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How Artificial Intelligence Technology Reshapes Higher Education: Internal Logic and Potential Risks

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ABSTRACT: The integration of AI into higher education is both an opportunity and a challenge. By critically examining its limitations and proactively addressing its implications, we can harness its potential to enhance learning while safeguarding the core values of education. This requires a multifaceted approach that combines technological innovation with pedagogical wisdom, institutional flexibility, and a commitment to humanistic principles. Only by striking this balance can we build a higher education system that is both adaptive to the demands of the digital age and true to its foundational purpose: the holistic development of individuals and societies.

KEYWORDS: Artificial intelligence technology, Higher education, Internal logic, Potential risks

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence and digital technologies are profoundly transforming various human activities, both in professional fields and in daily life. Many human jobs are being automated, and human activities are increasingly reliant on AI skills, which has also led to the continuous emergence of new professions related to AI. The field of higher education must seriously discuss and actively explore the opportunities and challenges faced in the era of artificial intelligence. In terms of opportunities, artificial intelligence has shaped new laws of knowledge production and dissemination, creating unprecedented conditions for the timely updating and iteration of educational content. Big data analysis, handwriting recognition technology, knowledge graphs, and other AI technologies have reduced the burden on teachers and students, promoting the personalized development of students. Artificial intelligence has facilitated open interaction and integration between schools and society, breaking down the barriers between universities and society, and enhancing their social service capabilities. In terms of challenges, the widespread application of artificial intelligence has placed some humanities majors in universities in a dual dilemma of enrollment and employment. While empowering the high-quality development of higher education, artificial intelligence also faces practical difficulties such as the intelligence gap, digital literacy, ethical misconduct, and legal risks. In fact, artificial intelligence technology is created by humans, and higher education is an activity centered around humans. Neither of them can exist apart from "humans". To address the challenges brought by artificial intelligence technology to higher education, it is necessary to clarify the inherent tension between artificial intelligence and the internal structure of higher education, especially between educational subjects, and to reveal and explore the related logic contained therein.

2. THE INTERNAL LOGIC OF HIGHER EDUCATION RESHAPED BY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TECHNOLOGY

When considering issues in education, educators must first clarify the fundamental purpose behind imparting knowledge and why they engage in teaching activities. The goal could be limited to equipping students with technical skills, enabling them to replicate professional operations, but it could also aim to guide students to contribute to societal development through their own creativity. In the past, one function of higher education was to impart the basic operational skills needed for daily activities, as well as fundamental cognitive abilities. Today, as we step into the information society (also known as the knowledge society), the role of education is more critical than ever. In a knowledge society, work is no longer repetitive. Modern workers must possess creativity; otherwise, they can easily be replaced by machines. The goal of higher education should be to cultivate students' creativity, imagination, and innovative capabilities, enabling them to meet the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and advanced machinery in their work field. To achieve this goal, higher education must continue to keep pace with the changing times.

The essence of artificial intelligence lies in its integrated process of perception, reasoning, learning, and action. In this process, AI can acquire information through methods such as computer vision, speech recognition, and deep learning, enabling it to think

and act like humans. However, artificial intelligence technology is also an externalization of human intrinsic capabilities. In the process of higher education transformation, the role of artificial intelligence technology should be emphasized, but it is equally important to avoid being replaced of main position of human by AI. The author will explore the reshaping effect of AI on higher education from three dimensions: cognition, agency, and practice.

2.1 AI technology reshapes the cognitive logic of traditional higher education

With the continuous evolution of machine learning algorithms such as deep learning and reinforcement learning Artificial intelligence not only significantly improves the speed of knowledge generation, acquisition, and application, but also has the ability to mine undiscovered, potential, and highly valuable information from complex data This greatly expands the boundaries and potential of knowledge creation. By fully integrating the intelligence distributed within individuals, machines, and between humans and machines, the enormous power of human-machine integration can be unleashed, surpassing individual ability limitations and extending individual cognitive boundaries.

Before exploring how AI is reshaping the cognitive logic of higher education, it is essential to first clarify what the cognitive logic of traditional higher education entails. The traditional cognitive logic of higher education is primarily based on the transmission of knowledge by human educators and the passive reception by students. This model emphasizes the authority of teachers and the one-way flow of knowledge, with students primarily mastering knowledge through memorization and comprehension. This logic, to some extent, relies on the experience and judgment of educators, as well as students' ability to digest and apply knowledge.

However, the integration of AI has introduced a new cognitive logic to higher education. AI technologies, particularly machine learning and natural language processing, can process and analyze vast amounts of data, offering personalized learning experiences and immediate feedback. This capability makes the educational process more dynamic and interactive, transforming students from mere recipients of knowledge into active explorers and learners. For instance, AI can automatically adjust teaching content and difficulty based on students' learning progress and comprehension levels, providing tailored learning pathways.

This shift from passive reception to active exploration fundamentally reshapes the cognitive logic of traditional higher education. AI integrated education emphasizes the individualized needs and developmental capabilities of students, rather than merely the transmission of knowledge. This transformation not only enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of learning but also fosters the development of students' critical thinking and innovative abilities.

Nevertheless, this shift in cognitive logic also presents challenges to higher education. Firstly, educators need to redefine the roles and responsibilities of teachers, transitioning from knowledge transmitters to learning facilitators and coordinators. Secondly, educational institutions must invest in the development and application of AI technologies to ensure the effective utilization of educational resources and the improvement of teaching quality. Additionally, attention must be paid to the ethical and privacy issues surrounding AI technology to ensure its application does not infringe upon students' rights.

In summary, the integration of AI has not only altered the cognitive logic of higher education but also brought new opportunities and challenges. Educators and policymakers must actively respond to these changes to ensure the education system can adapt to the demands of the new era and cultivate talents capable of thriving in future society.

2.2 AI technology reshapes the subject logic of traditional higher education

The traditional subject logic of higher education primarily revolves around the "teacher-student" dual relationship, where the teacher serves as the authoritative transmitter of knowledge, and the student acts as the passive recipient. This logic is built on the monopolistic control of knowledge by educators, emphasizing the dominant role of the teacher and the subordinate role of the student. The educational process is viewed as a one-way transmission of knowledge, with the student's role confined to that of a knowledge absorber and assessment subject. This subject logic has formed a stable structure over long-term educational practices, but it has also been questioned due to its unidirectional and rigid nature.

The integration of AI poses a fundamental challenge to the traditional subject logic of higher education. The core of AI technology lies in its data processing capabilities and intelligent decision-making abilities, which transform the educational subject relationship from a "teacher-student" dual structure to a "teacher-AI-student" triadic structure. As an intermediary, AI not only provides personalized learning support but also plays an auxiliary role in the knowledge transmission process, even replacing traditional teacher functions in certain areas. For example, AI can offer customized learning resources to students through intelligent recommendation systems, provide teaching improvement suggestions to teachers through data analysis, and reduce the assessment burden on teachers through automated evaluation systems. This shift makes the educational subject relationship more diversified and dynamic, replacing the traditional "teacher-dominated" model with a "multi-subject collaborative" model.

This change in subject logic stems from the deep involvement of AI technology in the educational process. AI breaks the teacher's monopolistic control over knowledge, as the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge no longer rely entirely on the teacher's personal abilities but can be achieved more efficiently through technological means. AI grants students greater autonomy, enabling them to choose learning content and pace based on their own needs, transforming from passive recipients to active

participants. The introduction of AI also makes the educational subject relationship more egalitarian, as the teacher is no longer the sole source of authority but instead forms a support system for education alongside AI.

The future scenario for higher education teaching in the next decade may be as follows: higher education institutions will be able to tailor degree programs and courses for each learner, adjusting them based on learning preferences, styles, and personal goals, and providing customized learning materials and personalized learning pathways with the help of emerging AI technologies. Teachers should strive to find their future position in this scenario.

2.3 AI technology reshapes the practical logic of traditional higher education

To explore how AI reshapes the practical logic of higher education, it is first necessary to clarify what the traditional practical logic of higher education entails. The traditional practical logic of higher education is primarily based on the physical space of "real fields," meaning that educational activities rely on physical venues such as classrooms, laboratories, and training bases. The core of this logic lies in the fact that the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation of skills must occur through real environments, real equipment, and real interpersonal interactions. For example, medical education depends on anatomy laboratories, engineering education relies on mechanical workshops, and art education is conducted in studios or stages. The advantage of this practical logic lies in its authenticity and immediacy, as students can gain experience and skills through hands-on practice in real scenarios. However, this logic also has limitations, such as the finite resources of physical fields, high costs, and constraints of time and space, making it difficult for educational practices to meet large-scale and personalized demands.

The integration of AI poses a fundamental challenge to the traditional practical logic of higher education. AI technologies, particularly virtual simulation, simulate real scenes, objects, and human-computer interactions, symbolizing people, buildings, and other elements in physical spaces, thereby creating a highly immersive virtual practice field. For instance, virtual simulation laboratories can replicate operating rooms, factory workshops, or historical scenes, allowing students to enter these environments through virtual reality devices for risk-free practical operations and exploration. This technology not only overcomes the limitations of physical fields but also achieves seamless integration between real users, virtual avatars, and simulated objects through three-dimensional teaching spaces, creating an unprecedented level of immersion and realism. This shift transforms the practical logic of education from "dependence on real fields" to "expansion into virtual fields," replacing the traditional "physical practice" model with a "virtual practice" model.

This change in practical logic stems from the reconstruction of educational fields by AI technology. Firstly, AI breaks the resource constraints of physical fields, enabling educational practices to be infinitely replicated and expanded in virtual environments. For example, a university can provide high-quality practical opportunities for thousands of students through virtual simulation technology without building numerous physical laboratories. Secondly, AI grants educational practices greater flexibility and safety. Students can perform high-risk or high-cost operations in virtual environments without worrying about the consequences of failure. For instance, medical students can repeatedly practice surgical techniques in virtual operating rooms, while engineering students can test mechanical designs in virtual factories. Lastly, the introduction of AI makes educational practices more personalized and interactive. Virtual fields can dynamically adjust based on individual student needs and learning progress, offering customized practical experiences, and the interaction between virtual avatars and simulated objects makes the learning process more engaging and participatory.

In summary, the integration of AI not only reshapes the practical logic of higher education but also brings new opportunities and challenges. This shift transforms educational practices from "dependence on real fields" to "expansion into virtual fields," breaking the limitations of physical space and providing more flexible, safe, and personalized practical experiences. However, educational institutions and policymakers must actively address the complex issues arising from technological changes to ensure that the application of virtual practice fields genuinely serves the improvement of educational quality and the comprehensive development of students. Only through the deep integration of technology and education can higher education find a sustainable development path in the new era.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS OF RESHAPING HIGHER EDUCATION WITH AI TECHNOLOGY

Artificial intelligence empowers higher education, serving both as an accelerator for its development and a litmus test for its reform. When technology is not used rationally but merely as a simple solution tool, it becomes an instrument that accelerates the demise of thought. The more humans technologize their understanding of themselves and the world, the more they fall into a dependency that leaves no room for viewing things and people from a "creatable" perspective. When artificial intelligence technology occupies an overwhelming position in modern society, it subtly influences human cognition and existence, turning individuals into electronic dependent on AI. In the field of higher education, the widespread application of artificial intelligence technology has reshaped and even overturned the inherent teaching models, academic traditions, and organizational structures of the higher education system. Intelligent algorithms are gradually becoming the underlying framework for the development of higher education, with educational content increasingly being digitized and symbolized, and teaching processes continuously being programmed and standardized. It can be said that artificial intelligence not only reinforces individuals' tendencies toward flattened and diffused cognitive habits and

thinking model, but also intensifies the implicit dominance and shaping of power structures by technology in the construction of mainstream ideology.

3.1 The limitation of knowledge encoding leads to rigid development of educational goals

Knowledge encoding, as a linguistic expression in the era of artificial intelligence, typically describes higher education content based on objective facts. Although it possesses significant advantages in structural form and organizational strategies, it has inherent limitations in connotative expression and meaning construction, which can easily lead to a value void in educational goals.

Artificial intelligence collects and encodes explicit human knowledge through visual, auditory, semantic, and linguistic means. Its essence lies in the "compression" of information. However, it cannot fully capture or describe the complexity of the real world. Knowledge encoding under technological operation is merely a superficial, shallow, and fast-forwarded network or reorganization of information, making it difficult to reveal and represent the deep, implicit psychological and spiritual processes of humans.

Digital technology implements a gentle, disciplinary form of persuasion and hypnosis, devoid of physical violence but capable of taming the mind and capturing consciousness through the presentation of "digital landscapes" derived from reality, thereby altering one's understanding of their own existence. This means that the digital thinking of knowledge encoding treats concrete human emotions as standardized codes composed of data, creating a subtle yet pervasive mechanization trend.

However, higher education teaching activities are precisely such highly complex psychological and spiritual interactions between individuals. They cannot be simply reduced to a physical process of knowledge transfer and skill acquisition. In the AI technological environment of higher education, where knowledge content is simplified into fixed symbols, individuals disappear into data. What people calculate and compare are merely the external data exhibited by individuals or organizations, turning educational activities into a numbers game. The era of human-centered, subjectivity-emphasizing higher education may be drawing to a close. Just as language clothes thought, one cannot infer the form of the thought concealed beneath the garment from its external appearance. This deviates from the original intent of artificial intelligence to assist and serve human development, becoming an undue suppression of humanity's inherent potential and power.

Taking the evaluation of students' learning processes as an example, the acquisition of implicit virtues, the transformation of thinking model and the enhancement of critical thinking abilities are far too complex to be easily captured by a singular "calculation and representation" mechanism, let alone comprehensively recorded by a highly algorithmic, homogenized evaluation framework. If higher education in the new era relies solely on quantitative indicators as the standard for talent evaluation, neglecting a profound exploration and pursuit of the essence and value of education, the true meaning of higher education may gradually fade, and colleges will become utilitarian talent production factories.

3.2 The dependence on digital virtual technology leads to weak teacher-student relationships

The core of the teacher-student relationship lies in interaction and trust, which are established through face-to-face communication and emotional resonance. In traditional educational models, teachers and students jointly participate in teaching activities within the same physical space, fostering a sense of shared presence that strengthens their relationships. Although digital virtual technology provides convenient communication channels, it remains a medium that cannot fully replace the non-verbal cues and emotional transmission inherent in face-to-face interactions. The intervention of such a medium inherently introduces potential distortions or losses of information, thereby weakening direct interaction between teachers and students to some extent. The spatiotemporal separation enabled by digital virtual technology further exacerbates this issue. By dislocating educators and learners across time and space, it deprives them of the foundational shared experiences necessary for forging emotional bonds, resulting in a loosening of their relational ties. The overreliance on digital virtual technology risks the mechanization of the educational process. In digitized learning environments, students' learning journeys are often reduced to the collection and analysis of data, while teachers' pedagogical practices become standardized according to algorithmic protocols. This mechanized approach neglects the humanistic aspects of education, such as personalized care and mentorship for students. Education is not merely the transmission of knowledge but also the cultivation of character and values. The erosion of this humanistic core through mechanization leads to a cooling of teacher-student relationships, fostering emotional detachment and alienation.

The use of digital virtual technology may disrupt traditional power dynamics of teachers and students. In conventional educational frameworks, teachers a high level of authority as knowledge transmitters. In the traditional education framework, teacher authority is not just a one-way power, but a teacher-student trust mechanism established based on the legitimacy of knowledge monopoly, which provides a structural foundation for teacher-student interaction. In such systems, teachers assume the role of a "gatekeeper" of knowledge. Students' access to knowledge necessarily occurs through the teacher’s systematic interpretation and sifting. This cognitive authority solidifies when students corroborate, through practice, that the knowledge imparted by teachers genuinely resolves practical challenges. Active dependence on the authority of teachers' knowledge, rather than passive dependence, forms the emotional basis of the teacher-student relationship. It allows students to establish enduring trust in their teacher's competence. Precisely this trust transcends basic information transmission, fostering an interactive mode characterized by mutual respect and collaboration. The security and trust thus generated also create a psychological “safe haven” for students—a space where

they dare to expose cognitive shortcomings, pose questions, and even challenge conventions while maintaining openness to growth, creativity, and critical thinking. The relationship structure rooted in the teacher's authoritative identity catalyzes genuine dialogue between them, that becomes a potent force in shaping students' personal and intellectual development. However, in digitized environments, technological platforms and algorithms increasingly dominate educational processes, reducing teachers to mere users of these tools. The changing of teachers' position in teaching activities has weakened their authority in knowledge, which inevitably renders teacher-student relationship even fragile.

The impact of digital virtual technology on teacher-student relationships is multifaceted and layered. It risks eroding the foundational trust and interactivity that sustain these relationships. The resultant weakening of relational bonds not only undermines educational efficacy but also exerts profound effects on students' development and well-being.

3.3 The digitization of management leads to an imbalance ecosystem of higher education

The core of the higher - education innovation ecosystem lies in diversity, free exploration, and cross - border collaboration. The realization of these elements depends on the organic interaction and dynamic balance among different subjects in the education system. Although digital teaching management improves management efficiency and data transparency, it is essentially a standardized and centralized technical tool. The application of this tool will inevitably introduce excessive control and a unidirectional orientation to the education process, thus threatening the diversity of the innovation ecosystem.

The core goal of digital teaching management is to optimize resource allocation and decision - making efficiency through data collection and analysis. However, this optimization often takes standardization as a prerequisite, that is, measuring teaching effects and academic outputs through unified data indicators and algorithmic models. While this standardization process can provide clear decision - making basis for managers, it comes at the cost of ignoring the non - quantifiable innovation elements in the education process. For example, the complexity of interdisciplinary research, the value of non - mainstream academic viewpoints, and the potential of experimental teaching methods are often difficult to be simplified into quantifiable data indicators. When teaching management overly relies on digital tools, these non - quantifiable innovation elements are likely to be marginalized, leading to a unidirectional tendency in the evaluation criteria of the education system. This unidirectional orientation not only suppresses academic diversity but also weakens the autonomy and creativity of educational subjects in innovation exploration.

Furthermore, the centralized nature of digital teaching management will exacerbate the power imbalance in the higher - education system. In the digital management model, technological platforms and algorithms gradually become the dominant forces in resource allocation and decision - making, while the roles of teachers, students, and other educational subjects are weakened to data providers and implementers. This power shift weakens the voice of educational subjects in innovation activities and suppresses their innovation motivation. For example, when a teacher's research direction and academic interests do not match the preset goals of the digital management system, their innovation exploration may be difficult to continue due to lack of resource support. This power imbalance not only affects the innovation enthusiasm of educational subjects but also makes the innovation ecosystem in the higher - education system gradually tend to be homogeneous and conservative.

In addition, there is a fundamental conflict between the technological logic of digital teaching management and the value logic of educational innovation. The core of digital management is to maximize efficiency through technological means, while the essence of educational innovation is to achieve breakthroughs in knowledge production and dissemination through free exploration and cross - border collaboration. In practice, this conflict is manifested in that digital management tends to predict and control the education process through algorithmic models, while educational innovation relies on unpredictable inspiration collisions and cross - border interactions. When teaching management overly relies on digital tools, the education process may be simplified into a predictable technological process, and the openness and uncertainty required for educational innovation are suppressed by the technological logic. This suppression not only restricts the innovation space of educational subjects but also makes the higher - education innovation ecosystem gradually lose its dynamic balance and self - renewal ability.

Finally, the application of digital teaching management may also lead to an imbalance in resource allocation in the education system. In the digital management model, resource allocation is often carried out based on data indicators and algorithmic models. This allocation method easily leads to the concentration of resources on projects with significant short - term benefits, while long - term, fundamental, and experimental innovation projects are difficult to obtain resources due to lack of data support. This imbalance in resource allocation not only intensifies the Matthew effect in the education system but also makes the higher - education innovation ecosystem gradually lose its diversity and inclusiveness. When innovation resources are overly concentrated in a few fields, the innovation ecosystem in the education system may become rigid and stagnant due to lack of diversity.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Through the survey, following conclusions have been drawn: In the context where AI technology is increasingly integrated into higher education, the limitations of knowledge encoding indeed pose significant challenges to the setting and achievement of educational goals. The core of this issue lies in the deep - seated tension between the technical logic of knowledge encoding and the essential attributes of educational goals. Educational goals are not merely about the transmission of knowledge and the cultivation

of skills, but also the growth of individual minds, the shaping of critical thinking, and the cultivation of values. As a technical tool, knowledge encoding essentially simplifies and abstracts the complex real world. While this simplification improves the efficiency of information processing, it also weakens the multidimensionality and dynamism of educational goals.

In higher education, the widespread application of digital virtual technology has indeed presented new challenges to the construction and maintenance of teacher - student relationships. The core of teacher - student relationship lies in interaction and trust, and the establishment of such relationships relies on face - to - face communication and emotional resonance. However, although digital virtual technology provides convenient communication channels, it cannot fully replace the non - verbal cues and emotional transmission in face - to - face interactions. It may even weaken the direct interaction between teachers and students due to information distortion or loss. In addition, the characteristic of separation in time and space further exacerbates this problem, making it difficult for teachers and students to build emotional bonds in a shared physical space. Meanwhile, over - reliance on digital virtual technology may lead to the mechanization of the educational process. Students' learning processes are simplified to data collection and analysis, and teachers' teaching behaviors are standardized into algorithmic protocols, thus neglecting the humanistic care and personalized guidance in education.

The trend of digitalization in higher education management, while enhancing management efficiency and data transparency, also poses potential threats to the diversity, free exploration, and cross - boundary collaboration in the higher education innovation ecosystem. The core of this problem is that digital management tools are essentially standardized and centralized technical means. Their application will inevitably introduce excessive control and one - way guidance, thereby weakening the organic interaction and dynamic balance of the education system. In the face of this challenge, against the irreversible background of AI technology, we need to re - examine the goals and paths of digitalization in higher education management. Through the collaborative innovation of technology and institutional design, we should build a more inclusive and sustainable higher education innovation ecosystem.

To address the challenges posed by the integration of AI technology into higher education, we must first acknowledge the irreversible nature of this trend while critically examining its implications, and adopt a nuanced approach that balances technological innovation with the preservation of educational values.

First, the limitations of knowledge encoding highlight the need to redefine educational goals in the age of AI. Knowledge encoding, by its very nature, simplifies complex realities into structured data, which can enhance efficiency but risks reducing education to a transactional process. To counter this, we must shift our focus from mere knowledge transmission to fostering critical thinking, creativity, and ethical reasoning. This requires a reimagining of curricula and assessment methods. AI can efficiently evaluate standardized tests; it struggles to assess nuanced skills like problem-solving or ethical judgment. Therefore, educators should integrate AI tools with traditional methods, such as project-based and reflective learning, to capture the full spectrum of student development. By doing so, we can leverage AI's strengths without sacrificing the richness of educational outcomes.

Second, the impact of digital virtual technology on teacher-student relationships demands a rethinking of how we foster meaningful interactions in a hybrid or fully virtual environment. While digital platforms offer unprecedented accessibility and convenience, they often lack the emotional depth and spontaneity of face-to-face interactions. To address this, educators must intentionally design digital spaces that facilitate trust and engagement. For example, incorporating synchronous discussions, virtual office hours, and collaborative projects can help bridge the emotional gap created by physical separation. Additionally, training educators to use digital tools effectively—while remaining attuned to students' emotional and psychological needs—is crucial. This dual focus on technological proficiency and human empathy can help preserve the relational core of education in a digital age.

Third, the trend toward digitalization in higher education management presents a paradox: while it enhances efficiency and transparency, it also risks stifling innovation and diversity. Digital management tools, by their standardized nature, can inadvertently prioritize uniformity over creativity, leading to a homogenized educational ecosystem. To mitigate this, institutions must adopt a flexible approach to digitalization, one that balances centralized efficiency with decentralized autonomy. AI-driven analytics can provide valuable insights into student performance, they should not dictate pedagogical practices. Instead, educators should use these tools as supplementary resources, allowing room for experimentation and adaptation. Furthermore, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and encouraging cross-boundary initiatives can counteract the siloing effect of digital management, promoting a more dynamic and innovative educational environment.

It is important to reaffirm the humanistic values of education in an AI-driven world. Technology should serve as a tool to enhance, not replace, the human elements of teaching and learning. This requires a cultural shift within educational institutions, where stakeholders—administrators, educators, and students—collaborate to define the role of AI in their unique contexts. Involving educators in the development of AI tools can ensure that these technologies align with pedagogical goals rather than distorting them. Similarly, fostering a critical dialogue about the ethical implications of AI in education can help institutions navigate the complex trade-offs between efficiency and equity.

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