

# EXPLORING MODELS OF ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITIES TO EXPAND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY UNDERSTANDINGS IN CHILEAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## INTRODUCTION

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Covid-19 became the most significant health crisis of the last century and quickly transformed society, including teaching and learning processes in higher education institutions (Mishra et al., 2020). As face-to-face interactions were restricted to protect citizens' health, universities led a swift transition to emergency remote teaching, facing unprecedented challenges (Hodges et al., 2020), which deepened

higher education systems' vulnerabilities (Brown and Salmi, 2020). One example was the safekeeping of academic integrity (Lancaster and Cotarlan, 2021). Hence, in this paper, we approach Online Learning Communities as a potential strategy to promote academic integrity understandings. We develop a conceptual exploratory inquiry by analyzing two Online Learning Community (OLC) models.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

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Faculty assessment practices worldwide remained mostly unaltered during emergency remote teaching. Therefore, the implementation of traditional remote assessments and the increases in university students' stress levels complicated the teaching and learning processes (Eaton, 2020a). Slade (2020) suggested that the pandemic posed a stern test to curriculum development and online assessment design.

These problems were also present in Chilean Higher Education. Moreover, university authorities and Faculty perceived that academic misconduct cases rose at an alarming and unprecedented level (Díaz, 2020; Sánchez, 2020). These leaders also made strong calls for action to raise awareness of emergency remote teaching challenges concerning AI.

Many Chilean institutions offered AI educational development. Most of these activities aimed to help Faculty understand the AI tenets, promote good practices in assessment design, and enhance capacities to use IT resources to support integrity (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2020; Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 2020; Universidad de Chile, 2020).

Keeping in mind Chilean higher education response and the stakeholders' interest in building academic integrity cultures, we identify a need to weave initiatives where Chilean universities' stakeholders can interact with AI to sustain organizational change.

## BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

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In Chile, some contextual factors were most salient, such as emergent academic integrity policy and the characteristics of current educational development for Faculty.

Regarding policy, among the forty-six accredited universities in Chile (MINEDUC, 2020), only six of them had Academic Integrity policy disseminated online before the pandemic began. These universities were Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Universidad Andrés Bello, Universidad de Chile, Universidad de las Américas, Universidad de Viña del Mar, and Universidad Finis Terrae.

In other universities, specific academic misconduct situations are placed under specific universities' regulations. From a general perspective, under these regulations, the Faculty is generally responsible for detection and sanction, with higher authorities' participation for severe cases.

With CoVID-19, Chilean universities readily offered AI educational development for their Faculty; these instances aimed to explain the tenets of AI, promoted good practices in assessment design, and used IT resources to support integrity (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2020; Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, 2020; Universidad de Chile, 2020).

There is currently an active online community called "Integrity Hour" in Canada. When the pan-

demically started, Canadian scholars, educators, higher education professionals, and administrators from different Canadian provinces and institutions started participating in this informal, participant-driven online community (Eaton, 2020b).

The Integrity Hour experience becomes significant in the Chilean context because universities are currently undergoing an adaptation process, pushing the advancement of technology (Contreras, 2020; Sepúlveda, 2020). Moreover, Chilean universities' Presidents foresee that the current circumstances might act as a springboard for more active use of blended teaching and learning (Contreras, 2020).

Inspired by the Chilean academic integrity issues, the challenges set by Covid-19, the "Integrity Hour" experience, and the current trends in Chilean universities, we identify that Online Learning Communities (OLC) are an alternative to develop AI understanding.

OLCs are virtual knowledge-sharing spaces that facilitate peer-to-peer learning (Cegarra-Sánchez et al., 2018) organized by shared purposes (Lau, 2020). OLCs facilitate members' connection with relevant stakeholders unavailable in offline and local environments (Lau, 2020). Moreover, OLCs provide flexibility regarding personal and work commitments (Cegarra-Sánchez et al., 2018).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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This paper uses a conceptual exploratory inquiry to analyze two Online Learning Community (OLCs) Models: the Community of Inquiry Framework and the Fully Online Learning Communities. To carry out this conceptual exploratory inquiry, we draw from Kenny et al.'s (2016) framework for supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). This framework addresses shifts in organizational culture in the context of higher education (Kenny et al., 2016). Specifically, we focus on the guidelines

for integrated networks for sustained development, which is recognized as one of the catalysts of this framework. Following Kenny et al. (2016), one of the most challenging aspects is to sustain social networks. The authors pose that these networks become involved in meaning-making, decision-making, and action, and change. Using Kenny et al.'s (2016) perspective, we explore how these models could contribute to these processes in the Chilean Higher Education context.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The implications of this conceptual exploratory inquiry are twofold. First, we aim to explore OLC models, based on the literature and their connections to the Chilean higher education context, to share insights for future Chilean educational development programs designed and implemented to promote academic integrity understandings. Second, we seek to bridge opportunities for AI OLCs in the Chilean context.

Regarding the conclusions, the exploration of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) and the Fully Online Learning (FOLC) models show that they could contribute to meaning-making and decision-making processes as they build from the notions of cognitive and social presence. The differences lie

in implementing these processes; as FOLC literature suggests, learners become more empowered. In FOLC, students could be co-creators and designers of the learning process, whereas, in COI, the facilitator oversees design. Moreover, both offer opportunities for action and change; however, FOLC literature seems to have a more in-depth development of the notion of digital space. Therefore, the actions of the group members can potentially transcend the social and cognitive presence outside the boundaries of the community. The Chilean higher education could benefit from both models; however, we see opportunities in FOLC for a more democratized learning process.

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