



Strengthening ethics in education: Challenges and strategies for academic integrity in OT according to its directors

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01.

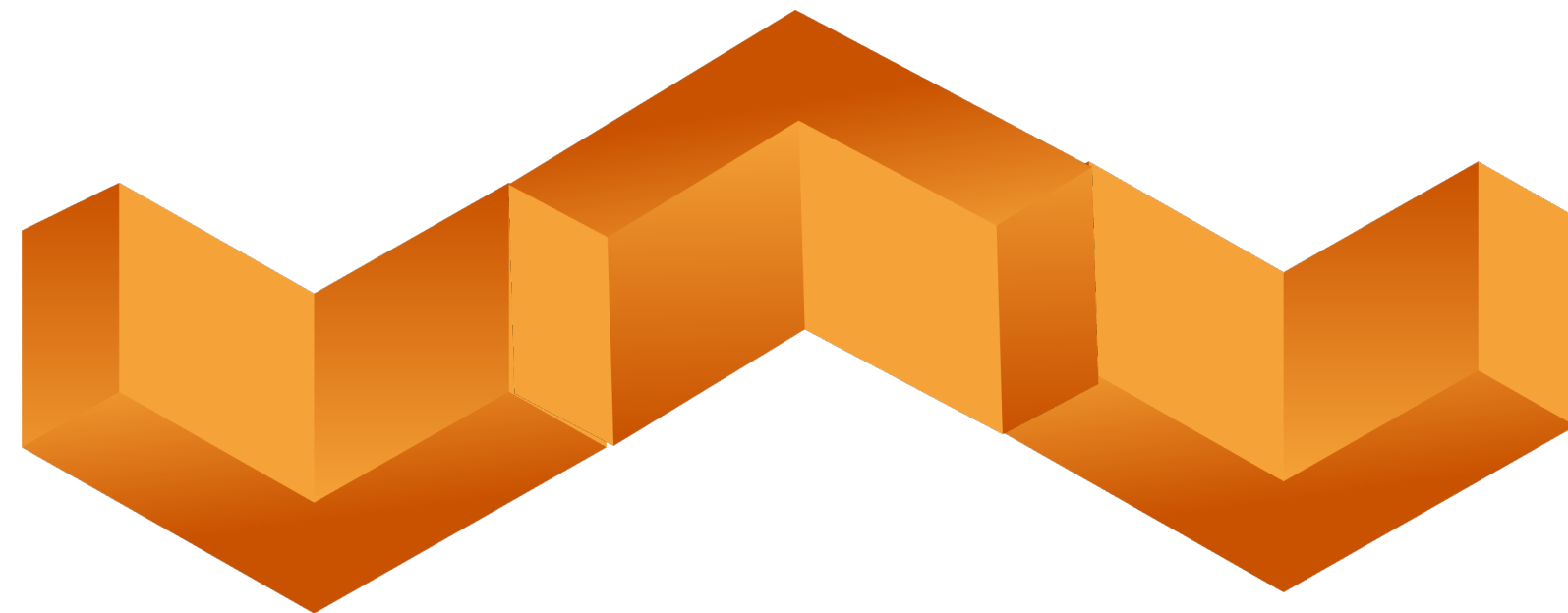
Introduction

Introduction



Academic dishonesty during training predicts unethical professional behavior

Occupational therapy students also report dishonest practices



High prevalence in health sciences education

Harding et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2018; Mulisa & Ebessa, 2021 et al., 2020

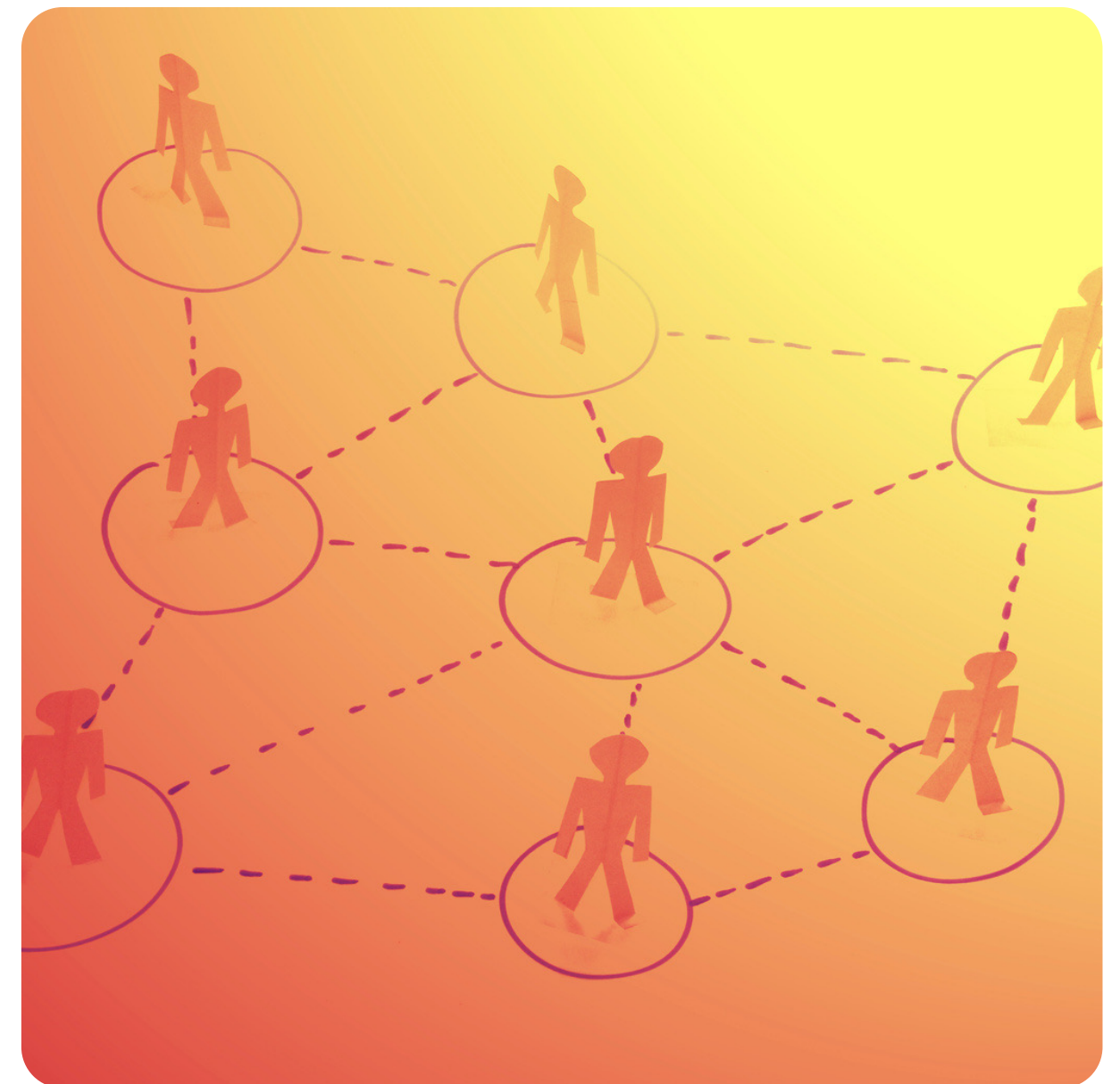
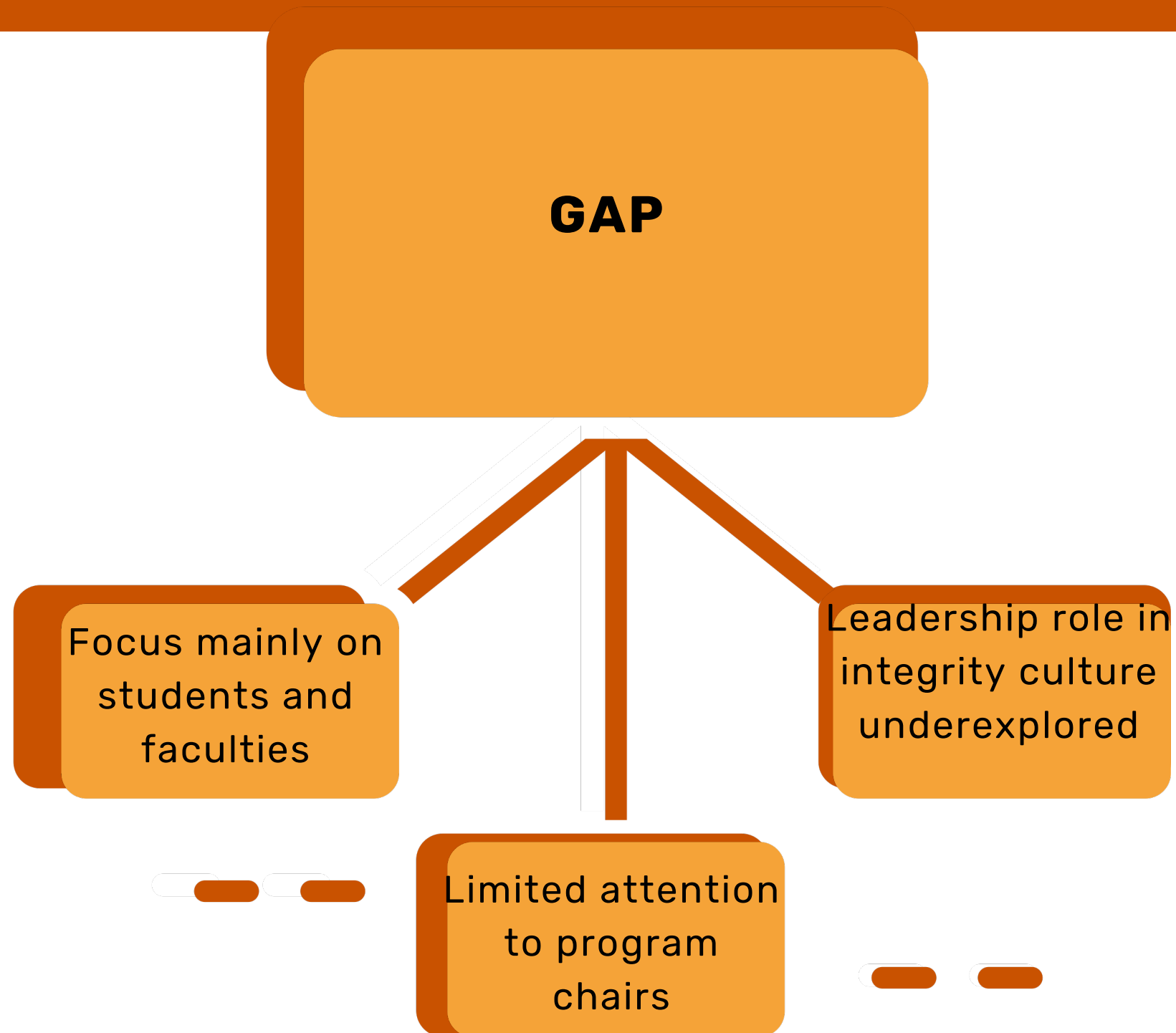
A study involving 550 nursing students reported **88%** admitted to academic dishonesty (Sheeba et al., 2019). Similarly, another study in the USA with 336 students found a **64%** rate of academic dishonesty (Krueger, 2014).



A large-scale survey of 872 medical residents revealed that **94%** reported dissatisfaction with the content and quality of their training in academic integrity (Khan et al., 2021).



OT students' studies reveal a **55%** rate of copying without citations, influenced by academic pressure (Brown, Isbel, et al., 2018).



(Jared et al., 2023; Bujang et al., 2025)



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Aim of the Study



integrity^{MIT}

To explore how OT programs directors in Chile understand academic integrity and identify strategies to strengthen it in the context of generative AI.



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02.

Methods



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Where is Chile?





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Methods



A cross-sectional qualitative study



4 Focus Groups



15 Universities



The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis in Atlas.ti by two independent researchers.

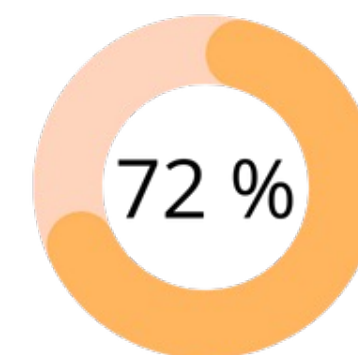


Validation of the Interview Guide

- 3 Academic integrity experts
- 1 Piloting Health chairs
- Incorporated suggestions



24 chairs of OT



Outside the metropolitan area



Approved by the ethics committee PUC #230327001



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03.

Results



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Integrity as competence



Directors define academic integrity as a transversal ethical competence that must be taught across the curriculum.

Integrity is framed as knowing–doing–being, directly linked to OT professional ethics.

“...beyond the grade... would you leave your loved one in that person’s hands?”

(Participant 16, University 10)





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Why misconduct happens



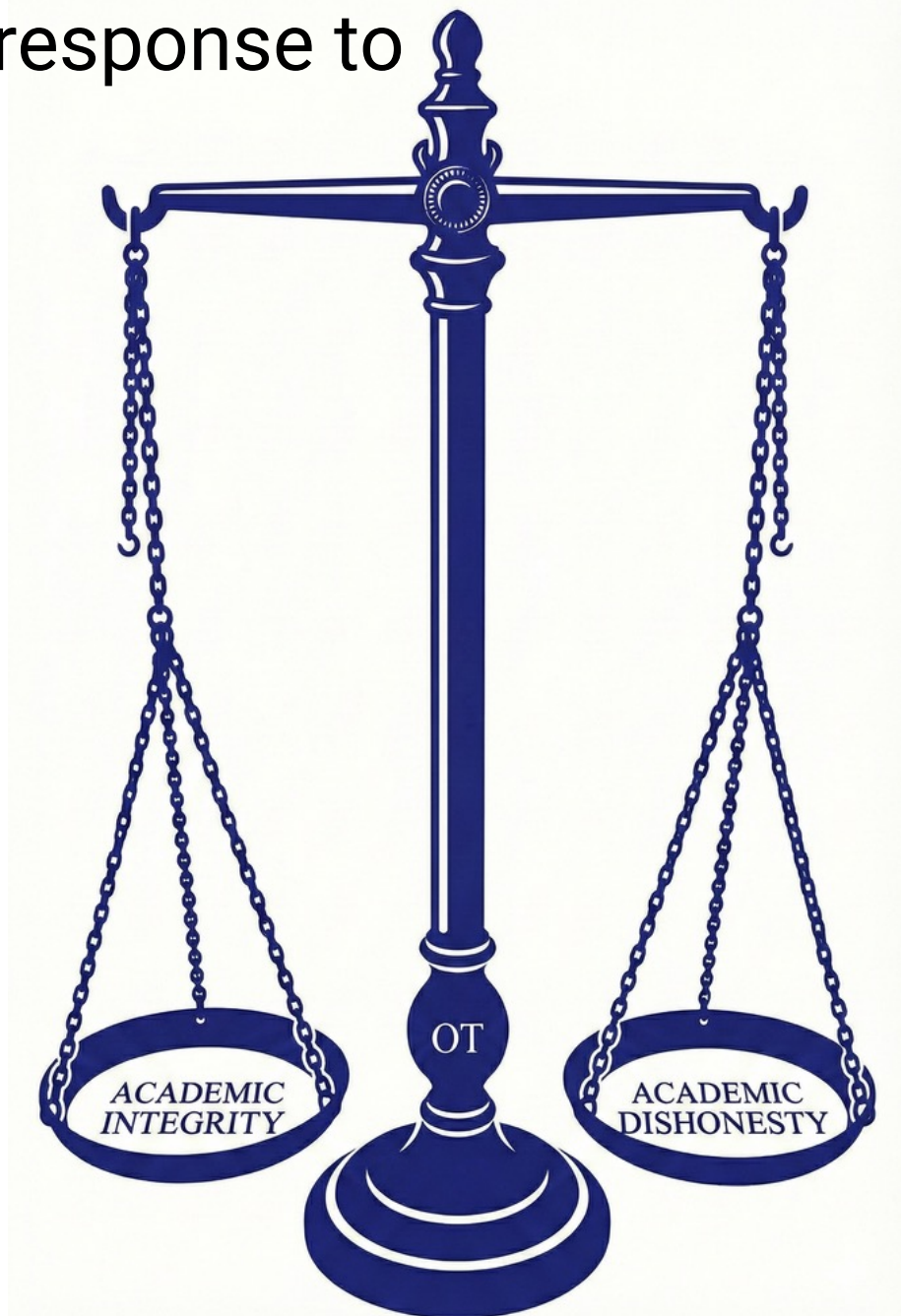
Misconduct is explained less as “bad character” and more as a response to context:

- High-stakes grades and pressure.
- Competition (e.g., scholarships).
- Personal/family/ socio-economic stressors.

”

“...it opens a Pandora’s box...
personal and family issues...”

(Participant 17, University 11)





uc | Chile Integrity is not sufficiently socialized



Integrity is often implicit and becomes visible only after serious violations, rather than being taught proactively.

- Directors report uneven faculty capability to teach integrity-related skills and design integrity-sensitive assessments.
- Lack of clear, shared protocols leads to inconsistent prevention and responses across institutions.

“...faculty don’t always know how to do it either...”
(Participant 10, University 5)





Current strategies implemented by OT programs primarily involve training faculty and students, explicitly declaring the use of artificial intelligence, and adapting evaluation methods.

Directors' strategies regarding generative AI:

- AI is inevitable: directors argue for ethical integration, not prohibition.
- Core risk: reduced authenticity of learning and cognitive effort in foundational OT skills.

Strategies proposed:

- Authentic assessments focused on clinical/professional reasoning.
- Explicit AI-use declaration (transparency).
- Faculty/director training and student support to reduce overload.



“...we need to promote transparency in declaring how AI was used.”

(Participant 14, University 8)

04.



Discussion and Conclusions



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Conclusions



Integrity in OT education is a cultural and relational process, not only compliance.



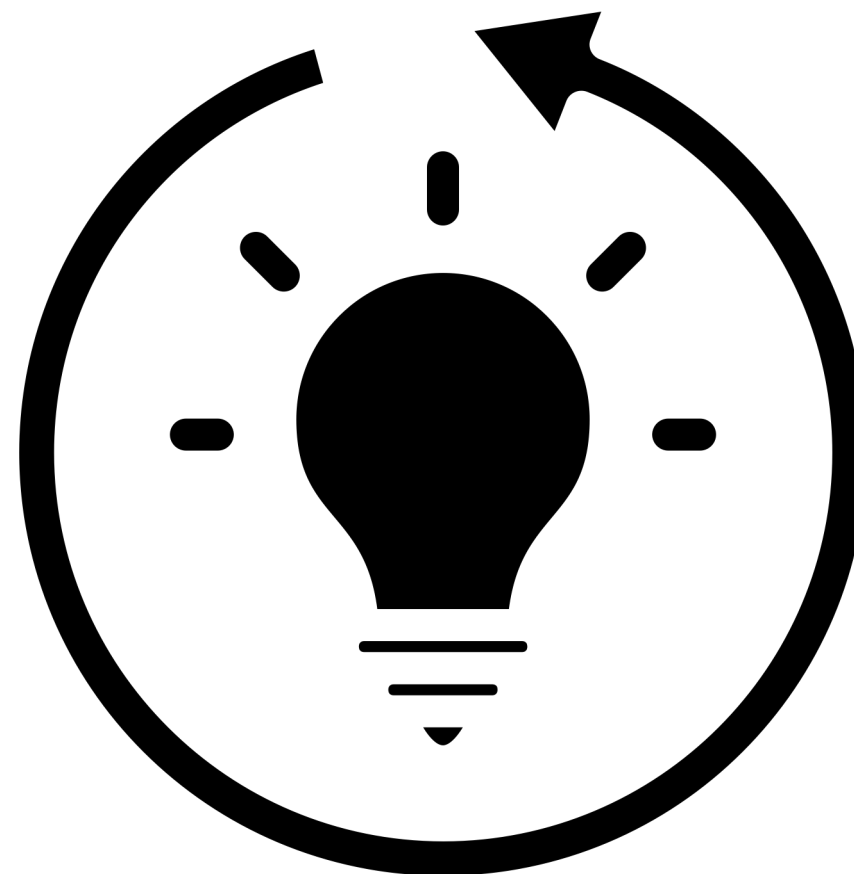
Leadership matters: directors reveal gaps in socialization, faculty capacity, and protocols.



AI intensifies the urgency: best response is policy, pedagogy, and assessment redesign.



Recommendations: institutionalize integrity, teach it longitudinally, redesign assessment, and operationalize ethical AI use (literacy, transparency, and boundaries).



Personal Reflection



The Reclining Buddha in Wat Pho represents a moment of conscious pause before action. In higher education, academic integrity is shaped in that very space: where individuals decide to act with coherence between knowledge, behavior, and the values they claim to uphold.

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