



PRESS RELEASE:

TUTORS CALL ON BOARD OF STUDIES TO HELP ELIMINATE PLAGIARISM AND ROTE LEARNING

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“The NSW Board of Studies needs to work more closely with tutors in order to effectively manage the issue of plagiarism and rote learning on HSC Assessment Tasks” said ATA CEO, Mohan Dhall. Speaking following an ABC Lateline investigation, Mr Dhall said that working with the tuition sector would help assessors to understand what tutors do. He said ‘by ignoring the tuition sector, dominated as it is by teachers working after hours, the Board is not ensuring that robust systems are in place. It is appropriate for all mainstream educational authorities to work closely with the tuition sector. In this way the best interests of students can be placed first’.

An need for an assessment of the “All My Own Work”

The NSW Board of Studies defines plagiarism as:

“Plagiarism is when you pretend that you have written or created a piece of work that someone else originated. It is cheating, it is dishonest, and it could jeopardise your HSC exam results.”

From a tutoring perspective plagiarism occurs when tutors create dependencies by doing the work of the student. Whilst the NSW Board of Studies does make explicit reference to tutors doing the work of students as an example of plagiarism it does not address the issue of rote learning and how this can overlap with plagiarism.

How the Board of Studies and tutors can work together

There are simple strategies that can help ensure Year 11 and 12 assessments are more robust and less likely to be subject to plagiarism and rote learning. Such strategies include:

- Ensuring that all externally done assessments are subject to a level of internal review by schools. Thus assignments written outside of the school could be subject to an in-school task that would moderate the effects of outside help
- Asking students to declare whether or not they have a tutor or tutorial assistance with a subject
- Specifically educating students about the appropriate role of tutors
- Creating less predictable examinations, thus better balancing the rote and content specific elements of assessment and increasing the thinking and cognition aspects of assessment
- Re-assess the range of assessments including whether there should be a small aspect of assessment in Year 11 that can draw from acknowledged outside sources. This type of task would mirror research in the real world outside of school.

“Clearly the tuition sector has much to offer in assisting the Board of Studies”, ATA CEO Mohan Dhall said. “As parents continue to seek tuition for their children at an increasing rate then these issues will only get bigger over time. We think it is time for tutors, mainstream educators and parents groups to get together and properly address these issues for the benefit of students.”

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