Ghosts in the Machine: Ghost Writing, plagiarism and the issues for students and educators

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Background

- November 2014 and June 2015 May 2016 major headlines in Australian media
- Customised academic essays
- Within 48 hours if payment is made
- *The Conversation* - “The slide of academic standards
- In Australia: a cautionary tale” (2015)
Where to?

• Academic misconduct?
• Cheating?
• Suspension, failure, degrees rescinded?
• Digital fingerprinting?
Mantras

• Stay Calm and Teach!
• Panic and Punish!
• Ignore at the peril of your Integrity!
Professionalism

• Professionals conduct themselves ethically and with integrity
• Preparation of students- any student, but especially nurses?
• Code of Ethics
The challenges

• Being a student
  • Short time frames, time management
  • Cost of units, time and of failure
  • Scholarships

• Being an educator
  • Short time frames, time management
  • Failure as a teacher
  • Ethics
  • Maintenance of standards
Academic ideals

• What graduates should achieve - technical skill, expertise
• English
• Level of academic writing
• Understanding of academic integrity
Being a ‘good’ student and a ‘good’ educator

- Knowledge of the student role
- Student charter
- Policies knowledge
- Spell out the rules and the possible ramifications
- Should they still choose to cheat....
Confrontation

- Policy on Academic Misconduct
- Remediation session
- Procedure for reporting
- Database of offenders
Rethink?

Shift the blame (O’Shea et al, 2016)
Other issues to think about

• Substantive editing
• Under-reporting- “Faculty members who ignore or trivialise academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life aren’t worth enforcing” (McCabe & Pavela, 2004, p 15).
• New forms adapting all the time (Dadkhah, 2015)
• Cyber fraud- fraudulent journals, invalid conferences, forced joint authorship, predatory publishing, hijacked journals, bogus impact factors and so on...
Summary

- ‘Perfect storm’
- Critical role that we play
- Commitment
References


