**GINA CODY School of Engineering and Computer Science**

**Department of Computer Science and Software Engineering**

**Concordia University**

**SOEN 342**

**Phase 1**

# Abstract

*This file contains a market analysis and the e-academy presentation for Rent-a-Tutor. The market analysis contains a comparative study of 3 different platforms to explore the features that other similar platforms offer. The second part contains a customer profile and a description of the features that need to be added along with additional features.*

**Part I: Market analysis**

1on1: <https://1on1.today/>

* Features:
  + Different subjects including sports and other activities
  + Apply to become a tutor from the website
  + Can view all the tutors and the categories without being logged on
  + Job postings for tutor jobs with specifics on the student and their needs
  + Group courses under testing
  + Profiles for each tutor with their picture
    - Shows their location
    - Shows hourly rate
    - Shows reviews made by other students
    - Small intro written by tutor
    - Different languages per tutor
    - Start time of lesson and end time of lesson
      * Calculates total price based on this
    - Shows the tutors education and certificates
  + Filter by price
  + Filter by rating
  + Some options for online teaching
  + Easy sign up
  + Shows the appointments you have booked (or received if you are a tutor)
  + Shows transaction history
  + Can send messages to tutors
  + You can send questions for tutors for free
* Our features:
  + Would be nice to have a google login

**Comparative Study 1on1:**

Like the other E-Academy platforms, 1on1 allows both tutors and students to interact within the same platform. It has an area where tutors can submit their applications to become a tutor on the platform. Unlike other platforms you can browse through the different courses and get a feel of the platform without having an account. You can see a variety of courses you can get tutoring for and is not only limited to school related courses (for example, basketball, piano, etc). You can filter through tutors based on their ratings as well as their prices. Like Superprof you have a list of tutors and a small intro to who they are to give a more personalised way to interact with students. Upon login you have access to your transaction history, and appointments that you have booked. You can also message tutors for free if you have any questions. From a tutor’s point of view, there are job listings describing the student, their location, the tutor that they need as well as their schedule. The way of displaying the tutors once you search for a category seems a bit outdated and can be made a bit more modern. It would also be nice to implement a way to sign in with Google to facilitate logins. There does not seem to be an easy way to send files to tutors so it would also be nice to implement a Dropbox like feature within the platform. A filter on the language the tutor speaks would facilitate the search of a tutor if you have a language preference. Another thing that can be added is the possibility to talk to other students taking similar courses for a more interactive learning experience.

Superprof: <https://www.superprof.ca/>

Features:

* + Simple UI - search for a tutor by subject and region
  + Tutor reviews
  + Option to save the tutor to the favourites list
  + Search by location and subject you want to learn
  + Tutors have the option to give a “Free first lesson”
  + Biography of the tutor
  + Hourly rates for tutors
  + Book classes
  + Filter by nearby or online, rate ($1 - $70) and “first class free”, response time, and level of education
  + Become a tutor:

1. Enter email
2. Choose subjects to teach
3. Create a teaching ad that will show up under your profile  (“Engineering student teaches maths and physics from middle school to high school in Toronto”)
4. Explain approach as a tutor and about the lessons
5. About you
6. Decide the location of your lessons ⇒ online, in-person (house or can travel)
7. Spoken languages (optional)
8. Hourly rate
9. Personal information (phone number)

* Tutors have a status (new, experienced, super, ambassador)
* Messaging system for tutors and students
* Different rates for travelling and online
* Students can buy tutoring packs in advance (5H or 10H)
* Receive payments by adding a method of payments
* Tutors can decide how much the student will be compensated if the tutor session is cancelled 24 hours before the lesson
* Premium benefits for $69/year

1. Ads are better positioned
2. 100% commission (student pays $30, tutor receives $30)
3. Get statistics of your ads
4. Priority customer support
5. Insurance for lessons

* To become a student

1. Enter address and phone number
2. Enter method of payment
3. Send request

* Offer and/or activate gift cards

Our features:

* Include a calendar that shows the availability of the tutor
* Adding badges that show the tutors strengths (patient, good at breaking down topics, kind, etc.)

**Comparative study:**

Superprof is an e-learning platform that allows anyone to find the perfect tutor for their learning needs. The platform is very easy to use, with their simple and intuitive design. Similar to other platforms, the student must filter by subject and area to find their tutor. Superprof is very interactive because students are able to see the faces of their tutors, allowing the tutors to show off their personalities before meeting their student. Tutors are also able to create an ad for themselves which is shown under their profiles. Becoming a tutor is simple and easy. Tutors have an easy to use dashboard, where they can handle payments, message their students and look at the statistics of their profile. Tutors have a status based on their reviews, the higher the reviews, the higher the status. A very unique feature that superprof includes is the option for tutor packs, where students can purchase 5H or 10H session with their tutors rather than requesting 5 - 10 sessions. Furthermore, Superprof allows for tutors to upgrade their accounts with a premium account, which includes benefits that will help get them more students. When we compare, Superprof to the other elearning platforms, Superprof stands above the rest. It is simple to use with their straightforward UI, so that anyone can use their platform. Superprof is almost flawless, however there are features that can be added to enhance the scheduling of lessons. If a new student was in a hurry to learn or had to study for a test that they were not prepared for, then an availability calendar on the tutors page would be very helpful. So that the student can see whether or not the tutor is available in the time that they need to prepare. Another feature that could enhance the experience of the student is to add badges that display the strengths of the tutor, for new students these badges will help them make a decision on which tutor to choose for their learning experiences.

Apprentus: <https://www.apprentus.com/en/private-lessons/Montreal-10-Canada>

Features:

* Shows which subjects are “popular right now”
* A “how it works” section providing a short tutorial on how to sign up for a lesson
* Free sign up as a teacher
* Section with languages (you can choose which language you want your lesson in)
* Reviews from students
* You can filter your search by: Location, student age, price, and more
* You can add teachers to your “wish list”
* A star system (teachers are rated 0 to 5 stars by students)
* 50$ off if you invite a friend, for you and your friend
* For each teacher, a short description of the teacher
* Easy to contact the tutor prior booking a session with this tutor
* Tutors have 48hours to accept/decline students who requested a session with them
* Satisfaction guarantee for the first lesson: Apprentus will refund if not satisfied or look for another tutor
* If there isn’t any tutors available near the student, a form can be filled to request the company for an instructor for the specific activity
* Stats: number of lessons/student, higher the value higher the tutor will get listed the top of the list

Our features:

* Group lessons (take a lesson with friends)
* For each teacher, a description of their method of teaching could be useful (some teachers have it but not all)
* Respond rate
* Recent graduates/students studying within the same school and program

**Comparative Study:**

Apprentus is another e-academy platform that allows students to interact with teachers, however, some of its features make it unique. As you enter the website, there is a search bar and if you click on it, it shows you some possibilities of lessons you can take that are “popular right now”. There is a “how it works” section with a short description of how to sign up for a lesson and pick your tutor. Signing up as a teacher is free, and you can enter your description as well as add a profile picture, your phone number, email, and any professional social media (LinkedIn & Facebook). Users can select the language in which they want their lesson to be taught, and there are many choices of language. Students can add reviews on teachers, and every teacher is rated out of five with a star system (0 to 5 stars). It is also easy to directly contact the tutor prior to booking a session with the tutor. To find your teacher, you can filter by location, student age, and more. If there isn’t any tutor available near the student for any specific activity, a form can be filled to request the company for an instructor for this particular topic. When a student likes a teacher, they can add a “like'' and that teacher will then appear in their “wish list” to be easily found later on upon reconnection. There is a satisfaction guaranteed for the first lesson: Apprentus will refund students if they aren't satisfied or will help them look for another tutor. For tutors, they have 48 hours to accept or decline students who requested a lesson with them. Additionally, each tutor has a statistics page where they can view their performance and their effective visibility. The higher their rate of number of lessons taught per student is, the higher the instructor will get listed. A promotion is available: if you invite a friend, you and your friend get 50$ off. Some missing features that could be implemented to make the website better would be the following. With the description of the teacher, there could be a short description of their teaching method or how they tend to teach, so that the student can see if that would be compatible with them. Furthermore, a response rate could be added to show the quality of their engagingness. There could also be a section to connect tutors (who recently graduated or passed the course) and students who studied within the same school and program to offer a more tailored tutoring session. Another missing feature that could be interesting to add to this e-academy website would be to offer the possibility to take either group classes, or classes with friends.

**Part II: E-Academy presentation**

Elicitation technique number 1: Interview with Customer

**Part I: Customer Profile**

Name: John Doe

Company: Rent-a-Tutor

Industry: Education

Job Title: CEO

What are your key responsibilities? I come up with new functionality for the website to allow users to have a better experience.

What outputs do you produce? The website gives a platform for students to meet with a tutor for lessons.

For whom? Students that need tutoring.

How is success measured? The progress of a student’s academics.

Which problems interfere with your success? Students have trouble sending documents to tutors easily and need to use third party apps for better communication with tutors.

**Part II: Assessing the Problem**

What is the primary problem of the website currently? Students are having trouble communicating and sending documents to tutors

Why does this problem exist? Third party applications have better means of communication and document upload than our website, therefore students and tutors rely on other applications rather than our website.

How do you solve it now? We added a small chat box, but it is not responsive enough for constant talking and limits the number of documents that can be sent.

How would you like to solve it? I would like to have a strong and responsive chat feature within the website that allows to students and tutors to communicate freely. Similarly, the chat box should have the ability to send documents through it. There should be another section that allows submissions like the Moodle platform.

**Part III: Understanding the User Environment**

Who are the user? Students, tutors, parents, and admins.

What are their computer background? They are comfortable using computers.

Are users experienced with this type of application? For recurrent users that have used other e-academy platforms, yes, they are experienced. New users might have some trouble at first but learn quickly.

Which platforms are in use? Chrome.

What are your plans for future platforms? We want to expand to iOS and Android.

What are your expectations for usability of the product? I want the website to be very easy to use for new and experienced users.

**Part IV: Recap for Understanding**

You have told me:

* + The website needs a feature that allows students/parents to communicate with tutors
  + The website needs a feature that allows students and tutors to send documents to each other
  + The website should be easy enough to use for both new and current users

Elicitation technique number 2: Artefact-driven Elicitation. Comparing system as-is with system-to-be.

**System as-is:**

The current system offers a way for students to communicate with tutors, but it is not very reliable. The system has trouble keeping up with heavy conversations between tutors and students and offers no way to send documents. The UI of the system has an older look that can be refurbished. The system also has a payment platform which allows users to pay for lessons through it. It has a review section where users can see the ratings and comments of tutors they would like to have and give ratings to tutors they had in the past. The system also has a registration section where students or parents can register for lessons. The current system also has a way to filter tutors via reviews, hourly rate and subject. They also have some type of cancellation policy that allows users to be refunded if they do not wish to take the class anymore.

**System to-be:**

The system we are proposing is like the one that already exists with a few additional features that will improve the user experience between the students and tutors. One of the features we would like to add is to be able to see past tutor videos so that the student can go back and view past lessons whenever they want. Another element that should be added is a section where students can upload documents to tutors so that tutors can grade and give feedback. Similarly, there should be another section where students should be able to share and upload documents to allow other students to benefit from questions and increase interaction between students. This section should contain a upvote/downvote buttons to increase the rating of a better solution or to decrease the rating of an incorrect solution. Another feature that will be present in the system to be, is to be able to have different accounts within the student category: a teen account which does not require a guardian and a child account which requires the account of a parent/guardian to be linked. These linked accounts will be able to view the documents and grades of the child account. (Accounts for the different users)

**Features for Each User Category:**

* *Users*
  + *Students*
    - Filter by time zone: students can choose to filter tutors by timezone, extending options available to them to outside just their city. Since tutors can do online sessions, timezones are a convenient filter because it helps for arranging schedules between the tutor and the student.
    - Students can browse past VODs from previous lessons on the topics they are studying.
    - Students can upload their worksheets and notes to share with other students studying the same subjects. They will be encouraged to remove any sensitive information (names) before uploading the documents. These notes can be rated by other students based on helpfulness, organisation, and other metrics. This will help promote the most helpful documents. There can be a section for notes, tests, cheatsheets, and practice problems.
  + *Guests*
    - Guests should have an option of listening to a snippet of the tutor’s voice before booking them. This is in the case where tutorials will be given over an online session so guests can get an idea of clarity and voice quality
    - Guests should have an overview of any selected tutor and their calendar schedule.
    - When guests register as tutors, they should have the option of uploading past diplomas and or linking their LinkedIn. This adds credibility to said tutor and can also improve response rates from validators.
  + *Tutors*
    - Tutors have the option of choosing between a 1-on-1 or class type environment of work. Why? Adds flexibility of choice to the tutors who are in the process of improving their teaching skills.
    - Tutors have the perk of doing offline tutoring using VODS (Video on Demand). Why? When availabilities aren’t in sync, tutors may do reviews of a student's work (assignments, technique, form, etc.) in their own time, and still provide feedback.
  + *Administrators/managers*
    - Admin must be able to manually reset passwords without the ability to see the password itself
    - Admins must be able to enrol somebody in course/program in case there was a problem with a payment (e.g., a customer paid but didn’t receive the product)
    - There should be a role of a super admin (owner for example). This super admin can have access to dashboard with financial information (website revenue, expenditure, etc)
* *Proposed features*
* Creation of multiple accounts: Guest, Parent, Child, Tutor, Admin
* Admins can select tutors and approve/reject them to be a certified tutor
* Offers a way for tutors and students to communicate
* Allows students to request lessons from a variety of tutors
* Allows students to choose from a variety of lessons
* Allows payment transactions to be done directly through the website
* Allows guests to preview the website
* Allows students and tutors to upload documents
* A forum for students to discuss with each other
* *How is it different from existing products*
  + Tutors can choose between giving a class lesson or 1-on-1 lessons
  + Tutors can choose to upload videos for the lessons instead of doing live lessons
  + Students can watch previous videos from past lessons
  + Admins have additional features such as: enrolling students into lessons and see finances of the website
  + Guest accounts that let you preview the voices of the tutors
  + Guests will be able to see a preview of the tutor’s calendar and availabilities
  + Tutors can link their diplomas, certifications, and LinkedIn
  + Users can filter tutors and lessons by time zone to have a tutor in a preferred time zone
  + Students can share notes and start study sessions with other students using the platform
  + Our platform will have a more modern look by using rounder UI
  + A help forum where a tutor will be always available to help students