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Academic aspirations amongst sessional tutors in a New Zealand University

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Abstract
In New Zealand, as in many other western societies, the higher education system has become an increasingly less secure place in which to work, and over 40 per cent of those teaching in New Zealand higher education are sessional staff of some kind. Our university in New Zealand has long relied on part-time paid tutors, many of whom are students themselves, to deliver part of the teaching in large courses. These tutors work with groups of students facilitating their learning in workshops, seminars, laboratories and a variety of other teaching environments. We have tracked the experiences of tutors over a significant period of time, and surveys of tutors' experiences since 2007 reveal that the majority of respondents hold tight to the hope of a future academic career. They regard tutoring as good preparation for an academic career, and many report being even more committed to pursuing an academic career since beginning tutoring.

How can we best support tutors to navigate their way into an academic career that might look somewhat different from the one they set out to pursue? This paper shares data and insights from our longitudinal research with tutors, and encourages those supporting sessional staff to think about how to enable tutors to take a scholarly approach to their teaching, regardless of the career path they eventually take.

Keywords
Tutors, academic aspirations, scholarly teaching

Introduction

In New Zealand, as in many other western societies, the higher-education system has become an increasingly less secure place in which to work. Data from the OECD (Gilbert 2013) suggest that well over 40% of those teaching in New Zealand higher education are sessional staff. Given the acknowledged difficulty of identifying all sessional staff, it is likely that many hourly casual teachers (including students who tutor) have not been included in this data, and the overall percentage is probably higher. Coates, Dobson, Goedegebuure and Meek (2009) suggest that the increasing percentage of casual teachers in higher education is creating pressures for the permanent staff who have to supervise and manage the contingent teaching population. These pressures, and the lack of job security and support for sessional staff themselves, are arguably making an academic career a less attractive proposition for many people.

Our university in New Zealand has long relied on part-time paid tutors, many of whom are students themselves, to deliver some of the teaching in large courses. These tutors work with groups of students to facilitate their learning in workshops, seminars, laboratories and a variety of other teaching environments. We have tracked the experiences of tutors over a significant period of time, and surveys of tutors' experiences since 2007 reveal that the majority of respondents hold tight to the hope of a future academic career. They regard tutoring as good preparation for an academic career, and many report being even more committed to pursuing an academic career since beginning tutoring.

This paper explores the implications of the changing higher-education environment for today's tutors in New Zealand, questions what they can bring to the academic profession of the future and examines how we can best support them to navigate their way into an academic career that might look somewhat different from the one they set out to pursue.

Academic Aspirations

A clear and growing body of research shows that part-time, contingent and sessional teaching contracts are increasingly common in universities around the world (Gilbert 2013), and fewer full-time and permanent positions appear to be available (Austin & McDaniels 2006; Gottschalk & McEachern 2010). Some researchers have argued that the lack of job security, training and support that accompanies this contract work is putting the academic profession at risk (Coates et al., 2009; Edwards, Bexley & Richardson, 2011) because few people want to work in such precarious conditions, *and* because the people with the permanent roles do not want the accompanying pressure of supervising and supporting the contingent staff (Lazarsfeld-Jensen & Morgan 2009).

Despite these pressures, many of the people hired in temporary roles still appear to want a full-time and/or permanent academic career. Reviewing studies on part-time teachers in higher education from three different countries, Tomkinson (2013, p26) found that, regardless of teachers' vast range of reasons for taking on part-time teaching contracts (from family reasons to flexibility to variety, for example), the "overall most pressing reason for taking a non-standard contract was the lack of any other sort". Many people in casual, sessional or part-time roles aspire to permanent central or full-time opportunities (Gottschalk & McEachern 2010; Lee 2013), but may have to face the reality that "the University's use of casual/staff [is] largely functional and that transitioning to full-time work, job security and a 'proper' career [is] for many an impossible dream" (Gottschalk & McEachern 2010, p48). However, the majority of casual teaching staff still "have career aspirations and [see] their casual work as a 'stepping stone' into an academic career" (p47). This corresponds with international literature that shows that many casual teachers, especially doctoral students, in the United Kingdom (Hopwood 2010; Chadha 2013), the United States (Austin & McDaniels 2006; Foote 2010; Weidert, Wendorf, Gurung & Filz 2012) and Hong Kong (Calonge, Chiu, Thadani, Mark & Pun 2011) aspire to an academic career.

Not all the people in part-time and sessional roles are PhD students or post-doctoral fellows in academic apprenticeship-type (Austin 2009) scenarios, despite some of the research literature giving this impression: Hakala (2009, p501), for example, identifies PhD students as "the youngest and least experienced members of academic communities", while Huang, Yellin and Turns (2005, p1) call them "the next generation of faculty". This identification of PhD students as the only people lining up for academic careers, and as the only people involved in the sessional teaching and tutoring that makes up the vast majority of undergraduate teaching in many universities, belies the existence of a cadre of other sessional staff, from external professionals to undergraduate students and retirees. University teachers include people from external professions or industries, such as law (Cowley 2010) or architecture (Marshall 2012), who engage in university teaching as a supplement to their full or part-time industry work. Sometimes they do this voluntarily and often outside of, or in addition to, their regular working hours. They often have no academic aspirations and are merely keeping in touch with their discipline, or see themselves as providing a service to and/or maintaining contact with future professionals (Brown & Gold 2007). Other university teachers who are not PhD students include those recently retired from an academic (or other) career, who teach to enliven their retirement or supplement their retirement income. Still others are teaching part-time or temporarily while they also raise a family (Tomkinson 2013), with the hope of coming back to or finding more-permanent academic work at a later date. Also, a significant proportion of people involved in teaching undergraduates are, in fact, undergraduate students themselves, as our earlier research (Sutherland 2009; Hall & Sutherland 2013) has shown.

However, most of this contingent teaching population, regardless of their background or current study status (except perhaps the undergraduates), would rather be in a permanent or more-secure academic position, or have the guarantee of such a position being available in the future. Durur and Gilmore (2013) have recently argued that we need to redefine what we mean by an academic career to include recognition of the role of sessional academic staff. Such a redefinition would also need to include a more holistic approach to the support provided for all staff, but especially sessionals, including: better recruitment and appointment processes, job security, appropriate inductions, support from managers, provision of adequate work spaces and resources, engagement with the wider university and career/professional development. We have investigated the experiences of our sessional teaching population and share below the results of our research into their academic aspirations. We also make some recommendations for how to provide the kind of holistic support that will enable them to prepare for a potential academic career, but also face the possibility of a career different from the one to which they aspire.

Method

The data reported in this study originates from a longitudinal survey of tutors at our university that began in 2000, various results of which have been reported elsewhere (Hall & Sutherland 2013; Sutherland 2002; Sutherland 2009). Our university is a research-intensive institution in New Zealand's capital city, with a broad range of academic programs (but no medical school). Students number around 23,000, and there are nearly 2,000 full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff, including approximately 800 FTE academic staff and 350 FTE "other" academic staff (this includes tutors and sessional teaching staff) (Victoria University of Wellington, 2011). Initially, this survey was designed to provide demographic data about the tutor population, as well as information that could be used to support the training and development of these tutors. The survey has developed over time, and is now run biennially. In addition to data relating to the demographics and needs of tutors, it has also become a valuable research tool. Since 2007 data have been collected on tutors' academic aspirations and their views of their personal development. The survey was last administered in September 2011; this paper focusses on data collected during that iteration. It has ethical approval from the university's Human Ethics Committee.

The 2011 Survey

The 2011 survey was administered online using the Qualtrics survey tool (www.qualtrics.com). It comprises five sections:

- Demographics: age, sex, ethnicity, current study information;
- Tutoring or teaching experience;
- Current teaching responsibilities, including discipline, hours (contact and total) and nature of tutoring role;
- Selection process and training received;
- Opinions: perceptions of value, remuneration, academic aspirations and reflective practice.

Tutors were also encouraged to add written comments about their responsibilities, their own development and other general issues.

Participation

Tutors were approached to participate in the survey in two ways. The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) maintains an email listserv of all tutors who have attended any training at CAD, and all tutors who were on that listserv in 2011 received a direct email with a link to the survey inviting them to participate if they had not already responded in a previous year. Tutor co-ordinators also received an email asking them to forward the link to any tutors in their school or course. A reminder email was sent two weeks later, and a further email one week after the survey was introduced. Participation was completely anonymous.

Given the acknowledged difficulties associated with identifying tutors (Gilbert 2013), it is hard to be sure of the exact numbers of tutors who were invited to participate, and therefore difficult to determine the response rate for this survey. We estimate that there was a tutoring population of around 600 at our university in 2011, and a return of 226 replies gave a response rate of approximately 38%.

Findings

We compared the demographics of the 2011 respondent cohort with the combined results from the two previous iterations of the survey (2007 and 2009) to determine whether the population of tutors had changed significantly over time. Table 1 shows the age, sex, ethnicity and level of study of the respondents in comparison with the total percentages across the other two surveys (2007 and 2009). The table indicates that the population of tutors responding to the survey in 2011 did not differ greatly from the total population of respondents in the other two years combined. The only major difference was in the proportion of males to females (32%:68% in 2011 compared with 44%:56% in 2007/9). This difference may reflect the changing demographics of tutors in general; however, given that the differences with respect to other demographic measures are relatively small, this difference will not be explored here.

TABLE 1: Respondent Demographics, 2011 Compared with 2007-2009

Age		**2011 % *(n=226)****	**2007-2009 % *(n=296)***
	Under 20 years	0.9	2.0
	20 – 24 years	46.9	50.7
	25 – 29 years	24.8	17.6
	30+ years	27.4	29.7
	Total	*100*	*100*
Sex		**2011 % *(n=224)***	**2007-2009 % *(n=296)***
	Male	32.1	44.3
	Female	67.9	55.7
	Total	*100*	*100*
Ethnicity		**2011 % *(n=237)***	**2007-2009 % *(n=304)***
	NZ Maori	4.9	4.3
	Pasifika	0.9	1.0
	NZ Asian born***	2.2	2.0
	Non-NZ Asian born***	11.9	7.6
	Pakeha/NZ European	71.7	66.4
	Other	13.3	18.8
	Total	*104.9***	*100*
Current level of study		**2011 % *(n=224)***	**2007-2009 % *(n=300)***
	Bachelors	22.8	22.3
	Honours	12.5	18.3
	Masters	19.2	20.7
	PhD	17.4	12.3
	Other	1.8	7.7
	Not currently enrolled	26.3	18.7
	Total	*100*	*100*

* *N*=varies because not all respondents answered all questions.
** Percentages add to more than 100 because respondents were able to indicate more than one ethnicity.
*** These two categories were amalgamated in 2007, so comparisons with 2011 are likely to be inaccurate

Reflecting international literature showing that women are overrepresented at the lower levels in academia (Bexley, James & Arkoudis 2011; Nana, Stokes & Lynn 2010; Sutherland, Wilson & Williams 2013), the split in terms of sex of participants is more pronounced than in the student population and the permanent academic staff population, which were both 46% male and 54% female in 2011 (VUW, 2011). In addition, both Maori and Pasifika (of Pacific Islands descent) tutors were under-represented compared to the student population in 2011 (8% and 4% respectively) (VUW, 2011). Of most interest for this research is the breakdown by study situation, which shows that nearly a quarter of tutors responding to the 2011 survey were undergraduates (23%) while 26% were not currently enrolled in study. This wide spread of academic experience has implications for tutors' academic aspirations.

Tutors' Aspirations to an Academic Career

Researchers have commented on the way in which academia is becoming less attractive as a career (Coates et al. 2009), so we were interested to find out what tutors thought about tutoring and academic

career progression. We asked tutors whether they saw tutoring as an important step towards an academic career.

Based on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly agree and 5 = strongly disagree, tutors' responses showed that they did indeed perceive tutoring as an important step towards an academic career, with more than three quarters agreeing with this statement. The table below presents responses from the 2011 survey by study situation, with Bach = Studying towards a Bachelor degree, Hons = Studying towards an Honours degree, Mast = Studying towards a Masters degree, PhD = Studying towards a doctoral degree, Other = Studying at another level (e.g. postgraduate certificate or diploma) and Not stud = Not currently studying.

TABLE 2: I perceive tutoring as a key step towards establishing an academic career

	Bach		Hons		Mast		PhD		Other		Not stud		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree/agree	38	**79**	19	**76**	36	**95**	26	**81**	3	**100**	24	**50**	146	**75**
No opinion	8	**16**	4	**16**	2	**5**	5	**16**	0	**0**	19	**40**	38	**20**
Disagree/strongly disagree	2	**5**	2	**8**	0	**0**	1	**3**	0	**0**	5	**10**	10	**5**
Total	48	**100**	25	**100**	38	**100**	32	**100**	3	**100**	48	**100**	194	**100**

Of the students who tutor, the vast majority (especially at Masters level) perceive tutoring to be a key step towards an academic career; very few at all disagree. Those not currently enrolled to study tended to respond more negatively than those studying. This is not surprising, considering that some of this group may have already chosen a different career path. Nevertheless, closer inspection of the data reveals that half of this group still see tutoring as a stepping stone into academia.

We also asked whether tutoring had made respondents more committed to pursuing an academic career, and, once again the majority (67%) agreed that their academic aspirations held strong (Table 3). There was more variation across the groups for this question, though, with fewer undergraduates agreeing with the statement, and more postgraduates and tutors not currently studying inclined to agree that they had become even more committed to an academic career since trying tutoring. Undergraduates were, understandably, less committal about this question. This may be explained by their age, lack of experience and less pressing need to pin down career options (as they had not yet finished studying), so it was not surprising to see the high percentage of undergraduate tutors not yet having formed an opinion.

TABLE 3: Since trying tutoring, I have become more committed to pursuing an academic career

	Bach		Hons		Mast		PhD		Other		Not stud		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree/agree	20	**42**	9	**38**	31	**82**	24	**74**	3	**100**	42	**88**	129	**67**
No opinion	25	**52**	9	**38**	5	**13**	4	**13**	0	**0**	3	**6**	46	**24**
Disagree/strongly disagree	3	**6**	6	**24**	2	**5**	4	**13**	0	**0**	3	**6**	18	**9**
Total	48	**100**	24	**100**	38	**100**	32	**100**	3	**100**	48	**100**	193	**100**

Overall, two-thirds of respondents agreed that tutoring had increased their commitment to an academic career. Further investigation revealed that the median response for this question was a 3 ("Neither agree nor disagree"), which is why, in 2011, we added a third question to this section of the survey, asking whether tutors had decided *not* to pursue an academic career since being a tutor. We

added this question because the previous two questions only told us whether the experience of tutoring had made tutors *more* committed to an academic career – they may well already have been very committed prior to beginning tutoring and/or their commitment may not have shifted either negatively or positively as a result of their tutoring experience. Thus, the additional question probed further to examine if the experience of tutoring was potentially putting tutors *off* an academic career.

TABLE 4: Since trying tutoring, I have decided not to pursue an academic career

	Bach		Hons		Mast		PhD		Other		Not stud		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Strongly agree/agree	2	**4**	1	**4**	3	**8**	2	**6**	1	**33**	1	**2**	10	**5**
No opinion	19	**40**	12	**48**	8	**21**	7	**22**	1	**33**	22	**47**	69	**35**
Disagree/strongly disagree	27	**56**	12	**48**	27	**71**	23	**72**	1	**33**	24	**51**	114	**60**
Total	48	**100**	25	**100**	38	**100**	32	**100**	3	**99**	47	**100**	193	**100**

On average, respondents to the third question disagreed with the idea that tutoring had discouraged them from entering academia. In fact, of all the respondents, only 5% agreed or strongly agreed that they had decided *not* to pursue an academic career since trying tutoring. Clearly, tutoring at our university is viewed as a preparatory phase towards an academic career. It is important, then, that we consider how tutors might be preparing themselves for such careers.

Development as a Scholar

One distinguishing characteristic of the academic career is its scholarly focus. That is not to say that people in other careers do not take a scholarly approach to their work, or that learning to be scholarly will not serve tutors well in careers outside academia; rather, being scholarly is part of what it means to be an academic. For example, Austin and McDaniels (2006, p56), in their article on the four domains of scholarship in doctoral education, argue that "a key task for graduate students is to develop an identity as a scholar and a member of a discipline". Thus, we asked tutors whether they felt that tutoring helped them to develop as scholars. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they had developed as a scholar through tutoring.

Table 5: Percentages of tutors who report that tutoring helped them develop as scholars

I have developed as a scholar through my tutoring experience	N	%
Strongly agree/agree	127	65.5
No opinion	58	29.9
Disagree/strongly disagree	9	4.6
Total	*194*	*100.0*

We were again interested in whether there was any variation between tutors with different levels of academic experience and in different age groups, but there was very little difference (and certainly no statistical difference) in the degree to which respondents saw themselves as having developed as scholars, in relation to either their level of study or their age, so we have not included that data here.

Respondents who believed that they had developed as a scholar through tutoring were asked to comment on the ways in which they knew that this was the case. Many respondents referred to their

development in terms of the university's graduate attributes (critical and creative thinking, communication and leadership):

> *I have learnt how to communicate ideas, process them, critically evaluate my writing as a result of teaching, and how to write reports to my students.*
>
> (Female tutor, Asian, not currently studying)

Some respondents provided quite detailed descriptions of their own development:

> *Viewing a course from the other side of the game has been incredibly useful. I have honed my skills on the particular subject and been able to talk far more candidly about it with academic staff. Secondly, the ability to be involved in a course without pressure of assessment has allowed me to fulfill my interests in it more also. Most importantly though it has taught me how to learn, and shown me the simple mistakes that many students can make. That has flowed into all of my learning.*
>
> (Male tutor, Pakeha/NZ European, undergraduate)

These comments show variations in understanding of what it means to be a "scholar". We argue that any support and training programs for aspiring academics should allow space for participants to investigate what scholarly teaching (Shulman 2000) might look like and how tutoring can help them to develop as academics who take a scholarly approach to *all* aspects of their academic role.

Boyer's (1990) four forms of scholarship – discovery, integration, application and teaching – are well accepted now as models for describing the various facets of academic work. Shulman (2000, 50) succinctly defines *scholarly teaching* as "teaching that is well grounded in the sources and resources appropriate to the field. It reflects a thoughtful selection and integration of ideas and examples, and well-designed strategies of course design, development, transmission, interaction and assessment. Scholarly teaching should also model the methods and values of a field". New academics (especially those who have recently completed a PhD) are arguably, according to several higher-education researchers, "socialized to consider scholarly activity as part of their professional identity" (Henderson & Buchanan 2007). But tutors, who do a considerable amount of university teaching and are themselves often engaged as novice scholars in postgraduate and even undergraduate programs, may not have enough academic experience to conceive of themselves as "scholarly", or as having any scholarly identity; furthermore, they are unlikely to yet have any sense of professional identity, whether as teacher, researcher, historian, psychologist or any other profession.

For this reason, we recommend that training programs for tutors (especially those tutors who are still students themselves) should be designed to reflect Glassick, Huber and Maeroff's (1997) scholarly standards: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, effective presentation, significant results and reflective critique. Through such programs (described in detail in Hall & Sutherland 2013), tutors can be encouraged to focus on what it means to be scholarly, how to carry this through into their tutoring work and how to adapt a scholarly approach to future career possibilities.

Such scholarly training programs could include articulation of *clear goals* for workshops, as a way of helping tutors understand the role that these goals play in students' learning. Tutors should be encouraged to *prepare carefully* for their work with students, and any training should include examples of preparation tools and lesson plans, as well as discussion about how to use such plans in the classroom.

The importance of using *appropriate methods* to teach can be emphasised by modelling a variety of techniques in the workshops. The methods demonstrated may then become the catalyst for tutors' reflective discussion of how different methods might influence students' learning, and how they might implement them in their own teaching.

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Tutors can be encouraged to develop *effective presentation* skills by undertaking peer observations of each others' tutorials and providing constructive feedback. A teaching-observation practicum or microteaching session can also offer tutors an opportunity to enhance their teaching skills. In such sessions, a small group of tutors, facilitated by an academic developer, undertake a short teaching exercise. Each one receives feedback from the other tutors and from the academic developer, along with ideas for future teaching. These exercises should be video-recorded so that tutors can refer back to them in their own time.

The outcomes of tutors' teaching should be measured through formal evaluations of tutorials using the university's student-feedback system (this corresponds with Glassick et al.'s *significant results* scholarly standard). Tutors should be encouraged to collect evaluative feedback from their tutorial groups, and then discuss the results of their feedback with an academic developer or their course coordinator, supervisor or head of department. Tutors should also be encouraged to collect informal feedback from their students to improve the quality of their tutorials.

Finally, as well as reflecting on the rationale underpinning different teaching techniques used in tutorials, a good training program will equip tutors to undertake a *reflective critique* of their learning as tutors. A discussion with an academic developer about the feedback they have received could be followed, for example, by writing a reflective essay or teaching portfolio that includes reflections on the development of their tutoring experience, their responses to students' feedback and their plans for future improvement.

All of this fits well with professional development for a tutor who aspires to a career in academia, but we argue that taking such a scholarly approach can also support tutor development in directions other than academia. Indeed, respondents to our survey identified several areas in which they had developed as a result of their tutoring experience (and their attendance at our training program), including being able to transfer new knowledge into different contexts, improving their communication and leadership skills and enhancing their critical reflection abilities and inclinations.

Our training program, which has been founded on the notion of scholarly teaching and preparation for an academic career, has begun a process of development to meet the changing needs of its participants. We maintain our commitment to producing scholarly tutors, principally to support the provision of high-quality tutoring at our university. However, cognisance of the changing employment environment for those who aspire to an academic career has led us to provide a new lens through which to view our training provision. Aside from the preparation to work with students in tutorials, tutors are also encouraged to consider their future employability. To do this, we use Yorke's definition of employability as a complex concept that is "evidenced in the application of a mix of personal qualities and benefits, understanding, skilful practices and the ability to reflect productively on experience" (Yorke, 2006, p13). Yorke's definition is particularly useful to us because it goes beyond a view of employability as the simple development of key skills. Rather, it emphasises the ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity, and complements the academic and scholarly values that we encourage.

Our program now places particular emphasis on the personal development of our tutors, while continuing to adhere to our scholarly underpinnings. From the beginning we discuss the complexities of teaching and encourage our tutors to develop their own values concerning their teaching and individual and group strategies for improving their students' learning experiences. Discussions on tutoring tend to focus on the importance of experience and reflection in dealing with uncertainties in the classroom. We work with tutors to increase their "understandings" and "skilful practices"(Yorke 2006, p13) so that they can apply and adapt them in their chosen sphere of employment. Our university also sees the benefit of this approach, and supports it through inclusion of aspects of tutoring in its student leadership program.

Conclusion

In a review of the prevalence of sessional teachers in universities across Australasia and Europe, Gilbert (2013) discusses the growth of the sessional teaching population and the challenges that presents to academia as a whole. On average, she estimates that 40% of university teachers are employed on a sessional basis, and notes that this percentage is probably increasing. Furthermore, the data do not necessarily account for those in more precarious roles, such as hourly paid tutors, so the percentage could be higher still. This growing trend to appoint teachers on a part-time basis arises for a variety of reasons. Sessional teachers are often cheaper to employ, their contracts are often insecure and their responsibilities and hours may fluctuate depending on the needs of the institution. These institutional pressures towards a part-time teaching workforce are also enhanced by the corresponding increase in workload for full-time academic staff. Full-time academics often find themselves undertaking a larger share of administrative and supervisory work (Percy et al. 2008). Academia has arguably become less desirable in comparison with more lucrative and stable options (Coates et al. 2009). With full-time academic careers becoming simultaneously too expensive for institutions to rely on and a less attractive option than some other career choices, there is clearly pressure for numbers of full-timers to decrease further.

Regardless of the current realities of the job situation for aspiring academics, tutors still think of tutoring as a step towards an academic career. Our research has shown that these perceptions are not significantly affected by how young they are as tutors, nor what level of academic qualification they have already reached. Undergraduates who teach perceive tutoring as a key step towards an academic career, as much as PhD student tutors, and for all but a very few, tutoring has not deterred them from an academic career. Given these aspirations, our university has created a training and support program that is designed to help tutors think of themselves as scholarly tutors. Our belief, based on more than a decade of research on the tutor experience at our university and the literature from elsewhere, is that a scholarly approach to tutoring has benefits for the tutors (and the students) regardless of their future careers. Tutors report that they have deepened their understanding of the subjects they are studying (if they are students) and their desire to move further in those subjects; linked theory with practice and applied knowledge to new contexts; and developed the graduate attributes of creative and critical thinking, communication and leadership. All of these outcomes have benefits beyond an academic career, and will also prepare them for an uncertain career future – a reality all members of the academy in the 21st century may face.

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