



An Apple for the Teacher/Uber Driver/Tutor

Insights

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As students have started another school year this Fall, conversations often return to teachers' pay and the disparity between what they are undoubtedly worth and what they actually earn. In fact, Time magazine dedicated a recent cover story to the economic realities of being a teacher in today's society. Perhaps in recognition of the long-standing pay issues, many teachers now use the gig economy as a way to supplement their income.

For instance, the platform Airbnb allows individuals to rent out their homes, apartments, and spare rooms to third parties. A recent study has shown that one in 10 Airbnb providers is an educator, and that they earn on average \$6,500 per year through Airbnb. This can be a welcome addition to their regular teaching income.

Recognizing that educators are commonly seeking to supplement their paychecks, Uber has also openly courted teachers to drive during their traditionally free hours such as nights and weekends. In fact, Uber has gone as far as to notify some riders when their driver is a teacher and boasts that three percent of their fare will be donated to the driver's classroom.

Teachers are also prime candidates to offer tutoring services as needed. Nowadays, many such services can be offered online from the comfort of the teacher's own home. In this way they can essentially continue their basic "day job" functions while supplementing their incomes based upon their own schedules.

Beyond economic need, another explanation for the large number of teachers in the gig economy may be their fairly flexible schedules. Many teachers, for example, have significant breaks during the year for summer, the winter holidays, and spring break. These breaks from their traditional jobs can give them the freedom and opportunity to dabble in other roles—particularly in areas that can boost their income. Airbnb in particular can be appealing if teachers have the latitude to vacate their homes during busy travel times when visitors may be inclined to rent them for an extended visit.

While in an ideal world no teacher would need to do a separate job simply for pay reasons, the gig economy has offered options and solutions that many educators undoubtedly appreciate.

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