AI is already in the classroom, but how are teachers using it?

How teachers in the United Kingdom and United States are using AI, where it is helping, and what support schools need to give in order to use AI safely, equitably, and effectively.

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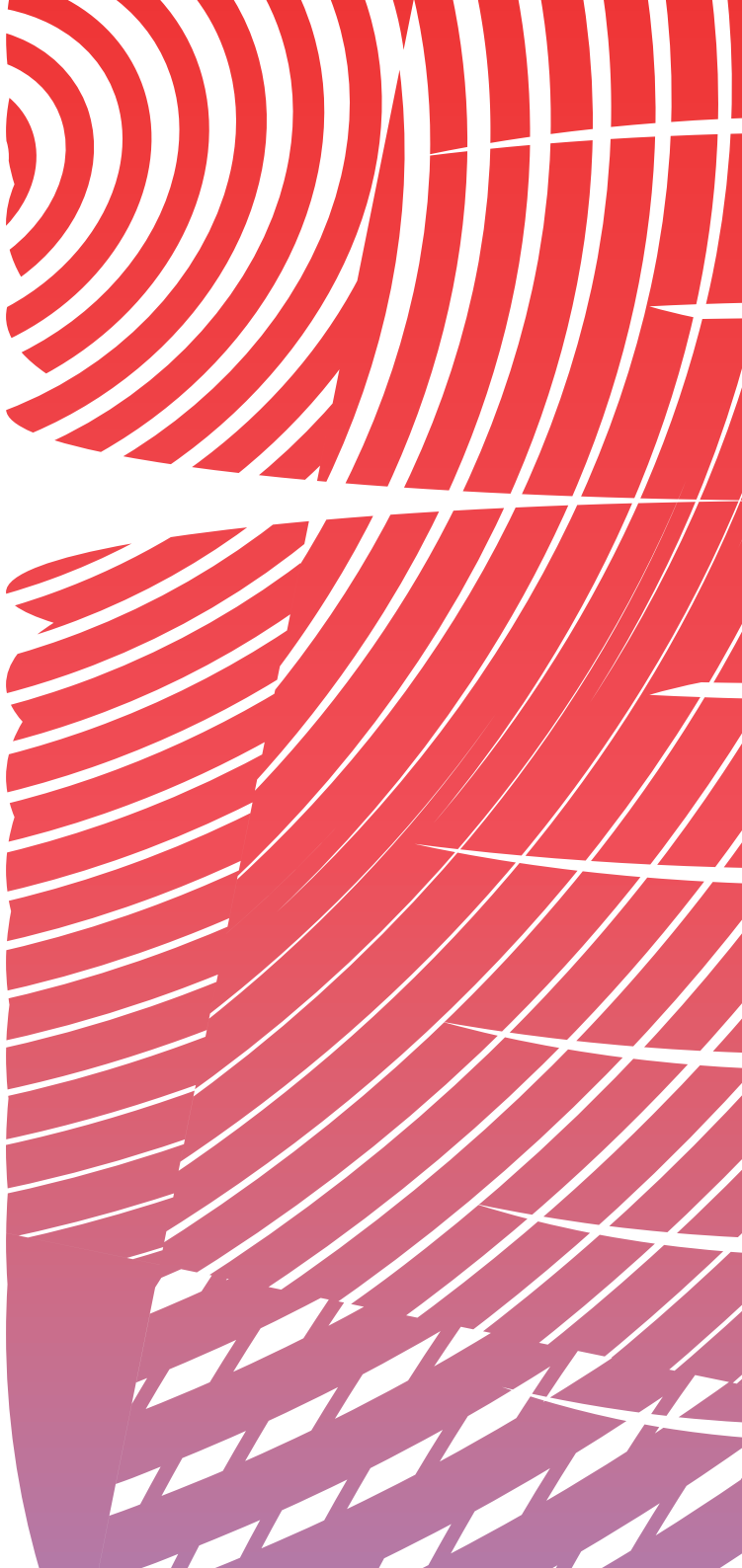


Foreword

Much of the media attention around AI in education has focused on students – from the implications for homework, assessment, and academic integrity to broader questions about how young people are interacting with AI. That matters, of course, but it only tells half of the story.

Teachers are also using AI, often in practical and immediate ways, turning to it for lesson planning, administration, assessment support and workload reduction. That creates an opportunity for schools, but also a challenge. If teachers are expected to make AI work in the classroom, they need clear guidance, proper training and tools designed around the realities of teaching to ensure it is used safely, ethically, and effectively to support student learning.

To get a clearer picture of this reality in classrooms today, Efekta Education commissioned an independent survey of 850 teachers[1], including 500 in the US and 350 in the UK, to better understand how they are using AI, how they expect their use to change, and where they feel support is lacking.

The findings show that AI use among teachers is already widespread, and points to a profession that is not waiting for AI policy to be settled before adopting the technology. Teachers are already experimenting, adapting and finding practical uses for AI in their day-to-day work. But the same findings also show that teacher AI adoption is moving faster than the policies, purpose-built tools, training, and support needed to maximize its benefits for teaching and learning while mitigating its risks.

That gap sits at the heart of this report. Teachers are not waiting for the systems around them to catch up; they are already making decisions about when, where, and how to use AI in their work. The question for schools, policymakers, and education providers is how to give them the tools they need to use it safely, effectively, and in ways that improve teaching and learning.

The following pages examine where teachers are using AI now, where they see the greatest value, and what needs to change as AI becomes an increasingly established part of teaching and learning.

Dr. Christopher McCormick
Chief Academic Advisor, Efekta Education

Dr. Stefania Giannini
President, Government Relations and Research, Efekta Education

1. Survey of 850 teachers aged 18+, including 350 in the UK and 500 in the US. Fieldwork conducted by 3Gem Research & Insights between 24 June and 2 July 2026.

1 AI is already part of teachers' working lives

74%
of teachers currently use AI-powered tools as part of their teaching or professional practice

80%
expect their use of AI in teaching to increase over the next two to three years

76%
of AI-using teachers use AI for lesson planning

54%
say government guidelines on AI use in education are not clear enough

2.66 hours
is the average time AI users say they save each week on admin and lesson planning tasks.

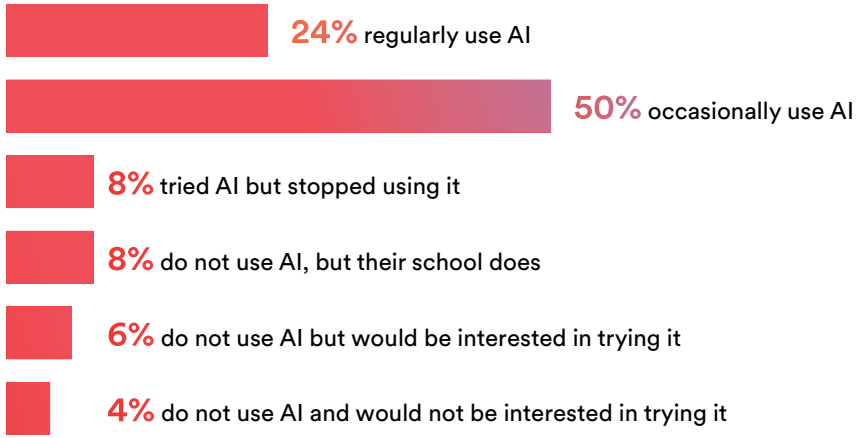
AI use among teachers is no longer limited to a small group of early adopters. Across the UK and US, 74% of teachers surveyed said they currently use AI-powered tools as part of their teaching or professional practice. That includes 24% who use AI regularly and 50% who use it occasionally.

The direction of travel is also clear. 80% of teachers expect their use of AI in teaching to increase over the next two to three years, including 34% who expect it to increase significantly and 46% who expect it to increase slightly. Only 2% expect their use to decrease. Whilst it is exciting to see teachers adopt AI at such speed, the pace of change makes guidance and training more urgent. If AI use is already common, and most teachers expect to use it more, schools need to ensure their policies, training, and support keep pace.

Teachers and students need support that matches how quickly AI is becoming part of day-to-day learning, and crucially they need tools that are built with education in mind and an uncompromising approach to student and teacher safety.

80% of teachers expect their use of AI in teaching to increase over the next two to three years

Three in four teachers now use AI



2 Lesson planning is AI's clearest use case

Among teachers who use AI, 76% said it supports them with lesson planning, making it the most common use by a clear margin, when viewed across the total teacher sample.

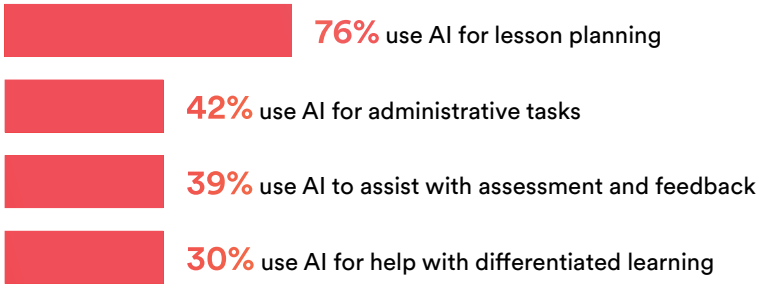
That is an important signal for schools and education providers. The first major teacher use case for AI is tied to one of the most time-consuming and routine parts of teaching.

Teachers are also using AI to support administrative tasks (42%), assist with assessment and feedback (39%), and help with differentiated learning (30%).

This suggests teachers are using AI in practical ways to reduce preparation burdens and manage the work around teaching more efficiently.

The first major teacher use case for AI is tied to one of the most time-consuming and routine parts of teaching.

Lesson planning leads teacher AI use



> Teachers are already finding practical ways to use AI where it can make the clearest difference, from reducing the time spent preparing lessons to helping them build a fuller picture of each student's progress. These tools should support teachers in making informed decisions, while leaving professional judgment firmly in their hands"

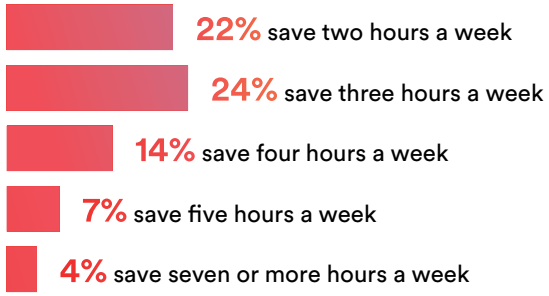
– **Dr. Christopher McCormick,** Chief Academic Advisor, Efekta Education

3 AI is saving time, but teachers want safeguards

This practical approach to AI is helping teachers save time on some of the work that sits around the classroom. Among teachers who use AI, the average time saved on non-teaching tasks such as marking, reporting, and administration is 2.66 hours per week.

The most common answers sit around the two to three hour mark, with 22% saving two hours a week and 24% saving three hours a week. A further 14% save four hours a week, while 7% save five hours and another 7% save seven or more hours.

Teachers are saving time with AI



This is where the value of AI feels most immediate to teachers and, it is also the area where teachers see the greatest future value. Across the full sample, 32% said teacher workload reduction is where they see AI's greatest future value in education, ahead of personalized learning, teacher training and development, assessment and feedback, and student engagement.

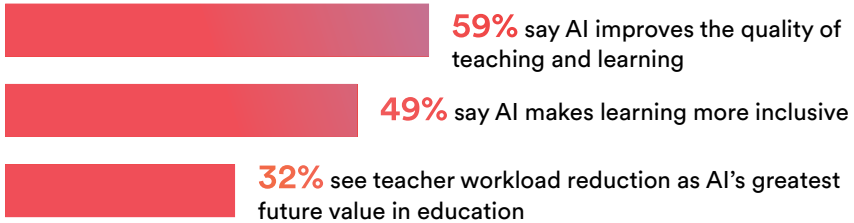
For many teachers, AI's most immediate value is time saved on the work outside of teaching

Promising results, but concerns remain

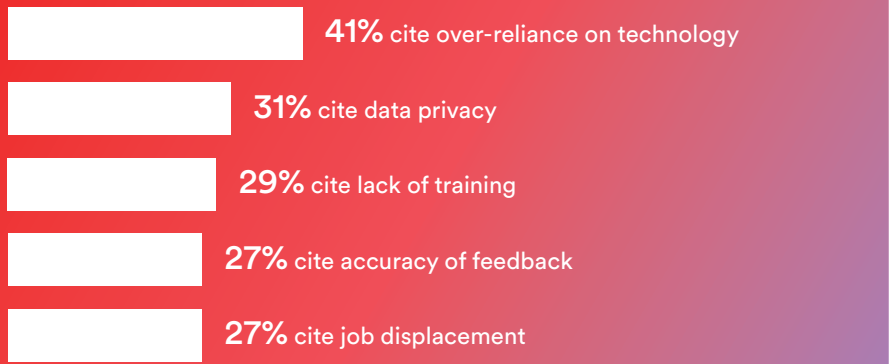
The findings also suggest teachers are generally positive about AI's influence. 59% believe AI improves the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom today, compared with just 15% who say it worsens it. 49% also say AI makes learning more inclusive for students with different needs or backgrounds, while only 15% say it makes learning less inclusive.

The concerns are less about the promise of the technology itself, and more about how it is implemented, adopted and controlled. The most common worry is over-reliance on technology, cited by 41% of teachers. This is followed by data privacy at 31%, lack of training at 29%, accuracy of feedback at 27% and job displacement at 27%. Taken together, the data points to a practical, yet cautious view of AI. Teachers can see where it helps, especially with workload and lesson preparation. But they also want clearer expectations about when to use it, how to check its outputs, and how to protect students and staff from avoidable risks.

Where teachers see value



What teachers are concerned about



Teachers see the value of AI but are asking for the conditions to use it safely and effectively.

4

Teachers are using AI before support systems have caught up

The clearest gap revealed by the research is between teacher adoption and the support systems available around it. AI use is already widespread, with 74% of teachers saying they use AI-powered tools as part of their teaching or professional practice. Confidence is also relatively high, with 63% of teachers agreeing that they are confident when using AI tools.

But confidence does not mean teachers feel fully supported. Fewer than half of teachers, 44%, say they have received formal training in using AI. More than half, 54%, say government guidelines on AI use in education are not clear enough, while 44% say the same of their school's own guidelines. More than a third, 37%, say they have not received explicit encouragement, guidance or approval from their school around AI tools for work.

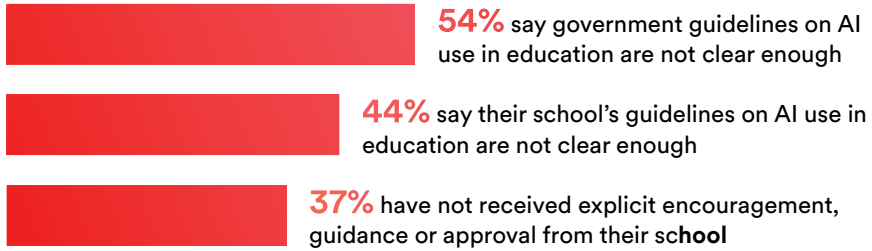
This shows a crucial vacuum in AI implementation at schools as in the absence of clear national or school-level guidance, AI adoption appears to depend heavily on the personal judgment of individual teachers.

Training should also be provided for teachers and students to help them critically evaluate AI-generated outputs, identify errors or bias, and exercise informed judgment about when those outputs can be trusted.

That creates the conditions for "shadow AI", where staff turn to widely available tools outside formal school systems because they are useful, accessible and often faster than waiting for approved alternatives.

Teachers are already using AI, but many are doing so without the training and guidance needed to make use consistent across schools.

Teachers are calling for more clarity around AI in schools



"Teachers need to know which tools are appropriate, how student data should be handled, how AI-generated content should be checked, and where the limits of use should sit. Without clear expectations, teachers are left to make those decisions individually. This risks creating inconsistency between classrooms, departments and schools, while also opening up governance and data privacy risks through the use of unauthorized or unvetted tools.

The immediate concern is how to make AI use clearer, safer and more consistent. Training and guidance need to catch up with classroom reality."

– **Dr. Stefania Giannini**, President Government Relations and Research, Efekta Education

5 Generic tools are driving much of the early adoption

Among teachers using AI, 72% use ChatGPT, 48% use Gemini and 35% use Microsoft Copilot. By comparison, only 19% use dedicated education or teaching-specific AI tools.

This is understandable as generic tools are widely known, easy to access, and flexible. But their dominance exists alongside a wider support gap. If schools do not have clear AI policies, approved tool lists, or guidance on what good classroom use looks like, teachers may be more likely to rely on the tools they already know.

Schools and governments therefore need to consider whether the tools teachers are using are designed for education settings. General-purpose AI models are designed to answer almost any question, but they are not built around how people learn, how teachers teach, or how schools operate.

Effective classroom AI requires pedagogy, curriculum alignment, safeguarding and teacher workflows to be built into the system from the outset, rather than added as an afterthought.

General-purpose AI models are not built around how people learn, how teachers teach, or how schools operate.

This concern comes through clearly in the survey. 44% of teachers believe that current AI tools have not been designed with teachers in mind, compared with just 24% who disagree.

The next stage of AI use in schools will depend on whether they have access to tools they can trust. For school leaders, that means moving from informal tool choice to clearer decisions about approved systems, data protection, training and classroom use.

> General-purpose AI tools can be useful, but they are not usually built around a school's curriculum, safeguarding responsibilities or teaching methods. Their answers can be inconsistent, and teachers may have limited clarity about how student information is processed or stored.
>
> Schools need tools that provide greater control over content, data and classroom use, alongside clear guidance that helps teachers understand when AI is appropriate and how its outputs should be checked"

– **Dr. Christopher McCormick,** Chief Academic Advisor, Efekta Education

UK and US teachers are adopting AI at similar rates, but support looks different

AI use among teachers is almost identical across the UK and US. In the UK, 75% of teachers surveyed said they currently use AI-powered tools as part of their teaching or professional practice. In the US, the figure is 73%. However, US teachers are considerably more likely to say they use AI regularly, at 29% compared with 16% of UK teachers.

There are also notable differences in the support teachers are receiving. US teachers are more likely to say they have received formal training, and have been given explicit encouragement, guidance or approval from their school. 50% of US teachers say they have received formal training in using AI, compared with 35% of UK teachers. 70% of US teachers say they have received explicit encouragement, guidance or approval from their school, compared with 55% in the UK.

School integration also appears more developed in the US. 40% of US teachers say their school has already integrated AI tools successfully, almost twice as much as UK teachers at just 21%. UK teachers are also more likely to say government policy is unclear, with 61% saying government guidelines on AI use in education are not clear enough, compared with 49% in the US.

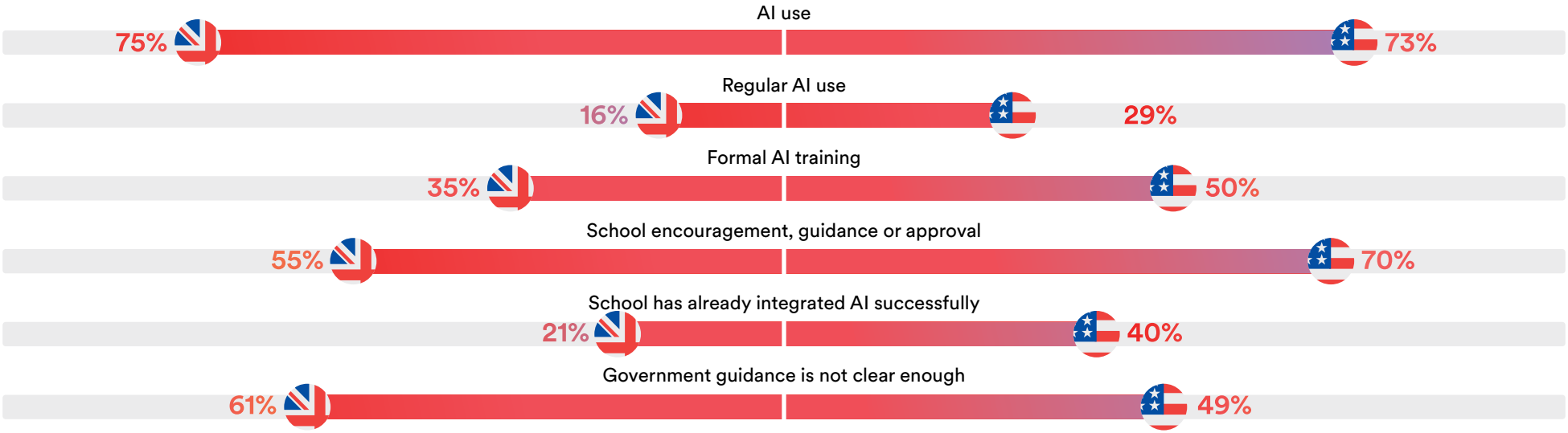
Student use presents a shared challenge on both sides of the Atlantic. Some 94% of UK teachers and 93% of US teachers either know or suspect that students are using AI for lessons or homework, adding to the need for policies that cover the whole school community.

Students are using AI too

Although this report focuses on teachers, student use adds pressure for clearer school policies. Across the full sample, 67% of teachers say they have noticed students using AI-powered tools either regularly or occasionally in lessons or homework. A further 26% suspect students have used AI but are not sure. Taken together, 93% of teachers either know or suspect that students are using AI for schoolwork.

> UK teachers and students are adopting AI at similar rates to their US peers. The difference is that the system around them appears less developed. If teacher use is already widespread, clearer guidance and training will be needed to make that use more consistent."
>
> – **Dr. Stefania Giannini**, President, Government Relations and Research, Efekta Education

UK vs US comparison



Five priorities for responsible AI use in schools

The findings point to a clear set of next steps. Teachers are already using AI, and most expect their use to grow. The priority now is to move from informal, individual use towards clearer, better supported practice.

1. Clarify national guidance.

Governments must set clear expectations for AI use in education, including data privacy, safeguarding, transparency and appropriate use in teaching and assessment.

2. Turn guidance into school-level policy.

Schools need practical clear frameworks that teachers and students can understand and apply consistently. This should include guidance on approved tools, checking AI outputs, student use and acceptable levels of AI support.

3. Make AI training part of teacher development.

Training should support teachers on their understanding of fundamental AI issues including accuracy, bias, privacy, safeguarding and how to judge when AI is useful or inappropriate.
Training should also strengthen teachers' ability to evaluate AI-generated content critically, and help them develop the same skills in their students.

4. Looking beyond generic AI tools.

As the market develops, schools should look beyond general-purpose AI tools and education products that simply layer pedagogical features onto existing models. A new generation of AI-native education platforms is emerging, designed around the specific needs of teaching and learning from the outset. Schools should consider not only what an AI tool can do, but how deeply pedagogy, curriculum, safeguards, and teacher workflows are built into its design.

5. Put teachers at the center of implementation.

Teachers should be involved in decisions about how AI tools are selected, tested and used. Adoption is more likely to work when it reflects real classroom needs rather than top-down technology decisions.

> AI is already part of teachers' working lives. It is helping with lesson planning, workload and professional practice, but teacher use is still developing faster than the guidance and training around it. The task for schools and policymakers is now to close that gap."

– **Dr. Stefania Giannini**, President, Government Relations and Research, Efekta Education

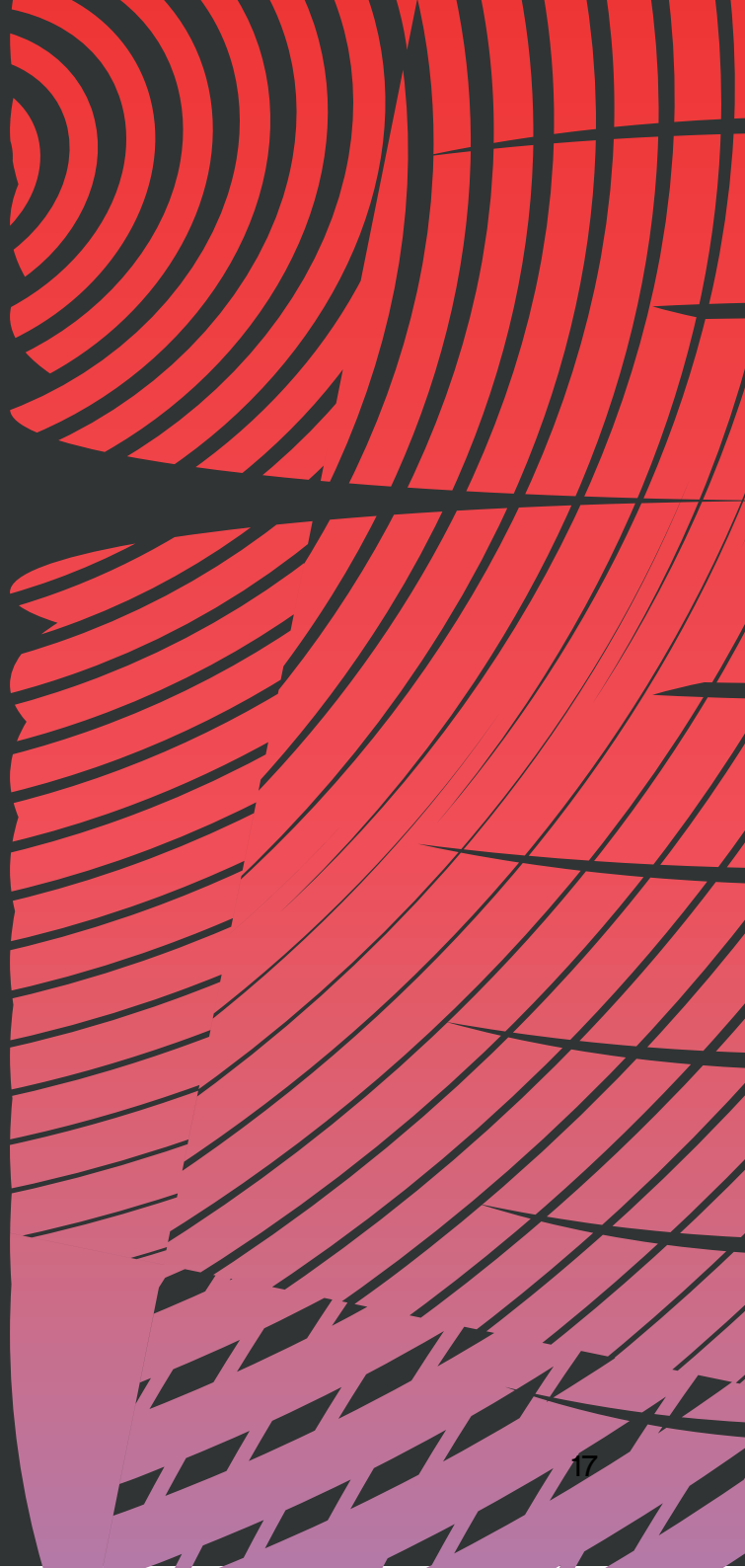
About Efekta Education

Efekta Education is an award-winning AI software company spun out from EF (Education First), the world's largest private education company.

Efekta's technology is used by millions of students and tens of thousands of teachers globally. We provide an advanced agentic teaching platform to governments, public and private school systems, universities and publishers.

Championing teachers, and supporting students and school operators alike. Delivering improved learning outcomes at large scale and with the mission to make high-quality education universally available. Our AI adapts in real time to each learner's needs and provides highly personalized learning journeys.

Efekta's agentic teaching platform is currently used by more than 5 million active students and 250,000 teachers worldwide.



Methodology

Efekta Education commissioned independent research partner 3Gem to survey 850 teachers aged 18 and over, including 350 teachers in the United Kingdom and 500 in the United States. The study was conducted between 24 June and 2 July 2026.

The research explored how teachers are using AI-powered tools in their teaching and professional practice, the tasks for which they use them, the value they believe AI can provide, and the concerns they have about its use. It also examined teachers' confidence and training, the guidance available from schools and governments, and expectations for how their use of AI may change over the next two to three years.

The UK and US were selected because both have large, established education systems in which AI tools are increasingly available to teachers and students. Studying the two markets provides an opportunity to compare countries with similar levels of teacher AI adoption but different approaches to training, school support and implementation. The comparison is intended to identify shared challenges and areas of difference.

While the findings provide insight into how teachers are using AI and where they see value, the survey did not examine differences in access to digital infrastructure, devices, connectivity or technical support. It also did not measure how adoption may vary according to school funding, location, socioeconomic context or other forms of digital inequality. These factors can affect how easily teachers and schools access and implement AI tools and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

The results are drawn from two high-income countries and should not be treated as representative of teachers or education systems worldwide. Access to technology, teacher training, school resources, regulation and classroom conditions vary considerably between countries. Further research would be needed to understand how teachers are using AI in lower-income markets and in education systems with different levels of digital access and infrastructure.

All percentages in this report refer to the surveyed sample or the relevant subgroup identified in the accompanying text. Percentages may not total 100% where figures have been rounded or where respondents were able to select more than one answer.