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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE CONVERGENCE OF DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: RECONFIGURING STUDENT LEARNING PARADIGMS

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ABSTRACT

The correlation between Artificial Intelligence and digital humanities paves the way to the pivotal transformations in the 21st Century. New technologies and AI tools are being used for assistance in writing and analysingtext through digital tools, which are stepping into the educational sector. The borders separating digital computation and humanistic understandings are reduced. This paper precisely examines the role of AI tools in the field of digital humanities and how they reconstruct the learning process, innovative mind and critical thinking of learners. The study includes some of the theories such as constructionism, universal design for learning, situated learning and cultural history activity theory. These literary frameworks showcase the process of learning through digital mediation, socio-interaction, and a comprehensive environment for learning and collaborative engagement. Moreover, learning through AI in the digital era emphasises knowledge through a collaborative learning approach and aims to enhance the futuristic learning environment. The incorporation of AI in academics fosters the learning and interactions of students as well as protects the emotions, critical thinking and cultural understandings when supervised by the moral frameworks and thoughtful pedagogy. This paper keenly sums up with the futuristic recommendations for academicians, scholars and industrialists seeking to maintain the balance between human and non-human intelligences in the digitalised era.

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INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario, higher education is intensely reformed by digital transformations. The involvement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) constantly increases in educational sectors as well as research progress, also redesignsthe production, communication and evaluation of knowledge. Within the humanities, which focus on textual analysis, cultural critique, and interpretive reasoning, the rise of generative AI brings both opportunities and challenges. AI systems like ChatGPT and Copilot can be cognitive partners. They offer students new ways to explore texts, languages, and histories (Fritsche & Münster, 2023). However, depending too much on these tools may reduce students' ability to interpret and weaken their critical thinking skills (Dickinson, 2024). The humanities have long focused on reflective inquiry, creativity, and moral imagination. These are abilities that seem to be uniquely human. However, as post-humanist theorists remind us, the line between human and machine has always been blurry (Hayles, 1999&Liu, 2024). Today, this blurriness appears in classrooms where essays are co-written with AI, translations are improved by neural models, and historical data is illustrated through machine learning. This change raises an important question: How does using AI tools in humanities education change learning, creativity, and critical thinking? This paper aims to answer that question through theoretical synthesis and critical review. It places AI within the larger field of digital humanities (DH), examines its impact on teaching, thinking, and ethics, and provides a guide for educators looking for effective ways to integrate AI.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recent studies show a growing interest in AI's potential for teaching. Research on AI-assisted language learning indicates that students value instant feedback and personalised guidance. However, they are also worried about a decline in originality (Butarbutar, 2023). In digital humanities programs, AI is increasingly used as both a topic and a tool. European universities are adding text-mining and generative AI modules to their curricula (Fritsche & Münster, 2023). A 2025 study on Chinese history and culture classes found that 94 percent of students saw digital humanities tools as effective for learning, with 40 percent finding generative AI particularly useful Zhang, 2025).

Despite this, perspectives specific to the humanities are still limited. Most research on AI in education comes from STEM fields (Alenezi&Alenezi, 2024). Reviews of algorithmic bias and academic integrity point out a lack of discussion on the interpretive and ethical issues that are particular to humanistic fields (Hackl et al., 2025). Additionally, commentators like Dickinson (2024) and Moran (2025) warn that AI-generated writing may weaken students' reflective engagement, which is key to developing both thinking and writing skills. Similar debates in digital culture and education studies view AI as both a medium and a message. Media-ecological analyses (Vehrer&Palfalusi, 2025) argue that intelligent media changes cognitive habits. Connectivist theorists, such as Siemens (2005), suggest that knowledge exists in networks made up of both human and technological elements. In this context, students' ability to navigate AI systems is crucial for digital literacy (Gilster, 1997, &Belshaw, 2012). However, awareness of ethical issues is uneven; reviews show little discussion of transparency, accountability, or authorship in the adoption of AI in the humanities. Together, these studies demonstrate that while there is strong enthusiasm for AI-assisted learning, a systematic understanding of its effects on humanistic thought, creativity, and ethics is just starting to develop.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Constructivism, introduced by Piaget (1972) and later expanded by Vygotsky (1978), sees learning as something active and shaped through social interaction. In AI-supported humanities classrooms, students don't just receive knowledge, they build it together by engaging with digital tools. As they prompt, question, and refine AI-generated responses, they develop a deeper understanding of the subject. In this context, AI doesn't replace the teacher; instead, it supports learning by encouraging dialogue and exploration (Alenezi&Alenezi, 2024). Connectivism, proposed by Siemens (2005), explains learning as the ability to create and move through networks of information. AI reflects this idea well, it connects learners to vast bodies of knowledge and allows information to flow dynamically. In humanities education, this means students become part of wider interpretive networks that include not only people but also AI systems. Posthumanism, associated with scholars like Hayles (1999) and more recently Liu (2024), questions human-centred views of knowledge. It suggests that human and machine thinking are closely interconnected. From this perspective, AI is not a threat but a partner in meaning-making. This view is especially important for rethinking how humanities subjects are taught in a digital world.

Media ecology, introduced by McLuhan (1964), reminds us that every medium changes how we think and perceive the world. As a new medium, AI is reshaping how students engage with texts and ideas. Features like text prediction and instant feedback speed up the learning process, creating a sense of immediacy that influences how students read and write (Vehrer&Palfalusi, 2025). Finally, digital literacy frameworks (Gilster, 1997), along with newer models like Hackl et al.'s (2025) AI Literacy Heptagon, highlight the importance of critical thinking, ethical awareness, and the ability to integrate AI into learning. For humanities students, literacy is no longer just about technical skills—it also involves understanding the cultural and ethical implications of AI.

RECONCEPTUALISATION OF PEDAGOGY

Teaching roles and learning modalities are being redefined by AI's introduction into the humanities classroom. As they guide students in critical engagement with AI outputs, teachers transition from being information transmitters to facilitators. Research in digital humanities classes shows that structured AI collaboration improves analytical depth when students evaluate rather than replicate AI recommendations (Fritsche & Münster, 2023). AI-assisted textual analysis boosted student engagement and decreased fear of complex data, according to Michigan State University digital humanities instructors (Fritsche, 2024). However, pedagogical balance is a fine line. Authentic reasoning may be replaced by an over-reliance on AI. According to The Guardian (2025), students' capacity to formulate arguments may be weakened by "outsourcing thinking." On the other hand, when educators present AI as a dialogic partner, it encourages rather than expedites inquiry. Constructivist learning takes place as students test, edit, and assess AI responses iteratively, emulating digital Socratic dialogue (Vehrer&Palfalusi, 2025).

SYNERGISTIC COGNITIVE AND CREATIVE PROCESSES

In the humanities, creativity has traditionally involved challenging accepted truths and reimagining preexisting narratives. By providing students with different metaphors, viewpoints, and textual options, generative AI tools expand this creative field (Dickinson, 2024). Students working with AI reported increased engagement and experimentation in a study on creating digital content. However, critical awareness must balance creative amplification, students must identify biases in training data and steer clear of stylehomogenization. AI alters cognitive patterns from a media-ecological perspective by rewarding surface coherence and speed. As a result, humanities teachers must create assignments that slow down thought processes, requiring students to consider how AI produced its results and what interpretive options were left out (Hayles, 1999). When applied carefully, AI can help students visualise arguments, test interpretive hypotheses, and externalise thought processes, deepening rather than diminishing cognition.

DIGITAL–ETHICAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND CRITICAL ANALYTICAL ENGAGEMENT

The foundation of responsible AI integration is ethical literacy. According to Hackl et al. (2025), there are technical, ethical, social, and legal aspects to AI literacy. Authorship, bias, and the moral ramifications of assigning interpretation to machines are examples of ethical concerns in humanities contexts. There is little humanities-specific research on algorithmic fairness or transparency, according to scoping reviews (Human-Centred AI Framework, 2025). Therefore, it is the duty of educators to incorporate ethical reflection into their curricula. Reflective journals on AI collaboration, class discussions on machine authorship, and assignments requiring students to evaluate AI outputs for cultural bias are examples of practical strategies. These methods foster what Belshaw (2012) calls "critical digital competence." Additionally, preventing new digital divides is achieved by guaranteeing equal access to AI tools (Times of India, 2025). To help faculty and students navigate the rapidly changing technological landscape, institutions must offer training.

The hallmark of humanistic education, critical thinking, becomes even more important. According to Le Monde (2025), students are concerned that AI could weaken their analytical skills. Evidence, however, points to the opposite when AI is applied dialogically: it offers content for criticism rather than taking the place of analysis. As with any text, humanities students can learn to analyse AI by challenging its sources, context, and rhetoric.

DYNAMICS OF HUMAN CREATIVITY AND INTERPRETATION IN AI CONTEXTS

The issue of human creativity and interpretation is one of the most significant issues surrounding artificial intelligence in humanities education. The humanities have historically placed a strong emphasis on creativity, emotional nuance, and interpretive thinkingall of which are thought to be exclusively human traits. With the advent of generative AI tools that can generate essays, poems, and literary analyses, academics are starting to wonder if these tools might affect how students approach creative and interpretive assignments. However, AI can be viewed as a tool that broadens the possibilities of creative exploration rather than taking the place of human creativity. Students can experiment with various viewpoints and stylistic approaches by using AI-generated suggestions as a basis for introspection, comparison, and reinterpretation. In this way, the existence of AI pushes students to consider more carefully what originality, authorship, and intellectual contribution mean in the humanities.

However, it is still crucial to preserve the importance of human interpretation. Because AI systems function through pattern recognition rather than lived experience, they are unable to fully replicate the contextual understanding, historical awareness, and cultural sensitivity that are essential to humanities scholarship. Students gain the capacity to assess concepts, challenge presumptions, and create more complex arguments when they critically interact with AI-generated content. Instead of weakening the humanities' interpretive traditions, this process strengthens them. Therefore, rather than being viewed as a rivalry, the coexistence of human creativity and artificial intelligence should be viewed as a cooperative relationship in which human judgment ensures depth, meaning, and ethical reflection while technology offers new avenues for exploration.

SUMMATION

Learning and teaching in the humanities are being redefined by artificial intelligence. This paper has argued that AI can be a catalyst for renewed creativity, critical thinking, and teamwork when it is guided by strong pedagogical and ethical frameworks. While posthumanism and media ecology highlight how human cognition is changing in technologically mediated environments, constructivist and connectivist viewpoints show how AI promotes active knowledge building through interaction. Digital literacy models show how important it is to engage with AI ethically and thoughtfully. Students appreciate AI's efficiency and feedback, but they worry about becoming dependent on it and losing their uniqueness, according to key findings from recent research. Therefore, educators need to strike a balance between innovation and integrity, utilising AI to enhance rather than automate inquiry. Institutions should redesign assessments to evaluate reflective processes rather than just outputs and create policies that promote fair and transparent access toAI.

FUTURE SCOPE

Longitudinal and interdisciplinary studies on the effects of AI on interpretive reasoning and creativity, case studies of particular humanities courses incorporating AI, and investigations of culturally varied viewpoints on AI ethics should all be included in future research. The humanities can reaffirm their relevance in an age of intelligent machines by embracing AI as both an object and a study partner. This will allow students to learn not only how to use technology but also how to comprehend, question, and humanise it.

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