



## **Learning with students about academic integrity: poster**

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### ***Poster abstract***

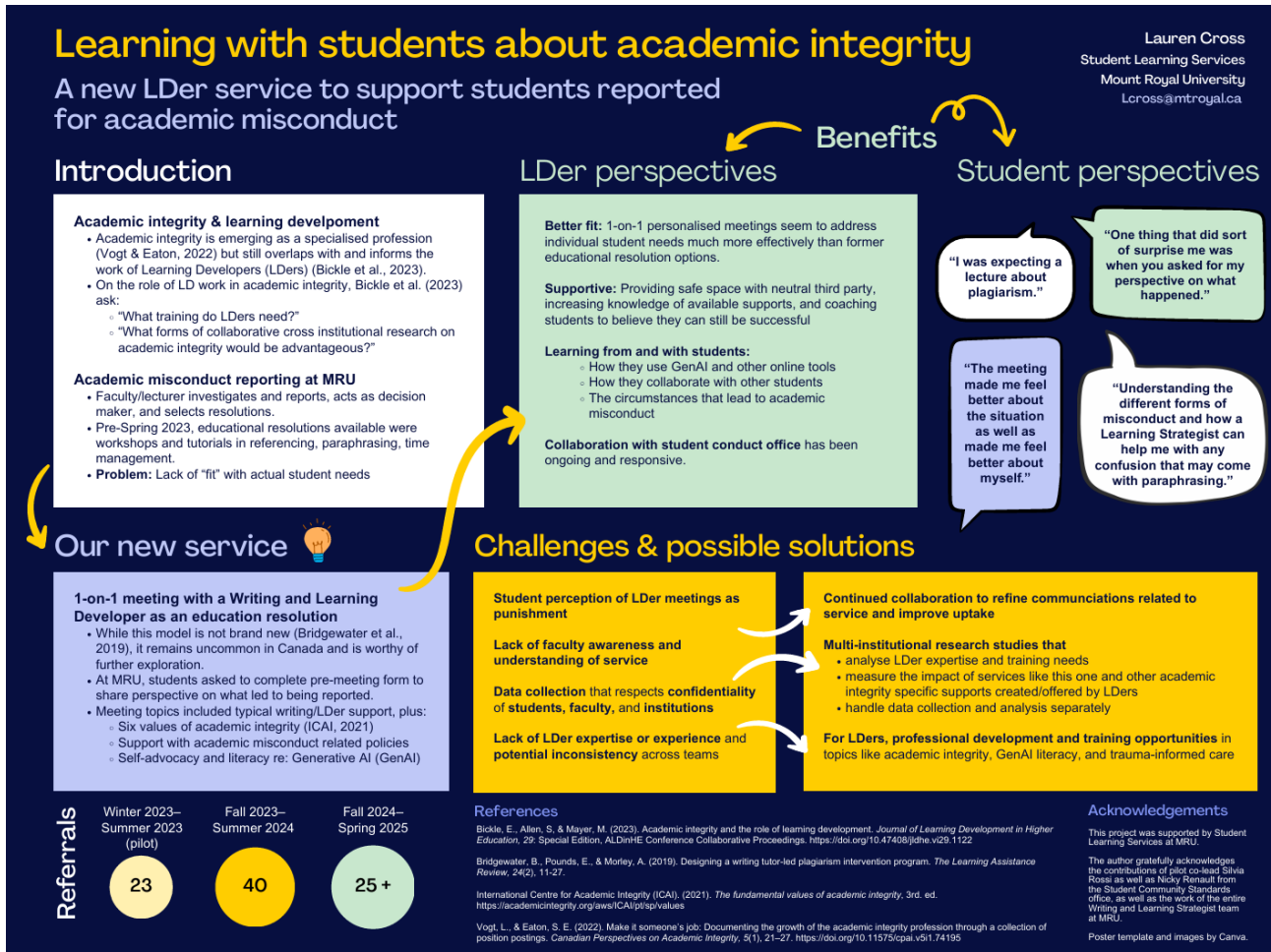
While academic integrity as a specialised profession in higher education is still emerging (Vogt and Eaton, 2022; Mackenzie, 2024), learning developers (LDers) perform many duties to teach and cultivate academic integrity at their institutions. As Bickle, Allen and Mayer (2023, p.1) highlight, many LDers ‘have designed and delivered courses, quizzes, tutorials, and events to promote academic integrity’ and encourage ethical scholarly practices. At their ALDCon23 session about the role of learning development (LD) in academic integrity, Bickle, Allen and Mayer posed questions that are still pressing today, such as, ‘what training do learning developers need?’ and ‘what forms of collaborative cross institutional research on academic integrity would be advantageous?’.

This poster (see Figure 1) responds to Bickle, Allen and Mayer’s session by sharing reflections on a new service our LD team launched in 2023 in partnership with our student conduct office. At our Canadian institution, instructors who report academic misconduct must select one or more ‘resolutions’, and a one-to-one meeting with an LDer is now one option. As LDers have no impact on institutional decisions around misconduct, we have attempted to create a neutral and safe space in these meetings for students to share their experience, deepen their understanding of academic integrity, and develop strategies to help them move forward more confidently in their studies and in contexts beyond higher education. While this model of LDer support is not brand new (Bridgewater, Pounds and Morley, 2019), it remains uncommon in Canada and is worthy of further exploration.

These meetings have offered us opportunities to learn directly from students about their generative AI and collaboration practices; however, our comfort with navigating these conversations came in part from our own professional interests in academic integrity,

suggesting more training for LDers is needed. Quality assurance data and opportunities and challenges regarding formal research are also included.

Figure 1. Learning with students about academic integrity: the presenter’s poster.



**Keywords:** academic integrity; academic misconduct processes; developmental support; generative AI.

### Community response

This poster addressed a pressing challenge in a contemporary higher education unsettled by the presence of generative AI: how learning developers can meaningfully contribute to academic integrity processes beyond traditional prevention-focused approaches. Building on Bickle, Allen and Mayer’s questions about training needs and collaborative research in this area, the author presented her innovative model of partnership with student conduct offices, positioning learning developers as neutral facilitators (rather than disciplinary

agents) in post-misconduct conversations. The response to the poster reveals both the timeliness of this work and the varied approaches institutions are taking to integrate developmental support into academic integrity processes.

A comment from one participant highlighted an important gap that this model addresses – the traditional focus on preventing academic misconduct without adequately supporting students who find themselves within disciplinary processes. It suggests that the poster's framework could transform ad hoc referrals into systematic support pathways:

When I cover academic integrity in my LD sessions with students, I normally include something about what to do if they are suspected of academic misconduct. While we are trying to prevent misconduct to happen, it's really important for students to know about the disciplinary procedure involved, the institution's position (e.g. institutions and lecturers are not students' enemy; fairness and impartiality need to be maintained in the process), and the support mechanism available to students. At my institution, LDers are not formally brought into the procedure even though students may be informally referred to us by course tutors. That's why I find your model to bring in LD into the disciplinary procedure of academic misconduct as really encouraging (Robert Ping-Nan Chang).

The second comment demonstrates that this developmental approach is gaining traction across different contexts, though with variations in implementation. The tutorial-based response to minor or first offenses represents another evolution beyond purely punitive measures, perhaps suggesting a broader shift in how institutions conceptualise academic misconduct:

At my institution (Edinburgh Napier University), we run tutorials as part of the academic misconduct process. If it is a minor or first offence, then students have to attend a tutorial about academic integrity rather than being 'punished'. It's really interesting to hear about similar approaches at other institutions (Hannah Awcock).

The final response captures the broader implications of this work, recognising how positioning LDers as collaborative partners could reshape institutional culture around academic integrity by challenging traditional power dynamics and deficit-based assumptions about students who engage in academic misconduct:

It was great to hear about a structured and developmental approach to exploring academic integrity with students that was so positively framed and as such offered a developmental way to improve understanding and literacy. This collaborative, enhancement-focused way of including students in improving their understanding

and academic practice offers scope to change perceptions (institutionally as well as individually) of the very nature of academic misconduct, of learner agency and of the role of the institution in providing inclusive opportunities to support and nurture. (Vic Boyd)

The enthusiastic reception of this poster, which was awarded second prize at the conference, underscores the significant interest in, and need for, innovative approaches to academic integrity that position LDers as developmental partners. The varied responses, from practitioners seeking to formalise informal referral processes to those implementing tutorial-based interventions, demonstrate that this Canadian model not only addresses a widespread challenge in HE but also suggests that there is a need for more sophisticated approaches to academic misconduct that centre student success.

### **Next steps and additional questions**

The poster provokes a range of questions that might inspire future work in this area:

- How can institutions better integrate developmental approaches to student misconduct without compromising due process requirements?
- What role should learning developers play in policy development around academic misconduct procedures?
- What new forms of collaboration and support do students need as the boundaries of academic misconduct continue to shift in the age of generative AI?

### ***Author's reflection***

I hope as a field we can think more about ethical and realistic ways to collect data about the impact of support such as one-to-one tutorials for students reported for academic misconduct. I have found this to be delicate territory for data collection since academic misconduct can be a sensitive topic for many students, and different departments may have different interests when it comes to collecting and sharing data. For example, institutions and faculty may be concerned about reputational damage if the data from students reveals negative experiences with the academic misconduct process.

However, I also think it is important to recognize the value of these types of meetings with students without focusing on data and measurement. Through informal feedback from students and our own reflections, our LD team felt we had often helped students challenge their own negative feelings about an academic misconduct incident and the notion that one incident – whether intentional or unintentional – did not mean they were a ‘bad’ student or that any of the work they had done for that course or for their programme was devoid of value. In many meetings, this seemed to be exactly what students needed to hear; that is, academic misconduct did not have to be an identity they took on or a ‘dirty secret’ they carried forward.

For me and for my colleagues, as the poster title implies, these meetings have also offered us the opportunity to learn about what students are experiencing right now – the pressures they are navigating and the difficult decisions they are having to make – which has helped us confront some of our assumptions about students and what leads to a student being found responsible for academic misconduct. As the comment from Vic Boyd suggests, these conversations can change our own perceptions but also those of colleagues around us and of the institution more broadly. As LDers, if we want to nurture a culture of academic integrity at our institutions and in our field, we have a responsibility to share what we are learning from our work with students while respecting their privacy/confidentiality.

As Robert Ping-Nan Chang suggested in the comment above, LDers are not always formally involved in the academic misconduct process. Pursuing this type of formalised role for LDers can help us ensure we are working with students to help them understand, not only their responsibilities, but also their rights related to academic integrity policies and procedures, and to support them in developing their voices as they respond to these incidents, which have become increasingly complex with the rise of generative AI. Students must now reconsider what authorship and collaboration mean, both academically and professionally, and how they might track and document their (co-)writing and editing processes; they must also critically engage with course policies and instructor expectations related to AI and push for them to be clear and realistic, especially in light of the rapid and ongoing changes to generative AI technologies.

To be well positioned to work alongside students in this unstable and inconsistent environment, an LDer needs to be well-versed in these generative AI technologies, and familiar with recent academic integrity literature that will help them develop a personalized approach to working with students who are responding to (or hoping to prevent) allegations of academic misconduct. This, in part, means LDers need training around generative AI, including time to explore different tools – their capabilities as well as their limitations and ethical pitfalls. We may have our own reservations about AI (or wish to avoid it entirely), but if we do not have an up-to-date grasp on the technology available to students, how can we possibly hope to effectively develop students' skills as critical thinkers, effective learners, and ethical communicators while nurturing their commitment to integrity?

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The author did not use generative AI technologies in the creation of this manuscript.

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