Scholarly practice the Australian way: an academic skills course for postgraduate students

Kirsten Wahlstrom, Helen Johnston and Chris Steketee
University of South Australia

Abstract International students in postgraduate coursework degrees experience many challenges in adapting to Australian writing conventions. Too often comprehending and meeting referencing requirements for assignments has proved challenging, and has cost students dearly in terms of academic success and lost face. A new pedagogical approach is needed. In this paper we describe a course which fosters inclusivity and communication. The course focuses on academic, professional and information literacies, and its design acknowledges that Australian scholarly practice is unfamiliar to many students. Our pedagogical approach is dialogic, involving students in many and various learning activities. Acknowledgement of students' prior experience, cultural difference and transitional needs is integral to classroom discussion. We present evidence of the course's success in meeting its goals including the adoption of Western academic conventions, and of high student satisfaction. The course is being adapted to other disciplines.

Key ideas

- In our teaching context, where academic integrity has been a problem for international students, students who are unaccustomed to Western scholarly practice learn about referencing and academic integrity through a supportive and positive curriculum.
- International students respond positively and successfully to a course that respects cultural and educational difference, introduces new cultural norms and idiom, and develops their capacities for scholarly observation, reflection and critique.
- An inclusive curriculum can be based on mutual respect, offer multiple and diverse opportunities to learn, and meet practical, immediate and longer term learning needs.

Discussion Question 1: What are the benefits of a specific postgraduate course, compared to an approach which embeds writing, referencing and cultural skills in existing curriculum?

Discussion Question 2: What are the challenges of extending this approach to other disciplinary contexts?

1. Introduction

In this paper we describe a postgraduate course aimed at developing the professional reading, writing and critical analysis skills of students. Most of the course's students are commencing from non-Western cultures. These students seek permanent resident status in Australia and have a corresponding goal of employment in Australian organisations. Their obstacles to academic literacy often manifest as integrity issues – for example lack of referencing and copy-paste writing – but it is our contention that a narrow focus on these issues is not sufficient. The deeper underlying problems include a lack of facility with the English language, and a cultural background and scholarly practice which use

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sources in ways that seem to be uncritical and even breach Western scholarly conventions.

When teaching newly arrived international students we need to be sensitive to the many adaptations they are making. Many of these students, particularly the postgraduates, are from '… distinctive learning traditions and find our academic contexts quite different from their previous experiences in terms of expectations and academic requirements' (Cadman 2000 citing Todd, 1997). For some, copying the text of respected authors is honourable, reasonable and strategic. Doing so demonstrates familiarity with the literature and acknowledgement of authors' expertise. However, this is unacceptable in the established Western tradition of informed critique and debate. It is unreasonable to demand a shift to unfamiliar practices that clash with students' known experience of academia or affront them by asserting that familiar and formerly condoned, if not encouraged, writing strategies are dishonest (Song-Turner, 2008).

Developing students' perspectives on new definitions of academic conduct is essential for addressing issues related to academic integrity. However, we are interested in developing our students' capacity for scholarly observation, reflection, critique and discourse as well as their situational awareness.

This paper reports on a core course in several Information Technology (IT) masters programs. A large proportion of the course's enrolments are international students. The course aims to deliver a range of key outcomes and brings together several key practices to innovatively and robustly support students' academic and cultural transitions. It provides a rich approach to addressing academic integrity, with a focus on cultural familiarisation in addition to Western professional and scholarly practices.

2. Background

The course was motivated by concern about the academic performance of many students in University of South Australia (UniSA)'s Computer and Information Science postgraduate coursework programs. In these programs, the majority are international students with student visas, many of whom hold aspirations for permanent residency and careers in Australia.

The cohort is diverse with students from Australia, Pakistan, Indonesia, India, Iran, China, the US, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Eritrea and Lesotho. All students hold an undergraduate qualification and have met entrance criteria for language proficiency (currently 6.0 IELTS). Pre-existing qualifications are as diverse as the class's cultural profile with the humanities and the social, formal and applied sciences often present in the same classroom.

Over several years, three issues have affected student progress and success. Firstly, there are issues of adjustment to a new academic culture and often a mismatch between Western academic expectations and students' previous experience. Secondly, in spite of meeting the language proficiency entrance criteria, many are unable to meet the required English language standards generally assumed in courses at the postgraduate level. This is not surprising given that IELTS 6.0 ensures competence but not the level of sophisticated discourse expected in postgraduate study, and many students are clearly reliant on translating to and from their native language (Birrell 2006 p.60). Finally, there was concern that graduates from our postgraduate programs were not well prepared for the process of applying for and gaining employment in Australia. This concern seems to be widespread and related to particular workplace issues. For example there can be a significant gap between employer expectations of work-ready employees and the

communication skills of graduates, particularly international graduates. Employers may expect new employees to have both technical expertise and the ability to manage complex communication with clients. The latter requires local cultural capital and a level of familiarity with Australian workplaces that are generally unavailable to international graduates (Quinn, Stokes-Thompson, Johnston & Luong, 2008). These issues were not being addressed adequately through courses or adjunct services.

Where academic integrity and writing are identified as key concerns in this type of cohort there seem to be two common approaches. One has been to embed such skills in existing courses, so that the concepts can be learned in context, without a reduction of specialist content in the program (Emerson, Rees & MacKay 2005). The other is an adjunct approach in which staff such as learning advisers work with students either within existing courses or in other ways such as optional openly advertised seminars, the provision of self-help resources for student use and referrals to learning advisers of students with identified issues.

In the Division of Information Technology, Engineering and the Environment (ITEE) prior to the introduction of this course, the existing approach to teaching referencing mainly entailed the provision of resources for staff and students which explained referencing and plagiarism within existing courses. There was a strong emphasis on explaining referencing requirements, plagiarism and academic misconduct, coupled with an expectation that staff setting assignments would ensure students knew how to cite and reference correctly. Many staff elected for the adjunct approach and directed students to resources or optional classes. Neither approach was seen to meet teaching and learning requirements.

Students seemed unable to understand the relevance of messages about academic integrity. Many, especially newly-arrived international students under pressure from multiple academic and everyday living demands, continued with their previous practices, not realising that those practices would be unacceptable in their new academic environment and put them at risk of failing. For example, several years ago fifteen newly arrived international postgraduate students who were enrolled in the same engineering course submitted assignments with extensive inappropriate use of sources and were referred to learning advisers for re-education. The students were angry, insulted, and affronted by accusations of academic dishonesty. All had used the 'copy and paste' style of citing references, some with attribution and others with none (Duff, Harris and Rogers 2006). Thus, even when referencing was taught within courses students were still at risk of failure and being referred to adjunct classes and individual appointments with learning advisers.

The adjunct approach was inherently flawed as a means of catering for students in general. Students who struggle to meet course expectations do not access optional classes, so at best this approach reaches a minority of the target group, and often only the most highly motivated and organised. Furthermore, students see such optional, additional classes as 'an extra' rather than essential learning with real outcomes in terms of success. Similarly students who do not see the need for self-help resources will not access them regardless of their ability to address key questions.

In 2007, these concerns led to a decision to embed the necessary skills into the relevant programs. The initial focus on referencing and writing skills was broadened to include career development skills to improve students' readiness for employment in Australia as Information Technology professionals. It was decided that the issues could best be met in

a dedicated core course.[1] To ensure that content retained discipline specificity, an IT academic staff member would have overall responsibility for the course, its assessment and a teaching role. This approach was considered in terms of the overall curriculum and desired outcomes. It was felt that the learning outcomes offered by such a dedicated course outweighed the loss of one specialist course.

As not all students are lacking the knowledge the course aims to develop, it was agreed that students would be able to apply for exemption, allowing for an additional specialist elective, if they could demonstrate required learning to the satisfaction of the course coordinator. In practice, few apply for exemption, including local students who apparently prefer the opportunity to hone their writing, scholarly practice and careers skills.

The course's focus on cross-cultural difference and inter-cultural communication respects the fact that many of our students, while planning a future in Australia, have limited exposure to Australian cultural norms. Anecdotal evidence from our students supports recent findings that a significant percentage of international students spend most of their time with others from their home country, often in shared housing, and experience little (if any) socialising with local students (Deakins 2009 p 209 citing Ward and Masgoret 2004). Consequently most have no way of knowing that their limited exposure to local cultural norms is likely to have an effect on their professional and life opportunities in Australia. Those who consider English their first language are similarly unaware of the impact of idiom, except in terms of trying to understand each other and Australians. In this course there is a strong focus on working in cross-cultural groups, students are introduced to Australian idiom and interests, and they are challenged to explore the relevance of their current context to their future working environment.

It is in this context of appreciating cultural difference and encouraging students to adapt to local norms as a means to reach personal goals that academic integrity becomes one aspect of developing students' capacities for scholarly practice. A skills-based approach to developing academic conduct, focussing on following the 'rules' of referencing, may inhibit this development. Abasi and Graves (2008) suggest that skills-based approaches to improving academic integrity carry an opportunity cost that prevents students' fuller development as scholars. They argue that these approaches disproportionately draw students' attention towards the 'rules' for avoiding plagiarism and away from the complexities of scholarly reflection, critique, and discourse. In addition, such approaches fail to address students' incorrect perceptions that published papers are factual, rather than subject to informed scrutiny and debate, which further inhibits the development of their scholarly practice. Furthermore, in a skills-based approach, these problems remain undisclosed and perhaps even unidentified (Abasi & Graves 2008). This silence obscures the highly informed, clearly articulated, polite, and discursive writing practices that constitute scholarly endeavour, creating obstacles to learning. If these obstacles are difficult for local students to negotiate, they are surely intractable for many of those students who are new to the tradition of informed critique and those learning in a second language.

Emerson, Rees & MacKay (2005) report on their experience of adopting skills-based approaches. In order to improve their students' academic skills, they introduced tutor clinics in which students have one on one discussion about referencing. While this approach was successful in reducing plagiarism, the students were overly reliant upon quotations, which supports Abasi & Graves' (2008) concern regarding students' acceptance of publications as factual and its cost in terms of lost opportunity for development of scholarly discourse. Their students were honing skills rather than

[1] It is worth noting that communication courses with many of the same aims are delivered at undergraduate level; a distinguishing feature of the course described here is the emphasis on addressing intercultural difference in order to better prepare postgraduate students for a professional IT career in a Western context.

developing knowledge and capacities for observation, reflection and critique. We aim to provide means of ensuring students connect their writing and thinking with the creation of knowledge and meaning.

3. Design approach

The course's starting point is the students' end point: overt recognition that students, most of whom are newly arrived international postgraduates, plan to apply as professionals for work in Australia. Thus, like others (Stierer 1997), we leverage the students' commitment to professional literacy in the development of scholarly practice. The explicit link between class activities and professional and scholarly practices fosters student commitment as it gives them an opportunity to see that class activities have meaning in the wider social and professional contexts. In addition, beneficial pragmatic outcomes are possible as these students are seeking explicit knowledge of Australian work expectations and job application processes.

A core element of this course is its focus on students developing communication skills that will transfer to other academic and professional situations. They collaboratively review each others' work to support the development of submissions that meet professional and academic standards. Most students are accustomed to working alone and are initially reluctant to provide any constructive and critical feedback to peers. However, reviewing peers is a reliable and valid approach to improving the quality of a student's own writing (Topping et al. 2000; Lundstrom & Baker 2009) and good preparation for work in Australian organisations. We therefore embed it throughout the course's assessment.

We adopted a three-stage, assessment-first course development methodology. Firstly, we overtly and clearly connected relevant and highly desired professional skills to the course's learning outcomes. Secondly, we designed assessment to ensure learning outcomes were met. Finally, we designed constructivist, transformative learning activities to support the course's assessment.

Team teaching

The course is taught by a team of teachers in thirteen workshops, each bringing unique expertise and participating in the scaffolding of assessment tasks.

- A staff member from the School of Computer and Information Science (CIS), usually the Course Coordinator, provides disciplinary context and attends all classes.
- Careers advisers attend the first three workshops, explaining Australian professional expectations and highlighting the importance of transferable skills.
- Library staff attend the next two workshops, providing training in information literacy and bibliographic management.
- Learning Advisers attend the remaining eight workshops, teaching Australian idiom, academic practices and language proficiency.

Thus, in each class two teachers are present and work as a team. The CIS staff member highlights connections to disciplinary specificities through the design of assessment and the use of relevant examples in class. The team-teaching approach is a key feature of the

course as it provides opportunities for collaborative scholarly discussion. For example, the CIS staff member may ask insightful questions of the other teachers in order to uncover further detail or to clarify content. It also creates opportunities for classroom debate, discussion and intellectual play between staff, creating a context in which is it clear that students may engage in similar practices.

Table 1: Timeline of assessment

Week	Assessment submissions	
1		
2		
3	Career development	Cover letter and resume
4		Small group review
5		Individual reflection
6	Technical report	Draft
7		Independent peer review
8		Final submission
9		
10	Conference paper	Draft
11		
12		Independent peer review
13	Annotated bibliography	Final submission
14	Conference paper	Final submission

It is within this light-hearted yet collegial context that the expectations and demands of the Australian academic and professional contexts are made explicit and practices common to both contexts are fostered (for example, teamwork, peer review, etc). Students develop new approaches to learning and discourse in a safe and supportive learning environment.

Assessment

The course has four assessment items: career development, technical report, conference paper and annotated bibliography (see Table 1: Timeline of assessment). At the commencement of each study period, exemplary submissions from previous course deliveries and the assessment criteria are provided via the course website.

The career development, technical report and conference paper assessment items each have three submission components and the annotated bibliography has one submission component. Although this seems complex it means that at each stage of assessment

students have the opportunity to write a draft and receive peer feedback on that draft so that their final submission is enriched by giving and receiving student feedback.

Peer review is a key component of our assessment approach. As noted above, it is a reliable and valid approach to developing students' writing (Lundstrom & Baker 2009; Topping et al. 2000). Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans (1999) identified guidelines for practitioners which frame our approach:

- Students require a guided opportunity to learn how to review peers' work and to experience the benefits of both reviewing and receiving reviews, prior to conducting it for assessment. We provide this opportunity and task familiarity through the annotated bibliography assessment.
- The peer review component of this assessment is conducted in class under the guidance of teaching staff, who motivate scholarly commitment to the activity and who influence the quality of the peer feedback. We also use a pre-determined feedback sheet.
- In the first few weeks, all students read the same papers, which provides an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the feedback sheet in the context of shared background knowledge.
- In week five, students select their own readings (as required for the conference paper assessment) in order to develop information literacy. Thus, they also apply the feedback sheet to annotated bibliographies of unfamiliar papers, learning that the hallmarks of quality scholarship can be effectively identified without detailed background knowledge of the topic area under discussion.
- Finally, we assess the peer review that they provide for the technical report and conference paper assessments. This encourages a higher standard of scholarly feedback and it enables the teaching team to critique the students' conceptions and conduct.

Annotated bibliography

The course commences with the annotated bibliography, which is not submitted until the end of the course. It requires weekly reading, analysis, critique and reflection. Each week students read a paper, so that a minimum of twelve papers have been read by the end of the semester, providing the literature for the conference paper assignment (weekly annotated readings culminate in a full paper with references). Four of the papers are selected by the course coordinator and include an inspirational biographical interview, a paper outlining common mistakes made in technical documentation, and two papers relating to the conference paper assignment topic. The students use the library's research databases to select the remaining eight for themselves.

For each paper, the students use a template to record annotations (we change the template each delivery to discourage academic misconduct). The template requires students to comment on such scholarly concepts as

- their search strategy (identifying improvements if possible)
- the credibility of the papers' authors
- whether there is a perceivable bias in the paper
- whether the paper was peer reviewed prior to publication
- the paper's argument
- the paper's utility in terms of future assignments
- whether the paper supports the argument the student is forming for their conference paper submission
- which of UniSA's graduate qualities were further developed by reading the paper
- whether the student would recommend the paper to another student.

We divide the class into two groups (A and B) and the annotations are then peer reviewed in class on an alternating basis (see Table 2: Annotated bibliography tasks). This provides an opportunity for students to share resources and expertise.

Table 2: Annotated bibliography tasks

Week	Reading selected by	Guided peer review
1		
2	Course coordinator	Group A reviews Group B
3		Group B reviews Group A
4		Group A reviews Group B
5		Group B reviews Group A
6	Individual students	Group A reviews Group B
7		Group B reviews Group A
8		Group A reviews Group B
9		Group B reviews Group A
10		Group A reviews Group B
11		Group B reviews Group A
12		Group A reviews Group B
13		Group B reviews Group A
		Final submission

Initially, the peer review activity is challenging as students may take time to comprehend the importance of critiquing and revealing shortcomings in peers' work. However, over time and under guidance (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans 1999) students comprehend the service they are providing and engage in increasingly unbiased and critical review of peers' work. These weekly, guided peer review activities build the students' capabilities for the peer reviews submitted and assessed as components of the technical report and the conference paper assignments.

At the end of the semester, students collate and submit their weekly annotations. Thus, this assignment is a staged approach to developing information literacy and academic critique and discourse.

We assess this assignment according to the breadth of reading undertaken, attention to instructions, detail, and presentation. Pedagogical outcomes include the further development of information literacy, capacity for scholarly reflection, discussion, reading and writing (Dochy, Segers & Sluijsmans 1999; Lundstrom & Baker 2009; Topping et al. 2000).

Career development

The Career Development assignment is the first assignment to be assessed.

Cover letter and resume requires students to complete an application for a position. It is assessed according to how well a student met Australian career market standards (whether the student is the best applicant for the position is not assessed).

It enables students to differentiate between the expectations of the Australian careers market and that of their home countries, and to develop professional language and literacy.

Small group review is conducted during class. Groups of three or four students review a bundle of applications. Under a tight time limit (ten minutes), the groups evaluate, short-list and provide feedback to the applicants. The groups are assessed on attention to detail.

This component requires students to act in a Human Resources role, engaging in rapid decision-making and provision of feedback. The activity demonstrates the importance of clearly articulated and professionally presented cover letters and resumes.

Individual reflection is a brief reflection (200-500 words) on this assignment's learning outcomes and how these outcomes relate to UniSA's Graduate Qualities (see Appendix A). This component is assessed for appropriate use of personal and reflective language, attention to detail, and plans for students' self-development. It enables students to develop informal and reflective personal language and discourse. As reflection facilitates lifelong learning and career development, an opportunity for students to engage in it is indispensable.

Technical report

The technical report is the second assignment to be assessed. It requires students to study existing software in order to reverse-engineer a software requirements specification document consistent with the IEEE's documentation convention (IEEE 1998). This documentation convention is later encountered by those students undertaking projects prior to graduation and also by those who later adopt a career in this area. For students in neither of these categories, exposure to the use of templates in standardised documentation practices is a valuable professional learning outcome.

In order to support task engagement, the software is a simple online game; we have used Sudoku and Minesweeper, and an online jigsaw puzzle is being used in the course's current delivery.

The draft requires students to work in their own time to develop a 1000-1200 word outline which is submitted to a discussion board. Those students who fail to submit a draft are excluded from participating in the peer review component.

This component promotes habits of timely preparation of assignments and facilitates the peer review. We do not assess the draft.

Peer review for the technical report focuses on technical literacy. It requires students to use a feedback template to review peers' technical report drafts. Each student reviews two peers and is reviewed by two peers. They provide feedback on detail

and completeness, and record two learning outcomes (i.e. what the reviewer learnt from observing the writer's draft), two suggestions for improvements and summary comments.

Due to disparities in reviewers' academic abilities, upon receiving feedback students must perform a qualitative evaluation in order to determine its applicability. If they have not already done so, this evaluation provides further motivation for students to examine the assignment's specifications and assessment criteria in detail.

When assessing the peer reviews, we consider the comprehension of the reading, the standard of feedback (how much detail was provided, were examples and corrections provided, were the assignment specifications referred to, were class exercises referred to, and so on) and the reviewer's learning outcomes.

Final submission requires students to complete their drafts, incorporating any peer feedback they evaluated as constructive.

In addition to the professional learning outcomes outlined above, the final submission provides students with an opportunity to reflect objectively upon their work with reference to the standard observed in peers' drafts and, if necessary, to make improvements.

Conference paper

The conference paper is the third assignment to be assessed and it dovetails with the annotated bibliography. It requires students to analyse readings in order to build a conventional academic argument. The IEEE's journal authoring guidelines are used as a template. The topic requires students to find correlations between the transferable career skills from early in the course and a pertinent disciplinary topic (for example, agile software development methodologies).

Through its requirements, this assignment delivers several learning outcomes: information literacy, further reflection on transferable career skills, scholarly reading and writing (analysis, critique, argument, vocabulary, voice) and academic literacy. These outcomes provide a strong foundation for subsequent courses in the students' programs.

The conference paper follows the same pattern as the technical report.

The draft is 1500-2500 words and must be submitted if students plan to participate in the peer review component.

Peer review for the conference paper focuses on academic literacy. Students consider breadth of reading, clarity of understanding, the structure of the argument, expression, use of formatting guidelines and information literacy. Again, analysis of the suggestions received is essential prior to developing the final submission.

Although the peer review template requires students to consider new grounds for critique, we assess using the same criteria for the technical report peer review (comprehension, the standard of feedback and the reviewer's learning outcomes). However, by the time this review is submitted, students have had ample opportunity to develop their capacities for critique. Thus, we overtly assess the conference paper peer reviews to a higher standard.

Final submission requires students to amend their drafts according to feedback. It is assessed according to structure, expression, breadth of reading, depth of discussion and consideration of peer feedback.

As for the technical report, the final submission provides students with an opportunity to reflect objectively upon their work with reference to the standard observed in peers' drafts and, if necessary, to make improvements.

Learning outcomes

Exemplary submissions of former students, the formal peer review exercises and the guided informal peer review exercises achieve three key outcomes. Firstly, when informed by exemplars, the discussions emerging from guided peer review heighten students' awareness that although published research findings establish state-of-the-art, they remain subject to informed analysis, critique and perhaps even redundancy. Secondly, exposure to peers' work develops a frame of reference and, when coupled with a requirement for reflection on learning outcomes, enables students to develop a more objective perspective on their own writing. Finally, students are able to benchmark their performance.

Staff play an essential role as they engage students in discussion, uncover meaning, guide the use of standard feedback templates, and ensure students focus on professional, technical and scholarly practices rather than language or integrity. Thus, while students develop capacity for informed critique of peers' work, they also learn that

- Research findings are not unequivocal truths and must be integrated into their knowledge, and reported on, with careful consideration
- Objectivity is an essential component in evaluating writing
- Benchmarking their own performance is essential to comprehending its quality.

Academic integrity

The course includes four one-hour lectures which focus on scholarly practice.

The first of these is a presentation on the benefits of good professional and academic conduct and the costs of poor conduct. To illustrate good practice, contemporary publication practices are outlined. Among other topics, authorship, the double-blind review process, journal impact factors, paper retractions, and the role of publication in the development of an academic's reputation and career are explained. To provide contrast, notorious real life cases of poor academic and professional practice are discussed (examples include the Piltdown man, the Challenger space shuttle disaster, and Jan Schön's falsified research findings) and the costs to individual people and wider society are detailed.

The second lecture focuses on evaluation of information, establishing criteria that will inform the selection and use of research literature. Students are presented with four readings from one disciplinary area with varying bias and reliability. Firstly, in searching for an answer to a set question, the students rapidly scan the papers. Secondly, they are asked to determine which of the readings offers greater academic reliability and whether this changes their answer to the set question.

The third lecture is delivered by library staff and is also a presentation on evaluating readings. The lecture is couched in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary sources of information. Research databases and bibliographic management tools are introduced and demonstrated. The library staff use multiple choice questions and 'clickers' to reveal students' understandings of the content delivered, providing opportunities for reflection in the class and for students to benchmark their own answers against that of the class as a whole.

Finally, the fourth lecture recalls the examples from the first lecture and provides cultural context for academic practices. The role that referencing plays in "showing off" a student's intellectual achievements is explained. Turnitin (2009) is introduced and demonstrated, with an academic integrity report presented and discussed. Finally, UniSA's penalties for academic misconduct are detailed.

The lectures' lessons are realised in class and in the assessment process by our use of Turnitin. We use Turnitin for each of the major submission items: the cover letter and resume, and the final submissions of the technical report and the conference paper. The Turnitin reports are carefully considered so that clearly inadvertent cases (e.g. the use of many common phrases) are separated from the more serious cases (e.g. full sentences or paragraphs copied from source documents or other students' submissions). In responding to the serious cases, we sort them into two groups according to the degree of copying that has occurred.

Students in the first group are those who may have inadvertently breached requirements. They are supplied with Turnitin's academic integrity report on their submission. We automatically apply a penalty but we do not make a permanent record of the incident. The students may contest the penalty in a meeting with the School's Academic Integrity Officer (a senior member of academic staff), however doing so creates a permanent university-wide record. In spite of supporting course content, students in this group are usually poorly skilled at paraphrasing and writing in English, so depend heavily on the wording in source documents. Students are referred to online learning resources.

Students in the second group are those who seem to have knowingly breached requirements. They too are supplied with Turnitin's academic integrity report, and are informed in writing that they are required to attend a meeting with the School's Academic Integrity Officer and the Course Coordinator. Students are advised that they may invite a student support officer from the student union to attend the meeting. At these meetings, students are asked to explain how their work came to share so much content with other documents. The outcomes of these meetings vary depending upon the findings. Penalties range from a re-submit with a penalty, to zero for the assignment, to zero for the course (for repeat offenders).

4. Discussion

In terms of student feedback, the course has been a resounding success, as evidenced by the following verbatim comments collected via UniSA's standardised course feedback questionnaire:

- This course is good to give you a sense of thinking and improves your writing, reading and searching abilities.
- Provide international students basic knowledge in academic that will be very useful in their study.

- I think [the course does] not need any improvement in the future because this subject already has a good form.
- A really well organised course. It was an absolute pleasure to do. I really enjoyed it and learnt a lot - further building on my skills.
- This course gave students about new skills and knowledge in writing skills and ability to adapt in new environ.
- Fabulous course to study. This gain the overall knowledge of the professional skills!!!!!
- As an international student, initially I don't know anything about way of teaching and studying in Australia but after going through this course, I felt very much comfortable with studying here. As this course taught us how to search papers from online database, how to study them, how to prepare technical & conference papers & most importantly how to prepare resume in Australian way. Simply I can say this, the knowledge I gained from this course is invaluable for me.
- The lecturer and tutor provide a new way of teaching for students. I am interested in this course. I have more chance to express my idea in the tutorial and small group.

These comments are typical of the positive feedback we have received, which overwhelmingly demonstrates the students' enthusiasm for both the content and the pedagogical approaches we have adopted. They also indicate the value of using students' professional goals as a platform for the development of academic literacies.

We have received comparatively little negative feedback; the ratio of positive to negative comments is 2:1. However, the few negative comments we have received highlight the burden of the assessment activities. In spite of this, we have not considered amending the assessment as it provides a robust structure in which students are motivated early and continuously.

Anecdotal feedback from academic staff teaching subsequent courses is also good, with staff able to easily distinguish between those students who have taken our course and those who have not.
The course is currently in its fourth delivery in two years. Thus, at this stage we have not attempted to find a correlation between it and the incidence of academic misconduct in the School of Computer and Information Science; it is simply too early to attempt definitive statements about its impact as too few of its students have graduated. However, the course is acknowledged as providing adequate transition to Australian academic and professional culture in addition to robust scholarly skills and practices. This is evidenced by the course recently being offered to engineering students, and providing a model for a similar course under consideration for the Division of Business.

5. Conclusion

This paper reports on an approach to improving academic conduct which is premised upon students' professional aspirations. The course overtly specifies Western professional and academic practices and provides opportunities for students to identify how these practices contrast with their prior experience. Academic and professional conduct are detailed in lecture content and explored during workshop classes. Workshops are taught by academic staff with differing areas of expertise which enables the modelling of scholarly discussion. Information literacy, critique and discourse are developed through weekly annotated readings which culminate in a conference paper. Critique and discourse are further developed through peer review activities which also provide opportunity for students to benchmark their performance and to further develop reflection and objectivity. Professional and academic literacies are fostered via the career development, technical report and conference paper assessments.

In the future, we hope to gain an understanding of whether and how the course impacts on the incidence of academic misconduct. We also aim to develop a similar course for UniSA's Division of Business.

The course receives overwhelmingly positive feedback from staff and from students, many of whom clearly see its relevance to their personal goals and to their future studies. We present it here for the discussion and critique of our colleagues in the hope that it may undergo further refinement.

Acknowledgements

We thank three anonymous reviewers for their feedback and suggestions for future teaching improvements.

Appendix A

In order to inform the development of teaching practice, Australian universities are increasingly adopting profiles of desirable graduate characteristics (Dansie, Fursenko, Gelade, Itzstein, Li & Wahlstrom 2005). At UniSA, *Graduate Qualities* are accounted for in program, course and assessment design, and are expressed in terms of expectations. A graduate of UniSA

1. Operates effectively with and upon a body of knowledge of sufficient depth to begin professional practice
2. Is prepared for life-long learning in pursuit of personal development and excellence in professional practice
3. Is an effective problem solver, capable of applying logical, critical, and creative thinking to a range of problems
4. Can work both autonomously and collaboratively as a professional
5. Is committed to ethical action and social responsibility as a professional and citizen
6. Communicates effectively in professional practice and as a member of the community
7. Demonstrates international perspectives as a professional and as a citizen.

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