**Part-Time, Autonomous Tutors as Knowledge Workers: Motivation & Engagement**

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**Introduction**

I own and run a tutoring service. To both improve my business and learn more about the wants and needs of knowledge workers in general, I wanted to talk to tutors to ensure we know what motivates and engages them. Knowledge workers: 2x the size of other employee types.

**Literature Cited**


**Methods**

- Qualitative research:
  - 1-on-1 retrospective interviews
  - 10 former tutors
- Topics:
  - Engagement
  - Components of engagement
  - Feeling supported
  - Preferred styles of management
- Loaded interviews to identify unidirectional responses and patterns.
- UT-Austin IRB approved study

**Results**

- **Why do people choose to become tutors?**
  - Great Pay
  - Flexible Schedules
  - Enjoy Tutoring

- **What do knowledge workers want?**
  - Good Pay
  - Relationships
  - Enjoying Work

- **What experiences do tutors carry over from tutoring to their long-term careers?**
  - Socializing
  - Intellectual Challenge
  - Resource Sharing

- **What engages tutors?**
  - Teaching
  - Engage Students
  - Meaningful Work

- **Why tutor?**
  - “Engagement feels like more of a natural side effect of tutoring.”
  - “You have to get to know them and get them to trust you and know that you know what you’re talking about.”
  - “One big positive outcome negated [the challenge of] weeks of working on the same thing.”
  - “A student who was engaged with me was what motivated me to be engaged as a tutor.”
  - “Tutoring is inherently rewarding.”

**Conclusions**

- **Why tutor?**
  - People choose to tutor for reasons that differ somewhat from those that keep them motivated to continue tutoring.
  - Aspects of tutoring positions that we highlight when recruiting new tutors should differ from those we emphasize once a tutor begins the work of tutoring.

- **Tutor engagement**
  - What engages tutors is what keeps them tutoring longer, primarily their relationships with their students.
  - Engagement is very much a two-way street. We have no control of how the student and parents will choose to engage with the tutor and their interactions with tutors have a significant impact on tutors’ feeling of engagement while working with students.

- **Tutor engagement with the organization**
  - Part-time, autonomous tutors want engagement with the organization for the purposes of resource sharing, socializing, and community service.

- **Engagement with knowledge workers**
  - Knowledge workers may want traditional organizational amenities.
  - They may want professional, social, and managerial support despite their ability to perform their work with relative autonomy.

- **Tutoring skills carry over**
  - Tutoring offers knowledge workers an opportunity to practice a range of skills that are transferable to other domains.
  - Tutoring supports a flexibility that knowledge workers particularly need as they move from project to project.

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**Acknowledgments**

Many thanks to Polly Strong for her thoughtful contributions. Heartfelt appreciation to Art Markman, Amy Ware, & HDO for their understanding and help getting back on track post-Harvey.

Thank you to my family for your support in pursuing this degree, especially Arnold Colunga, Aurora & Ariana Colunga French, Charlotte Spradley, Swannel & Ed Spradley, & Swannel Fowler.

Sincere gratitude to Clay Spinuzzi for his dedication and patience in guiding me and answering my constant questions.

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