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Reflections on the 2019 Canadian Symposium
on Academic Integrity

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Abstract

In this editorial I offer my reflections on the 2019 Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity, as a co-chair of the event hosted at the University of Calgary, April 18-19, 2019. I consider the origin of the event and consider key learnings. I conclude with a reflection about the impact of the symposium and where we go from here.

Background

The idea for the 2019 Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity was almost accidental. It did not start out as a symposium at all. In 2017, I applied for a University of Calgary seed grant. My proposal was unsuccessful. Feedback from the reviewers included comments such as, "Academic integrity is an administrative issue, not a research topic", and "There is insufficient evidence to show that academic misconduct is as much of an issue in Canada is it is in other countries. If the researcher really believes it to be a topic worthy of research in Canada, then the first step is to conduct and publish a literature review on the topic."

I took the reviewers' notes seriously. Together with a graduate student, I undertook the most comprehensive literature review on research on academic misconduct ever conducted in Canada. It was published in the *International Journal of Educational Integrity*, edited by Tracey Bretag (Eaton & Edino, 2018).

Through our analysis of the literature, it became apparent to me that the research that had been conducted on academic integrity in Canada was sporadic and there was no established community of researchers in this country. Nor was there much evidence of sustained large-scale projects with researchers from multiple institutions collaborating on projects, or graduate students who went on to careers in which they further developed the work they had undertaken in their graduate programs.

I reached out to Tracey Bretag for her advice on how she thought we could begin to build a strong community of scholarship around academic integrity in Canada. After our initial Skype conversation, I inquired with colleagues at the University of Calgary about what

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would be involved in bringing an international scholar on academic integrity to the university. This led to an offer of financial support from the Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning to support a visit from Bretag to our campus.

It became apparent to me that if we were to have a scholar of Tracey Bretag's calibre visit the University of Calgary, it only seemed ethical to offer others the opportunity to benefit from her expertise as well. One thing led to another and the idea for the Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity emerged. I reached out to Jennifer Lock and Meadow Schroeder, two colleagues at the University of Calgary with whom I had collaborated on a small internal grant to develop an academic integrity tutorial for students in our online and blended programs. I asked them to chair the symposium with me and they agreed.

Then, I circled back to the literature review published in 2018. I endeavoured to reach out to every author whose work we had reviewed for that article. I was able to reach almost all of them. I informed them about the symposium and invited them to consider attending. We also reached out to members of the academic integrity community in Canada to invite them. Our vision for the symposium was three-fold: (1) to give Canadian scholars, policy makers, educational professionals and advocates an opportunity to gather and share knowledge, as the first steps to building a sustainable community upon which to build future research; (2) to provide those who had undertaken research in this area an opportunity to showcase their work in a gathering of like-minded peers; and (3) to offer Canadians a chance to learn from Tracey Bretag, whose expertise working in Australian and global contexts could benefit us.

As it turned out, we were fortunate to have two prestigious international scholars join us. Thomas Lancaster made the trek from the United Kingdom to share his expertise on how social media enables contract cheating (Lancaster, 2019). In addition, James Blackburn also came over from the UK to share his research on educators' views of contract cheating (Blackburn, 2019), and colleagues from the United States shared insights about how technology can be used to recognize various forms of plagiarism (Singleton & Ricksen, 2019).

We were thrilled to be able to showcase research conducted or led by graduate students (Crook, 2019; Fernández Conde & Rothschuh, 2019; Hersey, 2019; Larijani & Rancourt, 2019; Thacker, Eaton, Stoesz, & Miron, 2019). It is imperative that graduate students have an opportunity not only to present their work, but to network with others in their field who can mentor them as they advance in their professional careers. I was eager to see graduate students being supported in this way.

I have highlighted some key aspects of the symposium in this editorial. We are pleased to share this special issue with you, with contributions from some of the symposium

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presenters. An archive of abstracts from all the sessions is available online (Canadian Symposium on Academic Integrity, 2019).

Challenges and Opportunities with Funding

A brief note about funding and sponsor acknowledgement is in order. Although the funding offered by the Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning at the University of Calgary was enough to bring Dr. Bretag to campus, it was insufficient to run an entire symposium. So, on behalf of the three co-chairs, I applied for a Vice President Research Conference Grant at the University of Calgary. Once again our grant application was unsuccessful. Not to be deterred, we actively pursued, and were successful in obtaining additional funding from a variety of internal sources, as well as corporate sponsors including Turnitin, D2L and Oxford University Press/Epigeum. Without this internal and external support, the Symposium would not have been possible.

Understanding Impact

The Symposium was held April 17-18, 2019. It was not the first symposium ever offered in Canada on academic integrity. Provincial meetings in Ontario and Manitoba had been bringing together practitioners and professionals on a regular basis, over a number of years (McKenzie, 2018). In 2014, there was a provincial symposium held in Alberta, co-hosted by MacEwan University and the University of Alberta (McKenzie, 2018). In 2018, a similar symposium was held in British Columbia (McKenzie, 2018).

But this was the first *national* symposium hosted in Canada. The event brought together 150 participants from British Columbia to New Brunswick, including scholars, higher educational professionals, university administrators and senior institutional executives. The participant evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, but the feedback that I remember most came from Dr. Ross MacKay, Acting Associate Vice-President, Academic at Vancouver Island University who commented to me that he thought it was "a landmark event in Canadian higher education" (R. MacKay, personal communication, April 18, 2019).

As I reflect on the symposium, a key piece of evidence relating to impact resulted from a workshop given by colleagues in Ontario about how to build and sustain a regional academic integrity network (Ridgely, Miron, & McKenzie, 2019). The Academic Integrity Council of Ontario (AICO) had offered a workshop a few months earlier at the 2019 International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI) annual conference in New Orleans. Our AICO colleagues revised the workshop they had presented in New Orleans and offered it again at the Symposium. Refinements on the New Orleans session included grouping workshop participants by province so connections could be made and discussions about creating provincial networks could take place. I recall working with the Alberta group. I felt

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simultaneously energized about connecting with colleagues from my province to talk about the possibilities, and also a little awkward and ashamed that I had not previously met some of them. I expect that I am not alone when I say that having the opportunity to connect with others involved in this work was a major takeaway from the Symposium.

Just over a month after the Symposium, colleagues in Manitoba held their annual Academic Integrity Inter-Institutional Meeting (AIIIM), and announced the advancement of the group as a provincial network, the Manitoba Academic Integrity Network (MAIN). On August 16, 2019, Albertans gathered at the University of Calgary for the inaugural meeting of the Alberta Council on Academic Integrity (ACAI), with participants from nine postsecondary institutions in attendance. On October 18, colleagues at Thompson Rivers University hosted the British Columbia Academic Integrity Day (BC-AID), which combined professional development with the inaugural meeting of a provincial group there. The workshop offered by representatives of AICO at the Symposium effectively catalyzed concrete action from three other provinces to formalize or launch their own provincial networks. That one workshop had a domino effect across the country, with three provincial additional networks being launched within six months of the Symposium.

At the conclusion of the Symposium, participants were asking us when the next one would be. I put forward a challenge to others saying it would be ideal if another institution hosted the next national event. A couple of weeks later, colleagues from Thomspon Rivers University contacted us to let us know they had their Provost's support to host the next symposium in 2021. I see this as a major impact of the Symposium; not only that we organized and hosted the first one, but that there is a commitment to continue this work going forward. To me, this is an indication of the amplification of academic integrity work in Canada happening at a larger scale, sustained by a network of professionals, scholars, and graduate students across the country.

It is imperative that this work not only grows, but is both sustained and sustainable. Since the Symposium, I have gone back to the book of abstracts or presenters' slide decks numerous times to dig deeper into the knowledge that presenters shared there. This issue of *Canadian Perspectives of Academic Integrity* is dedicated to those who have opted to share their work in this special issue not only to preserve it, but to amplify it. I hope you enjoy reading these pieces as much as we have enjoyed working with our colleagues to publish their work in the journal.

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Social Media-Enabled Contract Cheating

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Abstract

The contract cheating industry, those services and individuals who are supplying students with original work for assessment, is evolving. Contract cheating companies are using enhanced promotional techniques, including social media marketing, to encourage potential customers to avail themselves of services that breach academic integrity. Social media is proving to be integral to the success of the contract cheating industry as a whole. Social media allows contract cheating companies to recruit academic ghost writers and other staff. In addition, social media is fuelling a black market trade in ghost writer accounts for contract cheating services.

This paper examines the state of the contract cheating industry, paying particular attention to the role that social media has played in the industry's development and apparent growth. The discussion of the industry is supported by examples and case studies. These cover the end-to-end contract cheating process from when essay mills are first set up, through to when they supply services to students and when they engage with contract cheating service workers. Examples of contract cheating and social media use of specific interest to Canadian academics and scholars are included.

The paper concludes with a discussion of the future challenges posed by contract cheating. The paper is intended to enhance knowledge of the known perils of the contract cheating industry. This will enable more robust discussions on academic integrity to take place between instructors and students and for these parties to work together as academic integrity partners.

Keywords: contract cheating, contract cheating industry, academic integrity, social media, essay mills, marketing, academic ghost writing, Canada, Facebook, Twitter

Background

Contract cheating remains a threat to the integrity of the educational system in Canada and around the world. International analysis from Newton (2018) suggests that 15.7% of current university students will contract cheat at least once during their degree. A lower figure of 3.5% was estimated by Curtis and Clare (2017), who also found that 62.5% of students who contract cheated were repeat offenders. More than 50% of students have said that they would contract cheat were the right financial incentives and risk levels in

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place (Rigby, Burton, Balcombe, & Mulatu, 2015). Whether the real contract cheating figure for Canada is 3.5%, 15%, 50% or somewhere in between, contract cheating still represents a major cause of concern.

The term contract cheating was originally introduced in 2006 to describe the process where a student uses a third party to complete their work for them (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006). The practice of a student paying for essays and assignments dates back further, for example Stavisky (1973) stated that what would now be known as contract cheating providers were advertising in newspapers in New York back in the 1940s and 1950s.

The operation of the contract cheating industry, the set of businesses using developed processes to make money by helping students to outsource their assessments, has been evolving at a fast pace. Key to this industry development has been the role that social media plays in supplementing the physical processes already in operation. Little has been published academically on the operation of the industry, although this paper does build upon the archive of resources that the author has published on their blog, used in presentations and circulated through social media to raise awareness.

This paper briefly reviews relevant literature to set the scene, but the focus is on a discussion of how social media is used as part of the end-to-end contract cheating process. Illustrative examples and case studies are used throughout, covering the time from when essay mills are first set up, through to the recruitment of writers and to the provision of services to students. Many examples relate to the situation in Canada, although all examples are intended to be applicable internationally, since the challenge of contract cheating transcends borders. The paper concludes with recommendations regarding how to use this information to frame future discussions about academic integrity with students.

Contract Cheating in Canada

There has been little academic work published that specifically relates to contract cheating in Canada. Despite that, all indications are that contract cheating is a problem. Even dating back to the first study specifically referring to contract cheating, Canada was identified as one of the four countries from where the most orders on a website used for contract cheating originated (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006).

Eaton and Edino (2018) noted the lack of publications. They provided a systematic review of academic integrity literature related to Canada, covering 56 sources published between 1992 and 2017, finding that over half had been published in the last six years of that time range. Although Eaton and Edino find little coverage of contract cheating in the Canadian context, they do note that Oliphant (2002) saw this as a threat in a brief professional development article, where it was referred to as *cyber-plagiarism*.

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As examples in the remainder of this paper will demonstrate, contract cheating is happening in Canada. Figure 1 shows three examples of adverts for contract cheating services found during a 10-minute walk around a university campus is Toronto, Canada, which the author collected in July 2018. Eight different adverts were observed, with many duplicates pinned up around the campus.
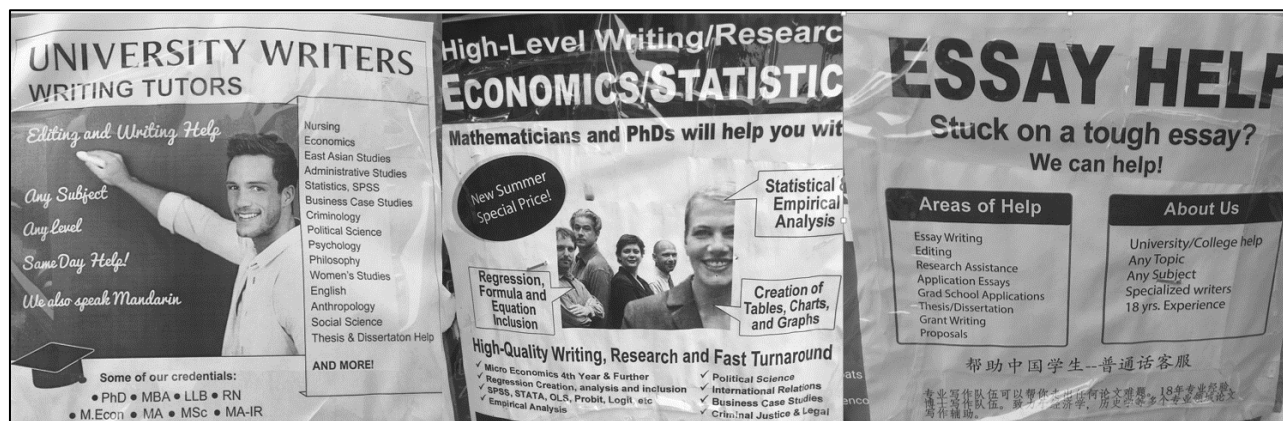

Figure 1. Examples of contract cheating adverts found in Toronto, Canada.

The adverts demonstrate sophisticated knowledge of the local market and the specific needs of students based there. Some offers are presented as tutorial support, rather than directly stating that they are services helping students to cheat. Several adverts state the subjects they can assist with, including data preparation. They also state that they are able to deliver solutions quickly. A non-pictured advert focused on the nursing student market, including the offer to deliver nursing dissertations written to order. Staff qualified to PhD level are presented as available to write for students. Adverts appear to be targeting a Chinese student audience, with Chinese text in one advert and another stating that the providers "*speak Mandarin*". A further non-pictured advert got straight to the point by simply stating that students should "*Buy Ur Assignments & Essays Cheap & Fast*".

The physical adverts show small scale examples of many contract cheating industry persuasion techniques similar to those identified by Rowland, Slade, Wong, and Whiting (2018). The adverts include the incorporation of credibility raising and informative features. The adverts do not include the third main criteria identified by Rowland et al., interactive features, but most contain telephone numbers, often in the form of tear-off strips. These contact details would allow students to directly interact with contract cheating providers.

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Contract Cheating Literature

The literature is beginning to recommend interventions, designed to make contract cheating more difficult for students and to disrupt the operation of the contract cheating industry. For example, Bretag et al. (2018) surveyed students in Australia and found the belief that there were opportunities to cheat as an influencing factor. Recommendations about how to think about contract cheating and redevelop assessments exist (Lancaster & Clarke, 2016). National quality assurance bodies have begun to provide advice, (e.g., Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK, 2017; Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) in Australia, 2017). Sotiriadou, Logan, Daly, and Guest (2019) advocate the use of authentic assessment, with relevance to situations seen in employment and in the world outside of academia.

Commentators have begun to recommend that academic integrity education be mandated and ethical expectations discussed with students (Kong, Goh, Gussen, Turner, & Abawi, 2019). Another line of discussion, which has been found by multiple researchers, is that work produced through contract cheating may not actually be very good (Jenkins & Helmore, 2006; Lines, 2016; Sutherland-Smith & Dullaghan, 2019).

Dawson and Sutherland-Smith (2019) have noted that it is essential to train markers to detect contract cheating. They found that training increased the rate at which markers could spot contract cheating from 58% to 82%.

The contract cheating industry has been shown to be highly developed with complex business processes in place (Medway, Roper, & Gillooly, 2018; Ellis, Zucker, & Randall, 2018). Contract cheating companies are equipped to turn customer orders around quickly, often in mere hours, with access to an agile workforce (Wallace & Newton, 2014). Assignment solutions are available cheaply; students connecting directly with contract cheating writers can buy essays at a common price point of $30 USD per 1,000 words ($40 USD or €27 EUR) (Lancaster, 2019). To allow for international comparisons, financial figures in this paper are given in United States Dollars ($ USD), Canadian Dollars ($ CAD) and Euros (€ EUR). The exchange rate from 30 April 2019 has been used in all cases.

Contract cheating providers have been found to be engaging with potential customers through social media. Sivasubramaniam, Kostelidou, & Ramachandran (2016) showed how individual writers connect with students through social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, bypassing essay mills. A similar situation was identified in Kazan, Russia by Rytkönen (2016). Here local offices are said to openly advertise contract cheating services and business cards are given out at metro stops, with an original thesis costing €100 euros ($150 CAD or $112 USD). A Russian social network similar to Facebook is said to be heavily

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used by contract cheating providers advertising their services, including advertising by companies and by individual writers. Amigud (2019) recognised the use of bots on social media to identify students who may wish to commit contract cheating and to generate leads. The same tactics used by legitimate businesses are being used by the contract cheating industry.

Not all of the tactics used can be considered legitimate. Contract cheating companies have been observed sending spam emails to students (Zheng & Stokel-Walker, 2018), often finding ways to bypass university filters. These emails include advertising in languages other than English to reach international students.

Social media can be used as a source for contract cheating research. Amigud and Lancaster (2019) provided a systematic analysis of the reasons given by students who expressed an interest in contract cheating on Twitter. The students were identified as ones targeted by contract cheating providers. Out of 246 identified tweets that listed reasons for cheating, they found the most common barrier to them completing their own work, expressed by 40.7% of students, was a lack of perseverance. Students said they were stressed or frustrated, finding it difficult to finish assessments they had started. The second most common reason, stated by 20.9% of students, was academic aptitude, where students found the material too difficult and said they needed help. Both of these reasons point towards agreement with an earlier recommendation from Lancaster and Clarke (2016), that academic institutions need to reconsider the design of their curriculum to ensure that students are equipped for success. Alongside this recommendation, universities need to consider the types of assessment that they use to ensure that they are fit for purpose and offer some resistance to contract cheating.

Social Media Use in the Contract Cheating Industry

The Operation of the Contract Cheating Industry

As the review of literature has suggested, the marketing methods used by the contract cheating industry are highly developed. The use of social media is key to the success of these marketing methods.

The industry extends far beyond a simple relationship between a student and a contract cheating provider. The workforce supporting the operation of contract cheating providers is key to its success. This workforce includes the writing staff, many of whom are likely to be freelance and to work remotely from the contract cheating provider, but also the whole administrative and marketing teams.

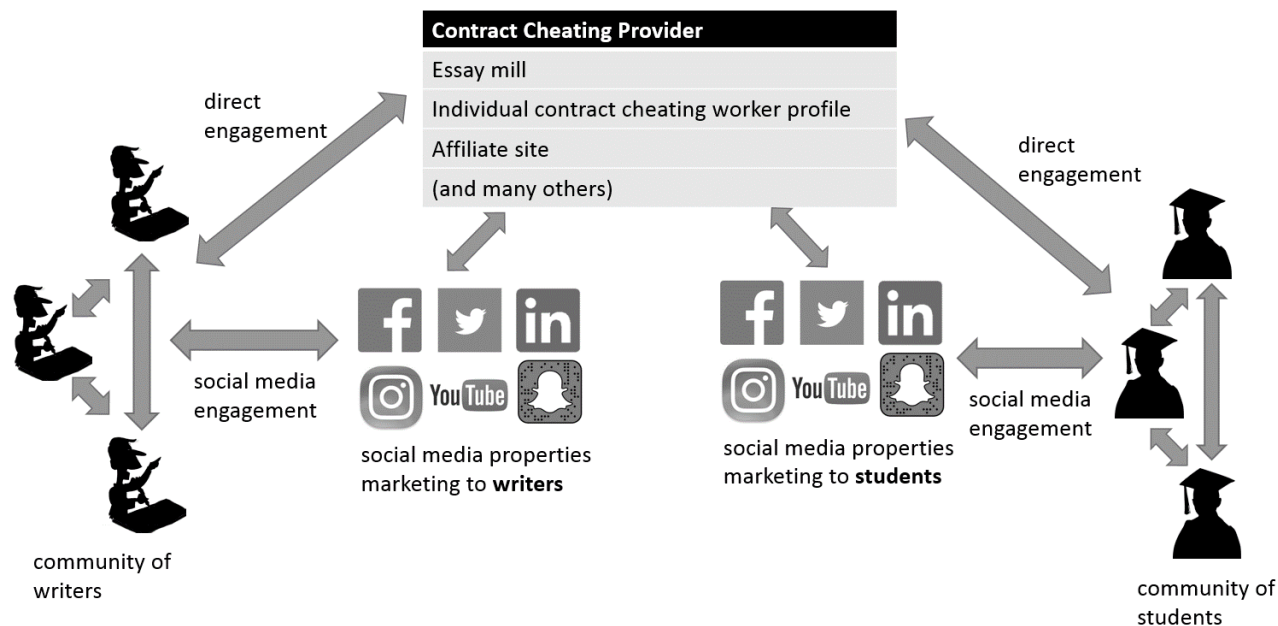Figure 2 provides an illustration of this complex operation.

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Figure 2. Contract cheating industry operations using social media.

The information given in Figure 2 is only an overview. To try and represent all the social media-enabled flows surrounding the contract cheating industry in a single diagram would be impossible. Examples of the social media service being used are shown, covering such properties as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, but there are many other social media services. Not every provider, student or writer will be active on every such social media site.

Figure 2 shows two main groups of actors, the community of writers and the community of students. These groups may themselves interact with one another, in person or through social media. Contract cheating providers can interact with both groups, either through their student or writer facing websites, or through social media properties. In some cases, for example where a writer works for themselves as a single-person firm and is self-employed, their social media interface may be the only mechanism they have to make arrangements with potential customers. Communication may also happen offline.

Social media engagement can take several forms. A student looking to contract cheat may directly find a provider online. They may be introduced to this provider through friends. For example, when one friend is seen to "Like" a page on Facebook, this can be shown in their newsfeed and start off a viral marketing effect. Alternatively, a provider may choose to send messages directly to a student who they feel may wish to take advantage of their offer. Providers use both free and paid methods of advertising. The marketing and

economic opportunities available to the contract cheating industry stem far beyond the simple information flows presented in this paper.

The examples given in this paper focus primarily on contract cheating engagement that is visible to the public. There are private online communities used to market these services, such as Snapchat, where picture-based messages are only seen by those on a contact list and disappear after seconds. It is difficult to infiltrate such networks as a researcher and particularly challenging to do so in an ethical manner. However, there are no shortage of examples of contract cheating marketing visible to the public through social media services.

This section focuses on four sets of examples of how social media is used within the end-to-end contract cheating industry, namely:

- How contract cheating companies encourage students to use their services
- How contract cheating companies find workers using social media
- The social media enabled communities used by current and potential writers
- How companies are selling ready-made contract cheating businesses through social media

Social Media Used to Engage Students with Contract Cheating Opportunities

Social media accounts owned by essay mills are easy to find on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Figure 3 gives an example of some such accounts found on Twitter and connected with Canada. Other accounts are localized in ways different to national level, for instance by using city names. Many accounts are used internationally and not focused towards Canada at all, but still as accessible as all others to Canadian students. Individual writers also set up accounts. In some cases, what seems to be a provider account may just be that of an affiliate, referring students to an existing provider in exchange for commission.
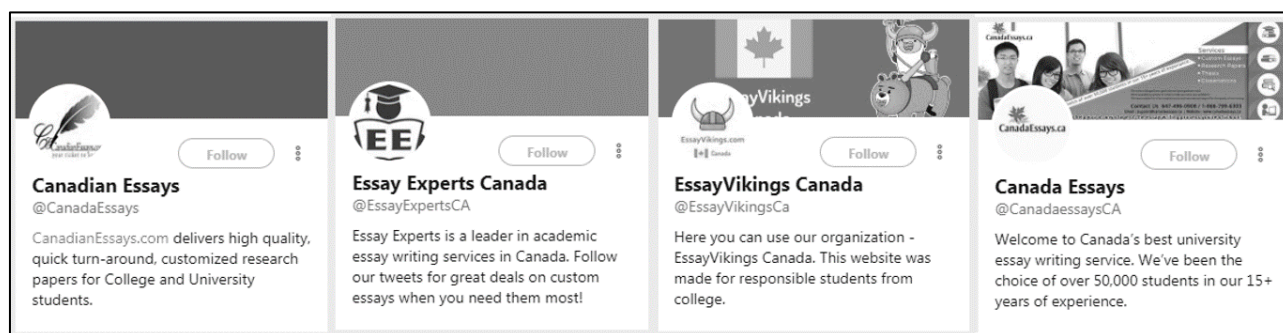

Figure 3. Example contract cheating provider accounts on Twitter.

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Once social media accounts are established by contract cheating providers, they are used regularly to advertise the type of work available, promote limited time special offers and to market directly to those students who have indicated that they have an assessment due. Only some of this communication is public, as much of this can be sent through private messaging, not observable by researchers. Some providers have been observed tweeting details of all the assignments they have completed. This helps to add legitimacy that they can successfully complete work for students as well as increasing the number of long-tail keywords they match. Tweets may refer students to essay mills, to order pages, or to adverts on third party sites such as Fiverr.com.

Figure 4 shows representative examples of the style of tweets that are made by companies and writers, including one given in response to a direct request by a student to hire an essay writer. A single tweet by a student, even one expressing that they have an assignment due with no indication that they plan to cheat, can lead to them receiving 20 or more visible replies from contract cheating providers within an hour from when the tweet is made. The tweet examples show writers and services aiming to appeal to a variety of academic disciplines, as well as making it clear that they are providing original work that is free from plagiarism, thus seemingly removing the risk from a student choosing to avail of such a contract cheating service.
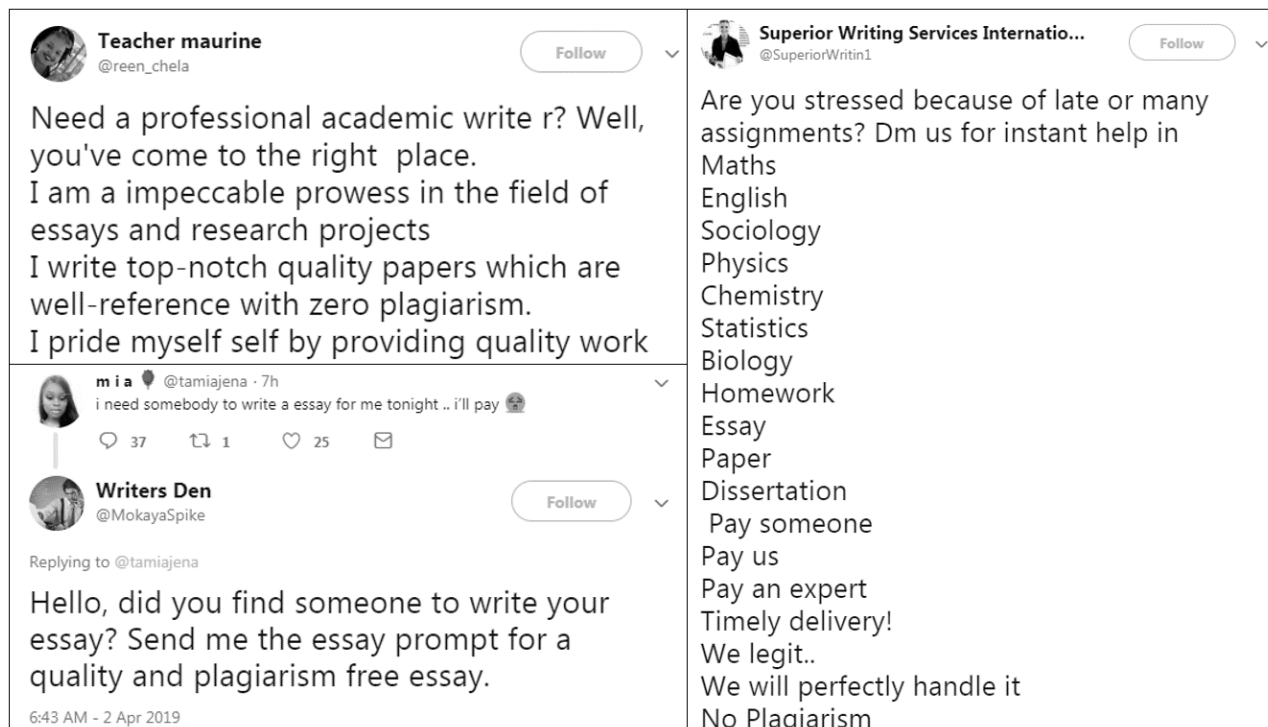

Figure 4. Example tweets made by contract cheating providers.

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Contract cheating providers have been observed engaging students on otherwise legitimate sites or accounts. One such example is where providers post adverts on Facebook Pages owned by student unions. Careful monitoring of academic institution-owned pages is needed to ensure they do not accidentally allow contract cheating provider adverts to be placed on them. Such positioning on a legitimate page can make it seem as though a contract cheating provider is endorsed or supported by a university.

Some social media accounts on which contract cheating adverts are placed may not be university owned but may otherwise be frequented by students. For example, Figure 5 shows a contract cheating provider post placed on a Facebook page aimed at supporting international students in Canada. The group has over 10,000 members. Murdoch and House (2019) found that some contract cheating providers were going further, by setting up false Facebook groups and virtual communities looking as if they were university endorsed. This includes connecting with students using chat systems like WeChat and WhatsApp. Once providers had established a seemingly legitimate friendship with students, they began to market contract cheating services to those indicating that they had upcoming deadlines or were under pressure, seemingly poised to take advantage of students' lack of perseverance, as identified by Amigud and Lancaster (2019).
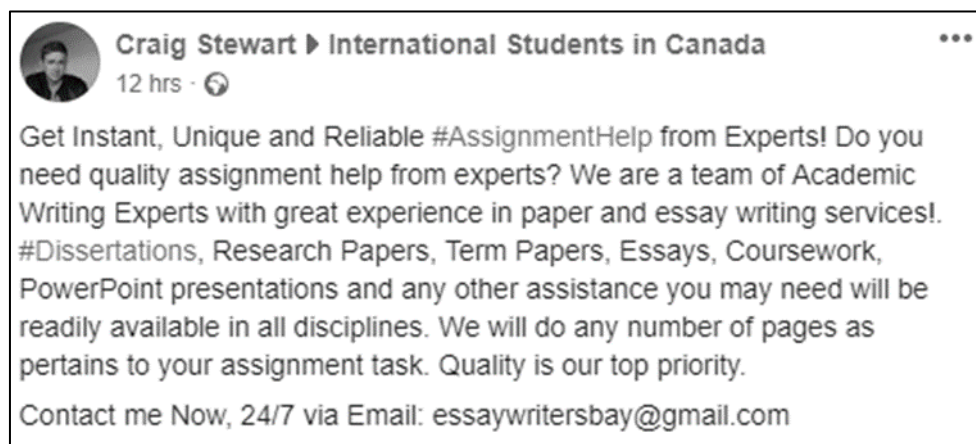

Figure 5. Contract cheating advert on legitimate Facebook group.

Social Media Used as Part of Contract Cheating Writer Recruitment

Advertising contract cheating writer jobs on social media is common. These work opportunities can be advertised on Twitter accounts and Facebook groups set up for this purpose, or in general purpose job groups. Figure 6 shows three examples of posts on a Facebook group advertising to potential academic writers in Pakistan.

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Figure 6. Example Facebook group used to recruit writers for contract cheating providers.

The rate advertised for writers familiar with the "*latest referencing styles*" works out at $9.50 CAD per 1,000 words ($7 USD or €6 EUR). But, as well as that rate of pay, access to the Turnitin software for similarity analysis is included. This allows writers to check that the original assignment solutions they have produced do not contain plagiarism before they are returned to students.

Potential workers do not only use social media to find customers, as the earlier examples in Figure 4 attest, but also to find work with contract cheating providers. Figure 7 shows two such examples. In both cases, the replies to the tweets indicated that the writers had likely been offered work through private messages.

Figure 7. Tweets showing people looking for work as writers for contract cheating providers.

Social Media Communities for Writers

Various online communities exist where individuals can post jobs and writers can exchange tips, techniques and leads. The ways in which social media is used to trade accounts, whereby even a contract cheating provider themselves may be unable to verify that the person they advertise as preparing an assignment solution is actually the one doing so, are of particular interest.

Figure 8 shows examples of two posts in a Facebook group that had 5,827 members in April 2019. The group had seen 1,068 posts made in the previous 30 days. The posts show accounts for sale to allow their owners to work as writers for contract cheating sites. They are sold to people who would not otherwise qualify for accounts, perhaps due to their nationality being one for which the provider would not normally accept workers, or where the purchaser would find it hard to pass the tests of writing standard required to gain an account legitimately.
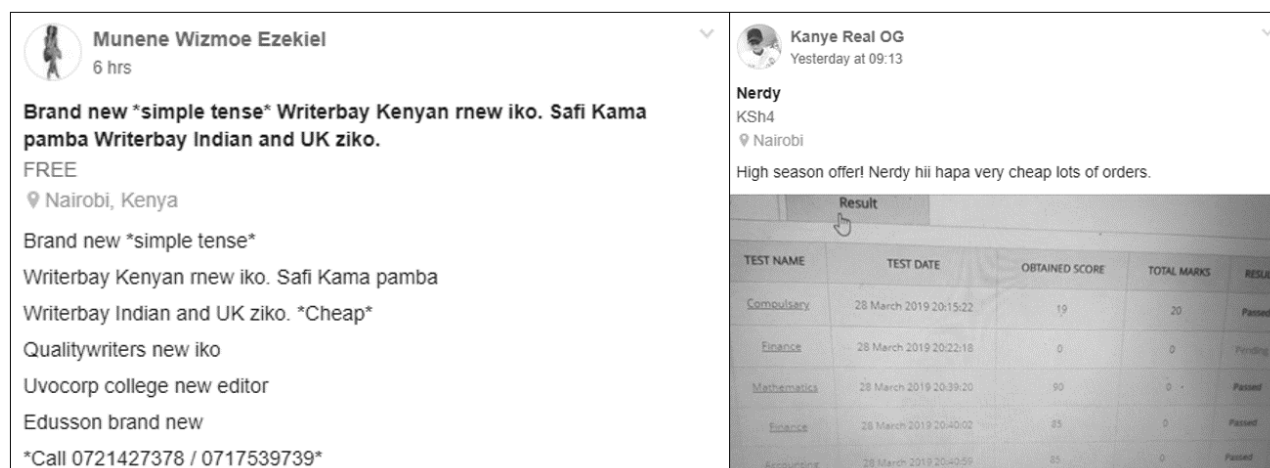
Figure 8. Facebook adverts for buying and selling contract cheating site writer accounts.

The same Facebook group shown in Figure 8 also contained adverts for work for people looking to become test takers, helping to establish new accounts that will themselves be traded and sold. Courses are also for sale in the Facebook group to show prospective workers how to pass the tests for themselves and how to get accounts working for contract cheating providers. One example course comes with free Grammarly account logins, presumably to allow writers to check their work for spelling and grammar issues. It is not clear if the free logins advertised have been legally obtained.

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Ready Made Contract Cheating Services Promoted Through Social Media

The contract cheating industry is now being promoted as a "*make money online*" type opportunity. Details of how to get started are available on online marketing forums, "*blackhat*" style websites which skirt around legal and moral marketing decisions, various websites where the owners take a commission by selling this as a business opportunity and, of course, social media.

The whole financial flows around the contract cheating industry are complex. Figure 9, for example, shows a tweet promoting affiliate opportunities for people to work with a contract cheating provider. Essentially, this is multi-level marketing. The tweet is being used to recruit affiliates. If someone signs up through this link and refers customers to the contract cheating provider, they will receive between 50% and 70% of each first order from a new customer. They will also receive 30% of repeat orders. Further, they will be provided with the website template to set up what looks to a customer like the buyer is running their own essay mill, but order fulfilment will go through the company shown in Figure 9. The site is Russian, but also operates in English. The average order value is stated as being $150 USD ($201 CAD or €134 EUR), meaning a minimum commission of $75 USD ($101 CAD or €67 EUR) per student referred. This appears to be a high enough level of financial reward that it would tempt people to want to enter the provision side of the contract cheating industry. The high level of commission offered also provides evidence that the original contract cheating provider only needs a small amount of the payment to be profitable. It could also be surmised that the end-writer must only receive a fraction of the amount paid by a student. Many other contract cheating affiliate opportunities are available and promoted through social media, as this is now a common way that contract cheating services obtain their customers.

Figure 9. Tweet promoting contract cheating affiliate opportunity.

For those people who prefer to set up their own essay mill from scratch, templates to run such a site are available. Templates and scripts for both the student-facing side and writer-facing side of a contract cheating service can be purchased. Figure 10, for example, shows a tweet advertising one such site, available for purchase for $75 USD ($101 CAD or €67 EUR). There are even videos promoting templates such as these available on YouTube.

Figure 10. Tweet promoting readymade contract cheating provider website.

Social media accounts can also be used simply to promote other sites as an affiliate, receiving a commission on each sale. They may appear to look like the original site and feed the traffic through. Some operate in a simpler way, for example Figure 11 shows a Twitter account that provides links to coupon codes for different contract cheating services. When a student orders an assignment solution with one of these coupon codes, the site gets paid.

Figure 11. Site using social media paid for promoting existing contract cheating providers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through necessity, this paper has provided only a limited number of examples and case studies regarding how social media is used as part of the contract cheating industry. This is an industry that continues to evolve and find new methods to put its message across. A

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large number of further examples are available amongst the blog posts of the author. The academic integrity community needs to be alert to the fact that students will be directly marketed to by contract cheating providers. Although academic institutions can take measures to reduce some of this advertising, for example by removing physical adverts placed on campus, a complete block is impossible. The industry is too sophisticated.

One recent development is of particular concern and worthy of immediate discussion with students. Contract cheating providers are infiltrating students and their network of friends, often by pretending to be one of them.

Students should be advised not to post details about their assessments on social media or engage in conversations with contract cheating services who contact them. There is evidence, for example as discussed on EssayScam (2018), that suggests that blackmailers are using social media posts to determine that a student may have contract cheated. They are then able to extort money from students under the threat of exposing them to their university.

Students need to be aware that contract cheating providers will be aggressive in their marketing to them. For providers, this marketing is big money. Providers will pay social media sites like Facebook simply to send paid adverts to people who appear to be in the student demographic. That is, they are of a typical age group, show the right level of high school education, or have a university name listed on their profile. Even if a student has no interest in cheating, they are likely to see carefully targeted adverts. Students have to realise that they shouldn't fall for these opportunities and that contract cheating companies are unlikely to be working in their best interest.

Social media can also be useful as a source for continued research into the contract cheating industry. Papers are starting to be developed using social media as a source to identify how and why students contract cheat. The data about how providers are advertising and what they are providing is available on social media for any researchers who wish to analyse it.

When academics are looking to put contract cheating interventions in place, social media can also be useful. Some contract cheating writers boast about completing assessments for students. Figure 12 shows examples of this collected from Twitter.
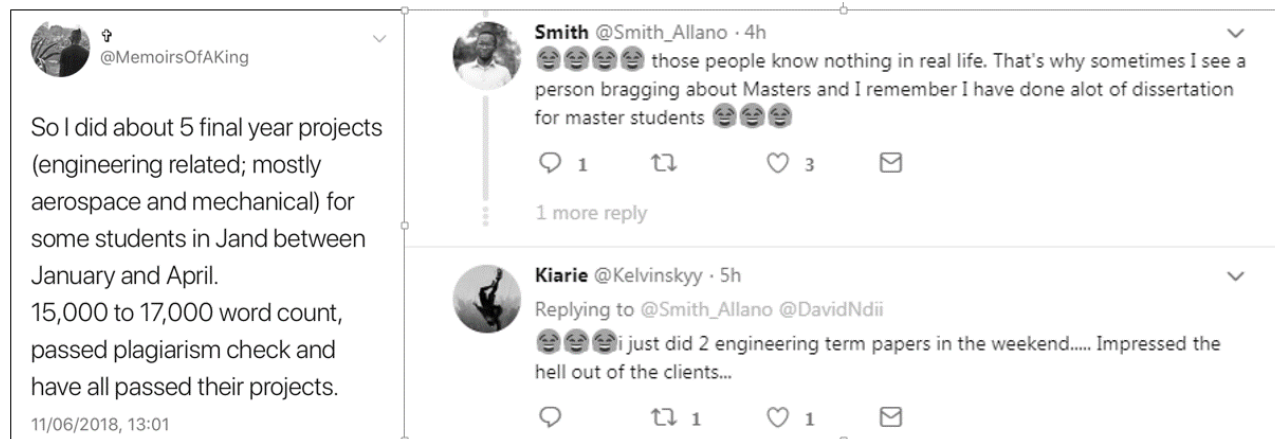
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Figure 12. Examples of writers discussing contract cheating on Twitter.

As an international community, within Canada and abroad, academics need to work together with students to reduce the effectiveness of the contract cheating industry. Academics need to hold robust discussions on academic integrity with students. It is important to communicate to students that there is value in doing their own work.

Students need to be made aware that there are risks incumbent if they choose to engage with contract cheating providers. These risks include being scammed and blackmailed. Students should think carefully about their choice of social media connections. Once companies have developed a relationship with a student through social media, that student is just a message away. They are there for the company to market to forever more. Unless the right interventions are put into place now, it appears inevitable that more students will succumb to the pressures of such social media marketing.

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The International Dimension of Academic Integrity:
An Integrative Literature Review

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Abstract

Over half a million international students now study in Canada. This rapid increase in international enrollments has intensified focus on academic integrity because the stakes are high for both international students and the institutions that host them. Academic integrity violations involving international students may garner scandalous attention, and the international students who become entangled in incidents of academic misconduct face potentially devastating life consequences, including expulsion from academic studies and dishonor in family life. International students studying in Canada, particularly those whose first language is not English, face several hurdles not experienced by their Canadian counterparts. Overcoming these cultural barriers is a shared interest and a top strategic priority because academic credentials are a signal that assert students have mastered the academic norms of the new culture. There remains considerable debate surrounding international students regarding their increased likelihood to commit academic integrity violations, and this integrative literature review explores the intersection of academic integrity and international students. It takes a broad and holistic approach to identify areas of conflict and knowledge gaps, with a focus on successful institutional interventions that proactively reduce the likelihood of academic misconduct. Little research details efficacious methods to reduce incidents of academic integrity violations involving international students, but taking stock of current interventions provides some guidance to institutions welcoming international students, and the faculty who teach them, so that they can both be successful in addressing academic integrity issues.

Keywords: Academic integrity violations; international students; Canada; literature review

The Rapid Rise of International Students in Canada

As of 2018, 572,415 international students were enrolled in Canada at all levels of study, an increase of 16 percent above 2017 (Canadian Bureau for International Education, n.d.). A large reason behind this rapid increase is that international students often pay more than triple the tuition paid by domestic students (Keung, 2018). As Figure 1 illustrates, international student tuition has grown enormously over the past decade, and international students have become an important part of the Canadian postsecondary funding model. Some institutions now receive more money from international students

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than provincial operating grants, and while "there is nothing intrinsically wrong with turning to international students to fill the gap left by flagging government support …we cannot continue to sleepwalk down this road" (Usher, 2018, p. 2). Refusing to sleepwalk is especially relevant to international students and academic integrity.
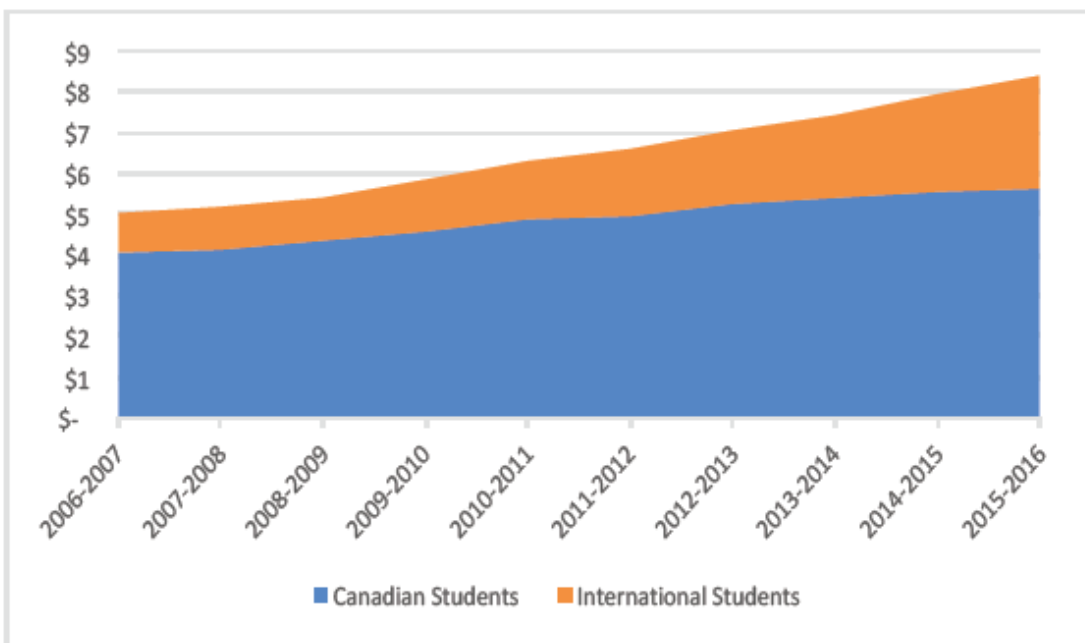

Figure 1. University tuition fees by source in Canada, 2006-2007 to 2015-2016, in figures in billions of constant $2016 (Usher, 2018, p. 2). Reprinted with permission.

Accompanying the rise of international students studying in Canada is rising concern about academic integrity and contract cheating. Niagara College raised concerns over the validity of standardized language test scores submitted by 428 students applying from India after a review found inconsistencies in language proficiency. 428 students represents 33% of the 1,300 Indian students to whom Niagara offered admission (Keung, 2018). It is possible, and highly probable, that this high-profile Canadian example is little more than the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Other well-publicized stories from around the globe include incidents of international students paying others to take their English-language entrance exams, and employees were bribed to manipulate scores on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam at Australia's Curtin University (Keung, 2018). A *Wall Street Journal* analysis (Jordan & Belkin, 2016) concluded that international students in the United States cheat at rates five times higher than domestic students.

These incidents raise important questions: Do international students commit academic integrity violations more often than domestic students, and if so, why? What preventative

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strategies have a positive impact in reducing academic integrity violations? This integrative literature review explores the extant literature to consider the prevalence of academic integrity violations involving international students, the underlying causes, key areas of friction, and the recommended intervention strategies institutions employ to prepare international students for success in Canadian postsecondary institutions.

Background to the Purpose and Approach

The Canadian community college where I work is, like many others, feeling the impacts of increasing its international student population as a way to diversify its funding. This increased international enrollment has generated tension and discussion about international students and their unintentional and intentional participation in behaviours that constitute academic integrity violations. Strengthening the culture around academic integrity fell within my role as Chair of our newly formed Academic Integrity Advisory Committee, and out of a real need, I sought to determine if international students are more prone to committing academic integrity violations, and if so, why? Most importantly, I sought to answer, what could be done about it? Using my experience as a librarian and doctoral candidate, I conducted an integrative literature review. Integrative literature reviews are a distinctive form of research that generates new knowledge by reviewing and synthesizing literature on a topic in order to develop new frameworks and perspectives (Torraco, 2016).

This review's purpose is to analyze conflicting perspectives relating to international students and academic integrity to identify similarities and differences between domestic and international students. The synthesis identifies the literature's strengths and weaknesses on this topic, and in short, much is known about who is likely to commit academic integrity violations, why, and the increased pressures faced by international students. There is little research, however, on successful interventions to reduce incidents of academic integrity violations. This review seeks to capture key disagreements and unknowns on the intersection of academic integrity violations and international students in order to inspire new research on successful approaches that positively address academic integrity issues involving international students.

Cheating (and Figuring Out How to Stop It) is a Global Phenomenon

Academic integrity is the moral code of academia and can be defined as the use, generation, and communication of information in an ethical, honest, and responsible manner (Brown et al., 2018 , p. 14). Academic integrity violations (including cheating, fabrication of information, facilitating academic misconduct, and plagiarism) have reached an alarming level that threatens to undermine the value of postsecondary credentials (Winrow, 2015).

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While academic integrity has reached a new height of concern, the situation is far from new. Whitley (1998) reviewed the prevalence of cheating in 107 studies from 1970-1996, and the prevalence of total cheating in these studies ranged from 9% to 95% of students, with a mean of 70.4% students admitting to committing some form of academic integrity violation (p. 238). More recent research from the International Centre of Academic Integrity concluded 40% of students admitted to committing academic integrity violations (Brown et al., 2018 . 40 percent is consistent with Whitley's (1998) finding that 43.1% of students cheated on exams, 40.9% of students cheated on homework, and 47% of students engaged in plagiarism.

Winrow (2015) reviewed the published research on the prevalence of academic misconduct, and she determined the high prevalence of academic integrity violations is not strictly cultural or confined to North American contexts. Table 1 (Winrow, 2015) highlights that academic integrity is a world-wide phenomenon, and it should be noted that most of these studies used self-reporting methodologies to determine the rate of cheating. Self-reporting studies may under-report, so it is conceivable the percentage of students who actually cheated is higher than documented in some of these studies. While the exact prevalence of academic integrity violations will never be known, it is safe to assume it is higher than funders, employers, faculty and academic administrators would find acceptable.

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Table 1

Global Academic Cheating (Winrow, 2015, pp. 3-4). Reprinted with permission.

(Graphic produced by Andrea Woods).	(Graphic produced by Andrea Woods).	(Graphic produced by Andrea Woods).
Taiwan	61.72%	Lin & Wen, 2007
Russia	60.31%	Grimes, 2004
Romania	85% (observed cheating)	Teodorescu & Andrei, 2009
Canada	45%	Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006
Japan	55.4%	Diekhoff, LaBeff, Shinohara & Yusukawa, 1999
Hong Kong	30.2%	Chapman & Luptop, 2004
Kyrgyzstan	80.10%	Grimes, 2004
Croatia	45.45%	Grimes, 2004
Albania	42.48%	Grimes, 2004
Belarus	87.39%	Grimes, 2004
Latvia	92.48%	Grimes, 2004
Lithuania	87.65%	Grimes, 2004
Ukraine	89.58%	Grimes, 2004
Poland	84%	Lupton, Chapman & Weiss, 2000
Singapore	94.4%	Lim & See, 2001
Portugal	62.4%	Teixeira & Rocha, 2008
Spain	79.7%	Teixeira & Rocha, 2008

The high global prevalence of academic integrity violations has generated mounting urgency to strengthen academic integrity and reduce corruption in higher education. This urgency arises from both the potential real-world damage caused by unprepared students, as well as the damage to the reputation of postsecondary institutions and their credentials. There are real world consequences to academic integrity violations; studies suggest a relationship exists between students who cheat in an academic setting and the level of unethical conduct displayed in the workplace (Winrow, 2015), and this "extended incompetence could seriously jeopardize human safety" (Katkins, 2018, p. 269).

The other real world consequence is growing doubt about the value of the postsecondary credential. A postsecondary credential is a signal to employers and graduate schools, and the parchment can be a strong signal or a weak signal depending on the prevalence of students graduating with academic integrity violations who have not mastered the knowledge, skills, and competencies promised by their parchment. As Caplan (2018) explains in *The Case Against Education: Why the Education System is a Waste of Time and Money:*

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> Signaling explains why cheating pays – and why schools are wise to combat it. In the signaling model, employers reward workers for the skills they *think* those workers possess. Cheating tricks employers into thinking you're a better worker than you really are. The trick pays because *unless everyone cheats all the time,* students with better records are, on average, better workers.
>
> Why discourage cheating? Because detecting and punishing cheaters preserves the signaling value of your school's diploma. When more of your students cheat their way to graduation, firms that hire your students are less likely to get the smart, hardworking team players they're paying for. Every time your school expels a cheater, you protect the good names of your graduates – past, present, and future. (p. 29) [emphasis in the original]

Widespread agreement exists that enforcing academic integrity is a universal problem, but there remains significant confusion, disagreement, and the need for further research on effective interventions, especially for international students. A recent disagreement between scholars at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) brings many of these issues into focus.

A (Partial) Disagreement About International Students and Academic Integrity

Tricia Bertram Gallant directs the Academic Integrity Office at UCSD, and she is one of the leading researchers and writers on academic integrity. Unlike many of the self-reported cases outlined above, Bertram Gallant, Binkin, and Donohue (2015) used data from registrar's office at a large U.S. research university (one assumes the university in question is UCSD) and linked it to the database used for students who had other-reported incidents of cheating. The study included five academic years and 23,000 students, and it categorized students by gender, international student status, major, and GPA. The researchers isolated students who had no violations, those with reported violations, and those with serious violations leading to suspension or dismissal.

Among their conclusions is the suggestion that being an international student is a risk factor for committing an academic integrity violation. In their findings, international students were twice as likely to have an academic integrity violation than their domestic counterparts. They suggest the international student population is "particularly vulnerable because they may be unfamiliar with behavioral standards in western educational institutions and given their previous educational experiences, may not share the same fear of punishment as our domestic students" (Bertram Gallant et al., 2015, p. 226).

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Barry Fass-Holmes is a psychologist interested in international education who is also at UCSD. He disagrees. Fass-Holmes (2017) challenges the conclusion that cheating by international students is pervasive, and he provides an alternative interpretation to the rise of academic integrity violations (AIVs) involving international students. The number of international students reported for academic integrity violations (AIVs) did increase, but the increase was proportional to the total enrollment of international students, which had increased six-fold over the five academic years investigated in the Bertram Gallant et al. (2015) study. True, Fass-Holmes found that international students accounted for one-fifth of the university's reported academic integrity violations, but this was not necessarily alarming or significant. A closer look at that five year period reveals that the percentage of international students reported for academic integrity violations remained relatively flat, and relatively low. The percentage of international students reported for AIVs remained steady between 3.7% and 7.2%, leading Fass-Holmes to conclude:

> The University's total number of international students reported for AIVs amounted to less than 7.5% of the total number who were enrolled. These findings indicated that AIVs were reported to a lesser degree than what would be expected if cheating were a vulnerability to international students. (Fass-Holmes, 2017, p. 660)

Where one falls on this disagreement about whether international students are at greater risk than domestic students has important implications for institutional response strategies and policy, and this is the bigger disagreement between Bertram Gallant (2008) and Fass-Holmes (2017).

Bertram Gallant's organizational theory (2008) endorses a teaching and learning approach, rather than a punitive one that focuses on a student's character or behaviour. The teaching and learning strategy "attends not just to the rule compliance or integrity of the individual student or student population but to the integrity of the environment as a whole" (Bertram Gallant, 2008, p. 88). The teaching and learning approach to academic integrity, and its attendant organizational strategy, shifts responsibility for academic integrity from the students to the faculty and the organization.

This shift from the student to the teaching and learning environment positions instructional design, pedagogy, and assignments as responsible components for why students engage in academic integrity violations.

> Researchers have found that students who admit to cheating perceive their classroom environment to be "less personalized, less involving, less cohesive, less satisfying, less task oriented, and less individualized (Pulvers & Diekhoff, 1999, p. 495). Thus, rather than convincing students to stop cheating, the goal of the teaching

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and learning strategy is to foster a learning-oriented environment that will motivate students to engage in the course material. (Bertram Gallant, 2008, p. 89)

This philosophical shift of responsibility from the student to those responsible for creating the learning environment "should be given primary consideration in efforts to encourage academic integrity" (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006, p. 3) because the quality of the educational experience (e.g. quality of the professor, the teaching and learning activities, and the assessment approach) may influence a student's decision to violate academic integrity.

This philosophical shift of responsibility has profound implications for faculty workload and faculty development, especially in an era characterized by the significant use of part-time faculty. Taking the example of student assessments, to create a holistic academic integrity environment requires faculty to plagiarize-proof their assignments by including individualized elements into assignments, requiring annotated bibliographies before the due date, and collecting writing examples in stages using weekly journals (Moore, 2019). These are all sound pedagogical suggestions, but they entail more time, energy, and effort. This is not necessarily a reason not to do them, but the larger issue becomes that, in accepting this responsibility, ensuring academic integrity moves from the student to the faculty. The teaching and learning approach has significant workload and training implications, and this organizational strategy is not guaranteed to work.

Fass-Holmes (2017) argues that Bertram Gallant's organizational strategy has failed to reduce academic integrity violations at the studied university. Furthermore, as the institution's focus shifts towards fostering a more engaging teaching and learning environment, and away from students' conduct, faculty might be less likely to report incidents of academic integrity because the learning design becomes responsible for encouraging or enabling student cheating. The volume of AIVs is also likely higher than is known due to faculty underreporting. Also not covered in the Bertram Gallant et al., (2015) study is the role of implicit bias, prejudice or racism. In attempting to understand why students of colour appear to have a disproportionate number of incidences compared to domestic students, the University of Windsor's academic integrity review (Christensen Hughes, 2010) notes that "some faculty may be over zealously pursuing charges against visible minority students" (p. 13).

This disagreement focuses attention on areas where significantly more research is needed in Canada, including whether international students are at-risk, if they commit AIVs at higher levels proportional to other student groups, and if the teaching and learning approach should guide the preferred organizational philosophy and response strategy to academic integrity violations. Despite their disagreement around these issues, Fass-

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Holmes (2017) and Bertram Gallant et al., (2015) agree about the intensified pressures faced by international students. International students face the same issues as domestic students, including finances, health, and housing conditions; they also face unique stresses, including acculturative stress, cultural and language barriers potentially leading to alienation and isolation, compliance with immigration regulations, and a lack of familiarity with western pedagogical approaches and expectations (Fass-Holmes, 2017; Bertram Gallant et al., 2015). Because international students have shared and unique stressors, it is necessary to draw a profile of who commits AIVs and why.

Why Do Students Cheat (or Not?): An Integrated Model

Several theories have been offered to explain why students cheat, including:

- *Deterrence theory* – The magnitude of punishments can reduce the frequency of cheating.
- *Rational choice theory* – Students decide to cheat after conducting a logical cost-benefit analysis.
- *Neutralization theory* – Cheating happens when students decide it is morally inoffensive.
- *Planned behavior theory* – Students are presented with situations where they are likely to get away with it.
- *Situational ethics theory* – Students decide to cheat in academic circumstances which do not apply to ordinary life.
- *Self-efficacy theory* – Students make judgments about their ability to achieve a desired outcome.
- *Goal theory* – Students hold a notion for their education's purpose.
- *Intrinsic motivation theory* – students possess a genuine desire to understand and master their academic studies (Fass-Holmes, 2017, p. 648).

These theories may have limited application to international students (Fass-Holmes, 2017), but taken together, they provide a useful model (if partial and incomplete) for understanding the different motivations for why students do or do not cheat.

Kolb, Longest, and Singer (2015) developed a framework to assess why students abide by academic integrity policies. Some students have a hard time imagining how they would get away with it (*planned behavior*). Others do not cheat because they do not think it is worth the risk (*rational choice*). Other students remain honest out of fear of the consequences (*deterrence*). Some students respect the policies of the institution and/or refrain from cheating because they realize violating academic integrity goes against their learning goals and their ethical beliefs (*intrinsic motivation and goals*) (Kolb, Longest, & Singer, 2015).

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Maturity also plays an important role; "younger students of all origins have a greater tendency to cheat, whereas students over 25 years of age are more likely to have knowledge of academic integrity" (Brown et al., 2018, p. 16). Older students who are married, employed, and financially independent also report lower levels of cheating (Christensen Hughes & McCabe, 2006).
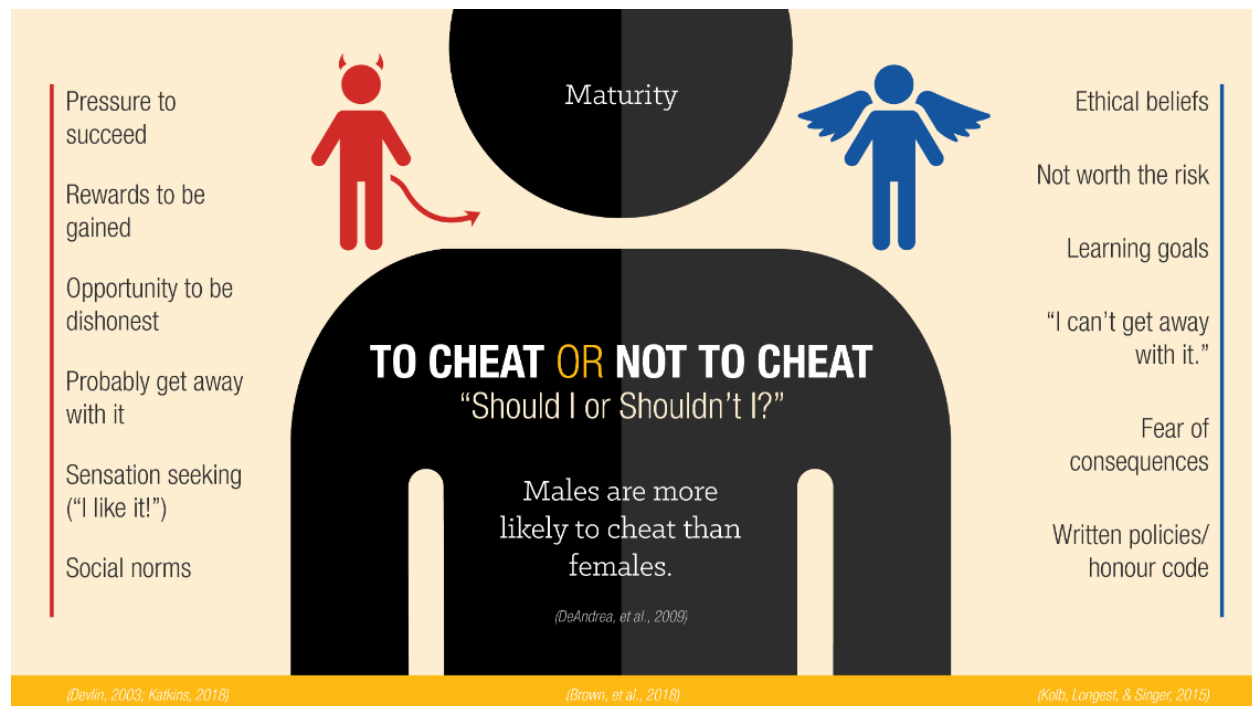

Figure 2. To cheat or not to cheat. (Graphic produced by Andrea Woods).

This integrated model outlines the research-based reasons why students choose to commit or not commit academic integrity violations. Most have some theoretical correlation. International students face intensified pressures around success, rewards to be gained (permanent residency), and social norms (some may come from countries where corruption is commonplace). Conversely, some international students may have stronger ethical beliefs related to respect for authority.

Conversely, students decide to violate academic integrity policies for various reasons. Devlin (2003) identified five factors that influence dishonesty among students. Some students face extreme family pressure to succeed and face penalties for failure (*rational choice*). They may expect a reward to be gained that they would not be able to achieve through their own intelligence and hard work (*self-efficacy*). For some, the convenience and temptation to engage in dishonesty is simply too great; it is very easy to do, and many students – based on their experience and observation – see a good probability of getting

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away with it (*situational ethics*). Tied to this is the growing acceptance that cheating is "normal" in a culture where corruption is endemic and education is viewed as an expensive commodity (*neutralization*) (Katkins, 2018). Beyond these motivations, students commit academic integrity violations based on personality characteristics. There may be a relationship between a student's sensation-seeking or prudence orientation, a stable personality trait where some students will choose to cheat because of the excitement and perceived pleasure of doing so (DeAndrea, Carpenter, Shulman, and Levine, 2009). Finally, gender is unavoidable; males are more likely to commit academic integrity violations than females (DeAndrea et al., 2009).

Why do International Students Commit Academic Integrity Violations?

This generic portrait in only a starting place. International students face all the same challenges and temptations of domestic students, but they may experience them with a greater intensity. Katkins (2018) customizes Devlin's (2003) five factors to focus specifically on international students. High family expectations and being a financial burden on one's family can increase pressure, especially when a student faces disgrace or dishonor for failure. The pressure to achieve the highest academic qualifications in order to procure professional employment *and* permanent residency can also increase pressure on international students. International students may come from countries where corruption in business and education is commonplace, and this can be compounded by the international students' awareness (discussed in the introduction) that they are upholding the solvency of many postsecondary institutions. The "conflict of interest here can be difficult to reconcile" (Katkins, 2018, p. 271). International students study in an environment where cheating and academic dishonesty is, by all accounts, rampant (Bretag, 2019), and they may originate from country contexts where copying is a legitimate form of business. Contract cheating, for these students, might be viewed as a "unique version of white collar crime" (Katkins, 2018, p. 272), one that is socially accepted both in their native and adopted contexts.

The added pressure may make international students particularly susceptible to contract cheating. The text of a recent ad from a contract cheating company illustrates the similarities and the differences.

> All college students face the same problem — the impossible task of getting straight A's, networking, supporting themselves and enjoying their youth all at the same time. With the job market more competitive than ever before, [contract cheating company] has found that more and more students are turning to the platform as a cry for help within an unforgiving institution — America's education system. ...The issue at hand is not students cheating more often, but the fact that our college

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system makes living a mentally healthy life impossible. Students need help, and [contract cheating company] has been there to help them when administration would not." (Kelly, 2019, para. 4)

This ad capitalizes on the appealing rationales offered by neutralization theory, situational ethics, and planned behaviour. As a result of technological developments, today's students all have greater opportunity to be dishonest, but the unforgiving system is to blame, so take advantage of the comprehensive range of academic materials/assignments that can now be ordered and purchased, including essays, oral presentations, literature reviews, dissertations, and research papers. As Katkins (2018) details, many of these companies specifically target international students, and it is safe to assume that international students, on many occasions, knowingly pay for these academic outsourcing services, fully aware that the non-plagiarized nature of their service is nothing more than a marketing strategy (Katkins, 2018).

Students who engage in contract cheating may then find themselves involved in blackmail and extortion schemes, but the consequences to international students may be more detrimental. International students engaging in contract cheating may find themselves pushed further away from their hopes and goals for academic success. As Katkins (2018) notes,

> habitual reliance on such commercial services make students vulnerable to academic exclusion in the sense that the development of students' language whether through oral or written means is inextricably linked to their enculturation and socialisation into academic discourse communities and therefore the maturation of their academic identities and consequent acceptance into those communities (Duff 2010). In the case of international students who usually have to overcome even greater challenges in trying to gain such acceptance, the use of essay mills while seemingly facilitating their academic progress is actually promoting a dangerous academic isolation while also increasing the potential risks of detection. (p. 276)

The greater challenges faced by international students include acculturation stress, adapting to new educational expectations, and language barriers. Each of these are briefly discussed before considering interventions.

The Unique Barriers and Challenges Faced by International Students

It is difficult (and most likely impossible) to separate culture from language from educational systems operating within a culture. Language and educational practices are an extension of a culture; indeed, educational systems reinforce and pass on a cultural tradition. Still, attempting a separation provides some value to differentiate the many

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barriers to be overcome when equipping international students with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid violations of academic integrity.

Culture

Gunawardena (2014) provides an excellent description of the stark contrast between Western conceptions of pedagogy and those familiar to international students:

> Most Western learners and instructors, believe that each learner (a) is a distinct individual, (b) controls his or her behaviour, (c) is responsible for outcomes of behaviour, (d) is oriented toward personal achievement, and (e) frequently believes group membership compromises goal achievement (Nisbett, 2003). Many learners from Asian countries, on the other hand, believe success is a group goal as well as a national goal. Attaining group goals is tied to maintaining harmonious social relations. (p. 87)

People from different cultures learn to learn differently (Gunawardena, 2014), and the challenges this presents are compounded when an academic institution hosts international students from many different countries.

Not all international students are the same, and there are significant differences among different nations' perceptions of cheating (Winrow, 2015). Asian students may believe that writing a paper for a classmate does not constitute cheating, and 80% of Asian students did not view collaborating on an exam without the instructors' permission as misconduct (Winrow, 2015). In addition to these examples, undergraduates studying business in Eastern European or Central Asian countries may have a "lower standard of honesty" than their North American counterparts (Fass-Holmes, 2017, p. 648). This diversity makes applying the aforementioned theoretical frameworks difficult, but it also presents challenges when determining when culture is contributing to academic integrity violations, and how to proactively address it.

One of the biggest cultural divides surrounds intellectual property and copyright. A collectivist view of text ownership sees information as "owned by the whole society" (Mundava & Chauduri, 2007, p. 171). Asian students may copy another's words as a sign of respect. Many international students come from languages where there is no linguistic equivalent to *plagiarism*, and their arrival in Canada may be their first introduction to the term. In one study, even though 40% of international students said they understood plagiarism, 80% believed that cutting and pasting information into academic papers was acceptable (Amsberry, 2010).

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Culture may also play a positive role, however. In a comparative study involving 603 domestic students and 98 international students in an Australian physical therapy program, the researchers found:

> No significant differences were observed between students' view of authoritative standards, public meaning, and common values. All students considered that the right behaviour consists of doing one's duties, that it is important to treat authorities with respect, and that meeting the expectations of others has value. On the moral practice subscale, the statistically significant difference in the respective scores indicates international students' stronger belief in the importance of, and adherence to, moral values and rules. (Brown et al., 2018, p. 17).

This suggests that ethics-based interventions to academic integrity may hold some promise, and that there must be contributing factors beyond culture at play in academic integrity violations.

Pedagogy

Amsberry (2010) argues that "the reasons international students may employ inappropriate source use are complex and cannot easily be attributed to 'culture'" (p. 32). If cultural differences were solely responsible for plagiarism, for example, Canadian students not facing cultural hurdles would have a deeper grasp of plagiarism and its nuances (Amsberry, 2010). Amsberry (2010) cites one study where a majority of American students (87%) considered verbatim copying to be plagiarism compared to only 43% of Chinese students. But when asked whether changing some words and syntax in a text source without citation was sufficient to avoid plagiarism, the responses were similar; 48% for American students and 55% for Chinese students. This suggests that "although American students may have a different view of the general *concept* of plagiarism, in practical application their understanding of when citation is necessary seems similar to that" of international students (Amsberry, 2010, p. 34). It is likely the same can be said of Canadian students. This prompts a closer examination of a culture's educational practices.

Some students may copy because it was the way they were taught in their own countries (Amsberry, 2010, p. 35). Western approaches to teaching and learning, including debate, critical questioning, collaboration, and discussion may prove difficult for students from other cultures. "Turkey's culture and oral traditions have emphasized the sacredness of the text, honour the responsibility of the professor to interpret the text, and expect students to memorize the professor's words," [which means that the Western educational paradigm of the independent learner is] "not a value-free, neutral idea" (Gunawardena, 2014, p. 87). Such educational systems may not provide adequate or sufficient writing

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instruction or practice because a student's predominant method of assessment is performance on examinations. Consequently, writing assignments and group work present significant challenges (Gunawardena, 2014). The only remedy for the institutions hosting students coming from such educational systems is to meet this omission head on and provide the writing instruction necessary for students to be successful on writing assessments, and provide clear guidelines as to what acceptable and unacceptable collaboration looks like.

Language

Language barriers, more than culture or educational practices, may contribute to greater amounts of plagiarism. *Patchwriting* refers to a coping strategy employed by international students struggling to express themselves in English (Amsberry, 2010). Patchwriting occurs when the student believes the original author conveys meaning far better than the student can. Patchwriting becomes a combination of the student's and the original author's writing "in which the student has substituted words or phrases but maintained the structure of the original work" (Amsberry, 2010, p. 36). Students unfamiliar with academic English and stock academic phrases may not yet know the difference between patchwriting and verbatim copying. Patchwriting may also occur because students reading in a second language can decode words and phrases at the sentence level but fail to grasp the overall meaning and purpose of the text (Amsberry, 2010, p. 37). This may be especially true when students are unable to determine the differences between technical terms and non-technical academic English. Patchwriting may be thought of as a developmental stage related to the writers' own confidence, or lack thereof, that their own writing will not blend well with the copied text (Amsberry, 2010, p. 37).

Taken together, international students may copy or collaborate inappropriately due to different cultural attitudes about textual ownership, educational systems that encourage copying as a learning strategy, and linguistic challenges that present difficulties in expressing the writer's ideas (Amsberry, 2010, p. 37). Considering the multifaceted nature of academic integrity and its potentially harmful effects in the workplace, to academic institutions, and to international students themselves, it becomes difficult but necessary to discuss what can be done to overcome the many formidable cultural and language barriers to build the academic skills necessary for success.

A Survey of Interventions

Very little research has been done regarding the efficacy of specific academic integrity interventions for international students. What follows is a list of promising approaches

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and comprehensive strategies for proactively addressing academic integrity for international students.

New Student Orientations

The University of Pennsylvania begins lessons on academic honesty before students travel to the United States. Staff lead orientation workshops including interactive sessions on academic integrity involving role-play and small group discussions. The curriculum focuses on the university's expectations. This information is then repeated for all students when they arrive on campus (Bowman, 2017). These substantive orientations can be complemented by program orientations, course orientations, and information literacy instruction to discuss expectations and address plagiarism issues before they occur.

Culturally Sensitive Student Supports

"Cultures differ in help seeking behaviours" (Gunawardena, 2014, p. 95). Students may not seek help out of fear others will perceive a lack of ability, and this requires institutions to focus on and emphasize the socio-emotional needs of students (Gunawardena, 2014). This may sound simple enough, but Gunawardena (2014) suggests "the socio-emotional needs of students are recognized as part of the classroom design in other cultures" whereas "Western teachers are expected to perform academic duties and generally are unconcerned or at least not responsible for students' behaviours or problems outside of school" (p. 95). This has serious implications for reconceiving student expectations, faculty roles, and facilitating students towards available support services.

Comprehensive Plagiarism Education

Different cultural conceptions of textual ownership requires exposure to Western conceptions of textual ownership, and the concept that information can be individually owned, that scholarship is a conversation, and that information has value (ACRL, 2016). Many academic libraries currently perform some level of training, and academic librarians are "the most likely members of the campus community to observe the information needs of students" (Amsberry, 2010, p. 38). These workshops include activities that compare cultural definitions of plagiarism, and examples of where appropriate text use ends and plagiarism begins. No matter how much training is offered, plagiarism often remains a fuzzy concept.

These workshops often centre around definitions and warnings, but these have proven ineffective and insufficient (Amsberry, 2010). Instead of warnings, academic integrity instruction may focus on the good nature of the student, the positive expectations of the

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institution, and how violating academic integrity guidelines undermines students' values, goals, and is ultimately self-defeating.

Authentic Assessments

Many students now see educational attainment as a means to an end, and during the learning process they can become overwhelmed by busy work (Katkins, 2018). Even though I am wary of shifting too much responsibility for ensuring academic integrity from the student to the faculty because students must be presented with opportunities to be honest, the authenticity (relevance to real-world contexts) of assignments can help shift student motivation from extrinsic to intrinsic. Integrating individualized components into the assignment may reduce the inclination and possibility of cheating because "unauthentic assessment materials that do not ask the learner to relate in a personal or sustained fashion to the material at hand—are more likely to encourage and enable cheating, whether in face-to-face or distance assessment" (Conrad & Openo, 2018, p. 101). Authentic assessments are not a magic solution, but assessments that are less likely to be outsourced (assessments requiring personalization, unique tasks, and reflection) are the assessment forms most rarely used (Bretag, 2019).

Targeted Interventions

Academic integrity violations affect all academic programs and all postsecondary institutions, mandating universal approaches. Universal approaches may be coupled to a more sophisticated and sustainable response, such as targeted interventions at specific programs and specific courses, as recommended by Katkins (2018). Bertram Gallant et al. (2015) also support targeted interventions because they found that "male, international students who major in computer science, economics or engineering, have a lower grade point average and are newer to the institution are more likely to be other-reported for cheating than their peers" (p. 226). Targeted interventions at certain students in specific majors may have more impact than generalized, universal approaches, but this must be done with sensitivity to the potential dangers of stereotyping and profiling.

Conclusion

The rapid increase of international students studying in Canada forces host colleges and universities to develop strategies that help international students succeed without resorting to academic behaviours classified as academic dishonesty and academic misconduct. Significant challenges remain, and strengthening the culture of academic integrity will require a concerted effort by librarians, teaching and learning centres, faculty, and, of course, academic leaders. This review sought to consider the similarities and

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differences between international and domestic students concerning academic integrity. International students share all of the challenges faced by domestic students, plus cultural, pedagogical, and linguistic barriers. Unfortunately, there is little literature on the effectiveness of interventions designed to reduce academic integrity violations, which remain consistently high and threaten to undermine the value of Canadian postsecondary credentials. Any research into the efficacy of academic integrity interventions with international students will be incredibly difficult to conduct because it requires establishing a causal chain of evidence linking students who might have committed an academic integrity violation to a direct connection with a particular intervention. Despite the complexity involved in such research, more successful, evidence-based strategies are sorely needed to support institutions, faculty and international students in achieving their academic goals. It is unclear what to do, but what seems crystal clear is that if Canadian institutions are going to continue to welcome increasing numbers of international students, the cultural impact on academic integrity will be a rich area for research and exploration.

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