

AI for Educators: What the Research Shows

Insights from the *Evidence Base on AI in K-12: A 2026 review of research*

REPORT SUMMARY

AI tools are becoming part of teaching and learning in many K-12 settings. *The Evidence Base on AI in K-12* report synthesizes high quality research to clarify how AI affects student performance and instructional practice. Findings suggest AI tools can strengthen teacher instructional practice when thoughtfully designed and integrated into teaching and learning environments.

💡 What the Evidence Shows

Takeaway

AI tools can reduce educator time spent on routine tasks, or shift their effort, with no evidence of quality losses.

AI can deliver real-time **instructional support and automated feedback that improve both educator practice and student outcomes**.

AI pedagogical supports appear to be **most beneficial to less experienced educators**.

Evidence

- ➔ An AI chat tool reduced lesson preparation time by ~25 minutes per week (31%) while maintaining quality. (Roy et al., 2024)
- ➔ Student access to an AI writing feedback tool increased the amount of time teachers could spend discussing essays with students, and also increased student essays scores on an unassisted exam. (Ferman et al., 2021)
- ➔ Weekly automated reports on teachers' use of "focusing questions" (that probe student thinking) increased their use of focusing questions by 20%, but did not affect student talk time or reasoning. (Demszky et al., 2025)
- ➔ Smart glasses that provided real-time analytics allowed teachers to redirect attention to struggling students, narrowing the performance gap across prior performance levels. (Holstein et al., 2018)
- ➔ Real-time AI coaching for tutors improved student mastery, especially for less-experienced and lower-rated instructors. (Wang et al., 2025)

★ Implications for Students and Learning

Instructional tasks can benefit from purposeful AI adoption.

Use AI tools to save educators time on lesson preparation and student feedback while maintaining quality.

Emphasis on tools that offer actionable information.

Prioritize evidence-based AI tools that provide educators with information about their own instructional practices.

Clear goals and data drive improvement.

Define clear instructional goals and collect evidence on how AI use is affecting student learning.

