

Restructuring Primary Chinese Teachers' Roles in Affective Education in the AI Era

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Abstract: The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence is profoundly reshaping the educational ecosystem. As key practitioners undertaking cultural inheritance and affective education, primary Chinese teachers are undergoing an in-depth role transformation from “authorities of knowledge” to “emotional interactants.” This paper systematically sorts out domestic and foreign research on restructuring primary Chinese teachers’ affective education roles in the AI era, and reviews research progress from four dimensions: realistic driving forces behind role transformation, unique value of affective education, emotional dilemmas brought by AI-enabled teaching, and practical paths for role reshaping. The study demonstrates that Chinese teachers’ affective education role is irreplaceable, with its core values embodied in emotional immersion, value guidance, and meaning construction. Nevertheless, human-machine collaborative teaching has created realistic challenges such as algorithmic compression of emotional space, over-reliance on technology, and weakened emotional bonds. On this basis, this paper proposes a four-dimensional reconstruction path: “Concept Renewal — Competency Restructuring — Technological Collaboration — Evaluation Reform”, so as to provide theoretical references and practical experience for primary Chinese education to uphold humanistic values and realize sound educational outcomes in the AI era.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Primary Chinese teachers; Affective education; Role Restructuring; Human-machine collaboration

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1. Introduction

At present, academic circles hold diverse viewpoints regarding the restructuring of primary Chinese teachers’ affective education roles in the AI era. Extensive discussions have centered on the transformation direction of teachers’ roles, the irreplaceability of affective education, and the boundaries of human-machine collaboration, yielding abundant important theoretical achievements^[1]. As the core platform for cultural inheritance and affective education, Chinese teaching shall construct an ecosystem for students’

emotional growth through three approaches: cognitive reconstruction, emotional immersion, and social interaction, in compliance with the requirements of the new curriculum standards. At present, the role transformation of Chinese teachers under the background of AI has become a research hotspot in education, and the preservation and reinforcement of affective education functions constitute the core issue of this transformation.

The explosive development of artificial intelligence is reshaping the educational landscape in a profound manner. Its high efficiency and wide coverage in knowledge transmission drive primary Chinese teachers to shift from the traditional role of “knowledge authorities” to “emotional interactants” guided by humanistic care. The Chinese discipline integrates instrumental and humanistic attributes, undertaking the missions of affective cultivation and value guidance. The *Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* clearly proposes to guide students to “perceive the beauty of language and characters and comprehend the ideological connotations and artistic values of literary works”, setting higher requirements for teachers’ leading role in affective education. Therefore, systematically sorting out research outcomes on restructuring primary Chinese teachers’ affective education roles in the AI era bears important theoretical and practical significance for upholding the humanistic values of Chinese education and promoting the deep integration of technology and education.

2. Realistic driving forces behind primary Chinese Teachers’ role transformation in the AI era

2.1. Technology-driven role restructuring

Technological evolution has always served as the fundamental driving force behind changes in teachers’ roles, continuously reshaping their authority over knowledge. In the AI era, emerging digital technologies represented by generative artificial intelligence have rapidly penetrated education. Such tools can handle massive routine work, including standardized knowledge explanation and homework grading, liberate teachers from repetitive labor, and allow them to devote core energy to areas beyond AI’s reach: emotional bonding, higher-order thinking stimulation, and ethical supervision. This technology-forced mechanism renders the shift of teachers’ functions from “knowledge transmission” to “educational construction” an inevitable trend.

The application of AI in Chinese teaching has transcended simple technical tools and become a core engine for personalized learning and improved teaching efficiency. In listening, speaking, reading, and writing sessions of primary Chinese courses, AI realizes visualized learning situation assessment via intelligent diagnosis systems, expands thinking training materials through resource platforms, and reconstructs learning loops with instant feedback mechanisms. However, general language models are often deemed “black boxes” due to opaque algorithmic mechanisms. Their generation logic and decision-making basis cannot be traced or interpreted. If teachers fail to understand AI’s reasoning rules, they cannot conduct professional judgment and pedagogical adaptation of generated content, and human-machine collaboration will remain superficial ^[2].

2.2. Value return to the essence of education

Although AI holds absolute advantages in knowledge storage and retrieval, education is essentially a process of guiding people toward goodness and cultivating humanity with culture. Education carries warmth: teachers

can deliver positive attention, empathy, and sincere attitudes through interaction, an emotional resonance cold algorithms can never replicate. Technology can simulate emotional expressions, yet it cannot replace teachers' humanistic care, spiritual enlightenment, and personality influence, which serves as the fundamental basis for teachers' role transformation^[3].

AI-enabled Chinese teaching faces two major limitations: first, generative mechanisms are untraceable and uninterpretable, leading fragmented generated content and superficial learning that cannot support systematic knowledge and in-depth meaning construction required for high-quality disciplinary education; second, large language models mostly focus on efficiency improvement, lacking in-depth attention to individual life experience, emotional worlds and meaning demands, making it difficult to fully realize the humanistic mission of Chinese education to cultivate people with culture and nurture hearts through emotions. Hence, the key path for AI-enabled Chinese teaching shall shift from isolated tool application to full-link empowerment and realize closed-loop design integrating teaching, learning and assessment.

2.3. Pressure brought by practical dilemmas

The extensive application of AI technology in teaching has created new predicaments. We must guard against the misconception of “data supremacy” brought by technological empowerment. When algorithmic evaluation squeezes the space for emotional resonance and massive resources overshadow core teaching objectives, affective education falls into new difficulties. This problem is particularly prominent in upper-grade Chinese teaching in rural primary schools, where supporting multimedia facilities and extracurricular reading materials are insufficient, and teaching staff have uneven proficiency with limited diversified teaching methods to satisfy students' diverse learning demands. Meanwhile, rapid information technology reform reshapes the educational ecosystem. How to leverage new technologies to boost Chinese teaching efficiency while preserving the warmth of affective education has become an urgent research topic.

3. Unique value of affective education for Chinese teachers

3.1. Humanistic attribute of Chinese discipline

While embracing the revolution brought by artificial intelligence, Chinese education faces contradictory tensions between technological rationality and humanistic values^[3]. Chinese courses shoulder dual missions of cultural inheritance and affective cultivation. Poems, prose, and classical Chinese texts selected for primary Chinese textbooks are classic works with elegant language and profound meanings, containing sophisticated emotions and the essence of national culture. The new curriculum standards explicitly require teachers to guide students to recite excellent poems, experience rhythmic beauty, perceive linguistic charm, and receive emotional nurturing to elevate aesthetic literacy.

Classical Chinese poetry, a vivid carrier of fine traditional Chinese culture, carries the nation's spiritual codes and aesthetic genes, and serves as the core medium to cultivate students' cultural confidence and aesthetic creativity. Nevertheless, in practical teaching, teachers often encounter barriers in transmitting cultural connotations: students struggle to truly perceive historical scenes and imagery metaphors embedded in poems^[4]. This demands that teachers exert the leading role of affective education and build deep emotional connections between students and texts through embodied teaching interactions.

3.2. Educational functions of affective education

Cultivating students' self-confidence constitutes not merely an educational goal, but also a key component of national talent strategies. Chinese teaching constructs an ecosystem for students' emotional growth through three pathways: cognitive reconstruction, emotional immersion and social interaction. In the implementation of interdisciplinary learning task groups, teachers can effectively strengthen students' emotional resonance by creating authentic interactive scenarios, and reinforce critical thinking and teamwork via group cooperative learning ^[5].

Under the new collaborative model of AI and human teachers, instructors assume triple identities: learning designers, human-machine collaborators, and emotional caregivers. As emotional caregivers, teachers' emotional bonds with students become increasingly precious amid pervasive digital technologies. Bombarded by AI-generated massive content, students tend to suffer cognitive confusion, value perplexity, and psychological anxiety. Teachers need to sensitively capture students' emotional states and provide spiritual support and value guidance via embodied communication.

3.3. Irreplaceability of teacher-student emotional bonds

Technological advancement can never substitute teachers' educational functions. Education is more than knowledge transmission; it involves spiritual enlightenment, emotional resonance, and value shaping. AI can efficiently complete knowledge instruction and skill training, yet it cannot comprehend students' emotional demands, respond to psychological expectations, or guide personality growth the way teachers do. Beyond knowledge, teachers transmit respect for life, yearning for beauty, and adherence to values during interactions—the core humanistic warmth of education.

In the dual-teaching model combining AI and human instructors, human and AI teachers cooperate across pre-class stratified preview, in-class situational interaction, and after-school personalized reading. However, AI always plays an auxiliary role, and human teachers bear the core responsibility for affective education. Conversational AI functions not only as teaching tools but also as emerging educational participants that jointly build interactive learning environments with students and teachers; even so, such digital interaction can never replace genuine face-to-face emotional communication between teachers and students.

4. Dilemmas of affective education in AI-enabled teaching

4.1. Algorithmic evaluation compresses the space for emotional resonance

Although AI technology makes primary Chinese teaching more personalized and intelligent, it also risks marginalizing affective education. Intelligent diagnosis systems visualize learning conditions via data tracking, yet such digitized evaluation fails to capture students' inner emotional states, aesthetic experience, and value recognition ^[6]. Taking the classroom teaching of *Borrowing Arrows with Straw Boats* as an example, AI tracking can generate full-dimensional visualized data reports covering teaching duration, emotional indicators, and sight trajectories, yet digitized emotional metrics often obscure the real effects of affective education.

When educational evaluation over-relies on algorithms, intangible educational elements including teachers' emotional investment and students' emotional experience tend to be overlooked, compressing emotional resonance and risking the loss of humanistic warmth in Chinese teaching. AI teaching evaluation

must adhere to the philosophy that technology serves humans and prevent education from becoming dehumanized due to excessive data quantification ^[7].

4.2. Technological over-dependence weakens teachers' affective competence

Widespread adoption of AI in teaching may boost efficiency while eroding teachers' affective education capabilities. Excessive reliance on AI for learning analysis, resource delivery, and feedback may impair teachers' direct observation and emotional judgment of students. Educators must guard against the "data supremacy" misconception brought by technological empowerment; when algorithmic evaluation crowds out emotional communication and massive resources overshadow core teaching objectives, affective cultivation falls into predicaments ^[8].

This issue stands out more prominently in rural primary Chinese teaching. Restricted by inadequate teaching resources and uneven teacher quality, rural instructors are more prone to technological dependence, while affective education demands extensive face-to-face communication and guidance. In oral reading teaching aided by AI speech assessment, although subjective evaluation ambiguity is resolved, the technology suffers from poor adaptive performance and immature human-machine coordination frameworks. Teachers shall construct a three-in-one teaching mode covering pre-guidance, in-class assistance, and extended learning to organically integrate AI tools into the whole process of affective education ^[29].

4.3. Risks of weakened emotional bonds in human-machine collaboration

If AI undertakes excessive interactive functions during collaborative teaching, direct communication between teachers and students may decrease, leading to diluted emotional connections. Explorations of the AI dual-teaching model confirm that the involvement of AI improves reading teaching accuracy and efficiency, yet balancing efficiency with educational warmth remains an unresolved challenge ^[10].

Conversational AI builds personalized learning environments for students, which bring convenience yet may weaken genuine teacher-student emotional exchanges ^[11]. AI penetrates all educational sectors at an unprecedented pace, but technology shall only serve education as a tool rather than replace its humanistic functions. Explorations of interdisciplinary Chinese teaching empowered by AI prove that technological integration can innovate educational models and elevate students' information literacy and creativity, yet affective education shall never be overshadowed by technology ^[12].

5. Practical paths to restructure primary Chinese teachers' affective education roles

5.1. Concept renewal: Establish identity as an emotional interactor

Primary Chinese teachers shall strengthen awareness as emotional interactants and realize the transformation from "knowledge authorities" to "emotional interactors" ^[13]. This shift demands prioritizing affective education at the conceptual level, regarding value guidance and emotional immersion as irreplaceable pedagogical missions. The primary task of role reshaping in the AI era is to clarify the relationship between technological tools and educational goals: technology is a means, education is the objective, and affective education constitutes an inalienable core duty of Chinese teachers.

The *Chinese Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education (2022 Edition)* sets clear requirements for teachers to fully leverage modern information technology, which does not mean surrendering leadership

over affective education ^[14]. On the contrary, teachers shall more consciously assume affective educational responsibilities empowered by AI, utilizing digital tools to expand emotional teaching channels and enrich instructional methods instead of allowing technology to take over affective education.

5.2. Competency restructuring: Boost affective education capacity in human-machine collaborative scenarios

Primary Chinese teachers' competency framework shall evolve from single teaching proficiency to comprehensive educational literacy covering three dimensions: first, technological application skills to operate intelligent teaching tools and design personalized lessons via AI learning diagnosis; second, affective education capacity to sensitively perceive students' emotions and deliver spiritual support and value guidance through embodied communication in human-machine collaborative classrooms; third, ethical judgment ability to audit and correct biases in AI-generated content, uphold teachers' dominant status and guard against algorithmic discrimination and data abuse risks ^[15].

In oral reading teaching supported by AI speech evaluation, the three-in-one mode of pre-guidance, in-class assistance, and extended learning is advocated to organically integrate AI assessment into reading instruction ^[16]. This framework provides replicable experience for teachers to enhance affective education in human-machine collaboration: AI activates learning interest in pre-class guidance and delivers precise tutoring during class, while teachers always dominate core affective links in extended learning sessions.

5.3. Technological collaboration: Build a coexistent human-machine teaching ecosystem

To construct a harmonious human-machine teaching ecosystem, clear division and coordination between AI and human teachers in affective education must be defined. AI can serve as a tool to build immersive learning scenarios and deliver precise learning data for teachers, as well as satisfy differentiated learning demands via personalized resources. Nevertheless, core affective educational tasks including value guidance, emotional immersion, and personality shaping must be undertaken by human instructors ^[17].

In classical poetry teaching, AI's unique strengths in scenario construction, precise diagnosis, and resource integration provide new approaches to resolve barriers in cultural connotation transmission. AI is not merely an additional tool; it reconstructs cultural presentation scenes and reshapes emotional communication between teachers and students, optimizing personalized evaluation feedback and elevating poetry teaching beyond superficial knowledge memorization to in-depth cultural immersion ^[18]. During this process, teachers' affective education roles are reinforced rather than weakened, as they are liberated from mechanical knowledge explanation and can devote more energy to guiding students to perceive poetic emotions and comprehend poets' inner worlds.

5.4. Evaluation reform: Establish an affective education-oriented assessment system

AI educational evaluation refers to the scientific quantification and judgment of educational activity values through digital tracking, which constitutes a rational research and monitoring tool for educational reform ^[19]. However, outcomes of affective education cannot be fully digitized, requiring retention of teachers' subjective professional judgment alongside AI assessment. AI teaching evaluation shall incorporate five dimensions of pedagogical reflection: goal achievement, student participation, teaching appropriateness, emotional warmth and developmental potential ^[20].

Building an affective education-oriented assessment system requires integrating students' emotional experience, value recognition and aesthetic literacy into evaluation criteria, while respecting the long-term, implicit and individualized nature of affective cultivation. Evaluation reform shall guide teachers to prioritize students' emotional development in Chinese learning rather than merely measuring knowledge mastery and skill proficiency.

6. Conclusion

Restructuring primary Chinese teachers' affective education roles in the AI era represents both an inevitable transformation driven by technology and a value return to the essence of education. This paper systematically sorts relevant research from four dimensions: realistic driving forces behind role transformation, unique value of affective education, emotional dilemmas in AI-enabled teaching, and practical reconstruction paths. The study confirms that Chinese teachers' affective education role is irreplaceable, with core strengths in emotional immersion, value guidance, and meaning construction. Yet human-machine collaborative teaching creates realistic challenges such as algorithmic compression of emotional space, technological over-dependence eroding teachers' proficiency, and diluted teacher-student emotional bonds.

Deep integration of AI and Chinese teaching shall never come at the cost of affective education. On the contrary, technological advancement shall liberate teachers from repetitive labor and free up time for irreplaceable affective education work. The essence of restructuring teachers' roles in the AI era is not greater technical proficiency, but a more humanized return to educational missions. Only by striking a balance between technological empowerment and humanistic adherence, and utilizing human-machine collaboration to deepen rather than alienate affective education, can Chinese teaching fully realize its mission of cultivating people with culture and nurturing hearts through emotions.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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