Journal of Educational Research and Policies ISSN: 2006-1137
DOI: 10.53469/jerp.2025.07(11).21

Research on Teaching Reform for Cultivating Innovative Artistic Talent in Higher Education Institutions: A Dual-Drive Approach Integrating Human-Machine Collaboration Capabilities and Artistic Critical Thinking

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Abstract: ***As artificial intelligence profoundly reshapes artistic creation and dissemination paradigms, higher education in the arts faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. This paper analyzes AI's impact on art education, proposing a dual-drive talent cultivation model centered on human-machine collaboration skills and critical artistic thinking'. It constructs a theoretical framework and practical pathways for higher art education, exploring how to balance technological empowerment with humanistic values to nurture innovative artistic talents equipped with both technological adaptability and cultural criticality. The research concludes that this dual-drive model is not only an inevitable response to technological transformation but also a core strategy for reconstructing the essence of art education and safeguarding human creativity.***

Keywords: Art education, Human-machine collaboration skills, Artistic critical thinking, Talent cultivation model.

1. Introduction

In today's era, AI tools have democratized artistic creation. Jason Allen's work 'Space Opera', created using Midjourney's generative technology, has won art awards. This demonstrates how artistic creation tools are becoming more intelligent, aesthetic standards are diversifying, and industry demands are becoming cross-disciplinary. It is evident that artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the artistic ecosystem with disruptive force. The traditional paradigm of higher education in the arts faces profound challenges, demanding answers to two core questions: How can we cultivate students' ability to collaborate symbiotically with AI amidst this technological wave? How can we safeguard art's humanistic essence and critical spirit within human-machine interaction?

The current state of art education in higher education institutions faces a dual predicament of 'technological dependency' and 'humanistic deficiency'. On one hand, the 'high-efficiency generation' enabled by AI tools easily leads students to neglect traditional craftsmanship and the essence of creativity. On the other hand, the lack of systematic guidance in ethical reflection and aesthetic critique of AI-generated works results in homogenized creations and superficial thinking. Against this backdrop, this paper proposes a dual-drive cultivation model centered on 'human-machine collaboration skills and artistic critical thinking [1].' By synergistically enhancing technical proficiency and humanistic literacy, this approach aims to respond to emerging trends in 'interdisciplinary convergence' and 'personalized learning', thereby fostering a profound integration of technological rationality and artistic sensibility within higher education art programs in the AI era.

2. Paradigm Shift in Art Education in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

With the advancement of artificial intelligence, the nation has introduced policies to support and explore the development of a training system that equally emphasizes cultivating 'AI+X' composite talents and establishing new models integrating discipline development with talent cultivation. Technological transformation driving educational paradigm shifts has highlighted challenges and dilemmas in creative methods, aesthetic standards, and the integration of scientific and artistic literacy.

Disruptive Transformation in Creative Methods AI technology has spawned new forms such as 'algorithmic art' and 'generative art'. Tools like Midjourney enable cross-modal creation from 'text to image' and 'image to video'. The AI creative process encompasses three stages: 'semantic analysis—model training—iterative optimization'. For instance, Cai Xinyuan's team trained on Jupiter imagery to generate the 'Jupiter' fashion series, demonstrating technology's restructuring of traditional design workflows. This shift requires students to transition from 'manual craftsmanship' to 'human-machine collaboration', mastering algorithmic thinking and the synergistic application of digital tools.

Diversified Reconstruction of Aesthetic Standards. The complexity and abstraction of AI-generated content challenge traditional aesthetic systems. Art's essence lies in humanity's profound, intrinsic comprehension of its context, projecting subjective interpretations and emotions onto the world. Beauty embodies subjective emotional expression and cultural accumulation, infused with sentiment and

philosophical reflection, authentically mirroring the inner world. AI-generated text or imagery, however, lacks genuine emotional experience, existing merely as rearranged linguistic or visual symbols. For instance, the Obvious team's Portrait of Edmond de Belamy, created by a Generative Adversarial Network (GAN) trained on 15,000 classic portraits, sparked debates about 'machine aesthetics' versus 'human subjectivity' due to its 'blurred style'. Higher education in art must guide students to comprehend data-driven aesthetic logic while upholding core values like 'emotional expression' and 'cultural significance' [2].

Interdisciplinary Expansion in Educational Settings. AI art's cross-disciplinary nature breaks traditional academic barriers. The 'Several Opinions on Promoting Disciplinary Integration and Accelerating Graduate Education in Artificial Intelligence at Double First-Class Universities' emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of 'AI + Art', exemplified by the rise of fields like digital media art and intelligent design. Educational settings are shifting from isolated studios to integrated spaces combining 'technology labs and art workshops', requiring students to possess comprehensive literacy in computer science, data science, and art theory.

3. Core Challenges in Contemporary Higher Education Art Programs

In responding to the impact of artificial intelligence, contemporary higher education art programs face three core challenges. First is the reliance on technological tools and the weakening of creative agency. Some students depend on AI tools to complete assignments, viewing them as 'creative shortcuts' while neglecting the cultivation of core competencies such as conceptualization and hand-drawn expression. Second is the absence of critical thinking and weak ethical awareness. Universities lack systematic guidance on issues like copyright ownership and cultural biases in AI-generated content, leading students to underestimate technological ethical risks and struggle to discern the value of human agency in 'human-machine co-creation'. Third is the lagging curriculum and faculty capability gap. Existing courses predominantly focus on tool operation while lacking theoretical modules like 'art philosophy' and 'digital ethics'. Research indicates only 38.2% of instructors believe their knowledge adequately addresses AI teaching, with over half requiring training in technological ethics and critical theory [3]. Current higher education in the arts faces challenges of tool dependency, critical deficiency, and outdated curricula and faculty. The solution lies in cultivating a symbiotic path that integrates human-machine collaboration capabilities with critical artistic thinking.

4. Symbiotic Pathways for Human-Machine Collaboration and Critical Artistic Thinking

First, cultivating AI-assisted creative capabilities can be divided into three progressive dimensions: technical, collaborative, and practical. The technical dimension focuses on solidifying tool application and algorithmic thinking, requiring students to master core AI tools such as Stable Diffusion parameter tuning and ControlNet image manipulation. It involves understanding underlying principles like Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs) and diffusion models, while developing algorithmic thinking to guide AI toward creative intent through parameter design and data training. The collaborative layer emphasizes interdisciplinary synergy and dynamic iteration training, fostering dynamic human-machine interaction where human creativity meets machine execution. Universities can introduce 'design thinking' methodologies to guide students in collaborating with AI throughout the entire process—from conceptual ideation and solution generation to detailed optimization. The Practice Layer emphasizes project-driven implementation and industry alignment. Real-world industrial projects enable students to practice human-machine collaboration in commercial contexts. Through university-industry workshops and competitions, students strengthen the industrial applicability of technical tools and cultivate a closed-loop mindset encompassing 'technology application—commercial transformation—user feedback'.

Secondly, critical thinking in AI creation can be developed across three dimensions—aesthetics, ethics, and culture—to build a comprehensive critical cognitive framework. Aesthetic critique focuses on deconstructing AI's aesthetic logic. Through courses like 'AI Art Aesthetics', it analyzes the aesthetic characteristics of machine-generated content and establishes a dual-dimensional evaluation system for 'technological beauty' and 'humanistic beauty'. Ethical critique emphasizes examining the risks of technological application, exploring issues such as copyright ownership, data privacy, cultural appropriation, and copyright disputes in AI creation. By discussing real-world cases, it addresses the impact of generative AI on artistic originality and cultivates students' sensitivity to technological ethics. Cultural critique strives to reconstruct the value of artistic subjectivity, exploring pathways to preserve cultural roots amid technological waves. It guides students to reflect on artistic uniqueness in the 'machine replication era', discerning the distinction between the 'irreplicability' of handmade creation and the 'mass-production' nature of AI-generated output [4].

5. Conclusion

The dual mission of AI art education lies in 'embracing technological transformation while upholding human aesthetic traditions'. The core of art education is repositioning human creativity alongside technological tools, proposing a dual-drive model for higher education art pedagogy reform: 'human-machine collaboration skills and critical artistic thinking'. Centered on dialectically unifying technological empowerment with humanistic preservation, this model constructs a 'tool-thinking-value' cultivation system. It requires advancing curriculum, practice, and assessment reforms through interdisciplinary integration. Future efforts must explore the boundaries of human-machine co-creation and guard against risks of aesthetic standardization. Ultimately, it aims to cultivate artistic innovators who master technological skills while maintaining cultural critical awareness, realizing the educational goal of 'technology as the vessel, humanities as the soul'.

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