



Reclaiming Human Ways of Knowing: Art-Led Learning in Living Heritage Contexts under AI-Driven Education

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Abstract

In the context of rapidly expanding artificial intelligence (AI) in education, prevailing discourses tend to prioritize efficiency, data-driven personalization, and scalable learning systems. While these approaches enhance accessibility, they also risk narrowing the scope of knowledge to what can be quantified, standardized, and computationally processed. This raises concerns regarding the marginalization of embodied, relational, and ethically situated ways of knowing, particularly within contexts of intangible cultural heritage. This paper critically examines how alternative modes of knowing, particularly those rooted in lived experience, embodiment, and social relations, can be sustained and articulated through art-led learning practices. Drawing on a three-year participatory action research project at Sricharoen Shipyard in Ayutthaya, Thailand, one of the country's last remaining wooden boat-building communities, this study explores a Living Heritage Lab as a site of collaborative and experiential learning. The project engaged primary school students, university students, artists, and educators in a series of place-based artistic activities, with drawing employed as a primary medium of inquiry. Data were generated through field observations, participant-produced drawings, reflective discussions, and questionnaires, and subsequently analyzed utilizing thematic analysis alongside visual interpretation. Rather than treating art as a pedagogical tool, the study positions artistic practice as a way of knowing through which understanding emerges from sensory engagement, emotional connection, and ethical reflection. The findings provide empirical evidence that art-led learning enables forms of knowledge production that are deeply human-centered, relational, and context-sensitive. Participants developed embodied awareness, affective bonds with the place, and a sense of ethical responsibility toward cultural heritage. These dimensions of knowing, often overlooked in AI-driven educational models, highlight the limitations of purely data-centric approaches. The study further advances art-led learning not merely as a pedagogical strategy but as an epistemological intervention that challenges the dominance of data-centric educational paradigms. By reframing art-led learning as a critical response to the epistemic constraints of AI in education, this paper argues for the importance of maintaining diverse ways of knowing in contemporary educational systems. It further suggests that universities can play a vital role as facilitators of dialogue between communities, knowledge systems, and emerging technologies. However, the findings are derived from a single case study, indicating the need for further research to examine the transferability of art-led approaches across different contexts.

Keywords: *Art-Led Learning; Place-Based Learning; Living Heritage; Wooden Boat Craftsmanship; AI in Education*