



The third one-day event on Institutional Policies and Procedures for Managing Student Plagiarism

Thursday 4 June 2009

Abstracts

IN THE MORNING

Plenary 1

Retribution, deterrence and rehabilitation: the dilemmas of plagiarism management in universities

Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith

Universities face constant scrutiny about their plagiarism management strategies, policies and procedures. A resounding theme, usually media-inspired, is that plagiarism is rife, unstoppable and university processes are ineffectual in its wake. This has been referred to as a 'moral panic' approach (Clegg, 2007; Carroll and Sutherland-Smith, forthcoming) and suggests plagiarism will thwart all efforts to reclaim academic integrity in higher education. However, revisiting the origins of plagiarism and exploring its evolution is useful in understanding the phenomenon. Plagiarism emerged from English law and the language of the law is the foundation for many plagiarism management policies and processes around the world. Interestingly, criminal justice aims are also reflected in university plagiarism management strategies. Whilst the media most often calls for retribution through increasingly tougher penalties – universities strive for deterrence in a variety of ways. However, a primary aim of the justice system, sustainable rehabilitation, is not often implemented in policy or process. This paper examines the disjunction between media calls for increased retribution and the educative value of sustainable rehabilitation in the institutional management of plagiarism.

Workshop 1

Integrating the use of plagiarism detection software into institutional academic misconduct policies

Gill Rowell

Anecdotal evidence suggests that use of detection software by UK institutions, in particular TurnitinUK, has, in many cases acted as a catalyst for revision of academic

misconduct policies and procedures in relation to plagiarism. However, to what extent do universities and colleges provide explicit procedural guidance on using detection software to academic staff in order to promote considered use which reinforces institutional regulations? This session will consider examples of good practice in this area from those who have fully integrated use of detection software into their policies and procedures, and will also provide some pointers for those looking to do so in future.

Workshop 2

Contract cheating in UK Higher Education: promoting a proactive approach

Thomas Lancaster & Robert Clarke

The UK media seem to express continual concern that cheating and plagiarism run rampant in Higher Education. The need exists for academic institutions to be seen to be working proactively to ensure that cheats do not prosper for their efforts.

The presentation in this session will focus on the relatively recent problem of contract cheating, where students have academic work completed for them on their behalf. Studies have shown that the level of work produced for students is not trivial, covering work at both undergraduate and postgraduate level and including students who 'plan to cheat' from the outset. Further, the average contract cheating student is not just a casual user of these services, having outsourced between four and seven assignments. This suggests that they receive value for money.

The current approach to contract cheating will be seen to be reactive, looking to find students who have outsourced work or are attempting to do so.

The session will emphasise the need for a proactive approach to contract cheating to be embraced at all academic levels. This ranges from educating students that the behaviour is inappropriate, reviewing assessment methods to reduce the opportunities for students to outsource work, ensuring that support is considered integral to studies so that students do not feel a need to look elsewhere for it, and requiring that clear academic processes and procedures are in place so that contract cheating is not rewarded. Where possible the session will be supported by practical examples which delegates can implement in their own institutions.

It is recognised that the student body is always finding new ways to cheat. Both plagiarism and contract cheating have long since suffered from a reactive approach. It is intended that the session will allow upcoming cheating issues to be proactively explored so that the Higher Education community can be seen to be tackling these head on as and when they may occur.

Workshop 3

Managing academic conduct officers: embedding a co-ordinated approach

Lindsay Williams

As the systems and procedures for academic conduct continue to be improved and refined at an institutional level, attention can be turned to the practicalities of managing new and experienced teams of Academic Conduct Officers. Focusing on the practical experiences of ACOs at Oxford Brookes University (and more specifically within the Business School) this workshop will outline the current approaches being used to ensure a more co-ordinated approach for managing academic conduct, and discuss both successes in this area and areas for future development.

AFTER LUNCH

Plenary 2

Plagiarism prevention: the dangers of separating management from pedagogy

Dr Anna Magyar

In my work with international students, it has become apparent that the recent focus on and concern about plagiarism in HE is causing much anxiety and confusion among students who would never dream of cheating. Plagiarism prevention strategies, if consisting mainly of scare tactics, can become obstacles to the kind of transformative (deep) learning HE institutions wish to foster. They may also go against principles of fairness and equal opportunity. Previous research, for example, showed how international students were disproportionately detected by Turnitin (Hayes and Introna 2005).

Using quotes from individual and group interviews conducted with international students across the disciplines, I will suggest that avoiding plagiarism – far from being self-evident – is a complex endeavour, intricately bound up with being proficient in using English for academic purposes and in mastering context specific academic conventions. I then propose a pedagogic and intercultural approach to plagiarism prevention which fits into the internationalisation agenda and at the same time to the diversity and inclusion agenda. Participants will be invited throughout to discuss the implications of these insights for plagiarism prevention in their own institutions.

Bibliography

Hayes, J N and Introna, L (2005) Systems for the Production of Plagiarists? The Implications Arising from the Use of Plagiarism Detection Systems in UK Universities for Asian Learners; *Journal of Academic Ethics*, Vol.3, No.1 (March)

Workshop 1

A student view on plagiarism and academic conduct

Aaron Porter

In this workshop, I will present the students' view on plagiarism and academic conduct, based on my perspective as VP of the National Union of Students.

Workshop 2

Applying penalties: the tensions and difficulties

Dr Julie Price

This session will explore the tensions and difficulties in applying penalties to student plagiarism cases consistently and fairly. Those attending have been asked to bring along their own institution's plagiarism regulations to the workshop to explore tensions and difficulties which may become apparent between individuals and their institution, and between different institutions.

Workshop 3

Winning hearts and minds: the Leslie Silver International Faculty's approach to academic misconduct

Stephanie Jameson & David Dewhurst

Several years ago Jude Carroll came to Leeds Metropolitan University and made some recommendations to the University regarding plagiarism, cheating and other forms of unfair practice. Since then, the Leslie Silver International Faculty has attempted to embrace these recommendations. Our Faculty has tried to take a holistic approach in the prevention and detection of plagiarism and we have tried to influence University policy and procedures regarding plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice.

This workshop will share our experiences of these initiatives and will take an open and honest approach to our successes (and failures) in winning the hearts and minds of our colleagues.

Workshop 4

Newcomers' forum on resources, advice and shared issues

Jude Carroll

This is an unstructured session for those who are new to the ASKe annual event on plagiarism and/or new to interest in the topic of student plagiarism. Here's a chance to hear about previous ASKe plagiarism days, and to tap into good resources within the UK and internationally linked to plagiarism.

During the session, we will identify and discuss topics of common interest. If the discussion stops (which seems unlikely), we will try out a selection of workshop activities and staff development tools which I will bring along.

Plenary 3

The UK from an international perspective: taking stock of our achievements

Jude Carroll

Guiding students away from plagiarism is a world-wide issue. Drawing on her one year secondment in Sweden and work in all the Nordic countries, Jude discusses where the UK can legitimately take pride in showing the way. At the same time, Jude will discuss approaches 'out there' which can offer new insights to the UK, too. The session will include trying out an audit tool for institutional efforts which Nordic countries have found useful.