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Exploring the Integration of Artificial Intelligence into University Course Teaching from the Perspective of Smart Education

Zongguo Zhang[1], Wenrui Qu[1], Lili Zhang[2]*

[1]School of Mathematics and Statistics, Qilu University of Technology (Shandong Academy of Sciences), Ji'nan 250353, Shandong, China

[2]School of Mechanical Engineering, Qilu University of Technology (Shandong Academy of Sciences), Ji'nan 250353, Shandong, China

Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Abstract: With the rapid progress of AI, smart education is playing an important role in transforming higher education. It takes full advantage of its own data analysis ability, pattern recognition capability, and personalized recommendation capability to infiltrate every link in university courses. According to the realistic backdrop of intelligent education, this paper reviews some common application scenarios of AI in university teaching from a practical standpoint, discussing both how it can help with teaching effectiveness and personalized learning, as well as making more reasonable decisions based on facts; however, it will also touch upon problems like technological maturity issues, teachers being unable to adapt, protecting one's private information from being misused due to the lack of data protection measures and humanistic value losses. improvement. This article holds that AI integrates into universities' teachings where people are cultivated first and technology second, so as to promote positive interaction between tech and education through enhancing teachers' digital competence and creating a favorable data environment while retaining educational warmth.

Keywords: Smart education; Artificial intelligence; University course teaching; Educational application

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1. Introduction

In recent years, breakthroughs in artificial intelligence technology - be it image recognition, natural language processing, or generative large language models – have dramatically changed many industries. The education field is no different. National policies like the "Education Informatization 2.0 Action Plan" and China's "Education Modernization 2035" both demand the deep integration of intelligent technologies with education and teaching to create a networked, digital, personalized, and lifelong education system. Against this backdrop, "smart education" has become a buzzword in university teaching reform.

Smart education means to rebuild and improve old school ways of teaching with the help of smart sensing technology,

data mining technology, learning analytics technology and other technological means. Artificial intelligence is the most important engine in a smart education system: Whether it's helping teachers prepare lessons or interact with students during class, automatically grading student assignments, or providing individualized learning pathways, AI is closing that long-standing divide between "mass instruction" and "personalization" within conventional teaching. But how to use technology essentially not just on the surface? And also, how to empower teaching rather than interrupting teaching? This still needs to be explored deeply by university educators [1]. This paper tries to explore from a practical application perspective what kind of specific methods are applied to incorporate AI into university classroom teaching and its effects, as well as difficulties, to provide a reference for pushing forward the localization of smart education.

2. Typical application modes of artificial intelligence in university course teaching

2.1. Pre-class stage: Intelligent analysis based on learning data and resource recommendation

In the traditional teaching mode, teachers evaluate students' learning basis according to their own experience and the feedback from the former student group, which results in delayed and imprecise information. With AI, there is lesson prep that is becoming more data-oriented. On one side， intelligent teaching platforms can automatically gather learners' previous online study behavior details like the length of watched videos, quiz scores, and forum question keywords themselves and then do clustering analyses on them to forecast classes' knowledge gaps. Take, for example, if it were a calculus class, the system could find that over 60 percent of students were struggling with questions about the "mean value theorem", which would warn the instructor that they should spend more time on that topic. On the contrary, people who like AI argue that AI technology can also do some good things for people, such as smart homes and self-driving cars, which have made our lives more convenient.

2.2. In-class stage: Enhanced interaction and real-time learning feedback

In a traditional class, only a few students would answer the teacher's questions. We cannot know the actual knowledge level of most of the students in the classroom. An AI-enabled smart classroom provides different ways to improve interaction, for example, with a real-time Q&A system where students can ask questions via mobile phones or terminals anonymously. AI will carry out semantic understanding and sort similar questions together, as well as give some hints of the answer to the students, so that the teacher can easily attend to the students' questions.

In addition, some smart classrooms have behavior analysis systems based on computer vision. Not collecting personal identity information, it is statistically analyzed for group behaviors like the frequency of head-up, nodding, writing, etc., then presented in the form of a chart to the teacher: If the system finds signs of distraction among most students, teachers can quickly start a discussion or adjust their teaching pace[2]. Other classrooms use real-time questioning and quiz tools. Teachers may give out questions with multiple choices or short answers immediately during class, and objective questions will be graded automatically by AI and produce a correct rate distribution chart, allowing teachers to know exactly about the difficulties of this lesson.

2.3. Post-class tutoring: Personalized learning and intelligent Q&A

Post-class learning lacks immediate guidance and individualized support. To solve this problem, adaptive learning platforms have become an important carrier of empowering AI in the post-class period. These platforms will create a knowledge mastery profile for every student by using the data gathered from quizzes in class, homework, self-paced exercises, and then send them some learning material that fits their level. Learners with weak foundations could be recommended prerequisite concept explanation videos and basic question practice automatically. For those who are more advanced, it can push extension readings, project-based tasks, or interdisciplinary challenges.

On the other hand, smart Q&A assistants based on big language models are slowly entering university courses. Students can ask the AI teaching assistant any questions at all times, whether it's asking to "Explain the intuitive meaning

of Bayes' theorem" or "Help me see why this code reports an error." The AI could give pretty detailed explanations from different angles and connect to related knowledge points. This 24/7 question-and-answer service saves students a lot of time getting stuck, and also reduces the pressure on teachers who have to repeat answers to common questions again and again.

2.4. Evaluation stage: Whole-process learning portraits and data-driven teaching improvement

The dominance of summative assessment and the lack of formative assessment have long been problems in university teaching. AI makes large-scale, continuous formative evaluation a reality. Learning management systems can automatically record multi-dimensional behavioral data such as attendance, frequency of classroom interaction, homework submission times, quiz trajectories, and forum participation, and generate visual "learning portraits" using algorithms. Teachers can not only assign more scientific continuous assessment grades but also quickly identify "at-risk" students – for example, those who consistently submit homework late, experience a continuous decline in quiz scores, or show extremely low class participation – allowing timely individual conversations or tutoring.

Teaching management: Course coordinators / Department can also utilize AI for vertical/horizontal comparisons of student learning data across the entire course/major, to spot teaching weaknesses. For example, if it is found by data analysis that students' average scores on "comprehensive application questions" in a certain course are greatly lower than those in other similar courses, it would be necessary to adjust the project-based teaching or case designs of this course. Such a teaching improvement model is driven by data, rather than unthinkingly modifying the syllabus based on intuition or an end-of-term summary report[3].

3. Positive changes brought by AI applications to university teaching

3.1. Freeing up teacher energy to focus on high-value teaching activities

Previously, university teachers spent considerable time on routine tasks such as grading assignments (especially objective questions, fill-in-the-blanks, and simple coding questions), recording scores, and organizing materials. After AI takes over these repetitive tasks, teachers can devote more time to course design, teaching research, and deep interactions with students. The teacher's role is shifting from "knowledge transmitter" to "learning designer" and "growth mentor."

3.2. Enabling large-scale personalized learning and narrowing the learning gap

The class teaching aims at making things efficient but disregards the differences in individuals. With the help of finely detailed learning behavior analysis and personal content recommendations from AI, each student gets to advance on a route that is right for them personally. From preliminary practices, it can be seen that the standard deviation of students' scores is smaller in classes using an adaptive learning platform compared to those in traditional classrooms; thus reducing "polarization", with more obvious improvements observed among mid-range students.

3.3. Moving teaching decisions from experience to evidence

In the past, teaching improvement was mainly based on personal experience and the feelings of teachers. Now it can offer objective, continuous, multidimensional information for teaching process data, enabling teachers and school leaders to make scientific teaching management decisions. Whether it is a single point adjustment or changing the whole framework, we now have a more substantial basis to proceed.

4. Practical problems and underlying challenges

4.1. Technology is not yet perfect; miscalculations and biases exist

Current educational AI technology is somewhat lacking. For instance, a natural language processing system might misinterpret a student's informal question and provide an inaccurate response; an emotion recognition algorithm can be imprecise when it interprets facial expressions, mistakenly labeling "thinking" as "confusion" or "distraction"; badly

constructed recommendation algorithms could intensify “information cocoons”, restricting students from being introduced to different types of information. Teachers and students rely too much on these incomplete AI systems, and new teaching problems arise.

4.2. Uneven digital literacy among teachers and varying technology acceptance

From all sorts of age groups and areas at the university, teachers differ greatly on whether they would use an AI tool. Some teachers like new things; they always try out new tech, but most others don’t want tech because they don’t know much about it or don’t trust it. Some fear that AI will remove part of their position in teaching, so they are worried about what will happen next in their careers. Helping all teachers cross the “digital threshold” is a prerequisite for large-scale AI adoption[4].

4.3. Blurred boundaries of data collection and prominent privacy/ethical risks

The effective operation of AI relies on collecting large amounts of student data, including learning behaviors, quiz scores, and even classroom video. If such data is leaked or misused, student privacy will be seriously violated. Additionally, algorithmic bias may lead to unfair evaluations of specific groups (e.g., female students, ethnic minority students). Most universities have not yet established clear AI data governance norms, and students’ rights to know and to appeal are not guaranteed.

4.4. Risk of technology supremacy: Dilution of “human warmth” in education

Classrooms become too reliant on artificial intelligence for classroom interactivities and student evaluation, which can result in less face-to-face interaction and emotions being exchanged by teachers and learners. Education is not just about imparting knowledge; it’s about passing down values, shaping characters, and making an emotional connection. Teaching becomes “human-computer dialog”, which undermines the basic object of higher education-” holistically”-making it hollow.

5. Countermeasures and suggestions for deep integration of AI and university teaching

5.1. Strengthen technology validation and applicability assessment

Before introducing AI teaching tools, universities should carry out small-scale pilots to strictly test the accuracy, stability, and pedagogical fitness of these systems, rather than unquestioningly adopt “fancy” yet unusable ones. On the flip side, a constant feedback system needs to be set up too, so that teachers and learners can quickly report any mistakes or strange behaviors done by the AI system, which can force vendors to improve their product.

5.2. Systematically enhance teachers’ digital competence

Universities should hold stratified training for AI application in teaching, and plan different content for young teachers, senior teachers, humanities and social science teachers. Training must include tool operation training, but also guide teachers to understand the strengths and weaknesses of AI, learn how to work with AI, and recognize possible mistakes made by AI. It encourages cross-departmental communities of practice for AI teaching innovation to share success stories and failure experiences.

5.3. Build a robust data governance and ethical framework

The universities must develop rules for gathering and utilizing the data of students, stating that “the least needed” principle should be used, as well as the need to retain the data period, who may access it, and how to de-identify it. Fairness reviews have to be made during the development of the algorithm, so biased training data doesn’t lead to unfair results [5]. Conversely, a channel has also been created through which students’ data can be appealed if they want to object to an AI analysis result that seems unreasonable to them.

5.4. Uphold the fundamental principle of "technology serving education"

In advancing smart teaching, we must always guard against technology alienation. AI can only serve as an auxiliary tool; it must never replace teachers' personal instruction and authentic emotional interaction with students. Course designs should retain ample high-touch activities such as offline seminars, face-to-face Q&A, and value guidance. Technology can improve efficiency, but the soul of education always lies in the awakening and companionship among people.

6. Conclusion

Smart education is moving from concept to reality, and the application of artificial intelligence in university course teaching is no longer a distant imagination. From pre-class learning prediction, real-time in-class feedback, post-class personalized tutoring, to whole-process learning evaluation, AI demonstrates great empowering potential. However, we must clearly recognize that technology is a double-edged sword: used well, it can liberate teachers and empower students; used poorly, it can bring bias, privacy breaches, and a loss of humanistic touch.

Looking ahead, universities should adopt an attitude that is both proactive and cautious: actively embrace the efficiency gains and personalization potential that AI offers, while prudently addressing challenges related to technological maturity, teacher adaptation, data ethics, and humanistic values. Only by securing the essence of talent cultivation in the deep integration of technology and education – making AI a "warm" teaching assistant rather than a cold controller – can smart education truly take root and contribute to cultivating innovative talents suited for the intelligent era.

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