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A+ Academy

Abstract

Our project is to build a tutoring platform, which we are calling A+ Academy. In order to get familiar with the type of project we are creating, we did a comparative study of three similar projects. Since our project is a tutoring website, we analyzed Khan Academy, School Success, and Superprof. From each of these websites, we pulled out details that we think will be useful for our own project. For example, we liked Superprof's method of presenting and advertising their tutors. We discussed ways that we can incorporate all the best features to create a newer and better website. After this research, we came up with our own unique features that would improve the quality and user experience of our website. An example of a unique feature is that A+ Academy will include Q&A pages and discussion forums so that users can ask questions to their tutors and their peers. In the presentation section of this report, a variety of features, both new and old can be found that will make our project into a brand new platform. This document describes our research findings of past projects and our plans for our future project.

Part I: Market analysis

The 3 E-Academy websites analyzed were Superprof, School Success, and Khan Academy. These services have proven to be very successful. This can be attributed to the array of unique features they provide such as 1-on-1 tutoring services, curriculums, self-evaluations, etc.

There are many ways an E-Academy can operate. Superprof's services have the goal of connecting students and tutors while a large part of Khan Academy is offering courses and pre-recorded lessons. Similar to SuperProf, School Success provides a very structured E-Academy service where students' growth and progress reports come first.

Superprof allows students or parents to select a tutor based on their current location, facilitating in-person lessons, but they are not limited to this. Students can select tutors from all over the world since online sessions are offered. Students and tutors may then add their Zoom or Skype IDs to their accounts to store this info for one another to access. Unlike Superprof, for School Success, potential tutors aren't displayed in the form of a marketplace. Tutors are assigned to students based on an application form submitted by a student or parent. Khan Academy has many useful features for users that are very different from other E-Academies. Teachers can create a course for their students and only their students will have access to their

custom lessons and evaluations. These courses are lessons pulled from Khan Academy's curriculum. Parents can create accounts to monitor their children's progress and even enroll them in certain courses provided by Khan Academy. This is useful for when parents want their children's knowledge to go further than the classroom. 1-on-1 tutoring is an important feature that Khan Academy does not offer that the other Academies do. This may have been acknowledged by the creator since he has recently created Schoolhouse, a tutoring service to compensate for what Khan Academy lacks. This however is not in the scope since it is an entirely separate company.

Becoming a tutor on Superprof is a very easy process. After tutors have created their account, they can create ads/listings. Tutors will also need to upload their degrees and ID for verification. Ads include information about the tutor, what they teach, their hourly rate, and flexibilities, along with an optional 'About me' video to present the tutor to the student. Potential tutors for School Success must create an account and then attend an interview to become a tutor. Unlike Superprof where tutors are freelance, School Success tutors don't create ads and are direct employees of the E-Academy. This makes it so that the tutors themselves have a lot less flexibility and sometimes receive a smaller pay. Khan Academy does not require a verification process for their tutors since they are considered teachers and have their own students. They also do not get compensated since they are using this service as an extension to their job.

When comparing the administrator access, all 3 companies are quite similar in regards to student payments, tutors' compensation, and customer service complaints except for minor differences. For example, where Superprof differs is that they compensate their tutors based on students' feedback rather than having a fixed compensation like Khan Academy and School Success. Furthermore, tutors with a Superprof pro pass (69$/year) receive the full profits made, are 3 times more likely to be recommended to students, and have access to statistics for advertising purposes. As for Khan Academy, their special administrator characteristics consist of being able to analyze Khan Academy's features, tutors' services, and tutor-student relationships. In regards to School Success, they provide a customized matching service where the tutor's skills and expertise in a specific field are matched to fulfill the student's needs.

In regards to the guest access for Khan Academy, guests can browse pre-recorded videos for different subjects, log in or sign up as a tutor, student, or parent, contact the Help centre, and view information and articles about Khan Academy Additional resources (i.e., practice documents, quizzes, etc.). As for the login and sign-up process, pre-existing emails, Facebook, Clever, or Apple accounts can be used. For School Success, you can also sign up as either student or tutor as well as having access to a virtual assistant. This virtual assistant helps answer and guide the guest throughout the website and depending on their needs. Contact information can be received through this method as well as going through the entire tutor request or sign-up process. As for Superprof, guests can create or log in with ease through their pre-existing Email,

Facebook, or Google account similar to Khan Academy. Guests can also browse tutors, see their ratings, and search the field they need a tutor for.

When discussing pricing, students and tutors are able to access an Invoice section. There, they can view payments they've made or payments they've received. Superprof takes a % of profits made by tutors that haven't purchased the pro pass. As such, this should be taken into consideration when talking about their pricing which depends on the price set by tutors. However, as for Khan Academy which is a non-profit organization, they don't have a pricing since everything is offered for free whereas School Success's tutoring fees range from 46$ to 50$.

Additional services that each of these E-Academy's offer are what make them stand out in the large and growing market. Superprof utilizes a feature that a lot of the population relies on in many industries. This is a rating system. Students or parents have the opportunity to rate and leave reviews for their tutors. These are then attached to tutors' profiles and appear on their ads. School Success offers an interactive Chatbox that is easy to use and makes it easier for students, parents, and tutors to do what they need to do. They also provide a great amount of information in their FAQ section. Khan Academy provides useful extra resources to further the students' learning.

Part II: E-Academy presentation

After observing similar websites, we have come up with features, both new and reused, that we will be incorporating into A+ Academy. Our website will offer accounts to students, parents, and tutors, and it will allow guests to have certain access as well. A+ Academy will also have administrators to help with the organization of the site and to handle moderation.

Students and parents will have the same account features, but a parent account will be made on behalf of a child who is too young to make their own account. Student and parent clients can view a market of available tutors, where they can choose the one they prefer. The available tutors will be offered based on the students needs: grade, subject, language, etc. For a cheaper fee, students may also sign up for group learning sessions. This feature adds value to our E-learning platform as most websites offer 1-on-1 tutoring or group sessions exclusively. In these sessions, there will be one tutor and multiple students. For all types of tutoring (private and group), A+ Academy offers its own curriculum courses that map to the public education levels and subjects. Clients can choose which of these courses they would like to be tutored for.

A+ Academy will offer tutoring sessions in person or online based on the needs of the student and will also have a built-in video call feature. This is different from many other E-Learning platforms as typically it is up to the tutor and student to figure out a video communication platform to use. Furthermore, this adds value to our platform as instead of tutors

and students taking time out of their lessons to deal with technology issues relating to Zoom or Skype, tutors and students will be able to start a call only during their allotted session. Having this feature is essential since the COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult to meet in person. This has also accustomed students to online learning.

A unique feature that our site will offer to clients is forums to help with learning. Students will have access to a forum for a specific course. There, they can discuss education-related topics with other students, parents, and tutors. After receiving a tutoring session, students are also given access to a Q&A page. Here, every student using the service can post questions. If a student's tutor is unavailable to respond at that time, other tutors may leave a response to the question. This feature is very advantageous to the student as their question will have a very high chance of being answered.

Students can also participate in progress quizzes and evaluations. These will help their tutors know where they need extra help and attention. The progress quizzes offered by A+ Academy will follow their own course curriculum.

A+ Academy will allow guests without a paid account to visit and access certain features. A guest may request to become a tutor by submitting their CV and degree. This feature allows tutors to apply to be a tutor without having to create an account right away and filling out a lengthy form. They can also look into becoming tutored. They will have a chance to preview the service so that they can try it out before paying. A new and unique feature of A+ Academy is that it will allow guests to sit and observe one group lesson, and to view limited pages on the Q&A page and forum. If they are listening into a session, the tutor will be notified that they are coming. Guests will have access to a standard internal curriculum and documents prepared that all tutors have access to. They may also access limited additional resources (online calculator, certain practice documents, etc.)

Tutors on A+ Academy may post custom ads on the site and advertise themselves however they like, including introductory videos. On their profile, they can post their availabilities so that students can ask them to set up sessions in specific time slots. For extra compensation, tutors can take the time to answer students' questions on the website's Q&A page and forum. Tutors will have their amount of work hours kept track of so that when they reach checkpoints, they receive certain benefits, like discounts if they ever need tutoring. This feature allows long-term tutors to be rewarded.

Since A+ Academy has its own curriculum, tutors will be trained on how to follow it. This will help the tutors stay organized because it will allow them to have specific guidelines on what content to cover, although they may stray a bit from this curriculum according to the student's needs.

A+ Academy administrators will have several responsibilities related to the management of the website. They will be in charge of moderating the forums and Q&A pages to make sure that all discussion is appropriate to the subject and follows guidelines. Administrators will also participate in tutor verification. This will be a process where tutors' expertise/degrees must be verified. They will also take care of the payment security for users. If a student doesn't show up, administrators must make sure tutors get compensated. Administrators must also provide a substitute tutor in case a tutor is unexpectedly unavailable.