

Research on the Transformation Paths of Screenwriting Curricula in Drama, Film, and Television Literature Programs at Private Universities in the AI Era

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Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has moved from the margins of technical experimentation into the daily workflow of script development, altering how stories are conceived, drafted and revised. Focusing on screenwriting curricula within drama, film and television literature programs at private universities, this paper draws together recent scholarship on GenAI in higher education and evidence from a pilot course taught at Liaoning Institute of Media. It examines how machine-generated writing reshapes the competencies expected of screenwriting graduates, diagnoses four weaknesses in present-day course provision, and sets out five routes for curricular renewal: redefining educational positioning, reorganising course content, redesigning classroom pedagogy, rebuilding practical training, and upgrading faculty capacity. The argument advanced is that the central task of screenwriting education in the AI era is not the substitution of human authorship but the construction of a human-machine partnership in which efficiency gains remain subordinate to humanistic judgement, so that reform serves both the long-term health of the screenwriting industry and the competitiveness of privately run institutions.

Keywords

Artificial intelligence, drama, film and television literature, screenwriting teaching, private universities.

1. Introduction

Large language models such as ChatGPT, Wenxin Yiyan and DeepSeek have carried generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) into ordinary creative practice: an outline, a scene draft, a character biography or several variants of a stretch of dialogue can now be produced within minutes, which compresses the front end of script development and lowers the barrier to entering content production [1]. Within domestic higher education, discussion of GenAI has likewise matured from isolated experiments toward systematic reflection, with attention converging on institutional reform, pedagogical innovation, digital transformation and the governance of attendant risks. A review synthesising studies published between 2022 and 2024 concludes that GenAI has already permeated the restructuring of higher education systems, the ecology of the classroom and discipline-specific teaching, while unresolved tensions persist around cognition, ethics, the attribution of responsibility between human and machine, and teachers' digital literacy [2].

Programs in drama, film and television literature at private universities have historically kept close ties with the screen industries and defined their mission as the training of applied creative talent. Yet their screenwriting courses still rest largely on conventional genre drills and the mechanics of text, and few have answered in any systematic way to the production logic that AI has introduced. Seen in this light, curricular transformation is not merely a disciplinary

adjustment; it bears directly on the quality and competitiveness of the talent these institutions cultivate.

Macro-level scholarship offers a useful point of departure. Drawing on one hundred GenAI teaching cases from American universities, Miao, Shen and Wang distinguish an optimisation route and an innovation route, together with six recurring scenarios: customised resources, alternative feedback, strengthened connection, simulated situations, accelerated processes and iterative creation [3]. Turning to the MIT experience, Xia, Yang and Tian argue that faculty should rebuild their practice around the TPACK framework, weaving together technological, pedagogical and content knowledge [4]. Writing from the perspective of science education, Wei and his colleagues single out personalised learning, intelligent content generation and human-machine collaboration as the most promising directions [5]. Discipline-specific inquiry into AI-era screenwriting curricula at private universities, however, remains scarce.

The study proceeds from three angles: literature analysis, case evidence and classroom practice. It begins by tracing how AI has entered the script-development workflow and, in doing so, redrawn the profile of the screenwriting graduate; it then sets out the weaknesses of existing curricula; a five-dimensional reform agenda follows; and a pilot course run at Liaoning Institute of Media supplies a working test of the model's feasibility.

2. The Reconstruction of Screenwriting Talent Capability Requirements under AI-Involved Script Creation

In dramaturgical work, AI tools offer tangible advantages. From a single prompt they can return several versions of an outline or a scene, giving students a dense body of reference material within minutes; they can lengthen storylines, regulate pacing and handle routine formatting, thereby freeing attention for decisions of a higher order; and, because they answer back, they let students interrogate character motivation and causal logic again and again, so that drafting begins to resemble an interactive experiment.

The limitations are just as visible. Machine-generated scripts tend toward sameness: emotional flatness, borrowed patterns and little in the way of genuine artistic insight, since what the model ultimately does is recombine probabilities rather than originate meaning. Hallucinated details, skewed values and unsettled copyright questions add a further layer of ethical risk. A screenwriting pedagogy that accepts AI output uncritically risks dulling precisely those qualities - empathy, scepticism, judgement - that distinguish humanistic creation.

The core competence of the AI-era screenwriter therefore shifts from solitary text-making toward a partnership of machine assistance and aesthetic gatekeeping. Students must learn to design prompts, weigh the quality of AI output, revise scripts and safeguard originality; teachers, for their part, remain responsible for keeping alive the warmth, cultural depth and value stance that only humanistic creation carries.

3. Existing Problems in Screenwriting Curricula of Drama, Film, and Television Literature Programs at Private Universities

Curriculum design, first, trails the AI-inflected production ecology. Many programs still organise teaching around character archetypes, plot architecture and dialogue technique, leaving out AI-assisted drafting, prompt design and the review of machine-generated content; graduates consequently find it difficult to fit into the collaborative workflows the screenwriting industry now runs.

Second, textual technique is pursued at the cost of humanistic literacy and creative judgement. Drills alone do not teach students to read social reality, cultural nuance or ethical limits. Once

machines can turn out competent standard text, the market looks not for a faster technician but for a writer whose values and aesthetic judgement are articulate.

Third, human-machine collaborative training is largely absent. The prevailing pattern - teacher sets the brief, student writes alone, teacher marks alone - offers no scenario in which a class generates drafts with AI and then diagnoses, revises and elevates them together.

Fourth, school-enterprise projects seldom include AI screenwriting practice. Cooperation with film and television companies exists, but it stays within traditional scriptwriting; the short-drama and micro-drama production chains built on AI assistance rarely reach the classroom, and the transfer of learning outcomes accordingly remains weak.

4. Transformation Paths of Screenwriting Curricula in the AI Context

Renewal should begin with educational positioning: a training philosophy of 'technology empowers, humanities take root.' GenAI is to be treated as an instrument of productivity rather than a stand-in for the author, while humanistic quality, creative thinking and ethical responsibility remain the centre of gravity. Only on that footing can graduates meet the industry's longer-term demands.

Course content comes next, through the addition of three modules: AI-assisted script collaboration, prompt design, and script review and revision. The first teaches students to work with large models on plot expansion and version comparison; the second trains the translation of creative intention into workable instructions; the third sharpens the eye for hallucination, bias and stylistic mediocrity in machine drafts.

The classroom model itself then needs redesign. Informed by practice at Liaoning Institute of Media, this study proposes a three-stage workflow of 'AI-generated initial draft - teacher-student collaborative polishing - humanistic sublimation' (see Figure 1): students first use AI tools to produce multiple drafts and acquire prompt literacy; the class then jointly diagnoses structure, character logic and dialogue quality; and the writing group finally deepens theme and value orientation so that the script keeps a humanistic core.

Practical training can be reformed through school-enterprise cooperation on short-drama and micro-drama human-machine co-creation projects. Running the industry's real chain - topic selection, AI outline generation, script polishing, filming, evaluation and iteration - not only builds students' hands-on capacity but also lets teachers accumulate teaching cases of their own for the AI era.

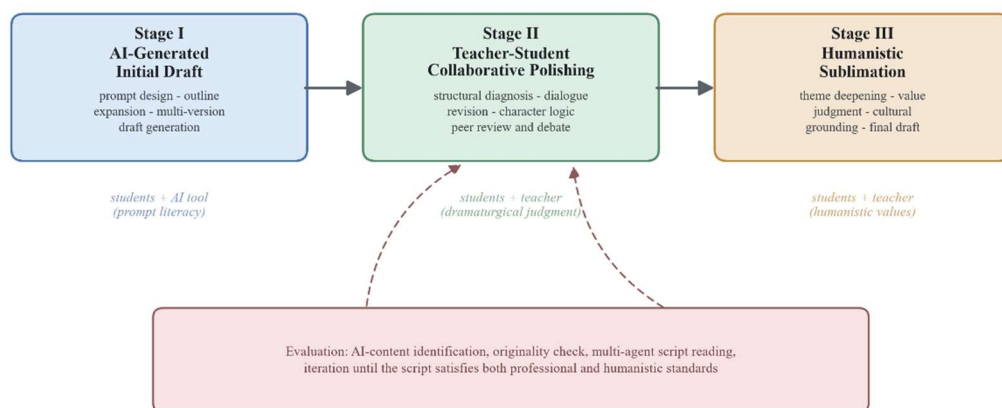


Figure 1. The "AI-generated draft-teacher-student polishing-humanistic sublimation" teaching workflow.

Faculty development, lastly, deserves equal weight. Teachers of drama, film and television literature are typically strong in literary analysis and less confident with AI tools; institutions should therefore invest in systematic training and support teachers' participation in industry projects, so that a team fluent in both dramaturgy and machine collaboration gradually takes shape.

5. A Teaching Case: Course Practice of the Drama, Film, and Television Literature Program at Liaoning Institute of Media

A pilot course, 'AI-Assisted Screenwriting Practice,' was offered to junior students of the drama, film and television literature program at Liaoning Institute of Media as a test of the paths above. Four phases structured the semester: familiarisation with tools and prompt training; AI-assisted generation of short-drama outlines; collaborative polishing of scripts between teachers and students; and final project presentation. Efficiency gains and humanistic reflection were given equal weight throughout.

Students' human-machine collaborative scripts reveal three encouraging changes. Drafting accelerated markedly, leaving more energy for character depth and the refinement of theme; the quality of peer review rose because AI drafts supplied a shared baseline for argument; and repeated revision cycles visibly sharpened students' ethical awareness of originality, bias and copyright. Some students, admittedly, leaned too heavily on machine output - a reminder that training in aesthetic gatekeeping must be strengthened.

Three optimisation strategies follow from the pilot. First, cap the share of AI-generated text in the final draft and require that AI-assisted passages, together with the reasoning behind each revision, be explicitly marked. Second, design teaching activities around the TPACK framework so that technical, pedagogical and content knowledge reinforce one another. Third, bring industry mentors into final assessment to narrow the distance between classroom outcomes and professional standards.

6. Conclusion

For private universities, transforming the screenwriting curriculum answers simultaneously to technological change and to the internal logic of applied talent cultivation. The wise course lies between rejection and dependence: human-machine collaboration, taken as the organising concept, with educational positioning, course content, teaching models, practical training and faculty development rebuilt as one integrated system. Experience at Liaoning Institute of Media suggests that the workflow of 'AI-generated initial draft - teacher-student collaborative polishing - humanistic sublimation' can hold efficiency and quality in balance. Evaluation indicators for AI-assisted screenwriting, together with longitudinal tracking of students' creative growth, remain open questions for future work.

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