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An auto-ethnographic approach to academic integrity: experiences through the lens as a student, design teacher and academic integrity officer

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Abstract

This research aimed to share a personal voice, through a reflexive narrative process, of how the author's experiences as a student, design teacher and academic integrity officer influenced the conceiving and implementation of a student designed university academic integrity campaign. An auto-ethnographic methodology was utilized to share stories, expressing thoughts, feelings, and attitudes, as new knowledge for other universities seeking to engage in academic integrity initiatives. Self-reflective journaling provided key words and phrases that were identified as data and then coded using three Saldaña coding methods (Emotion, In Vivo and Initial). Three key themes emerged: empathy, education, and positive change. It is evident in the key findings that these three themes play a vital role for academic integrity awareness in enabling student engagement, deep learning, redirection of student mindsets, and second chances. These reflections shared a process for fostering behavioural change at student and university levels through academic integrity promotion. This campaign and exhibition were heralded as an example to follow for universities by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) of Australia.

Keywords: Academic integrity, Auto-ethnography, Academic misconduct, Student campaigns, Integrity culture

Introduction

My journey of auto-ethnography began with the need to share an experience. As an established university teacher new to research, auto-ethnography as a qualitative methodology was lost on me, however, I have learned that this type of qualitative inquiry offers insight that cannot be captured in other forms of data (Dyson 2007). Over the years during my own post-graduate studies, qualitative analysis appealed to me as a way of connecting humans together to share meaning (Wall 2006). As a recent Masters graduate, and a current design academic with over ten years' teaching experience, who believes reflexive practice allows for growth and self-understanding

(Chang 2008), the learning of auto-ethnography sparked curiosity and provided a way to share my experiences: subjective yet authentic and valid (Dyson 2007), and written in my own voice (Chang 2008).

Auto-ethnographies provide a platform for lived experiences and cultural awareness to be heard (Edwards 2021) and it is my intention to share my personal voice (Chang 2008). It represents and provides specific and direct insight into the world of academic integrity, through my lens as a student, a design teacher, and academic integrity officer for the design faculty: a unique combination of personal narratives and perspectives, underpinned by the theoretical framework of reflexive practice (Schön 1994). My aim is to share distinctive experiences and perspectives and analyse how they contributed to a student-designed academic integrity campaign. It is my hope that others are impacted, encouraged, and motivated by these narratives (Cooper and Lilyea 2022) to reflect on their own experiences (Sparkes 2000) to help shape positive and educational future experiences of our students in academic integrity within the higher education community.

Through the lens of a teacher, I believe in the power of the student voice. It can provide positive, negative, and constructive feedback; culturally diverse experiences; genuine concerns; and areas for growth (McLeod 2011). Based on my experience, student feedback can change decisions and alter direction, but unfortunately it can be overlooked without recognition of its potential (Harvey 2003), providing frustration and disappointment. As a recent student, I have shared in those emotions but have also chosen at times to keep quiet, for fear of invalidation. As a teacher, I have gained another perspective and have used my position to encourage voices to be shared so that they can not only be validated but provide opportunity for change and growth. Giving power to the student experience acknowledges that they too have knowledge to share and a voice to be heard (Matthews and Dollinger 2023).

Feedback within a teaching context can sometimes be tough to hear, and based on my experience, is often associated with teacher reviews and performance. Feeny (2007:193) explains how important it is for teachers to be able to 'collectively participate in analysing data and drawing conclusions that link instruction and student learning'. I am sure many teachers strive to receive positive feedback at the end of a teaching block, validating the hard work and long hours, however it only takes one negative comment to undo all of that, making you feel inadequate. In my time as an academic, I have found that listening to students and reflecting on their feedback have enabled me to tackle negative (and constructive) feedback, providing me with a growth mindset that encourages change (Seaton 2018). I cannot aspire to grow as a teacher if I am not first prepared to listen to those I teach.

Listening and reflecting are key elements of the interior design process (Schön 1994). If one cannot listen to their client and understand their wants and needs, they will naturally create barriers towards designing a successful solution. Likewise, if reflection is not integrated during the construction of design elements, improvements cannot be made (Schön 1994). Teaching design students about active listening, as they will need to do with future clients, is a fundamental soft skill required in any industry (Bancino and Zevalkink 2007). It would be neglectful if I did not instill this essential principle towards my student's learning and their subsequent challenges.

Through an academic integrity initiative at an Australian University, I became an academic integrity officer for the Design and Creative Technology faculty to investigate academic integrity breach accusations and to resolve outcomes. A key aspect of this role is to educate both students and lecturers about academic integrity standards and issues. As an academic integrity officer, I have always been curious with why students participate in academic misconduct. The reasons I have encountered are varied and fascinating and align with numerous research studies (Walker and White 2014; Blum 2016; MacLeod and Eaton 2020; Waltzer and Dahl 2022). In 2022, several Australian universities faced the realities of academic integrity challenges with a ghostwriter going public on their contributions to the contract writing industry (Milienos 2022). From my experience, the struggles that students face are real and should be taken seriously. As an established teacher, I feel it is important to know our students, not only their passions and career goals, but their challenges and weaknesses too. Through this we may find solutions that support them and truly recognise their challenges.

This auto-ethnography shares my personal voice through reflexive narrative of how a student- designed academic integrity campaign and exhibition came about and the lessons that I have learned. I have witnessed first-hand the journey that academic misconduct can take someone on. Despite the institutional policies and procedures in place, workshops provided to support students with assessments, the education students receive in their classrooms, students still engage in academic misconduct. The wording of academic misconduct has been chosen in an attempt to represent the act of wrongdoing rather than cheating, which can elicit assumptions, judgements, and biases. Whilst the term cheating is mostly used in the context of research, the term misconduct has been connected with a teaching and learning approach (Bertram Gallant 2020).

The research question "How did my experience as a student, teacher and academic integrity officer help inform a student designed academic integrity campaign?" was explored through three guiding questions:

1. What previous stories or experiences have I encountered that have shaped my teaching approaches?
2. How does my unique perspective as a student, teacher and academic integrity officer contribute to educating students?
3. Can my experiences help inform other universities to partner with students to create positive, educational academic integrity campaigns?

Literature review

Higher education in Australia has faced many challenges with academic misconduct over the last three decades: issues of contract cheating (Bretag et al. 2019); debates over what constitutes cheating (Rettinger and Bertram Gallant 2022); educational and institutional responsibilities (Bertram Gallant and Drinan 2008); through to the uses of artificial intelligence (Cotton et al. 2023). Cheating will never stop (Bertram Gallant 2011) as the factors that contribute to it remain unchanged. Cheating greatly hinders knowledge and skill development whilst tarnishing the reputation of universities (Bertram Gallant et al. 2015), as was reported by multiple journalists across many news outlets throughout 2022 (Christodoulou 2022; Milienos 2022; Jha 2022). While debates continue on what

constitutes intentional and unintentional cheating (Walker and White 2014; Sutherland-Smith 2005), research pinpoints some key contributors to cheating such as time constraints, insufficient preparation, a lack of knowledge and skills, external pressures, poor language skills, and high standards and competition (Walker and White 2014; Blum 2016; MacLeod and Eaton 2020). If university specific issues are not addressed, unique solutions cannot be designed and implemented.

Research identifies four key factors (teacher perceptions, student perceptions, strategies and campaigns, and student involvement) relevant to educating students and preventing cheating from occurring. Of these four, three are relevant to my topic and will be explored in this paper: student perceptions, strategies and campaigns, and student involvement. There is a clear emphasis on the need to understand the issues of cheating from a student's perspective (rather than from a teacher's perspective) and how this understanding can help shape educative practices.

Student perceptions

There has been continuous research generated on student perceptions of academic cheating over the years which has provided evidence for key factors on why students cheat. These factors include needing to pass, assessment difficulty, peer pressure and helping a friend (Waltzer and Dahl 2022; Hosny and Fatima 2014). Similarly, McCabe (2016:193) found that students reported the need to get an A 'is a must'. To students, the lack of academic integrity reinforcement within the classroom meant that cheating was not perceived as a problem (Walker and White 2014; Robinson and Glanzer 2017).

Peer pressure, along with peer observation, has been noted as an influencing behaviour for students to cheat (Ewing et al. 2019; Pan et al. 2019; Rogerson and Basanta 2016; McCabe 2016). In addition, Lang (2013:170) describes loyalty as a strong peer value that can also affect behaviour. He writes, 'it is right to follow the rules of academic integrity, but it is also right to show loyalty to one's peers'. Although peer influence can often be seen as a negative quality, research shows that peer influence in the form of student involvement across campaign development, can have a positive impact on student behaviour (Bertram Gallant et al. 2011; Khan et al. 2020).

Although cheating can occur due to a lack of understanding (Waltzer and Dahl 2022), this may not always be the case (Ahmed 2018; Hosny and Fatima 2014; Robinson and Glanzer 2017; Awosoga et al. 2021). Often students have an awareness, however, they do not see their actions as wrong, or they are able to justify it (Waltzer and Dahl 2022; Robinson and Glanzer 2017; Hosny and Fatima 2014; Ewing et al. 2019; Pan et al. 2019; McCabe 2016). Interestingly, Blum (2016) notes that some students may not even be aware of their actions unless it is made explicit.

Strategies and campaigns

A reoccurring theme throughout the academic integrity campaign research is the importance of learning and teaching (Penaluna and Ross 2022; Morris 2018; Cullen 2022). At the heart of addressing academic misconduct, Bertram Gallant's (2008:89) Teaching and Learning Strategy outlines the need to focus on establishing supportive environments, increasing support and instruction for academics, and removing university constraints. Without these, student cheating cannot be stopped. It redirects the focus from student

cheating to student learning, and the underlying pedagogies that facilitate it. This is supported by Robinson and Glanzer (2017) who reported students request for more teacher support through academic assistance and meaningful assessment design and Bretag et al. (2014:1161) who noted students request for more support 'rather than telling us all the consequences of breaching.

Another common theme amongst the research is the idea of building a culture of integrity (Bertram Gallant 2011; Zivcakova et al. 2014; Cullen 2022; De Maio and Dixon 2022; Robinson and Glanzer 2017). Robinson and Glanzer (2017:220) noted the importance of emphasising a more holistic, 'positive message' of academic integrity so students receive the message clearly. Hendershott et al. (2000:597) explain the need to have a strategic plan that addresses all areas of a university, however 'persistence, fortitude, patience and passion' are required for sustainability.

In her paper Building a Culture of Academic Integrity, Bertram Gallant (2011:12) explains that 'there is no universally successful strategy, no one-size fits all approach.' Universities have tested their own unique strategies to overcome their individual challenges, however evidently a constant battle with new challenges surfaces. Penaluna and Ross (2022) experimented with educational workshops as a method of instructing students on the different types of cheating, however, no student feedback was provided to ascertain the outcome. East and Donnelly (2012) created online quizzes, animations and case studies for students which proved successful, but note that student support was required throughout. Zivcakova et al. (2014) delivered interactive discussion-based presentations, which proved successful due to its peer instruction component, and demonstrated the positive impact peers can have on each other.

Student involvement

Student involvement within academic integrity campaigns have been widely acknowledged within research for producing positive outcomes, however, many of them are in the form of future recommendations only. There are some that have attributed their work to analysing student involvement in campaigns (Khan et al. 2020). Cullen (2022), Morris (2018), Sefcik et al. (2020) and Bretag et al. (2014) all support student involvement and collaboration within academic integrity as it produces positive cultures within communities.

It has been noted that positive peer influence can be beneficial to learning outcomes (Sefcik et al. 2020), enhancing the need for students to act as co-educators for their peers. Bertram Gallant (2011) explains that students placed within informal educative roles help to strengthen academic integrity messages in campaigns. Khan et al. (2020) agree, adding that this type of education can increase a campaign's effectiveness. Chauhan et al. (2017) suggest attributing the success of academic integrity learning to the peer education provided by students.

Enabling students to be stakeholders in academic integrity campaigns allows teachers and faculty to recognise the everyday challenges that students face (Lang 2013). Bretag et al. (2014:1163) explains that students can 'share their understandings and how they wish to be educated.' From there, students will be able to establish a culture that supports their needs rather than a 'culture of fear" (Sefcik et al. 2020:41). Based upon these

research findings, understanding a student's perspective, and involving them in the process is a best practice approach to improving academic integrity education.

Although many researchers have discussed the importance of student involvement and specific university strategies, there is limited knowledge of how student-designed campaigns can affect peer behaviour positively. Only one student-led campaign was identified amongst the research (Payne 2017) which assessed the effects of educating and raising awareness of academic integrity issues. Whilst the study captured the campaigns success of educating students, it did not provide findings on changes in student behaviour. This research aims to address this gap, by analysing the experiences of my own behaviour as a recent student, as well as a teacher and an academic integrity officer, who initiated and curated a specific student-designed university exhibition, that was created to educate and prevent academic integrity breaches and impact behavioural change.

Process

Participants

To analyse my own experiences as a student, a design teacher, and an academic integrity officer, a retrospective auto-ethnographic approach was taken (Edwards 2021), as it enabled me to analyse my personal and professional experiences in the hopes of providing insight to students, teachers, those in academic integrity roles and the wider institutional community (Dyson 2007). Writing in an auto-ethnographic approach also allows me to share stories through narrative, expressing thoughts, feelings, and attitudes (Dyson 2007), using different writing styles of 'confessional-emotive' and 'descriptive-realist' (Chang 2013:118–119) to engage the audience in my story-telling. Although subjective, the sharing of stories allows reflection of what has been learned (Wall 2006).

Data collection

To address research question one and two, concerning my own student, teacher and academic integrity officer experiences, narratives have been captured predominantly in journaling, a form of self-reflective data (Cooper and Lilyea 2022), with a touch of recall (Chang 2013). To ensure reliability and validity, the self-reflections were reviewed against other forms of recorded data that took place across the time frames of the experience (Cooper and Lilyea 2022; Chang 2008). These include but are not limited to emails, recorded meetings, exhibition details, graphic sketches, and verbal corroboration.

Data analysis

Auto-ethnographies can be both collaborative and individual throughout the data analysis (Saldaña 2013; Chang 2013). Whilst a collaborative process may increase reliability, it is not uncommon for a researcher to choose an individual analysis as there is a strong intimate connection between researcher and the data (Cooper and Lilyea 2022; Galman 2007; Chang 2008). I specifically chose to analyse the data as an individual due to sensitive nature of my reflections and the stories that I had heard.

The narratives produced from my self-reflections were stored in my handwritten notebooks and on a digital platform and then translated across to Microsoft Word. All data was initially reviewed holistically to provide a reacquainting of the text (Chang 2013) and displayed chronologically (Cooper and Lilyea 2022). Manual

inductive coding (Linneberg and Korsgaard 2019) "using paper and pencil on hard copies of data" (Saldaña 2013) integrated with three of Saldaña's (2013) First Cycle coding methods (Emotion, In Vivo, and Initial) were applied. These specific coding methods were chosen due to the nature of the research questions and narratives. As the self-reflections are personal in nature, and share notes relating to other people, it was recommended by colleagues that I should be the sole coder of the data collected.

Experiences and stories are often directly linked to emotions and behaviours (Emotion coding), whilst also providing opportunities for sharing similarities and patterns through repetitive language (In Vivo). Initial coding was used to examine the similarities and differences of the student, teacher and academic integrity officer lenses. 124 codes were initially established in the First Cycle with seven codes created during second iteration (see Table 1), by "comparing and sorting" utilising Code Mapping (Saldaña 2013:196). Key words and phrases were then identified across the narratives (Chang 2013) through recoding (Saldaña 2013). During the Second Cycle, codes, key words and phrases were further analysed and condensed into three categories using

Table 1 The process of first cycle coding, recording and second cycle coding

Codes	Key words & phrases				Categories	Themes
1. Positive internal feelings	Cared for	Joy	Understanding	Moved	Feelings and attitudes	Empathy
	Proud	Humbling	Emotional	Happy Sad		
	Witnessed change	Listened	Valued	Respected		
	Love	Inspired				
2. Negative internal feelings	Inadequacy	Embarrassed	Grief	Sadness		
	Dread	Nervous	Trauma	Frustration		
	Distaste	Ashamed	Shut down	Heartache		
	Mortified	Fear	Stigmatised	Relationship breakdown		
3. Positive behaviours	Second chance		Empathy		Outcomes and behaviours	Education
	Change		Create			
	Grow positively		Understand importance			
4. Negative behaviours	Pressures		Not taught			
	Circumstances					
5. Positive outcomes	Learn from failures		Experience			
	Educative growth		Educated			
	Feedback		Lesson learned			
	Reflect		Positive results			
6. Negative outcomes	Consequences		Punitive outcomes			
7. Students	Authentic	Voice	Not taught	Focus	Student Lifecycle	Positive change
	Success	Experiences	Enticing options	Strengths		
	Challenges	Development	Not a number	Alternative path		
	Hurdles	Connection	Feedback			
	Lesson learned	Potential	Time Management			
	Weakness	Change	Improvement			

Pattern Coding (Saldaña 2013). Finally, three major themes were drawn out as the findings from the five narratives of the inquiry.

Ethical considerations

Since this research is reflective, producing my own narratives, this auto-ethnography paper has been written from my own perspective, not including the information or perspectives of others that were involved throughout the process. Ethics exemption was approved for this paper by an Australian University Ethics Advisory panel as per the requirements of the National Statement (National Health and Medical Research Council 2023). Lee (2018:310) explains that 'it is almost impossible to tell one's story without referring to others' however my narratives have provided a valuable story and do not implicate any persons. As the author, I respect those that are characters in my stories (Adams et al. 2017), as they have influenced my growth and understanding, providing me strength to share my stories. Without whom, these experiences would not exist.

The four pillars of ethics (research merit and integrity, justice, beneficence and respect) (Health and Medical Research Council 2023) played a key role in the campaign and exhibition as the exhibitions purpose was to educate, support students and show courage, not shame and humiliate in any way. Students who shared their own stories in the academic integrity exhibition volunteered them and gave permission for the stories to be used, providing that they were anonymous. In some instances, stories were written by the student, others were written by me based on a summary of events provided by the student (and approved). The stories used in the initial campaign presentation (narrative 4) were invented and did not represent any individual. As a disclaimer, any student that is involved in academic integrity (both positive and negative experiences) is encouraged to talk to the university counsellor.

It is suggested in this type of research that self-care be practiced since auto-ethnography share's the vulnerabilities and emotional experiences of the author (Cooper and Lilyea 2022). A two-fold support system was established throughout the duration of the process: 1) Workplace—a workplace support system was established between multiple senior academics who provided regular check points and guidance. The use of the free university counselling service was also encouraged throughout this time, providing a confidential space for me and any other staff or students who interacted with me. 2) Personal – regular breaks were taken to ensure a clear mindset when journaling and analysing, including taking personal leave throughout the experiences when required. Mindful meditation was also employed due to the nature of these experiences.

My five narratives

Understanding my own student voice

I recall my senior year in high school. External pressures to perform well; a lack of enthusiasm for not wanting to be present; a feeling of inadequacy; bullying. Feelings of dread every morning as I sat on the bus for another day of school. Why did I have to be here? I was consistently told that completing year 12 would provide avenues that dropping out did not. My anticipated career in design did not require academic achievements, it required creativity however, I as look back now, I realise how valuable that completion was, despite the challenges and hurdles.

On a Sunday afternoon, I had forgotten about an upcoming English assignment. No excuses, just forgetfulness coupled with bad time management, and a tiny hint of distaste for the subject. With privy information, I noticed that the assignment task was identical to the task from two years prior. I had pondered, 'Surely a previously submitted assessment would not be remembered'. So, at the eleventh hour, I adapted a previously submitted assignment I had obtained, thinking I was the smarter person. When I received the grade and feedback, I was surprised (and nervous) to read that the submission had been remembered! I was mortified and embarrassed. It was something that I did not want anyone to find out. I cannot recall ever thinking about the consequences that could have happened, because being caught was not on my radar. I could have been provided with an extremely punitive outcome however I was educated on the issue, provided with what the lack of originality cost me (knowledge and skills) and had my work downgraded. No further penalty was given. Lesson learned.

Although I was brought up in a home that focused on developing attitudes and principles centred around religious morals and beliefs, in a moment of weakness, I succumbed to the pressures around me and rather than submitting late, or acknowledging my forgetfulness, I turned to a behaviour I was unfamiliar with. I am surprised that the consequences were not more severe, although I do not remember much classroom discussion around plagiarism, or more broadly, academic integrity. I had to use a cover sheet in my senior years that stated the work was mine however I do not recall actively thinking about it or discussing it. I wonder if it was an issue back then, as it is today in schools.

This high school experience was the key moment in my memory since plagiarism was not an issue for me in my undergraduate study. Fast forward 15 years after high school, and I was back to being a student, enrolled into a Masters degree. This time though, I was an adult, a higher education teacher and an academic integrity officer, with a lot of responsibilities. As an online student, I soon came face to face with the realities of why some students breach academic integrity: full time work, juggled with family commitments, lifestyle upkeep, and the unrealistic expectations that we naturally place on ourselves which include the pressure to achieve high grades. Interestingly, I had not been taught about academic integrity during my undergraduate study and later during my Masters degree, I still was not taught about the implications that academic integrity can have on post-graduate study.

As an academic integrity officer and a teacher with a philosophy centred around ethics and integrity influenced by past experiences (Jenkins 2011), breaching academic integrity was not an option for me. However, I can see how it becomes a viable option for many. The pressures and circumstances create the conditions for breaching academic integrity. As a student, I sacrificed a lot across my two years of study. I can only imagine what it feels like as a high school leaver studying a degree, needing to work part time but wanting a social life or a mature aged student changing careers whilst juggling work, school pickups, and the lifestyle that family life requires. Our society has always (and probably always will) presented us with too many enticing options and unfortunately hard work (doing the right thing) can fall victim to laziness and bad time management.

Understanding students through the lens of an academic integrity officer informed by teaching

When I first became an academic integrity officer, I must admit that I was a little naïve about academic misconduct. I was not aware of the wider higher education problem that existed, nor did I appreciate the literature that existed on why students breach academic integrity. My approach, although not punitive, was not guided by learning and teaching, but by policy and procedure – following the rules to ensure everything was completed by the book. I ashamedly looked at students with a set of assumptions, hastily drew my own conclusions and somewhat defined them by their mistake. This narrative is underpinned by Mezirow's (2009) transformational learning theory, where I can safely share that those initial assumptions have been replaced with a cultural consciousness of learning and teaching.

My approach to the academic integrity role was informed by what I had learned over the years about the impact that mentoring or one-on-one support can have, in both receiving it and providing it. As a teacher, providing mentoring or support allows me to focus on a student-centred teaching approach that specifically assists a student in a way that they can understand, learn, and grow (Blackie et al. 2010). These opportunities enable conversations of educative growth as well as reflection. As a student who has received mentoring, I felt that someone genuinely cared about my development, that I wasn't just a number in a classroom. Sometimes we cannot see the potential in ourselves until someone points it out.

Having a conversation as a student with a teacher, and reviewing feedback together, allowed me to see where I could improve, the direction I should focus on and where my strengths lay. I found this invaluable, and whilst I know that all learners are diverse and respond differently to feedback, I try to implement similar approaches in my teaching. I have found it extremely successful over the years in academia, with student feedback and individual reflection guiding me to make change. When I became an academic integrity officer, I anticipated the same approach would contribute to building change in academic misconduct behaviour.

Part of my role as an academic integrity officer was to interview students. The procedure that I followed allowed a student to either respond in writing or attend an interview to discuss the allegation. My preference was always an interview as it provided a human connection and showed that I valued what they had to say. Mann's (2008) ethics of caring underpins this approach, demonstrating respect and an unbiased view of the student. I have experienced punitive and biased interviews that have negatively impacted students, causing unnecessary grief and trauma.

If a student chose to respond in writing, I would try persuading them to attend a conversation (not an interview) to discuss the issue. Language is key in establishing rapport. Sometimes I feel our policies and procedures are too formally written for students, creating fear rather than a supportive learning environment. These conversations, although recorded for minute taking, provided safe environments to discuss the realities of unfortunate situations.

Whilst evidence of academic misconduct shows facts, understanding a students' story, their circumstances and thinking processes is human and real. Mistakes get made, and often, unintentionally. Listening to these stories, these experiences, allowed me to

empathise. Empathy aids this process and allows for connection and understanding. The powerful component is that such a process acknowledges the students experience and creates occasion for growth and change.

With every story, there is an explanation and normally, actions to be justified. Regardless, we need to take responsibility of what has happened, embrace the outcome, and learn from our mistakes. Empathy enabled me to provide education, support, and guidance which allows students to take feedback on board rather than dismissing it. We may not learn our lessons through punitive approaches as we can feel shut down and stigmatised. We learn through education, a kind heart and a second chance, through human connection – a theoretical framework for the teachable moment outlined by Bertram Gallant (2020).

An approach is validated by positive results, not just holistically but right down to individuals. As a teacher, there is no greater joy than to see your students succeed. The joy as an academic integrity officer proved to be similar. Knowing that breach numbers were decreasing because of my educational approach was rewarding and inspiring. I knew that educating students on academic integrity could not be focused on reactive approaches.

Empathy as a practice

As a student, I had learned about the Design Thinking methodology. Design Thinking is a five-stage process focused on solving problems by creating solutions through a deep understanding of its user, creativity, idea generation and prototyping (Henriksen et al. 2017). Whilst there are many different versions of this process utilised around the world, the main commonality is the starting point: empathy (Melles et al. 2015), which I found to be the perfect starting point in understanding why students breach academic integrity and how we can begin to solve the broader problem.

Based on the positive experience of using Design Thinking and the impact empathy had on the results, I genuinely believed that student problems could only be solved with the help of students. Work Integrated Learning (WIL) is a final year subject at an Australian university that allows students to work collaboratively on a live brief, focused on real-world problems. Academic misconduct was used as a real-world problem and so the challenge was to design an academic integrity campaign that focused on education and prevention to assist behavioural change.

The first meeting with the WIL class was crucial in establishing context. The project brief (a design phrase used to define the details of a project) was shared and discussed amongst the class, highlighting the need to educate students and prevent breaches from taking place. For additional context, I shared my own personal approach to educating students on academic integrity and played an audio recording of a story that aimed to showcase the realities of the academic misconduct experience (collusion) and its consequences. The direct and intense nature of the story was heartbreaking. I could not help but to feel sadness and frustration towards the events that had taken place – academic misconduct can affect anyone. Not all experiences are as direct as you may think – some can indirectly involve friends, causing heartache and relationship breakdowns.

Empathy plays a fundamental role in academic integrity concerns as it allows you to put yourself in someone else's shoes to understand the context of the issue. Observational

(peer-based) and knowledge-based research was conducted by the students, and what was shared, was eye-opening. What it showed me was how seriously this problem was being taken by the students. The realities affect everyone, not just the immediate context of an Australian university but the broader higher education sector within Australia.

At the second meeting, the WIL class provided initial concept presentations to a panel of stakeholers (concept presentations are a design phrase used to describe initial ideas presented in response to a project brief). The idea is presented based on an overarching theme supported with research and inspiration, and feedback is given. From there, the idea evolves. During this meeting, approximately 20 concepts were presented to a panel of stakeholders, who acted as the clients to provide feedback (a client is a person or group of people that bring a project brief to a designer to produce an outcome). As a stakeholder providing feedback, it was crucial to my role to be objective, offering direct points on the viability of the idea in terms of feasibility and projected success.

One concept really resonated with me, not only as an academic integrity officer, but as a current student and teacher also. It was titled 'What does academic integrity mean to you?', a mini exhibition that shared personal stories and experiences. Hearing it made me realise just how important that audio recording from the first meeting was. It had provided a connection to the issue, created empathy, and built the case that individual student and teacher voices were demanding to be heard.

Implementing a student-designed campaign

The Faceless Crowd exhibition grew from the initial concept of 'What does academic integrity mean to you?'. Providing feedback to the WIL class was an amazing opportunity for me. Not only could I give feedback on the concept from an academic integrity officer perspective but from the perspective as a design teacher. By During the final presentation by the WIL class students, I could feel the atmosphere; I could hear the silence as the stories were read; I could see raw emotion. Posters and graphics had been created to share these stories, hiding and distorting unknown faces in the background (see Figs. 2 and 3), emphasizing the mystery of contract writers. This exhibition was going to provide an immersive experience that would allow the viewer to connect with the students on an emotional level – one that would make the viewer realise just how similar their life and study experiences were. The purpose of The Faceless Crowd was to share students' untold stories of academic integrity.

As a designer and academic integrity officer, I was moved and inspired with the campaign. The campaign provided a framework, a starting point, a tangible idea that I could work with to make happen in the future. With the right approvals, I set about creating an action plan, timeframes, deadlines, and budgets.

I prepared the design of the exhibition itself (based off the chosen concept), creating a physical 3D model that exacerbated the intensity and rawness of the stories (Figs. 1, 2 and 3). Designed as a cube with internal and external black walls and a black floor, awkward wall angles were added in the middle to create further drama to immerse the viewer in the exhibition. The space needed careful consideration of circulation to guide the viewer on the intended journey – education by way of academic breach definitions, stories and advice, support resources and a final thought at the

Fig. 1 Physical 3D model creation of the exhibition with graphic posters designed by students. The front facade

exit. The message was clear: every student, on every campus, needed to have access to this exhibition to understand the importance of academic integrity, through their peers.

The stories, breach definitions, advice cards and resources were printed on a variety of page sizes (ranging from A4 to A1) and mounted on black foam board. Suspended from the tops of the walls and positioned at eye level, the posters were at every turn, each with something different to share. Whilst the exhibition's purpose was to share the untold stories of academic integrity, a key component for myself were the advice cards: an idea that I created to educate students on an alternative path that could have been taken (Fig. 4).

Another advice card read:

> *'Avoid advertising at all costs. Nothing good ever comes out of cutting corners or avoiding your responsibilities as a student. Don't fall into the same trap as this student, or don't be naïve that it won't happen to you. We are all susceptible to*

Fig. 2 Physical 3D model creation of the exhibition with graphic posters designed by students. Distorted faces covering identities

pressures around us and it can certainly get the better of us. Plan your time well, reach out for extensions if you need them, but never resort to not doing the work yourself. Be proud of what you accomplish and be authentic to yourself'.

It was also important for me to let students know that not all allegations turn into actual breaches. Although the interview process is extremely daunting, students are encouraged to talk through how assessments were created, sharing evidence to prove authenticity of work and/or collaboration. Based on this, a no breach story was shared with an advice card of the following:

'Our process allows your voice to be heard. The meetings that we conduct are about investigating the process you undertook to complete your assessment. There is nothing to be afraid of if you've completed the work yourself. Always keep drafts of your assessment to prove you've authored the work. Any other additional evidence you can produce too is great'.

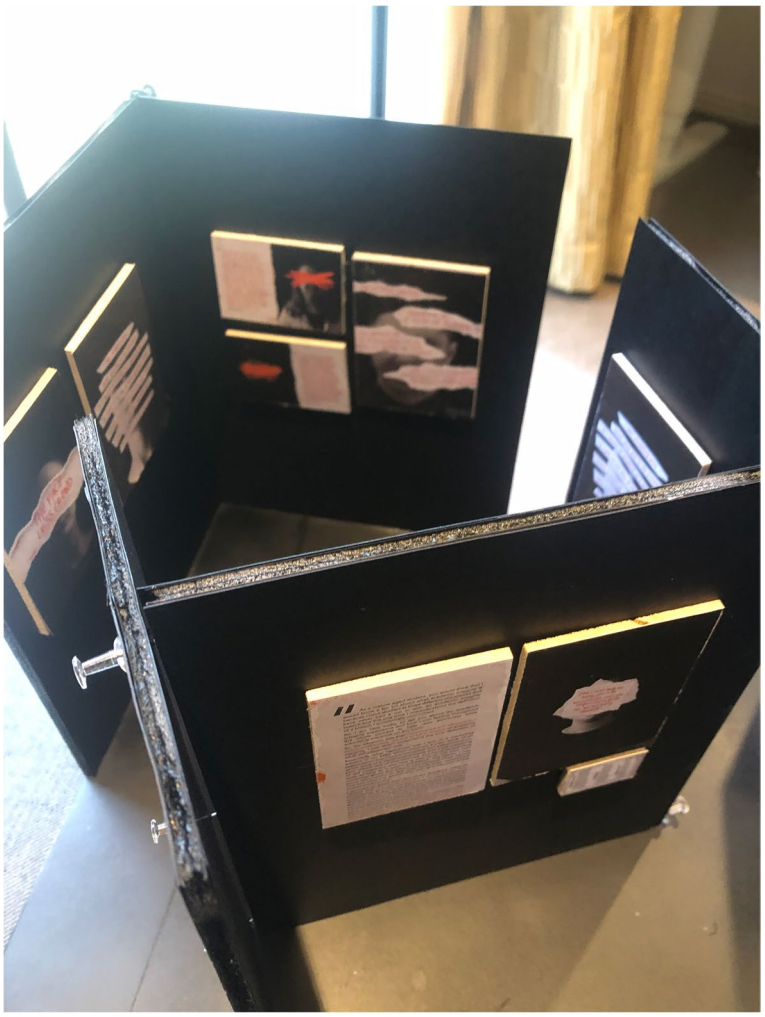

Fig. 3 Physical 3D model creation of the exhibition with graphic posters designed by students. Awkward wall angles for circulation

Top Left: Design Student
Breach: Plagiarism
Outcome: Resubmission with max 50% grade (initial + significant)
Advice: Copying technical information from websites (i.e. coding for programs, websites etc.) doesn't provide you with the skills required to be proficient in your field. All it does is hinder you, causing you to struggle until you finally commit the time to the skills. There are certain careers that require strong software skills and it's important that you don't lead employers on in your CV when your skills are not there. Invest the time and learn the skills.

Bottom Left: Health Student
Breach: Collusion
Outcome: Warning (initial + minor)
Advice: Studying at the same time as other family members can be challenging, especially if they're studying the same course! Be sure to put strategies in place to decrease the risk of collusion happening and ensure that you each have your own dedicated work spaces, including computers. By sharing these thinds, you put temptation in the way! Avoid the stress and keep things separate. By all means discuss your opinions on similar topics, but generate your own assessments using your own references and resources.

Fig. 4 Example of an advice card provided with each story

Fig. 5 The installation process of the exhibition - building the framework

Fig. 6 The installation process of the exhibition - hanging the fabric walls

For me, sharing a story of innocence was just as important. Too often people can be blamed for things they didn't do. Asking the right questions and being offered an opportunity to discuss circumstances is part of the process that needs to take place. Innocent until proven guilty, right?

One of the most defining moments of the exhibition for me was watching each exhibition take shape (Figs. 5, 6 and 7), as it was a labour of love. Across one week, I travelled to each of the university's campuses and collectively installed the exhibition. The framing, nailing the black fabric to the framing (the walls), positioning the black foam floor squares, sticking the posters to the mount boards, attaching the wire and hooks to the mount boards for suspension, and setting up large computers to

Fig. 7 The finished exhibition set up

showcase premade videos. Outside the exhibition on the front wall hung a suspended poster advertising The Faceless Crowd (Fig. 7). The colour scheme of black, white, and orange was enticing in both text and graphics, luring viewers into the exhibition to see what was inside the black cube.

Change and growth

The Faceless Crowd achieved an experiential approach to highlighting academic integrity issues and it was truly inspiring to be part of the process. Its overarching purpose was to educate students on academic integrity and prevent academic misconduct from occurring, from the perspective of peers - designed by students, for students. Its aim was to reduce the number of contract cheating cases; create awareness regarding the risk of blackmail relating to contract cheating and to increase the number of visitations to the university's academic integrity webpages. Across two trimesters (teaching periods of 12 weeks) of that year, there was a 33% and 45% reduction in contract cheating cases. This seemed to be a strong indicator of the success of the campaign, although the constant positive feedback circulating the campuses was enough of a success indicator for me!

This experience changed me, not only as an academic integrity officer, but as a teacher and student also. When I finally arrived home after travelling for the setup, duration, and pack down of the exhibition (two weeks) I was exhausted, both physically and mentally, and saddened that a project of love and passion was complete. I was proud of what was achieved and looked forward to witnessing change. It was humbling to reflect on what had transpired – the curiosity of those that walked past, the questions that were asked during set up, the excitement of the official launch, the general atmosphere that was held over the week, and the constant impact the stories had on me each time they were hung. I was proud of those who had shared their story – although anonymous, I

cannot imagine the emotion of seeing your own story printed out for the world to see. It certainly demonstrated courage.

I thought I knew so much about academic misconduct: the who, why, when, where and how, but I have come to realise that even though academic research presents study after study on academic misconduct, and why students do it, there is still a gap in what universities are trying to do to address the problem, or yet what their specific problems are. I am sure we will never solve the problem, but the reality is that if we do not try to understand our own students, not the global problem, then we are not that invested after all. Bertram Gallant and Stephens (2020:64) summarise with, 'If we refuse to help our students learn from their failures – ethical or otherwise – we are failing our students and falling short of achieving our educational missions'.

It has now been over a year since that exhibition took place and I have learned and grown in that time frame. I have listened more, experimented with educative practices and approaches, seen what a second chance can do and ultimately witnessed behavioural change. Studiosity also acknowledged the impact of the exhibition, and we were awarded the prestigious Professor Tracey Bretag Prize for Academic Integrity. It was a beautiful validation of courage, resilience and a desire for positive change.

We can all change and grow positively when given the opportunity. I know I have certainly grown as an academic and the approach to my students is one of empathy, listening, and constant support. It is through these narratives that I have found my own voice within research (Blackie et al. 2010).

Discussion

In analysing the three guiding questions to answer the main research question, three key themes emerged from coding the narratives (see Table 1). These looked at empathy, education, and positive change.

Theme #1: Empathy

Throughout the five narratives of my reflective research, there is a clear moral and ethical compass embedded. Not everyone has it as clearly defined in their life however everyone is shaped by their own upbringing and experiences. That is what makes us all unique individuals. As individuals, we can choose to be empathetic, compassionate, and caring. We make a conscious decision each day to be the person we are.

As a student, I learned through my experiences. Experiences of doubt, mistakes, reality, feedback, understanding and guidance. What I did not learn in those experiences was empathy. This value, along with compassion and care, had already been ingrained in me, however, it is through these experiences that I can now empathise with the students that I teach and those affected by academic misconduct.

As academics, we need to understand the power that empathy can play in the relationships we have with our students. Blackie et al. (2010:642) explain how Rogerian Therapy (person-centred) is focused on the belief that everyone has the ability to fulfil their own potential. They say that 'without intentional care, it is easy to lose sight of the real goal of higher education. In Rogerian terms, this is empathy, arguably the cornerstone of higher education'. This is especially true where academics are constantly being challenged with other competing tasks such as reporting academic integrity breaches (Bertram Gallant

et al. 2015) and attending to varying student backgrounds and learning needs (Flecknoe et al. 2017).

As seen throughout the narratives, empathy has enabled collaboration between peers as well as between the teacher and student relationship. Gates and Scott Curwood (2023:203) explain that empathy is a 'valuable tool for fostering student engagement and deepening learning'. As teachers, especially online, we can often lose our students amongst the numbers. Time constraints can also impact our ability to reach out and connect but as the research shows, providing empathy can nurture relationships and by default, engagement. I valued the connection because it demonstrated care. To enable empathy and deeper connections, perhaps a university's focus should be on smaller class sizes.

Theme #2: Education

It is evident from the research and the coding of the narratives (see Table 1) how learning and teaching need to be at the heart of addressing academic misconduct. Whilst the big picture lies with the university itself, responsibility also sits with the academic and the education they provide to their own students. Notman (2008), in speaking about values-based leadership explains how a person's values can be linked back to their upbringing and role models founded in the early stages of their life. These experiences can ultimately shape a student and their actions. With the guidance of a teacher, the understanding of values, goals and self-reflection, students can learn the power of moral decision-making, develop one's own behavioural philosophy and validate the importance of hard work.

Throughout all the narratives, conversations of growth and reflection were noted. A student-centred approach ensures that the student's best interests were at heart, which means having discussions around academic integrity. In the literature, Walker and White (2014) and Robinson and Glanzer (2017) noted that a lack of academic integrity discussion in a classroom supported that there was no issue to begin with. This supports my initial naïveness as a teacher and an academic integrity officer, and a view which I am sure many other academics share. Teachers also need to be provided with education, support, and guidance so that they can share their knowledge and experience with students.

I have found that genuine care provides a backbone to education, which is hard to imagine if you teach a class of 100 students (Blackie et al. 2010). Blackie et al. (2010) explain that care is not about spending multiple hours with a student, but rather being present in the moment and placing importance on the student development over your own. From my own experience this was certainly true, and from the feedback I have received over the years, is true of my students also. This human connection helps shift the mindset of teaching to focus on the outcome of student learning, which is supported by the advice cards developed for the exhibition.

Peer education was successfully evidenced in the exhibition, supporting the literature on the involvement of students within campaigns to educate peers. Had the untold stories been invented rather than genuine experiences of the students, the outcome and effect may have proved different. The success lies in the peer education because students can empathise with each other. Whilst the only positive evidence of behavioural change

lays in the decrease of breaches, it would have been beneficial to conduct interviews with students after the exhibition to assess the full impact the stories had on them.

Theme #3: Positive change

Learning from a mistake and being given a second chance is generally what most people want. No one wants to be defined by their mistakes. It was certainly true for me, and I am going to also suggest it was true for a large portion of students who have breached academic integrity. Although no specific measures were provided for students breaching multiple times, I witnessed as an academic integrity officer a decline, evidencing that students can learn from their mistakes.

As seen in the five narratives, learning from a mistake comes from education. The educative process outlined demonstrates partial success of Bertram Gallant's (2020:63) theoretical framework of teachable moments. Her 'learning through mentoring' suggests peer mentoring, however, the same approach can be utilised with an academic integrity officer, such as myself. Whilst not specifically evidenced, the experiences that I have encountered support an experience where the 'student is actively engaged, the engagement is social and communicative in nature, there is built-in reflection and there is deliberative practice'. Further studies would need to be conducted to reinforce the positive affect mentoring can have on those affected by academic integrity breaches.

It has been made apparent from the narratives, that peer engagement and peer education can aid in positive behavioural change, as supported by the literature. Although not discussed in the narratives, a student ambassador program for academic integrity was established around the time of the exhibition, however, no study was conducted to gauge its effectiveness on peers. Without our awareness, it may have played a role in the reduction of cases. As peer education is highlighted in the literature for enhancing the academic integrity message (Bertram Gallant 2011), it would be prudent to assess this in the future. Establishing a student ambassador program that comprises of students with academic integrity values, goals, and moral decision-making skills, may enable more positive behavioural change as well as classroom-based conversations.

Implications

With the success of The Faceless Crowd exhibition, it is recommended that more student-designed academic integrity campaigns are created and implemented within universities, with the results shared in academic papers to further enhance the research. The minimal campaigns discussed in the literature does not imply that campaigns are not taking shape, merely they are not being shared at a macro level. It is imperative to involve students in the design so that they can 'share their understandings and how they wish to be educated' (Bretag et al. 2014:1163). Although there will be similarities, each university will have their own academic integrity problems that will need to be addressed and designed for if the goal is to witness positive behavioural change and an increase in academic integrity awareness.

Conclusion and future recommendations

This research sought to determine whether my experiences as a student, a design teacher, and an academic integrity officer can help inform a student-designed academic integrity campaign. The research captured my auto-ethnographic reflections on the experiences that shaped my teaching approaches and included my unique perspectives on my contributions to educating students. The outcomes will hopefully help inform other universities to partner with students to create positive, educational academic integrity campaigns. The reflections shared key themes of empathy, education and positive change, evidencing that it is possible to make positive behavioural change at a micro and macro level at a university.

This research showed that a student-designed campaign can help educate their peers and affect change in academic integrity, through a specific focus on empathy and reflection, representing new knowledge in academic integrity. Our experiences and perspectives from different roles i.e., students, teachers, and academic integrity officers, play a vital role in education and should not be dismissed. These insights also contribute new knowledge to the field of academic integrity and can inform future practices within your own universities. I know the fundamental role that I have played and the impact that I have helped create inspires me to stay dedicated to the academic integrity cause.

This auto-ethnography could be enhanced with insights and perspectives of those involved in and around the exhibition to provide further understandings, and validity to this paper. It is recommended that future research incorporating campaigns have ethics approval to capture feedback and experiences received through student interviews and observations. The results would prove beneficial to the field of academic integrity, specifically positive behavioural change, and student involvement. Subsequently, as Bertram Gallant's (2020) theoretical framework in part aligns to the university's current educative processes (teachable moments), it would be prudent to further explore and analyse the framework within the university.

It is recommended that future studies focus on student education through peer support and experiences. The aim of the education should be one of learning and teaching, providing teachable moments, for students so they are able to develop moral decision-making skills that will play a vital role in their career and everyday life. Universities are encouraged to use and develop this approach, implementing post-exhibition student interviews and observations, to gather feedback and responses. I encourage academics of other universities to experiment with self-reflective auto-ethnographic research, as I have conducted and documented with this paper, to establish changes in behaviours and attitudes regarding academic integrity. Sharing these experiences has been enriching and invaluable to my research outcomes. I hope that you (regardless of the role you play within your university), find your voice to share your own experiences, so that we can all learn from each other and the stories that have defined us.

Abbreviations

TEQSA Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency. Australia's independent national quality assurance and regulatory agency for higher education

WIL Work Integrated Learning. A program of study within a university that provides an opportunity for students to apply discipline knowledge and skills to a real world project, whether through an industry internship or a classroom-facilitated live brief

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