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## 2010 Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Chairman's Report

### *Welcome to the ATA Annual General Meeting for 2010*

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

Any business that relies on customers using discretionary spending (as we do) will tell you that the last year has offered some difficult conditions to trade in. Over the last 12 months government stimulus has faded to a memory and interest rates, school fees and utility bills have all increased. We are now trading in what is referred to as a two speed economy, mining and mining services business are flying while the rest of the economy is sluggish. Interestingly our association has not only consolidated its position but continued to strengthen through this period.

Membership this time last year was at 311 (associate and full). As at our last monthly report, on the 15th November, membership was at 350. This represents an increase of some 12% and is obviously a very positive outcome for the Company. The ATA Board believes that our increasing membership base reflects our relevance to the tutoring industry and re affirms the importance of our work.

#### **SELF REGULATION**

I believe we have reached a point in our history where we can point to a number of key outcomes and claim that self-regulation of our industry has been a success. These would include but are not limited to;

- Growing membership
- Stable finances
- Diminished media focus on negative aspects of the industry
- Dialogue with, and recognition by state and federal levels of government
- Increased media and government references to us for comment and opinion
- Growing consumer awareness of our role

We have built the platform for a long term successful association and something for which the board and its members should very be proud.

#### **ATA PARTNERSHIPS**

This year we have continued to explore relationships that offer members additional benefits and discounts, over and above the reputational advantage they receive from being associated with the ATA. We have established new agreements with:

- Hoyts Cinemas
- SKS Printing
- Dymocks Book Stores

And we are exploring a potential new discount relationship for members with a national stationary supplier. These on top of the existing banking and insurance relationships we have with Westpac and AAMI. All these relationships have been targeted by the Board because they should offer business' appeal through direct decreases to normal business costs. Hopefully members will continue to support these business affiliations so that we can continue to offer them in the future.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

As a Board we will continue to focus our attention on delivering outcomes based upon our industry specific Code of Conduct. Let there be no mistake, we see this as continuing to provide the basis for our organisation.

I recently had experience of just how powerful a force membership of the ATA and our code of conduct can be in giving consumers the ability to differentiate between claims made by different businesses. We discovered an operator making claims about their employment and educational history that we knew to be false. Further they were infringing upon our copy write in the use of their advertising, creating the misleading impression that they may have been associated with my business. Given my background in the industry it was a simple process to ascertain the falsity of the claims being made, however I can only imagine how powerless a normal consumer would be in assessing this business.

The ATA badge gives consumers a level of protection they otherwise would not have. False or misleading claims made by operators with low ethical values hurt all of us in the industry. With the help of the ATA we were able to put pressure on this operator to change his claims and desist from the misleading practices he was using. A win for the industry was achieved.

## 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

This year the ATA has continued to lobby, press for change and advance our industry position where ever we see the opportunity. Some of these instances include;

- Our CEO continuing the relationship that we established in 2009 by meeting with and presenting a paper to our colleagues in the NTA during their annual conference in the US.
- Presenting to Peter Lawler Minister for Fair Trading in QLD and following on from this meeting Qld Fair trading producing a fact sheet on "computer based tuition."
- A meeting with the NSW Director General of Education, Michael Coutts-Trotter and following on from this a journal article in Ezine, which goes to every public school in NSW, dealing with recommendations regarding sourcing tutoring. This article was then reproduced in a large of number school newsletters.
- A meeting with Joe D'Ermilio for the Parramatta Office of Fair Trading.
- NSW Office of Fair Trading produces a media release referring to a fact sheet they produced for tutoring that was produced with the ATA's co-operation.
- Introducing ourselves and our code of conduct to Parents & Citizens Association with the eventual aim of more open dialogue between the two parties.

## CHILD PROTECTION

The ATA continues to be concerned about a lack of uniform child protection legislation nationwide. We see this as a serious issue and one that requires ongoing attention. It is not good enough that some states and territories continue to maintain a position where there is no checking involved into the backgrounds of those people that work with children.

## ADMINISTRATION

In 2011 the board have decided to explore the option of having a permanent part time role devoted entirely to growing ATA membership and lobbying at an appropriate and sustained level on areas we see as important. This will add further to the professionalism of the organisation and provide for future expansion and strength. We plan for the role to be self-sustaining with the increase in membership providing the funding for the role.

## THE BOARD and STAFF

The current ATA Board continues to work tirelessly and voluntarily in support of our industry. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the individual members of the Board for their support and hard work and to thank Melanie Lopez for her work behind the scenes in helping to administer our office. I believe that the tutoring community has derived enormous benefits from their efforts.

## CLOSING

In closing I would like to thank our members, corporate partners and supporters all of whom have contributed to the success of the ATA. We must now resist the temptation to rest on our laurels regardless of the success of the past. We should continue to explore all options to ensure our ongoing success. I offer everyone best wishes for the approaching holiday season and a bid everyone a successful 2011.

Regards

**Chris Druett – Chairman ATA.**

## SECRETARY'S REPORT 2010 AGM

### Membership and Insurance

As at 30th November 2010 the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd. has 356 paid up members. These are from the following States and Territories:

- NSW: 161 members
- Queensland: 95 members
- Victoria: 67 members
- Western Australia: 19 members
- South Australia: 5 members
- Tasmania: 4 members
- ACT: 3 members
- Northern Territory: 1 member
- International: 1 member (Singapore)

### Financials

The ATA has a current bank balance of \$33,227.50 with about \$1,800 yet to bank and Westpac owing \$2,500. This means year on year we are down about \$1,000. This is an excellent financial result given the expenditure this year.

### Board of Directors

The end of 2010 brings the resignation of ATA Treasurer Bill Edwards. The current Board is therefore as follows:

- Christopher Druett, President, Tutoring for Excellence P/L
- Mohan Dhall, CEO and Company Secretary, Private Tutor
- Storm McGrath, CEO, Kip McGrath Ltd.
- Paul Flymen, Director, Zambusters P/L

### The ATA in the Press and Publicity

- E-Zine (Issue No.7), ATA extensively promoted
- NSW Office of Fair Trading Press Release
- Qld Office of Fair Trading warning on computer-based tuition
- Kids on the Coast article titled, 'The way of the future'
- Illawarra Mercury article by Emma Shaw titled 'Looking for that Extra Educational Edge'
- Both the Daily Telegraph and the Sydney Morning Herald wrote pieces on the trip by Mohan Dhall to the NTA in which he called for a national recognition of tutors as partners to mainstream education in Australia
- Widespread press coverage in Singapore with a call for the industry there to establish a self-regulation body (Sept-Oct 2010)
- Major article in the Education Review (Nov 2010) – the educator's journal that goes to all members of the Australian College of Educators. This article will be reproduced in full in the December edition of Within Tuition
- Major Article in the Catholic Education Office magazine called 'Busy Kids' (Dec 2010)

- Major article in the government approved My School Kids website which will be launched in Dec 2010.

### Notable Achievements for 2010

#### 1. Building Member Benefits:

Through:

- The reputation and public position of the ATA and uncompromising stance on blending consumer protection and educational excellence
- The choice we give to the paying public
- The support of members in conflict or the public in conflict with others in the industry
- The voice we have in the media \*(see below)
- Corporate alliances:
  - ATA-AAMI
  - ATA-Westpac
  - ATA-Hoyts
  - ATA-Dymocks (Sydney)
  - ATA-SKS Printing
- A serious and building partnership with mainstream education
  - Public schools (NSW)
  - Parent groups
  - The Catholic System

#### 2. A Global Presence:

The ATA is the most active Association globally and aims to press integration and tuition growth, with benchmark standards, throughout Asia Pacific. We currently have alliances with

- On-going partnership with National Tutoring Association, NTA, USA
- The New-Zealand Tutoring Association
- Are in discussions with three parties in regards to setting up a Singapore Tuition Association

### The Way Forward: ATA Ltd. 2011 Plan

1. Driving revenue growth through the provision of a wider range of client services – most notably finalising the Tuition-Enterprise Scholarship scheme
2. Creating an on-line accreditation for tutors which can assist with training and benchmarking minimum educational standards within the sector
3. Possible alliance: AMEB and Vice Chancellor's Association  
*The Board are proposing to offer a part time job to the Company Secretary with a 6-month probation contingent on achievement of particular KPIs such as revenue growth and the creation of on-line accreditation.*

## A Private Practice

*Despite its growing prevalence, private tuition in Australia is a largely hidden industry. Darragh O Keeffe sheds light on the shadow education system.*

Don't look now, but there's a giant elephant in the room. Private tuition, or the 'shadow education system', is estimated to be a \$1 billion industry in Australia. The industry's self regulatory body, the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA), suggests there could be more employed in it than in formal education. It's rarely, if ever, acknowledged by mainstream education. It is grossly under-researched in Australia. It's without any regulation, standards or complaints mechanism. And, by all accounts, the elephant is getting bigger and bigger. According to the last census, 78,000 people were listed as working in 'other education'. However, according to the ATA, that figure does not include teachers who moonlight as tutors.

A Google search of 'private tutor Australia' yields 303,000 website results, while the Yellow Pages has 800 listings for 'coaching colleges' in NSW alone. Using the ABS Household Expenditure Survey 2003-04, Professor Louise Watson of the University of Canberra has charted the growth in spending on tutoring. In her 2008 paper, the most recent academic work on the Australian context, Watson shows that in 1998-99, Australian families spent almost 3.9 per cent of their education expenditure on private tutoring. By 2003-04, it had increased to 4.8 per cent.

Elsewhere, Professor Dianna Kenny of the University of Sydney surveyed 1700 Year 4 to 12 students at MLC Burwood to examine the effects of coaching. Her 2004 study found that 65 per cent of the students reported receiving after school hours coaching – 45 per cent had a private tutor and 43 per cent reported attending a coaching college.

Much like the estimations of the industry's size, the suspected reasons for its sustained growth in Australia vary. "There is international evidence to suggest that high stakes entry systems create demand for private tuition," says Watson. "It's the notion you get one chance to step up into a selective high school, or get into university. Private tutoring does tend to proliferate in those systems."

Indeed, in her 2008 paper, Watson showed that private tutoring accounted for 9 per cent of household education spend in NSW in 2003-04, compared to 2.3 per cent in Victoria. She goes on to point out that NSW has 27 selective high schools and a final year exam, while Victoria has just two selective high schools and the VCE, which is a combination of ongoing assessment and an exam. "Essentially it's about parents trying to minimise the risk. When you have selective high schools it does contribute to the demand, but it's not the only factor," she says. "The feeling has always been that tutoring and coaching colleges tend to be used by non-government school students to enhance their results and to provide a better score in the formal assessments that lead to tertiary education," says Helen Walton, president of the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW.

*“There have been additional concerns about the use of these services to train students to allow them to score adequately enough to gain a spot in a selective high school or private school. The P&C Federation, as supporters of public education, continue to express our concerns about this particular phenomenon.”*

In her research, Kenny found that parents and teachers cited similar reasons for why children were being tutored. "Parents listed four main reasons: improving academic performance; improving exam performance (for scholarships, entrance to selective high school or gifted and talented classes); helping with school work and providing additional teaching. Teachers cited three factors: improving academic performance; improving competitive grades and, interestingly, it was the result of a contagious social phenomenon," she says.

Watson also points to the current focus on school performance, and national testing, driven by the federal government and the media. "Universally, parents are becoming more aware of the importance of educational attainment. Parents concerns about academic achievement are growing. Through NAPLAN, that awareness is growing, families are very switched on to achievement now," she says. "Concerns have emerged around the use of tutoring and coaching to promote a better score in the NAPLAN assessment," adds Walton. "There are many services actively advertising that they are able to improve a child's score in these national assessments."

The obvious question, therefore, is does tutoring work? Again, opinion varies. Kenny's 2004 research found that academic coaching intended for secondary students to improve performance in end-of-year exams in English, maths or science was "generally ineffective".

"Results indicated that students who had received coaching in the English, maths and science curricula did not perform better than did students who had not..."

"Students coached in Year 8 performed worse in that year's English examination than did the uncoached students, and students coached in Year 10 performed worse in that year's science examination and on overall aggregate marks compared with students who had not been coached," Kenny's paper said.

In a subsequent paper, this time analysing the results of the Year 4 to 6 students at Burwood, Kenny found there was no affect of coaching on the award of scholarships. For the entrance to a selective high school exam, coaching “fell just short of significance”. Echoing this, Deirdre Jackson, director of assessment services at ACER, which creates the scholarship tests used by many schools, advises against coaching. “We don’t recommend coaching for candidates sitting these tests as we feel that any benefits are marginal at best. It is very difficult to ‘coach’ to the ability-based tests that make up the scholarship tests. The tests rely more on the ability of candidates to infer and apply knowledge, than any curriculum-based learning,” she says.

*“Coaching does little for the bright students,” adds Kenny. “If a student is doing well, getting 90 per cent in maths, for example, the margin of improvement could be 1 per cent from coaching.”*

However, Mohan Dhall, CEO of the ATA, argues that the vast majority of private tuition does not relate to selective school entry. Much of it, which is provided by individual tutors, rather than coaching colleges, relates to remedial work. “The majority of students need confidence and support. They are not getting it in their regular classrooms,” says Dhall, who runs a centre with 30 staff. “Moreover, with a greater recognition of a range of learning styles, many students who miss out in mainstream classes – public and private – may be best taught in a one-to-one situation.”

Given the apparent lack of research to support the claims made by private tutors and coaching colleges, why, then, do parents persist? “People play the odds,” says Kenny. “People generally can’t, or won’t, read complex research. When the coaching colleges roll out their spin, that 97 per cent of their students gain places in selective high schools, or 97 per cent win scholarships, parents say: ‘Wow, I better enrol my child in a coaching college or they’ll be disadvantaged.’ Some even say they’re not entirely sure it will be effective, but they do it anyway. People do things without evidence, without logic, when they think it’s in their children’s interest.” Kenny also says that coaching colleges are generally unwilling to “expose themselves to outside empirical, independent investigation”. “They package their wares in a very elaborate and confusing way. For example, they don’t control for their students’ IQ or prior learning. Often, it’s the brightest, and the most coached students who are in these colleges. But that’s never acknowledged by the colleges in their promotional material where they’re taking all the credit.”

Jenny Davis, a PhD student at the University of Western Australia, who is currently researching the growth of private tuition, says the sector is becoming broader. “Once the focus was remedial, but now there are a lot of other elements coming into it. I think parents always recognised the importance of education. But perhaps there has been a change in culture around what you expect from government schools and whether they meet those needs,” she says.

Walton highlights the mass marketing employed by coaching colleges. “Families are targeted with promotional material which plays on their desires to provide the best opportunities for their child and broaden the options available,” she says.

Kenny agrees. “Private tutoring is big business, and like any big business, it develops its tentacles. There’s a huge marketing arm to it, and it feeds on fear. It’s a bit like alternative treatments for cancer; if you take modern medicine as an analogy for a standard education. If it’s perceived as failing, then people turn to all sorts of unproven, untested alternative treatments,” she says.

Academic merits aside, one of the greatest concerns expressed about Australia’s shadow education system is the lack of regulation governing it. Dhall says the government must introduce standards and regulate the industry, or else promote the ATA to parents as the self-regulatory body. He says the ATA, which has 345 businesses registered, was established five years ago after a working party convened by Standards Australia failed to develop standards and a system of accreditation. Instead, it produced a voluntary Tutoring Code of Practice. “Initially we were there talking about a standard, but when it became clear it could cost \$20,000 each to be accredited, everyone shied away. Instead we ended up with a working document, and I don’t think a single member of that board bought it,” says Dhall, who was on the working party. “Hardly anyone knows about the Standards Australia code. We certainly don’t promote it, because it’s not relevant. It means nothing. It has little to no industry support,” he says.

Dhall suggests the government introduce a licensing regime, similar to what covers taxi drivers, as a means of regulation. “The licence could then be withdrawn if the organisation breaches the code – that would be the best form of regulation. The ATA would get government funding and we would undertake the accreditation to ensure organisations have policies, are open about their curriculum, their complaints handling process, don’t make misleading claims. The cost of a licence would help cover the cost of compliance,” he says. Short of this, the government should be promoting the ATA to parents as the self regulatory body.

Currently, tutors or colleges that wish to gain ATA endorsement must sign a statutory declaration that they will adhere to the ATA’s code of conduct. Breach of the code results in disendorsement and/or legal action. Dhall says the ATA has disendorsed four members in the past five years, “and that was the result of our own investigating of their practices”.

Kenny, too, criticises the current situation, and the result of the 2006 Standards Australia working party. I think a little bit of cleaning up is in order. I was upset that Standards Australia wanted the industry to self monitor, because we all know how well that works. That was a few years ago, and as we all know, once the noise settles down things go back to normal, and people go back to making money,” she says. “There’s a whole whack of issues around accreditation of colleges,” says Watson.

“If you are paying sums of money for tutoring, there’s very little guarantee of quality. You might get a qualified teacher, or you might not. Kenny says that, as part of her 2004 research, she contacted individual coaching colleges, posing as a parent, to inquire about the qualifications of their staff.

“When I asked colleges whether their tutors were trained teachers, a lot said they were university students, some were retired teachers, some were other retired professionals – such as retired engineers teaching maths – and some had undergraduate university students who had no idea of teaching or curriculum.” Dhall also points out that, with several states lacking legislation requiring background checks for people working with children, there are potential child protection issues at play. “In NSW, from next July, tutors will have to have police checks, as will anyone else working with children. Until then, there’s no regulation. In South Australia, Tasmania, ACT and NT, there are no requirements for people working with children to undergo background checks. Every state has different legislation.” To test the current scenario, Dhall says that, four years ago, he used the name of a paedophile who had just been released from prison to register a coaching college with the Office of Fair Trading in NSW. “They took some time, which meant, I thought, they were on to it. But no, they came back and said that was fine; go ahead,” he says.

Elsewhere, Kenny and Walton both highlight the lack of a clear complaints mechanism for parents. “I spoke to some parents who were very unhappy with their experiences and no one would hear their complaint. Some premises I visited wouldn’t meet occupation health and safety standards – with crammed classrooms, no natural ventilation or air conditioning. I’m not sure if that has changed since then,” says Kenny.

“We would ask the question: Is there a complaints mechanism?” says Walton. “As with many services provided, the industry develops outside of a set of standards which would allow for regulation. Self-regulation is dependent upon the ethics of the industry and individuals within it.”

Indeed, for parents, navigating the shadow education system must be an enormous challenge. The Standards Australia document is only partially available on its website, and then must be purchased. Similarly, consumer watchdog, Choice, confirmed to ER that it has not done any research into the private tuition industry. Davis says her research, while in its early stages, is showing that parents rely on local media, the internet and word of mouth when it comes to choosing a private tutor.

Next, add to the mix the peculiar relationship that exists between private tuition and mainstream education.

“The relationship is not acknowledged. It’s highly complex. A lot of private tutors are teachers in their day job,” says Watson. Kenny says the teachers in her study were, in general, opposed to it. “They believed they should be developing the whole child – a concept which is sadly becoming outdated. They were very much aware of the level of private tutoring, and the levels of profit being made off the back of the good teaching that was happening in the school. And the teachers felt hopeless about that. “They asked, what was the point of their teaching, if the material was already covered in a coaching college? You reach an over-learning situation. Children thrive on novelty; they’re not going to be as attentive if they’ve heard the material before. Teachers become frustrated,” she says.

“Teacher unions don’t want to acknowledge it,” says Dhall. “Many teachers double up as tutors out of school hours, but that’s never acknowledged. No one wants to talk publicly about it; and it’s not reported.” Dhall says Australia is not alone. Shadow education systems are growing in various countries around the world. As he spoke to ER, Dhall had just returned from a conference in Singapore, which is facing up to similar issues. “Governments need to deal with this. Just like in Australia, the Singapore government continues to ignore the issues being presented by the growth of unregulated private tuition,” he says.

Watson echoes this. “This is not going to go away. The indications are that the shadow system is growing. It’s here to stay, and policy will have to accommodate it,” she says.

## Fresh Calls for Regulation of Shadow Education System *by Darragh O Keeffe*

### *Growth Fuelled by Government*

Private tutoring in Australia was given a major boost when the former federal government announced the \$457 million An Even Start program in May 2007. The four year program would provide funding to the parents of children in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 who were failing to reach literacy and numeracy benchmarks to access one-on-one tutoring. An Even Start was later disbanded by the government in late 2008.

The government had said it intended to collect data on student gains made through the program, through the use of pre and post tuition assessment tools. Tutors in the scheme were required to enter these results into a national database – the National Tuition Management System.

ER requested the results of this data collection from the federal department of education. A spokesperson said the information “was not publicly available at this time”.

As Watson highlights in her 2008 paper, An Even Start had grown out of an earlier scheme, Tutorial Voucher Initiative from 2004, which provided a voucher of \$700 to enable children to access reading tuition for children who had fallen behind Year 3 achievement levels.

“The effectiveness of the Tutorial Voucher Initiative is difficult to determine because the monitoring and evaluation of program outcomes was grossly inadequate,” Watson’s paper said.

It seems federal governments like to, on occasion, fund voucher systems for private tuition. Unfortunately, they’re just not as keen on releasing data on their effectiveness.

## Copyright and Naming Rights

The ATA office became aware in November of a person in Melbourne, Victoria claiming to be a member of the ATA and using a business name very similar to that of an ATA member. A search of our records showed that the person was not, nor at any stage had been, an ATA member. Moreover, his credentials – proudly displayed on various websites – were found to be questionable at best. The biggest issue however was the use of a name which was granted to a company.

### Business Names

Business names are subject to State-based legislation and generally fall within the realm of consumer protection and fair trading. The issue here is what the situation is in the following scenarios:

1. When a business gets a name registered in one State and operates in other states as well
2. When a business uses Federal law to protect a name under trademark and trades as an incorporated entity thus being subject to national corporations laws

#### 1. Name Registered in One State

Here a business can register a name in the State in which it is set up. However, this does not preclude businesses in other States from operating under similar names. Thus, if a business expands into other States and Territories then the issue of who owns a name can arise.

#### 2. Setting Up and Getting Protection Under Commonwealth Law

When a business becomes incorporated then it is subject to national laws and regulations as set down by ASIC. Furthermore, may business may seek to protect a name by registering a trademark with IP Australia (<http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/>) a Commonwealth government body. According to the government website:

*“The difference between trade marks, business, company and domain names sometimes causes confusion. Registration of a business, company or domain name does not in itself give you any proprietary rights - only a trade mark can give you that kind of protection”.*

Further,

*“The same word(s) may be registered by different people as business names and trade marks. However, the registered trade mark owner can sue the business owner for infringing the trade mark if the business name owner uses it on goods or services similar to those covered by the trade mark registration.”*

Source: [http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trademarks/what\\_names.shtml](http://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/trademarks/what_names.shtml)

In the situation faced by the ATA member there was great uncertainty because of the weakness of State-based laws (see page 8) and the lack of national unity. The State laws seem very weak and only allow for private litigation in the event of a dispute. The national situation provides some protection but the cost of registering a trademark needs to be balanced against the possibility of breach of the trademark. An alternative open to those not creating an incorporated would be to register the same business name in every State and Territory – an exercise about as costly as the creation of a trademark.

### Resolution of The Dispute

The ATA contacted the party which was using the name of the ATA registered business. Whilst first denying a breach the offending tutor took down the reference to the ATA and later agreed to trade under a different name.

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To find out more about our exclusive ATA offer, please contact the Westpac Merchant Business Solutions Team on 1300 365 376, available weekdays 8.30am – 5.30pm (EST).

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Things you should know: This brochure is current as at 28/08/09. Some Banks may define Premium credit cards as Platinum cards. International credit cards are defined as overseas issued credit cards. Commercial/Business credit cards may be defined as cards issued to businesses. Some Banks may define Premium credit cards as Commercial/Business and International credit cards.

## Rights and Protection – The View From Victoria

### Registering a business name does not:

- give you ownership of the business name
- give you legal rights over the business name
- protect the business name.

**Registering a business name cannot protect words or terms of a generic or descriptive nature. For example, registering the business name Garden Furniture does not prevent another business from including these words in its business name or using them in advertising.**

### Registering a business name does not prevent:

- someone registering the same business name in a different state or territory
- the Australian Securities and Investments Commission registering a similar company name
- IP Australia registering a similar trademark
- someone registering a similar domain name.

**Disputes over business names are not covered by the Business Names Act 1962. They are private civil matters that should be settled between the parties concerned, or through legal action. You should seek legal advice about any such disputes.**

Source: <http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/CA256EB500644CE/page/Business+names-Business+names-Rights+protection+and+disputes?OpenDocument&I=20-Business+names-&2=010-Business+names-&3=060-Rights+protection+and+disputes~>

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### South Korean Boot Camps for 'Lazy Children'

A story comes to us from South Korea about children sent to harsh boot camps to overcome laziness caused by computer game playing. South Korea is ranked second in the OECD in terms of educational outcomes and it has achieved this through a valuing of education. Of course, the tuition industry in the nation is booming. However, whether more active parenting is required or the outsourcing of discipline to a boot camp is arguable. Meantime, the tuition/coaching industry in South Korea is booming and there is no sign there of a push towards self-regulation. Ju-Ho Lee and Sunwoong Kim are two academics who recently have published an academic article on the prevalence of tuition in South Korea, noting:

*"Private tutoring in South Korea is quite pervasive. In 2006, the household sector spent 2.57% of the nation's GDP on private tutoring for primary and secondary school students. Government spending on those students was about 3.5% of GDP, which is about the average level among OECD countries. Despite the substantial government expenditure on the formal education system and strong policies that try to reduce private tutoring activities, household spending on private tutoring has been increasing very rapidly. We argue that the prevalence of private tutoring is a market response to the government's rigid and uniform education policy. The desire to enter elite universities in a very hierarchical higher education system and a heavily regulated and equalized secondary school system has created an enormous demand for supplementary private tutoring. Empirical analyses indicate that students with high academic ability and high family income whose parents are highly educated spend more on private tutoring. Also, students in regions without school choice spend more on private tutoring. The estimated income elasticity of private tutoring is about 0.5. Pervasive private tutoring may create an inefficient as well as inequitable educational system. Korean experience studied in this article suggests that private tutoring should be studied as an integral part of the whole educational system."*

Reference: <http://www.jstor.org/pss/10.1086/648186>

## British Kids Log On and Learn Math — in Punjab

By JULIA WERDIGIER Published: October 24, 2010

LONDON — Once a week, year six pupils at Ashmount Primary School in North London settle in front of their computers, put on their headsets and get ready for their math class. A few minutes later, their teachers come online thousands of kilometers away in the Indian state of Punjab.

Ashmount is one of three state schools in Britain that decided to outsource part of their teaching to India via the Internet. The service — the first of its kind in Europe — is offered by BrightSpark Education, a London-based company set up last year. BrightSpark employs and trains 100 teachers in India and puts them in touch with pupils in Britain through an interactive online tutoring program.

The feedback from pupils, the schools and parents is good so far, and BrightSpark said a dozen more schools, a charity and many more parents were interested in signing up for the lessons. The one-on-one sessions not only cost about half of what personal tutors in Britain charge but are also popular with pupils, who enjoy solving equations online, said Rebecca Stacey, an assistant head teacher at Ashmount.

But the service also faces some opposition from teacher representatives who are fearful that it could threaten their jobs at a time when the government is pushing through far-reaching spending cuts. The 3 percent that is to be cut from the budget for educational resources by 2014 might be small compared with cuts in other areas, like welfare and pensions, but money at schools will remain tight.

Online learning is still controversial in Britain. Some teachers said tutors based elsewhere lacked the cultural empathy and understanding of a pupil's social environment that could influence study habits and performance. There is also concern about the qualifications of teachers abroad.

At the same time, many parents said they had struggled to find qualified private tutors who were conveniently located and whose fees were affordable. With online learning, they can keep an eye on their children's progress by listening to the lessons, and many said that being taught by someone in India also opened the children to foreign cultures.

But Chris Keates, general secretary of NASUWT, Britain's largest teachers' union, said he was concerned about the precedent BrightSpark was setting. "This is wrong on so many levels," Mr. Keates said. "What next — do without maths teachers? What about the follow-up lessons for the pupils, and the interaction with teachers?"

Tom Hooper, the founder of BrightSpark, said teachers' unions were missing the point. "This is supplementary and in no way replacing teachers," he said. And Ms. Stacey was quick to point out that Ashmount was using BrightSpark's program in addition to, and not instead of, its traditional math classes.

*"For children, it's a novelty that catches their attention for longer and engages them in a different way," Ms. Stacey said. "Eleven-year-olds aren't always enthusiastic about math classes, so any way we can make it more fun for them is good."*

BrightSpark tutors in India are math graduates or former math teachers and go through a month of training on the British school curriculum. Pupils in Britain log on to the service via BrightSpark's Web site and interact

with their teachers via a video phone and a so-called white board on their computer screen, which can be written on by both parties. Lessons can be booked as long as 24 hours in advance for any day of the week, and all sessions are recorded and can be replayed by the pupil or the pupil's parents.

For Marie Hanson, who runs the charity Storm in South London, the online teaching tool is helpful in keeping children away from drugs and crime. "The kids love it because they love computers," said Ms. Hanson, "and I love it because it helps them with their education while keeping them off the streets."

An earlier pilot project for four months with 30 children was successful after parents reported that their children had improved at school, said Ms. Hanson, who plans to seek government funding for more sessions.

Mr. Hooper, 31, said he had discovered there was a market for online teaching in Britain after he quit his job as investment manager at Aberdeen Asset Management and took time off to travel. In Panama, he met several U.S. families who had used online learning to give their children an education that would allow them to return to U.S. schools without problems.

When he returned to London, Mr. Hooper realized that there was a shortage of qualified private tutors in Britain and that some parents spent hours driving their children to and from tutors, sometimes paying £20, or \$31, per lesson. BrightSpark is charging £12 per session and pupil. Tutors are being paid £7 an hour, more than double the minimum wage in Punjab.

*"There is a huge thirst for support in the U.K.," Mr. Hooper said. "That, combined with a huge pool of skilled and available academics in India — it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out the potential."*

Mr. Hooper is aware that offering teaching services from India in Britain could be controversial and that there might be concerns about the quality of the teaching, foreign accents and the impersonal nature of the Internet. Britain — like Europe as a whole — is also less accustomed to outsourcing such services than is the United States, where similar one-on-one online tutoring from India has existed for the last five years, offered by companies like India-based TutorVista, in which the British publishing company Pearson owns a stake. BrightSpark is also unique in selling its product to schools in addition to single pupils.

Europe's desire to outsource services in general had been lagging behind the United States, said Martyn Hart, chairman of Britain's National Outsourcing Association. "There is social resistance because outsourcing here is always coupled with unemployment," said Mr. Hart.

Mr. Hooper said he hoped BrightSpark's product would eventually make outsourced services more popular in Britain and quash concerns among some teachers that it threatens their jobs.

But there is little doubt that online learning increases competition, at least for some in the education sector. Lola Emetulu, a trained lawyer who now works as an office assistant, said that she used to drive her 11-year-old son, Jesse, to his private tutor every Saturday but that "it just took so much out of your day." She recently signed up to BrightSpark and said she preferred the flexibility.

Jesse said he preferred it, too. "It's better on the computer," he added. "The teacher doesn't know you that much, so he takes it easier on you."

[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/technology/25iht-teach25.html?\\_r=3&ref=education&pagewanted=all](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/technology/25iht-teach25.html?_r=3&ref=education&pagewanted=all)

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## Catholic Education Office Interviews ATA CEO

*Hello there, Mohan I rang your office (ATA) and was given your contact details in the hope you might be able to answer some questions for our December feature story on 'Busy Kids', a Catholic Education Office publication. It goes to 70,000 teachers, parents and more.*

### 1. Have you/your members seen a spike in children enrolling in tutoring?

There has been a consistent and steady rise in tuition in Australia for at least the past decade. I run a centre which has grown at least 15% year on year for 5 years and we have never advertised. Arguably there is a greater demand for tuition as a result of MySchool and the release of Naplan Testing which provides a basis for measurement and comparison, but there are others factor also contributing to the demand.

### 2. If so, what do you think is driving this push?

There have been several strands to the rise in tuition. The main one has been the reorientation of parents towards a model of self-help in respect of their child's education. This means that they are increasingly tending to take the stance 'what can I do independent of schools in order to best support my child's education?'. Secondly, there is greater competition in education as there are limits to selective schools places, private school scholarships and at the end of schooling, to university courses. Parents therefore see an investment in tuition, and the narrower 'coaching' as an investment in better educational opportunities. Competition undermines education and it is always better if a child is to compete that they do so against their own best standards.

### 3. How much is too much tutoring? Does this depend on the child/the child's age? Do your members advise over-anxious parents as to what the tutors believe the children can handle?

The ATA is of the view that responsible tutors are both aware of stresses a student is under and will suggest to parents that tuition is too much if a child is showing signs of stress. In this way the commercial imperative is restricted by accountability, honesty, respect and placing the interests of the child foremost. Typically these days many parents will cram the after-hours space with music lessons, sport, drama, singing, dance, educational tuition, cultural activities and so forth. A responsible tutor will identify if, in addition to tuition there is too much else on. A stressed child is not likely to learn effectively.

See also the ATA fact Sheet here title 'How young is too young?'  
[http://www.ata.edu.au/component/option,com\\_docman/task,cat\\_view/gid,12/Itemid,5/](http://www.ata.edu.au/component/option,com_docman/task,cat_view/gid,12/Itemid,5/)

### 4. What is the value of unstructured play at home? Does this have any correlation to children's academic prowess – by perhaps providing a balance.

There is great utility in both structured and unstructured play, whether it is at home or in other contexts. Play, thinking time, quiet time free of distraction from electronic media, reading, time with parents one to one and reflection are all crucial in the development of insight, self understanding and social skills.

### 5. How can parents assess if their children are at risk of academic burn-out? Are there warning signs?

Stress manifests in a number of ways. A younger child may be sullen or resistant, argumentative or unusually quiet. An older student may be consistently late, express resistance or disinterest, skip classes and so forth. Sometimes children will be visibly anxious (lip biting, nail biting, etc) and parents should be aware to listen and observe children. A good tutor will also be aware and will raise any concerns about stress with the parents even if it means recommending that the child not get tuition.

## ATA Board Member Paul Flymen Gravely III

It has come to the attention of the ATA Board that Paul Flymen, based in Queensland, is gravely ill. Paul has served on the Board for 3 years and has contributed ideas, insight and support for the ATA as it has consolidated its position in the tuition industry. Paul has represented the ATA extremely well both publicly and privately and the thoughts of the Board are with him and his family at this time.

### 6. Is tutoring for everyone? Do you think curriculums/schools/ teachers are lacking in some respects if we have to have tutors?

This depends how you define tutoring, but assuming we are talking about academic tuition then it may be relevant to any student depending on the context. For example, tutors can act as mentors to very academically able students stimulating engagement and interest. In a remedial capacity tutors can assist to raise self-esteem when in the context of a regular classroom such students may be missing out.

As to whether curriculums/schools/ teachers are lacking is a question of opinion. We note a growth in private tuition all over the world at the same time as there is a greater emphasis on educational standards and educational accountability in mainstream systems. So I do not think we can say that schools are failing or teachers lacking. There does seem to be an odd private/public stance taken by teachers and educators generally, dismissing tuition as unnecessary whilst they get their own children tutored or tutor them themselves. It would be better if the mainstream schools system acknowledged the reality of private tuition and then worked in partnership with accountable private providers in the interests of children. This could be done by having tutors communicate with schools, and schools to help direct the activities of tutors. Moreover, such a partnership would be particularly beneficial for students requiring remedial support or those needing help with literacy and numeracy as identified through national testing. The ATA would very much like to work with the CEO, public schools and independent schools to this end.

### 7. Some cultures seem rather keen on tutoring to the exclusion of all other kinds of downtime activities – what sort of effects might these decisions have on the child?

There appears to be a cultural bias towards particular types of tuition but do not mistake that for being the bulk of tuition. The bulk of tuition is not based on a cultural bias but rather on a perception of need regardless of culture. In respect of culture it is said that the push to gain Selective Schools entry has a cultural bias but that is only one aspect of tuition, albeit rather public given the advertising of the private providers.

Coaching in the narrow sense provided for the purposes of entry into a Selective School, and to the exclusion of other types of activities, seems rather a narrow approach to education. Such decisions have a two-fold effect on children: they know that outcomes are highly prized (ie the entry into a particular school or schooling system). Defining a child by their performance takes away from the intrinsic worth of a child. This is true whether the activity is sporting or creative - whenever there is pressure to achieve a particular outcome then the process is undermined. Education is a lot more about process than product as any good educator would know.

A second effect is the valuing of education which can be beneficial. Thus for many children they may learn to associate academic success with self-esteem and for some students they will see that discipline and effort equate to success. This then is beneficial to all aspects of life as a successful life is a disciplined life. However, where discipline is negative or stressful then it is not beneficial. In this way parents, tutors and mainstream educators need to place the interests of the child foremost.

### 8. There have been plenty of stories/commentary surrounding tutoring at selective schools where those tutored students then go on to university – where creative and independent thought is prized – and, many, cannot make the leap. Would you like to comment on this?

A very disappointing aspect of a 'coaching' approach to tuition is that it focuses on outcomes not processes. In the workplace, in university and in life, the process of problem solving is a more important skill than coming up with an answer deemed to be 'right' It is sad when a student of any age baulks at a task which is open ended and creative when they are fixed on 'being right' rather than having a go. In a world which is changing, where flexible thinking, intuition and creativity are valued, the narrow approach to coaching robs a student of a capacity to effectively learn; to take an academic risk and thus learn. If the aim of education is self awareness and learning to learn then this whole aim is undermined by a focus on a very narrow set of outcomes - such as entry into a particular school or course at university.

#### Within Tuition Editor

Mohan Dhall  
Email: mdhall@ata.edu.au  
Phone: 02 9704 5724  
Mobile: 0408 619 714

#### Contacting Us

For contributions and comments please email the ATA mdhall@ata.edu.au or mlopez@ata.edu.au

Alternatively, mail us at:

**Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) Ltd.**  
PO Box 256, Croydon NSW 2132  
Phone: 02 9704 5724 or Mobile: 0408 619 714  
Fax: 02 9744 0519

