

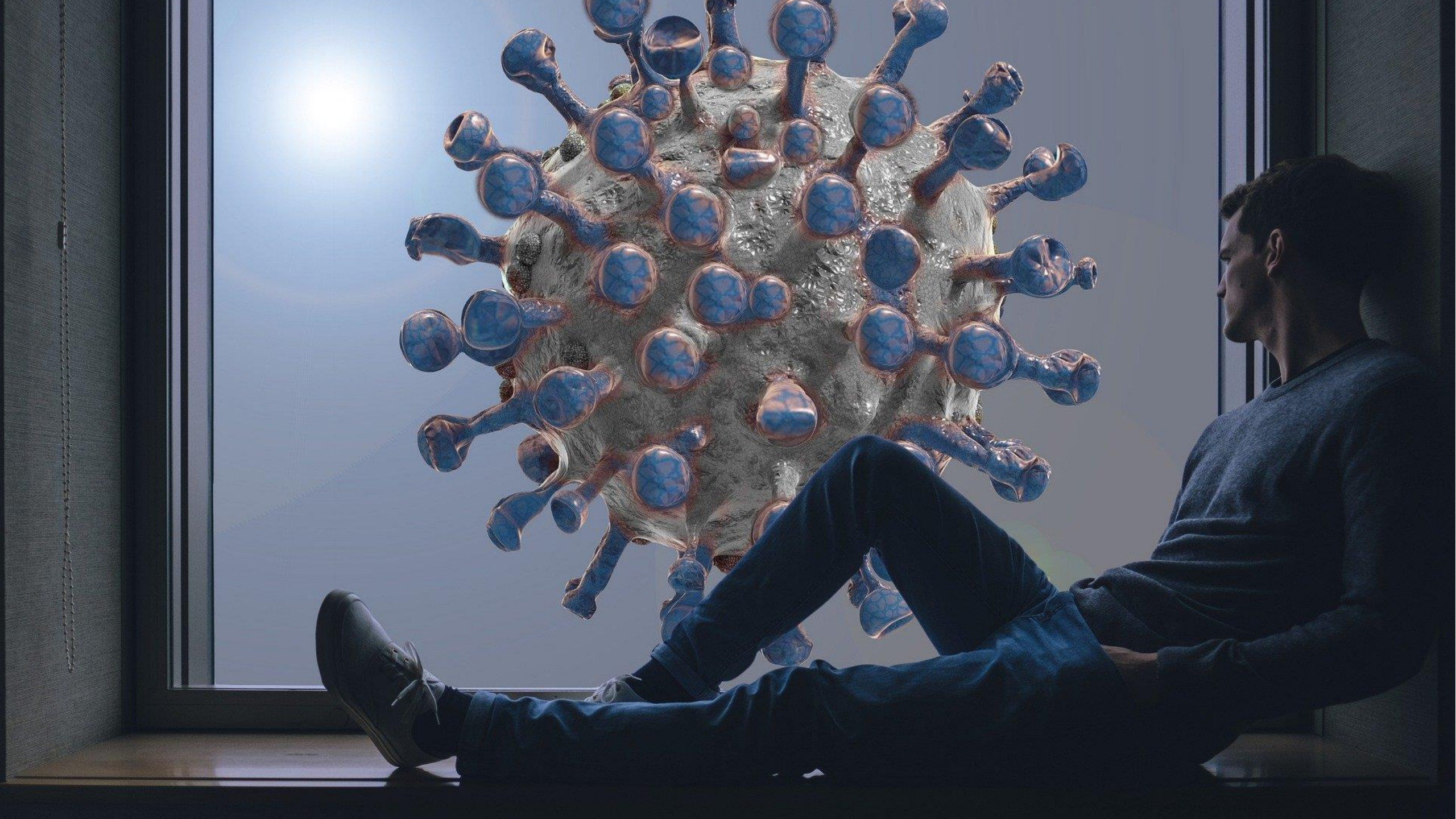
Reimagining assessment beyond restrictions and surveillance

Phillip (Phill) Dawson

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Digital Learning (CRADLE)

Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia







5 things to
take from this
presentation

1: Assessment is the site of mass
suspicionless surveillance

2: Assessment is also the site of mass
restriction

3: We need to balance academic
integrity and assessment security

4: We are at a critical juncture where
we can reimagine assessment

5: Let's make our restrictions authentic
and minimize our surveillance





Online learning good practice

TEQSA

STRATEGIES FOR USING ONLINE INVIGILATED EXAMS

Author: Associate Professor Phillip Dawson, Deakin University



← Algebra Assignment

$$(i) \frac{(2x-3)}{5} + \frac{(4x-1)}{10} = 1$$
$$(iii) \ 5x^2 + 3x - 9 = 0$$

$$\frac{(2x-3)}{5} + \frac{(4x-1)}{10} = 1$$

$$x = \frac{17}{8} = 2\frac{1}{8} = 2.125$$

Get step-by-step solution



We need to balance academic integrity and assessment security

- Academic integrity is positive, educative and values-based
- Assessment security is adversarial, punitive and evidence-based
- In tension, but not a dichotomy





Fundamental values of academic integrity

- Honesty
- Trust
- Fairness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Courage

Assessment security:

“measures taken to harden assessment against attempts to cheat. This includes approaches to detect and evidence attempts to cheat, as well as measures to make cheating more difficult.”

(Dawson, 2021)

Addressing cheating requires...

Academic Integrity

- Trusting
- Educative
- Proactive

Think 'crime prevention'

Assessment security

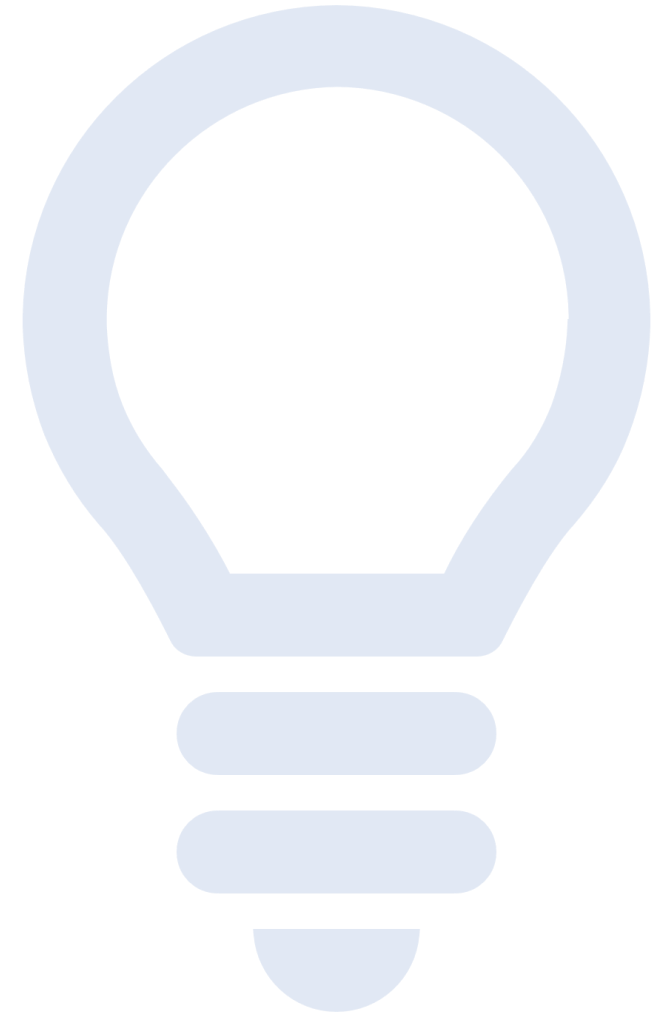
- Detecting
- Punitive
- Proactive or reactive

'policing' or 'surveillance'

It's a balance, not a dichotomy



7 suggestions for reimagining



PHILLIP DAWSON

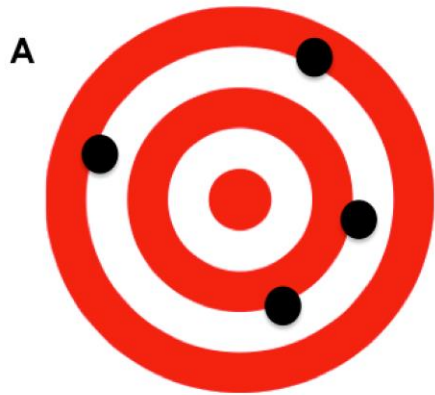
DEFENDING ASSESSMENT SECURITY IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Preventing E-Cheating and
Supporting Academic Integrity
in Higher Education

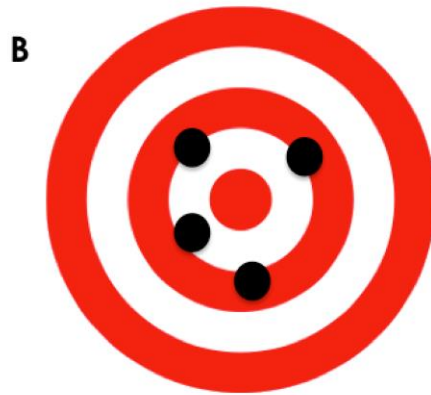


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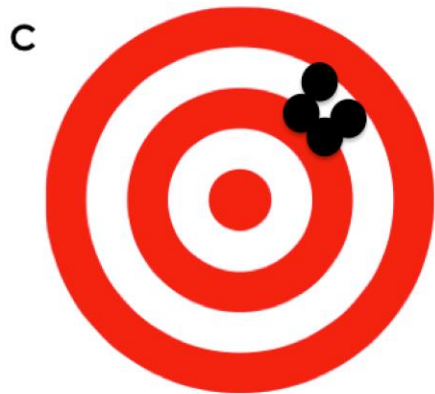
Re-imagining University Assessment in a Digital World



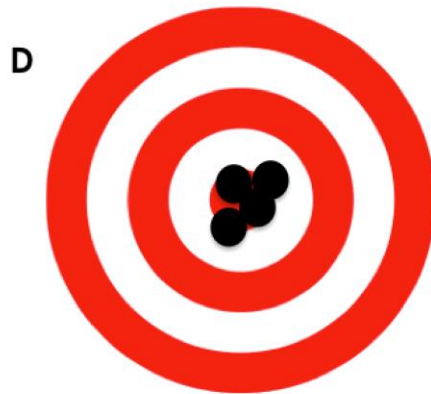
Unreliable & invalid



Unreliable but valid?



Reliable but invalid



Reliable & valid

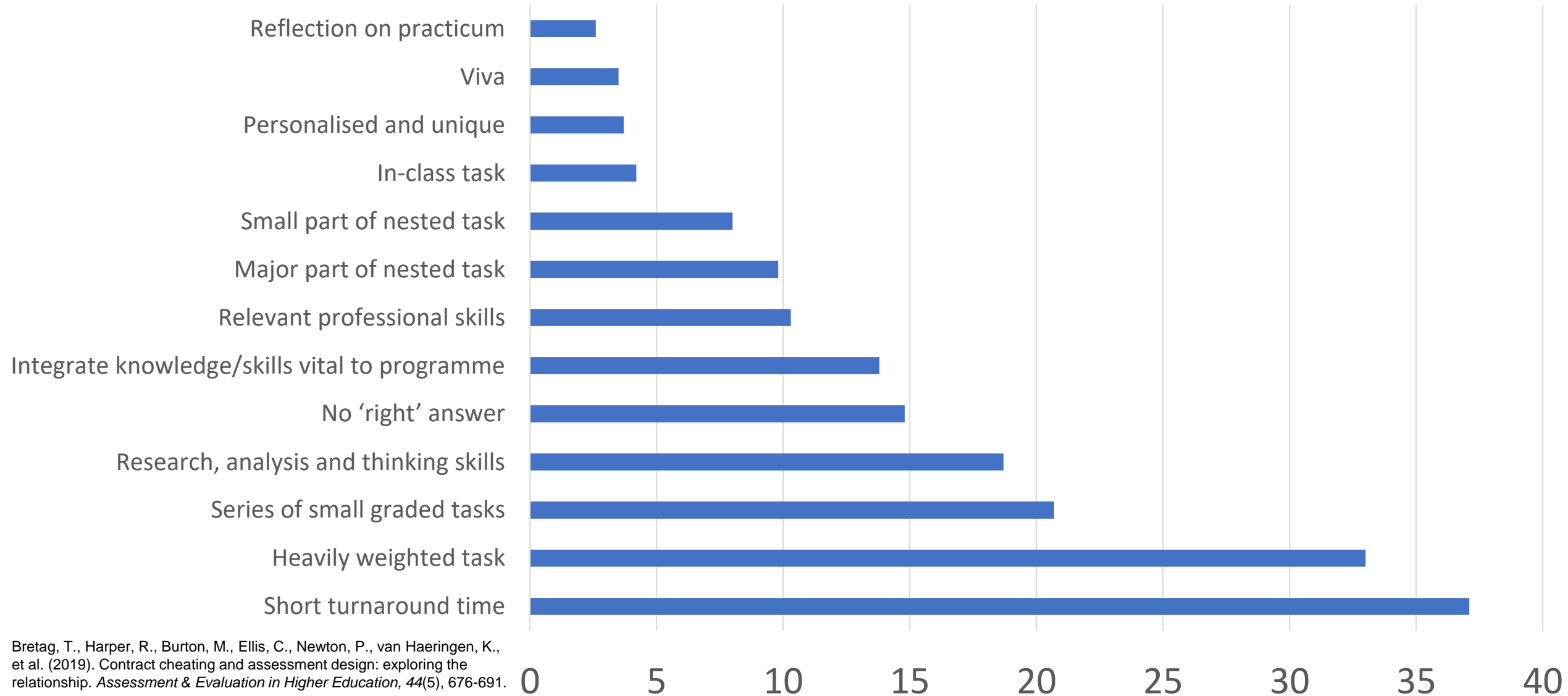
Assessment design trumps assessment security

It's only worth securing reliable and valid assessment of learning

When it's assessment *for* learning, focus on developing academic integrity

Listen to students.

Students' perceptions of the likelihood of contract cheating (%)



Listen to professional cheaters.

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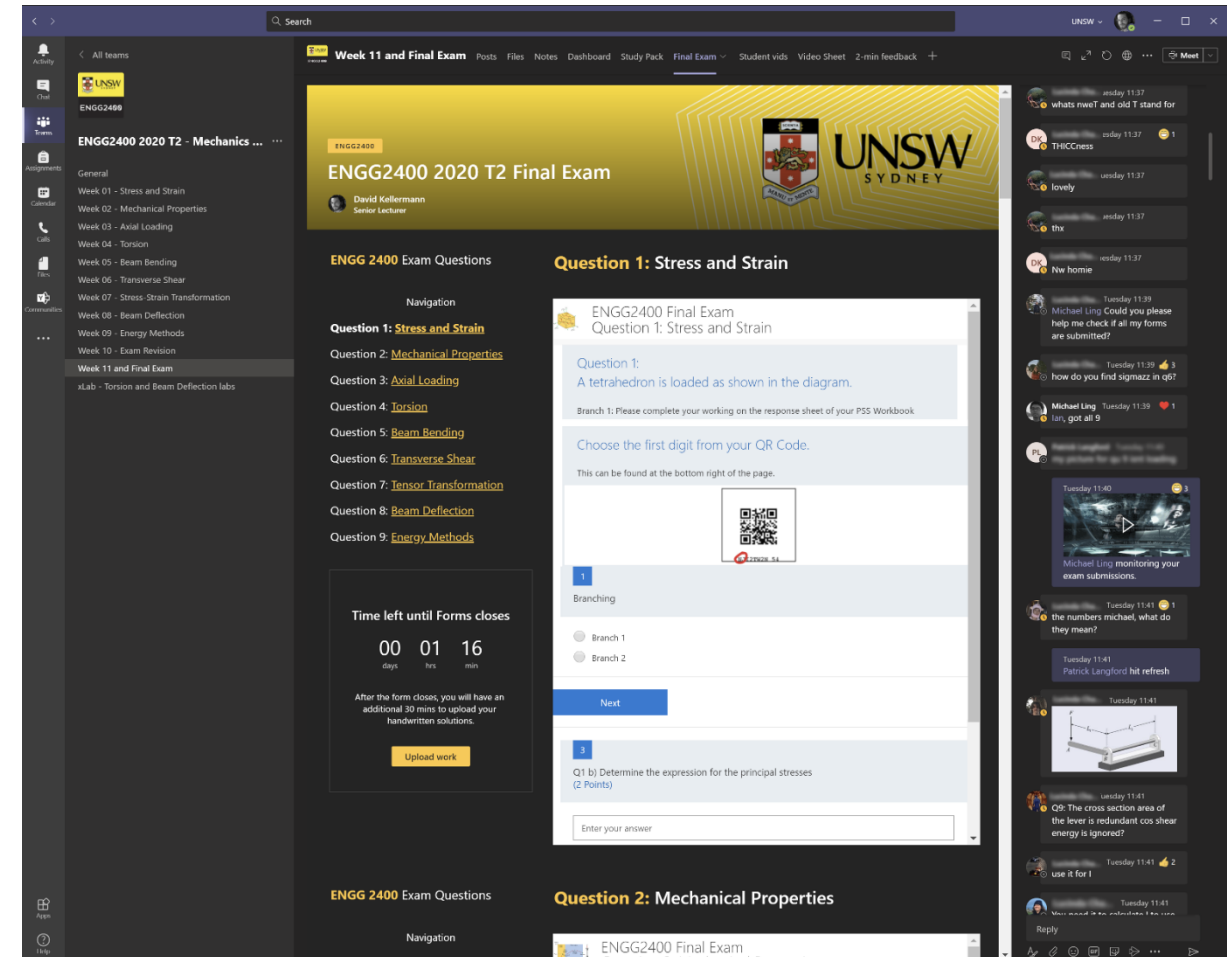
Make restrictions authentic:

Authentic *assessment* is great but it doesn't stop cheating. Authentic *restrictions* might.

Restrictions need to be enforced, and therefore make assessment harder to secure.

Authentic restrictions reduce the 'attack surface'.

Allowing students tools, collaboration and/or information reduces the options for cheating.



<https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/academic-integrity/case-studies>

David Kellermann UNSW @DrKellermann

Talk with students

Our study using vivas with markers across four diverse discipline found 100% cheating detection rate

(Too good to be true? Needs replication before we publish but it's a good sign)

(Too time consuming? Yes, but we need to think programmatically...)



Make assessment security programmatic

‘Cheat-proofing’ every act of assessment is probably impossible and definitely a bad idea.

Focus on securing those acts of assessment that matter to the degree program outcomes.

Focus on developing academic integrity in the others.



Consider random audit

‘Cheat-proofing’ every act of assessment is probably impossible and definitely a bad idea.

Consider random audit of individual students’ work.

The possibility of an audit is associated with more honest behavior in other contexts (e.g. tax)





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CRADLE suggests ...

'Academic integrity, assessment security and digital assessment'



WHAT IS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ASSESSMENT SECURITY?

With a rapid shift to online learning, many educators have raised concerns about student cheating. Without face-to-face examinations, how can we verify that students have completed their own work, under the circumstances we have prescribed? These concerns raise issues related to academic integrity and assessment security. Academic integrity focuses on equipping learners with the capabilities and values necessary to conduct ethical scholarship. In contrast, assessment security focuses on hardening assessment against attempts to cheat, and on detecting any cheating that has occurred. Both are necessary to ensure that students who obtain university degrees have met the required outcomes.

THE RESEARCH

The CRADLE team have conducted a range of projects on assessment security and academic integrity, including work on detecting contract cheating (including a [CRADLE Suggests resource](#)), the quality of contract cheated work, and the security of online examinations. The following advice comes from CRADLE research as well as other cited sources from the literature.



Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning

CRADLE suggests is a series of briefings from the [Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning](#) (CRADLE), which translates our own research into practice-based possibilities.

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ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
2019, VOL. 44, NO. 5, 715–725
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2018.1531109>

Online learning good practice **TEQSA**

The prevention of contract cheating in an online environment

Author: Associate Professor Phillip Dawson, Deakin University

Contract cheating refers to students getting someone else to do their assessed work (Lancaster & Clarke, 2007). While the term has become closely associated with students buying custom essays online, contract cheating can occur with any task type, and need not involve a formal contract or payment. In online learning it can be difficult to tell if students have contract cheated, because it is harder to observe students working, and contract cheating assignments are bespoke creations made specifically for the student. This guide dispels some myths about contract cheating and offers practical suggestions for how to prevent it through assessment design, detection, and partnerships with students.

Three myths about contract cheating

Myth 1: Contract cheating is very rare

While the vast majority of students never contract cheat, the rate of contract cheating is high enough to warrant serious attention. In one large-scale Australian survey, around 6% of university students surveyed self-reported that they had contract cheated (Bretag, Harper, Burton, Ellis, Newton, Rozenberg, et al., 2019). The rate of contract cheating appears to be comparable at Australian Non-University Higher Education Providers (NUHEPs), with 7% of NUHEP students surveyed admitting to contract cheating (Bretag et al., 2020). A key difference between students at the two types of institution was that NUHEP students surveyed were twelve times more likely to use commercial cheating services compared to students at universities.

Myth 2: Contract cheating can be 'designed out' of assessment

Convincing-sounding arguments are sometimes put forward that contract cheating can be eradicated through assessment design. Approaches like authentic assessment (assessment that represents the real-world practice of a profession or discipline), short turnaround times for tasks, and replacing take-home tasks with exams, are common proposed solutions. These approaches do not reduce rates of contract cheating. Students can purchase authentic assessments just as easily as traditional assessments like essays (Ellis et al., 2019). Contract cheating services can meet very tight deadlines (Wallace & Newton, 2014). And exams do not protect against contract cheating; if anything, they may be the site of more contract cheating and more undetected contract cheating than take-home assignments (Harper, Bretag, & Rundle, 2020). However, while assessment design cannot make contract cheating impossible, it can help improve detection rates and make students

CRADLE suggests ...

'How to detect contract cheating'



THE RESEARCH PROJECT

In 2016 and 2017 the CRADLE team worked with markers from across Deakin on experimental research to improve the detection of contract cheating. Together, we identified the following recommendations on how to improve the detection of contract cheating:



Tell markers to look for/be aware of contract cheating when marking

Our study shows markers are much more likely to detect contract cheating if told to be aware of it and to look for it when marking.

Tell students you know contract cheating is out there and your markers are looking for it

Advise them that under Deakin policy it is regarded as serious breach of integrity.

Ask markers to use their discipline knowledge to spot contract cheating

Expertise in contract cheating detection is not enough.

Look for lack of appropriate discipline theory

For example, when an assessment task asked for psychological theory on development, contract cheating sites used medical development theory instead

Contract cheating assignments often lacked key theorists covered in unit

Look for missing sections

Contract cheating assignments lacked particularly tables, figures & reflections; reflections were done particularly poorly (if at all).

Think about assessment task structure

Essay tasks are the easiest for contract cheating sites to produce; consider setting non-traditional tasks

Contract cheating sites often did not follow instructions well; consider using templates or providing helpful guidance to students.

Consider vivas (or alternate assessment)

Follow-up studies show that it was much harder for students to contract cheat when they were asked to engage in a dialogue with markers about their work.

Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning

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FIND MORE

Dawson, P., & Sutherland-Smith, W. (2018). [Can markers detect contract cheating? Results from a pilot study. Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 43\(2\), 286-293. doi:10.1080/02602938.2017.1336746.](#)

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OPEN ACCESS

Check for updates

Can training improve marker accuracy at detecting contract cheating? A multi-disciplinary pre-post study

Phillip Dawson^a and Wendy Sutherland-Smith^b

Routledge
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Online learning good practice **TEQSA**

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