per cent of black children getting extra help, compared to just 20 per cent of white families. And of today's figures, 25 per cent of tutored children are from affluent families, while 18 per cent come from poorer backgrounds. Yesterday, educational charities warned the trend could widen the educational gap between the 'haves and have-nots' with poorer parents unable to afford private tuition.

Sir Peter Lampl, chairman of the Sutton Trust, said: 'Private tuition appears to be booming despite the recession. 'While it is natural that parents should want to do the best for their children, it does give well off families an advantage, particularly when money to help children from poorer homes is being cut.'

The Sutton Trust has funded a pilot scheme of 100 pupils from poor homes in London who will be given one-to-one tuition in a bid to boost GCSE maths scores.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2033770/Rise-tutor-parents-lose-faith-classroom-teaching.html#ixzz1eEkcFjtr>

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