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GENERATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF EDUCATIONAL PARADIGMS AND LEARNING RECONSTRUCTION IN THE AI ERA

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Abstract: The widespread application of artificial intelligence (AI) is profoundly transforming traditional educational practices. While conventional education centers on knowledge transmission and standardized assessment, AI enables dynamic knowledge generation and shifts the learning subject from isolated individuals to a collaborative process involving teachers, peers, and intelligent systems. This results in a generative shift in educational paradigms and the reconstruction of learning. Through theoretical analysis and case studies, this study explores three key questions: the drivers of the generative shift in educational paradigms, the mechanisms of learning reconstruction, and their interrelations. It aims to uncover the ontological changes in education in the AI era, offering new perspectives for theoretical innovation and practical optimization in education.
Keywords: Artificial intelligenc; Educational paradigms; Learning reconstruction; Generative shift; Meaning generation

1 INTRODUCTION

The widespread application of generative artificial intelligence in education is reconstructing the traditional paradigm characterized by "teacher-centered instruction, unidirectional knowledge transmission, and standardized assessment." Education is shifting its core mission from mere knowledge reproduction to co-constructed meaning generation driven collaboratively by teachers, students, and intelligent systems. The locus of learning is being reconfigured from isolated individuals to a distributed cognitive network comprising human and artificial agents, thereby propelling a generative paradigm shift in education and necessitating a systematic reconstruction of learning processes. While prior scholarship has examined adaptive algorithms, AI-supported instructional models, and ethical concerns, few studies have systematically investigated—from an ontological perspective—the following questions: What drives the generative paradigm shift? How does learning reconstruction unfold across cognitive, relational, and evaluative dimensions? And what is the interplay between these two transformations?
This study addresses three interrelated research questions:
1. The techno-cognitive-societal mechanisms driving the generative paradigm shift;
2. The multidimensional pathways and manifestations of learning reconstruction;
3. The interaction logic between paradigm shift and learning reconstruction.

2 THE TECHNO-COGNITIVE-SOCIETAL MECHANISMS DRIVING THE GENERATIVE PARADIGM SHIFT

The widespread application of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in education is driving a paradigm shift in education across three dimensions—technological, cognitive, and social. Notably, this transformation is not the isolated effect of a single force but the result of multiple mechanisms that interpenetrate, cyclically reinforce, and continuously evolve, exhibiting systemic characteristics.
At the technological level, the breakthrough of generative AI lies in its shift from "knowledge retrieval" to "co-creation of meaning." Traditional educational technologies focus on achieving learners' knowledge consolidation through content reproduction and practice management. In contrast, generative models, leveraging large-scale pre-training, contextual understanding, and multimodal generation capabilities, can dynamically produce diverse texts, images, code, problem solutions, or even complete learning paths based on learners' linguistic inputs, emotional states, cognitive levels, and specific goals [1]. This shifts learning from passive reception to active exploration. For instance, in a history course, when students investigate historical events, generative systems not only provide factual statements but also generate narratives from different perspectives, hypothetical deductions, or visualized timelines. This technological leap—from "preset content" to "on-demand generation" and from "unidirectional output" to "bidirectional interaction"—not only greatly enriches the expressive forms of instructional resources but also transforms the classroom into an open, continuously growing space of meaning. In essence, the widespread application of generative AI in education provides an indispensable material foundation and operational feasibility for shifting the educational paradigm from knowledge transmission to collaborative construction.
At the cognitive level, the widespread application of generative AI is reshaping learning from "individual memorization"

to "distributed construction." Traditional education treats knowledge as an external, stable object, with learning viewed as a process of internalization and reproduction through memory, comprehension, and application. However, with the intervention of generative AI, cognitive activities form a dynamic division of labor and collaborative construction between humans and machines: for students, repeated prompt design and feedback iteration gradually clarify ambiguous concepts and build personal understanding; for teachers, the role shifts from the sole source of knowledge and final arbiter to a designer of learning processes, coordinator of dialogues, and provider of cognitive scaffolding [2]. Thus, the two complement each other, jointly constituting a new form of "extended cognition." In this process, knowledge is no longer hoarded in individual minds but emerges within an interactive network of continuous dialogue, trial-and-error, adjustment, and re-expression, rendering learning an open, iterative, and collectively participatory generative process.

At the social level, the changes induced by the application of generative AI technology trigger multidimensional transformations and rebalancing in sociocultural life. On one hand, generative AI significantly lowers the barriers and costs to accessing high-quality educational resources: students in remote areas can engage in natural-language dialogues with world-class curricula, learners with language barriers can receive real-time translation and explication support, and disabled learners can benefit from highly adaptive interfaces, thereby bridging educational gaps across regions and social strata to some extent. On the other hand, traditional assessment systems premised on "independent completion" struggle to measure the weights of individual contributions versus systemic support; the "omniscient" image of AI undermines teacher–student relationships originally built on unidirectional knowledge transmission. These issues pertain to educational equity and academic integrity [3]. Currently, many schools are addressing these challenges by revising assignment guidelines, developing content provenance tools, and enhancing teachers' AI literacy. Notably, these social reflections, norms, and practices in turn profoundly shape the priorities and design philosophies of technological development—for example, by demanding higher model explainability, traceable creation processes, and mechanisms for bias detection and correction—thus forming external constraints and internal drivers for technological evolution.

Of particular importance is that the technological, cognitive, and social dimensions are not simply parallel or sequentially progressive but constitute a dynamically nested, cyclically feedback-driven, and self-reinforcing system. For example, the trial use of a generative writing tool in the classroom (technological level) may trigger students' cognitive confusion about "originality" and "authorship" (cognitive level), thereby prompting the school to issue "Interim Regulations on the Management of AI-Assisted Learning" (social level). These regulations, in turn, require developers to embed "creation process recording" and "contribution attribution" functions in the system (returning to the technological level). This closed loop not only exemplifies the systemic nature of the transformation but also reveals its historical character—each cycle accumulates, adjusts, and deepens upon the previous one. It is precisely within this ongoing tension that the generative paradigm of education gradually takes shape, exhibiting structural features distinct from traditional paradigms: from closed to open, from unidirectional to co-creative, from individual to networked, and from reproductive to generative.

3 THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL PATHWAYS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF LEARNING RECONSTRUCTION

Learning reconstruction represents a core feature of the generative teaching paradigm. It involves the systematic reconfiguration of learning along the cognitive, relational, and evaluative dimensions, transforming the process from isolated, static knowledge possession to a dynamic, interactive network of meaning generation.

In the cognitive dimension, reconstruction follows a path from "individual internalization" to "human-AI distributed construction." Generative artificial intelligence, through real-time feedback, prompt iteration, and multimodal expression, transforms students' initial ideas into testable and expandable cognitive artifacts. For instance, when a student inputs a vague hypothesis, the system can generate logical chains, counterexamples, visualizations, or cross-disciplinary associations, thereby externalizing abstract thinking into operable and shareable dialogic objects. This externalization mechanism not only significantly reduces individual cognitive load but also renders the thinking process itself an observable, intervenable, and optimizable shared resource[4]. Consequently, learning evolves from "memory reproduction" into an iterative cycle of "trial-negotiation-refinement-reexpression," embodying an extension and deepening of connectivism within a human-AI symbiotic context[2]. At the same time, cognitive reconstruction emphasizes the openness of the generative process: rather than providing standard answers, AI serves as a "cognitive amplifier" to stimulate diverse pathways, enabling students to select, critique, and integrate multiple system-generated options, thereby fostering metacognitive abilities and creative thinking.

In the relational dimension, learning reconstruction manifests as a shift from "hierarchical dependence" to "networked collaboration" in role repositioning and interaction restructuring. Teachers transition from knowledge authorities and directive issuers to "meta-designers" and "dialogue coordinators" within the learning community, tasked with crafting challenging interactive tasks, modulating the depth of human-AI dialogue, and ensuring the integration of humanistic values and ethical principles. Students move from passive recipients to active questioners, peer collaborators, and co-producers of meaning. Artificial intelligence, in turn, embeds itself in the relational network as a "cognitive partner," offering immediate responses, contextual adaptation, and process documentation without supplanting human emotional connection, empathetic understanding, or moral judgment. The emergence of this multi-agent relational web extends the learning field from the physical classroom to a distributed, dynamically reconfigurable ecosystem spanning time and space[5]. Teacher-student relationships, mediated by technology, undergo a profound transformation from

"command-obedience" to "co-creation-mutual trust-shared responsibility," elevating relationality to an ontological foundation of meaning generation rather than a mere adjunct. Notably, relational reconstruction underscores trust and transparency: only when teachers and students clearly understand AI's generative logic, data boundaries, and potential biases can collaboration avoid risks of alienation and truly empower the learning community.

In the evaluative dimension, the reconstruction pathway centers on a paradigm shift from "standardized summative measurement" to "process-oriented generative multi-source assessment." Traditional modes relying on uniform examinations and single scores to gauge knowledge mastery fail to capture the distribution of contributions, process value, and individual growth in human-AI collaboration. Evaluation must therefore pivot toward integrated multi-source data and dynamic feedback, encompassing interaction logs, prompt evolution trajectories, contribution annotations, reflective narratives, and peer reviews. For example, the system can automatically record the number of dialogue iterations between student and AI, revision magnitudes, proportions of original input, and critical decision nodes, forming a visualized "learning footprint" as a quantitative foundation, supplemented by teachers' qualitative judgments, students' self-reflective reports, and group mutual evaluations [6]. Such evaluation ceases to function as a terminal verdict or external adjudication; instead, it becomes an embedded, continuous feedback mechanism that drives students to refine generative pathways, enables teachers to adjust intervention strategies, and supplies diagnostic and optimization cues for the entire learning network.

It is worth noting that the three-dimensional reconstruction does not unfold in parallel but rather in mutually embedded, co-evolving patterns: cognitive externalization relies on the trust and support of relational networks, relational collaboration requires the fair guidance and incentive alignment of evaluative mechanisms, and the richness and timeliness of evaluative data, in turn, enhance the depth and breadth of cognitive iteration[7]. This closed loop endows learning reconstruction with holistic, generative, and dynamic characteristics.

4 THE INTERACTION LOGIC BETWEEN PARADIGM SHIFT AND LEARNING RECONSTRUCTION

The author contends that the relationship between the educational paradigm shift and learning reconstruction is neither a unidirectional causal sequence nor a temporal order, but rather a concrete manifestation of a bidirectional, cyclically emergent interaction logic. This logic is driven by techno-cognitive-societal mechanisms and continuously feeds back within the three-dimensional reconstruction of learning, thereby progressively deepening the structural characteristics of the generative educational paradigm. Specifically, the paradigm shift initiates the possibilities for learning reconstruction through technological empowerment and cognitive externalization: the real-time generative capabilities of artificial intelligence dismantle the closure of traditional knowledge transmission, shifting the cognitive dimension from individual memorization to distributed negotiation, the relational dimension from hierarchical dependence to networked co-creation, and the evaluative dimension from summative measurement to process-oriented feedback, thus infusing the learning process with generative, open, and ecological qualities. Concurrently, the practical unfolding of learning reconstruction reciprocally consolidates and expands the boundaries of the paradigm—emergent diverse meaning pathways in cognitive iteration demand greater interpretability and adaptability from technological models, trust-building in relational networks propels the formulation of policy norms and ethical frameworks, and the dynamic accumulation of evaluative data provides empirical foundations for algorithmic optimization and pedagogical intervention, forming a closed-loop feedback from micro-level learning events to macro-level paradigm evolution [8].

For instance, in a project-based learning activity supported by generative artificial intelligence, students collaboratively generate research proposals with the system (manifestation of cognitive reconstruction), teachers guide critical reflection through relational dialogue (relational reconstruction), and multi-source assessment is ultimately conducted based on process logs and contribution visualizations (evaluative reconstruction). This complete cycle not only validates the operational feasibility of the shift from "transmission" to "co-construction" but also, through data reflux, prompts developers to incorporate "authorship tracing" functionality, thereby further strengthening the technological foundation of the paradigm. The deeper mechanism of this interaction logic lies in emergence and self-organization: the paradigm shift provides structural loosening and resource inputs for learning reconstruction, while learning reconstruction catalyzes the paradigm's qualitative leap from quantitative accumulation through the cumulative effects of distributed practices, collectively forming a self-reinforcing, dynamically balanced evolutionary system.

It is precisely within this continuous interaction that the generative educational paradigm transitions from technological possibility to educational reality, exhibiting ontological characteristics distinct from the traditional paradigm: learning is no longer the reproduction of knowledge but the ongoing generation, negotiation, and regeneration of meaning within human-AI networks. This interaction logic not only reveals the systemic dynamics of transformation but also offers an operable theoretical framework for educational practice, emphasizing that in designing generative learning environments, technological iteration, relational governance, and evaluative innovation must be advanced synchronously to ensure the co-evolution of paradigm shift and learning reconstruction.

5 CONCLUSION

This study, from an ontological perspective, systematically addresses three interrelated research questions and reveals the generative transformation of the educational paradigm in the age of artificial intelligence (AI). First, the paradigm shift is not a linear consequence of technological advancement but an emergent outcome of the intertwined interactions among technological, cognitive, and social mechanisms. Generative AI functions both as an enabler and a catalyst,

breaking the closure of traditional knowledge transmission and providing the material foundation for the co-construction of meaning. Second, the reconstruction of learning unfolds along three dimensions—cognition, relations, and evaluation—signifying a shift from individual internalization to human–AI distributed construction, from hierarchical dependency to networked collaboration, and from summative judgment to process-oriented, generative assessment. Together, these dimensions constitute a dynamic and interactive network of meaning generation. Third, the interaction between paradigm transformation and learning reconstruction is not unidirectional or sequential but represents a bidirectional, recursive, and self-organizing system in which micro-level learning practices continuously feed back into macro-level paradigm evolution, while the evolving paradigm in turn reshapes the conditions and possibilities of learning.

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