A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic and resultant changes to academic practices revealed forms of academic misconduct that while almost certainly were already occurring amongst our student community, were predominantly hidden from us. Spring 2020 saw the majority of our teaching and assessments move rapidly to an online format. With this rapid pivot we were also rapidly exposed to many more instances of misconduct through the use of file sharing websites, ghost writing services and other forms of contract cheating than we were previously aware of, echoing similar experiences reported in the literature and media (Lancaster & Cotarlan (2021), Sforza (2021)).

For university staff this was a challenge, a new vocabulary and many were underprepared to deal with it. For the authors, attending the 2020 ENAI conference was eye opening and daunting. It was not just academic misconduct that shocked us, but the threat to student welfare as a result of engaging in certain forms of academic misconduct. We knew that action was needed to educate both staff and students to the dangers of engaging with contract cheating, with regards both academic integrity and student welfare.

Prior to 2020, continuing professional development (CPD) in relation to academic integrity in our university tended to focus on plagiarism, text matching tools and how to use those tools to improve students' academic literacies rather than using them only to *catch* students plagiarising. Supporting university policy also took a very narrow view of academic integrity, focussing on plagiarism, and the penalties of such. While CPD in assessment and assessment design as part of curriculum design was current and available to staff, CPD in the area of academic integrity was lagging behind the advances in digital communication, the ways in which students study and the sophisticated methods used by third parties to recruit students into academic misconduct. A renewed effort was needed to refresh the university's view of academic integrity.

We wanted to promote a culture of academic integrity, in tandem with our existing work on promoting good curriculum and assessment design. Academics had unfortunately learned during the pandemic that assessment design alone was not *the* solution to academic integrity challenges (Bretag et al (2019); Ellis et al (2020)) and to assume so was damaging to staff morale and confidence. Our aim was to first and foremost quickly educate staff and students with respect to contract cheating and the dangers of engaging in such. We also wanted to ignite conversation between staff and students on what Academic Integrity means to each of us, and allow both staff and students see the issue from each other's point of view ultimately working towards a collaborative approach to academic integrity education, as identified in

Efcik et al (2019). We wanted to promote the message that academic integrity is everyone's business. This would complement work elsewhere in our university focussed on defining a new Academic Integrity policy.

This conference presentation will outline one year of a journey in Academic Integrity Continuing Professional Development. We will outline the events, workshops and self-paced lessons developed (and shared widely by our National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) in Ireland), what we learned as we developed the lessons, consulting with staff and students, and how the CPD workshops often resulted in learning for both the attendees and the facilitators. Finally, we will share our plans for the coming year and beyond.

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