The causes of contract cheating and how to address it: What do student advocates think?

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Some things we know….

- Globally, contract cheating sites are expanding (Awdry, 2016; Lancaster & Clarke 2016; QAA, 2016; Wallace & Newton, 2014)
- 35% (ug) and 24% (pg) said cheating is ‘ethical’; 22% indicated they had purchased assessments (Hosny and Fatimer, 2014)
- Some students see contract cheating as a ‘business deal’ or ‘outsourcing’ and therefore a legitimate use of time/resources (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016; QAA, 2016)
- Many struggling students don’t realise getting ‘help’ from these sites is a breach of AI (QAA, 2016; TEQSA, 2014; Walker & Townley, 2012; Wolverton, 2016)
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Who are student advocates?

• A paid employee of a university student union who supports a student throughout the AI process

  "Their primary function is to ensure that students do not face hearings alone and are fully informed of their rights as well and understand the formal procedures and range of outcomes" (National Student Union Australia, 2017).

• Not lawyers

• Similar student advocate processes to Australia:
  • New Zealand (NZ Union of Students, 2017)
  • Sweden (Sveriges Förenade Studentkårer, 2017)
  • UK (UK National Union of Students, 2017)
  • USA – some States (eg: UC Berkeley, Indiana State); others have varying degrees of support
  • Germany – but advocates can also speak for the student
Advocacy Tertiary Conference

• 25 advocacy providers/40 Australian universities
• 5 (out of 6) States and all territories represented

Specific aims¹:
1. To understand what student advocates think are the causes of student contract cheating
2. To identify potential courses of action to address contract cheating

¹approved by Deakin University Ethics Committee
Why do students use contract cheating sites?

- Pressure/fear of failure
  - normalised practice – if others do it/’normal practice’ then assumption it’s OK
  - poor time management skills – competing priorities and ran out of time on deadlines
  - fear of failing and do anything to avoid failure

- Unaware of seriousness under policy; Unaware of policy at all

- Lack of competency and confidence
  - In one skill area eg: statistics – no confidence in their competency

- A means to an end is not cheating—‘passing is the goal, not learning’
  - not interested in the particular degree, unit or task and see ‘outsourcing’ as legitimate
What do student advocates think we should do?

University level

• Academic integrity modules in core units
• Increase ‘legitimate’ support and extend to online students
• Obligation to make students aware of the long-term registration risks of contract cheating (DUSA 2016; ICAI, 2016; Nayak, 2015; Rigby et al., 2015)
• Use new technologies for identification – eye detection software, wifi radar software, analytics – keystroke identification, random ID photos
  • Some technological products being trialled for online assignments: Cadmus; others available for exams: Examity, ProctorU; Proctorio; DigiExam.
• Pressure governments for national legislation on contract cheating
  • New Zealand leads the way in terms of legislative reform. Under the Education Act (1989) s.292E makes it an offence to provide or advertise cheating services – penalty is a fine of up to $10,000. Other nations introducing/working towards legislation
• Increase contract cheating awareness campaigns (DUSA, 2016; ICAI, 2016; Nayak 2015)
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION
against CONTRACT CHEATING

CALL TO ACTION
October 19, 2016
Speak up and out against Contract Cheating!

http://contractcheating.weebly.com/the-event.html

http://www.contractcheating.com
Contract Cheating Awareness Week

Understand what Contract Cheating is and the help services available to you.

#knowitscheating
What do student advocates think we should do?

Unit /subject co-ordinator level

1. Increase awareness of AI at the micro level of teaching
   - openly talk about contract cheating across year levels
   - compulsory contract cheating/AI module in core units at ug and pg levels

2. Re-design assessment
   - supervised tasks emphasis on oral/demonstration/practical tasks
   - no ‘take-home’ tasks, no recycled tasks
   - more tasks where staff ‘get to know’ the students’ work (discussed the logistics of this for high enrolment and online units)
Student Advocates agree:

• There is no single solution to the issue but focus on ‘Education, Deterrence, Detection’ (QAA, 2016, p.16)

• Universities need to get students involved in the issue – they are an invaluable ally in deterring contract cheating


