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# Exploring the Optimization of Practical Legal Education under Artificial Intelligence Technologies

Yuhong Ju

Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, Shanghai, 201701, China

## Abstract

**As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in the legal field, the content, format, and goals of legal education require optimization accordingly. AI is not merely a technological tool, but a strategic fulcrum for reshaping the ecosystem of legal practice education. This paper examines how AI shapes legal education, including potential applications and new challenges and proposes corresponding strategies for improvement. The discussion focuses on updating the design of practical courses by integrating core legal skills with AI-related knowledge, improving traditional assessment approaches, and strengthening the use of AI tools in internships and other practice-based learning environments. These measures aim to enhance the overall effectiveness of practical legal education in the AI era.**

## Keywords

**Artificial Intelligence; Legal Prefessional Competence; Optimize teaching methods.**

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the wide application of emerging technologies such as big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence (AI) have brought new opportunities and challenges to education.

Artificial intelligence is driving the deepening development of educational informatization, and the integration of online and offline teaching represents a concrete exploration of the "Internet + Education" classroom instructional model. Platforms such as China University MOOC and Chaoxing Learning App have been widely adopted in classroom teaching, facilitating interdisciplinary integration between the New Liberal Arts and other disciplines. In April 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the Innovation Action Plan for Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education Institutions, emphasizing that “efforts should be accelerated to innovatively apply artificial intelligence in education, leveraging intelligent technologies to support innovation in talent development models, reform of teaching methodologies, and enhancement of educational governance capacity [1].” In September 2020, the Ministry of Education’s Comprehensive Reform Plan for the Open University of China emphasized the need to leverage 5G, AI, virtual reality, blockchain, big data, and cloud computing to accelerate the development of online learning platforms, promote a vertically integrated and horizontally connected learning network, and support the deep integration of information technology with teaching. These efforts aim to advance digital, intelligent, and lifelong education and enhance the overall modernization of China’s educational system [2].

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# 2. The Impact of AI on the Legal Profession Ecosystem

## 2.1. The Multidimensional Value of AI in Legal Practice Education

### 2.1.1. AI Aligns with the Policy Orientation of Cultivating Legal Talent Suited for the New Economy

The new economy is driving the transformation of legal education under the "New Liberal Arts" framework—not as an external variable, but as an endogenous force that reshapes both its core essence and boundaries. Only by proactively embracing the legal transformations, technological logics, and business ecosystems brought about by the new economy can legal practice education truly achieve a leap—from textbooks to real-world practice, and from tradition to the future. Practical legal education should establish a forward-looking, adaptive, and distinctly Chinese model of legal practice teaching for the new era, providing robust talent support for the development of Digital China and Rule-of-Law China. Therefore, the deep integration of AI into China's legal practice education not only aligns with the trends of educational digitalization and legal modernization, but also demonstrates unique and far-reaching value across multiple dimensions—including pedagogical innovation, model transformation, and competency development. As an innovative teaching approach that integrates modern information technologies and contemporary educational theories, practice-oriented teaching is highly aligned with the national policy orientation for cultivating legal talent [3].

### 2.1.2. AI Extends the Temporal and Spatial Boundaries of Legal Practice Education

Law is a highly applied discipline, whose core lies in cultivating students' legal reasoning, practical skills, and capacity to adapt to societal needs. Traditional classrooms, primarily lecture-based, struggle to adequately simulate real-world legal scenarios, whereas practice-oriented teaching serves as the crucial bridge connecting theory and legal practice. As a new educational infrastructure, AI possesses an inherent advantage in transcending temporal and spatial constraints. AI technologies enable 24/7 availability, cross-regional collaboration, and personalized interaction, offering innovative solutions to the aforementioned limitations and serving as a key driver in transforming the paradigm of legal practice education.

## 2.2. AI-Driven Transformation of Legal Professional Competencies

AI is profoundly driving a structural transformation in legal professional competencies, primarily reflected in the following three aspects:

(1) The center of competence is shifting from “knowledge memorization” to “higher-order thinking”. Legal professionals are no longer distinguished by the volume of legal provisions they can recall; instead, they must strengthen higher-order capabilities—such as legal interpretation, value balancing, and strategic design—that are difficult for AI to replicate.

(2) New competencies in “human-AI collaboration” and “technological literacy” are emerging. Legal practitioners must understand algorithmic logic, evaluate the reliability of AI-generated outputs, identify data biases, and effectively leverage Legal Tech tools to enhance the efficiency and precision of their services.

(3) Professional roles are becoming increasingly “interdisciplinary.” Modern legal professionals are expected to integrate AI with complex negotiation, risk anticipation, business decision support, and cross-domain problem-solving—blending legal expertise with technological and commercial acumen.

Specifically, the legal profession’s requirements in the context of AI are as follows: The application of big data primarily lies in extracting valuable insights from large datasets. These technologies enable the intelligent classification and search of legal documents, allowing users to quickly locate relevant information and accelerating the production of research outputs. AI

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tools can compress tasks that once required hours or even days of document review into just minutes but make fewer errors. AI systems are now capable of assisting in drafting, reviewing, and revising a wide range of legal documents—including contracts, pleadings, and memoranda. Tools such as Kira Systems, Luminance, and Evisort use natural language processing (NLP) to identify key provisions, generate annotations, and support document analysis. AI-powered legal chatbots and question–answering systems also offer new possibilities for providing basic legal guidance. As technological innovation reshapes the legal industry, legal education must adapt accordingly. For practice-based training, this means integrating AI technologies with traditional legal competencies and preparing students for new forms of legal work. Such integration not only supports the development of sustainable professional skills but also ensures that future legal practitioners can operate effectively in an increasingly technology-driven environment.

### 2.3. AI-Driven Transformation of Practical Legal Education Content

AI technologies are expanding the substantive scope of legal education and raising expectations for students' technical skills. The training now needs to incorporate elements of legal technology, data analysis, and AI ethics in order to cultivate professionals who can practice in interdisciplinary fields.Course design should include virtual simulation platforms and role-playing softwares that create realistic practice environments. These systems allow students to choose different roles across various case types during the in-class activities. For example, in criminal or civil cases, students may assume the roles of judges, attorneys, or witnesses, and learn procedural skills across stages such as case filing, courtroom hearings and enforcement. Course design may also include human–computer interaction scenarios, such as simulated client interviews or case-handling practice. These interactive components help students become familiar with real-world workflows and strengthen their practical competencies as future legal professionals.

## 3. Challenges and Reflections on AI in Practical Legal Education

### 3.1. Challenges to Teaching Philosophy

All social practice activities have an intended purpose. Education, as a form of social practice aimed at human development, fundamentally revolves around the question of what kind of person learners should become in a given society. This purpose serves as both the starting point and ultimate goal of all educational activities [4]. Traditional legal education has largely focused on knowledge transmission and memorization, with practical training often limited in scope and delivered in a relatively uniform manner. The high-level, interdisciplinary legal talent required in the age of artificial intelligence can be cultivated through cross-disciplinary legal education [5]. In contrast, AI technologies demand integrated skills and emphasize active participation and independent exploration. Therefore, placing competency development at the core of practical legal education is essential for bridging theory and practice. This approach not only stimulates critical thinking and enhances students' ability to use information technology but also compensates for the limitations of traditional teaching methods, aligning legal education with the skills and competencies required in a technology-driven professional environment.

### 3.2. Low Student Awareness of Practical Teaching Content

Traditional legal courses tend to focus on theoretical knowledge, while practical courses often carry relatively few credits and are loosely integrated into the curriculum. As a result, practical training is frequently marginalized in teaching. Facing pressures related to employment and further study, law students typically prioritize their performance in academic courses, often lacking a deep understanding of practical training. Many students are unclear about what

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practical legal education entails and do not fully grasp its significance for future legal careers [6]. For some, practical courses are seen merely as school requirements to earn credits, leading to misconceptions about their purpose. This passive engagement limits students' awareness of the real-world skills and demands of legal employment, particularly regarding the importance of social practice experience in the legal profession. To align with the transformation of the legal field driven by AI, it is crucial to raise students' awareness of practical training and encourage proactive participation.

### 3.3. Subjectivity in the Assessment System of Practical Teaching

The diversity of practical teaching methods makes the assessment of social practice complex, and evaluation systems often involve a significant degree of subjectivity. For example, evaluation criteria can be vague: grades on research reports, internship performance, or community service rely on the personal experience and judgment of instructors, lacking a standardized and operational set of indicators. Different instructors may have varying interpretations of what constitutes excellent performance, resulting in assessments that are not easily comparable or consistently fair. Moreover, practical assessment systems often lack effective feedback and optimization mechanisms, and students rarely participate in defining the evaluation criteria. Consequently, the actual assessment results may not accurately reflect the effort or learning process during social practice. In some cases, the system may even produce unintended incentives that run counter to the goals of practical legal education.

## 4. New Pathways for Optimizing Law Students' Practical Teaching Empowered by AI

### 4.1. Establishing a New Concept

With the wide, practical legal education is developing a new philosophy centered on human–AI collaboration, integrated competencies, immersive scenarios, and modular assessment.

(1) Human–AI collaboration refers to the deep integration of AI tools into practical training, such as using legal search engines, simulated courtroom platforms [7].

(2) Integrated competencies emphasize a shift from completing simple tasks to cultivating comprehensive abilities, including applying digital technologies in real legal work—drafting and reviewing legal documents, mitigating legal risks, and making more precise and predictable legal decisions.

(3) Immersive scenarios involve using AI to simulate complex legal situations, such as dispute mediation, compliance review, or public-interest legal services, creating high-fidelity environments that bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world practice.

(4) Modular assessment refers to building a scientifically grounded evaluation system that highlights the role of AI in assessment and incorporates diverse, dynamic criteria.

The new concept reflects the trend of integrating legal education and practical training to serve the development of the new economy, enabling students to fulfill their corresponding social responsibilities.The cultivation of practice-oriented legal professionals is a gradual process, and teaching philosophy must evolve alongside AI development to meet the needs of the modern legal profession.

### 4.2. Achieving Three-Dimensional Integration in Practical Course Design

The three-dimensional integration refers to incorporating three key dimensions into the design of practical courses.

(1) The first dimension is the optimization of teaching methods, which integrates the cultivation of practical legal skills into theoretical courses and embeds AI technologies into practical training. It is primarily reflected in the design of specific course content: For example,

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Select civil or criminal cases from a simulated software case library 3D simulation-based training-Role-play as the plaintiff's attorney Case Summary Mock Trial Mock Trial Human-AI Interaction Engagement mock judgment Submit online. Furthermore, students may visit smart courts to observe workflows and case-handling processes, with a focus on how AI supports case information management, procedural nodes, electronic case files, and trial information systems [8].

(2) The second dimension is the reasonable allocation of class hours. Based on the specific content of practical courses, time should be appropriately distributed among theory, practice, and hands-on training. This approach ensures the integration of theoretical instruction with practical application while emphasizing the development of professional skills.

The practical legal education course may be assigned 2 or 3 credits, depending on disciplinary and program requirements. In a typical semester, instructional hours should be allocated such that one-third (1/3) is dedicated to theoretical instruction and two-thirds (2/3) to hands-on training. The practical component should primarily take place in off-campus professional settings (e.g., law firms, courts, compliance departments), supplemented by on-campus simulation-based exercises).

The course "AI + Fundamental Theories of Law" includes:

- Fundamental principles of AI technology;
- Legal risks raised by AI applications;
- Data confidentiality and professional ethical obligations, etc.

The practical training module covers:

- Hands-on use of practical technologies and legal tech tools;
- In-depth analysis of representative cases combined with AI-driven scenario-based exercises, etc.

Legal practice education in the AI era is not about “teaching AI with PowerPoint slides,” but about “practicing law within an AI-enabled environment.” A well-designed course schedule must ensure that students understand legal rules while mastering practical tools, and develop both professional judgment and technological literacy—ultimately cultivating a new generation of high-quality legal professionals equipped for an intelligent society.

(3) The third dimension is the objectivity and diversity of assessment methods.

This assessment system prioritizes evaluating students’ learning processes and learning capabilities. Assessment in practice-oriented courses should emphasize objectivity and clarity of criteria, shifting from “vague evaluation” to “precise competency profiling.” By leveraging AI technologies, a quantifiable framework—featuring clear dimensions, measurable standards, and multi-source validation—can not only objectively capture students’ development of practical legal competencies but also guide them to uphold professional judgment and ethical boundaries in the AI era.

Therefore, optimizing practical legal education requires refining assessment standards and establishing evaluation systems that align with the competencies demanded in a legal profession increasingly shaped by AI technologies.

### 4.3. Establishing a Multidimensional Assessment System

A multidimensional assessment system in practical legal education breaks away from traditional subjective, static, and outcome-oriented evaluation models. It establishes a comprehensive framework that spans multiple dimensions, covers the entire learning process, and involves diverse evaluators, thereby reducing the subjectivity of conventional assessments.

This system includes the following key mechanisms:

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(1) AI-supported assessment technologies: AI and big data can be used to record students' practical activities, such as online simulations or document revision histories, providing objective data to support evaluation.

(2) Multiple evaluators: Assessment is conducted by a variety of stakeholders involved in practical teaching, including course instructors, judges, lawyers, corporate legal staff, and peers in internship groups. This approach allows for multi-perspective, collaborative feedback.

(3) Integration of multidimensional and dynamic assessment: Multidimensional assessment considers not only tangible outcomes such as internship reports and legal documents but also students applied legal skills, including drafting, analysis, and communication abilities. Dynamic assessment runs throughout classroom activities, after-class assignments, and social practice, emphasizing process-oriented evaluation and enhancing students' engagement and understanding of practical training.

In conclusion, an AI-enhanced legal assessment system, through the integrated fusion of competency, process, and technology, is driving a transformative shift in evaluation paradigms—from traditional subjective judgment toward a scientific, precise, and dynamic model of modern assessment.This three-dimensional integrated system not only addresses the core questions of legal education in the AI era—"what to assess," "how to assess," and "how to evaluate"—but also establishes a high-quality, closed-loop talent development model that promotes learning, application, and ethical cultivation through assessment, demonstrating strong foresight, practical feasibility, and scalability.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of AItechnology presents both new challenges and opportunities for traditional practical legal education. The main challenges facing conventional practice-based teaching include: teaching philosophies that are ill-suited to the demands of the digital era, insufficient digital skills among instructors and students, a general lack of understanding and operational ability with AI tools, and subjective, inefficient assessment systems that lack data-driven, process-oriented evaluation mechanisms.To address these issues, practical legal education must be optimized by establishing technology-oriented teaching philosophies, implementing "three-dimensional" course design, and developing a multidimensional assessment system. In this way, AI can serve as a key driver in the transformation and upgrading of legal practice education.

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