

## Artificial intelligence

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### Schools should safeguard student learning amid limited evidence base for AI's use in education

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) is advising teachers, school leaders and policymakers to carefully weigh the potential opportunities and risks of using artificial intelligence (AI) in schools, amid limited robust research on its impact on learning.

The national education evidence body has published [two new explainers on the use of AI in schools](#), providing an overview of the emerging evidence base and considerations for policymakers, school leaders and teachers.

AERO CEO Dr Jenny Donovan said educators were understandably seeking guidance on the rapidly developing technology.

“Students are already using AI for help with their schoolwork, including using it to find information, support learning or translation, and for writing or editing,” Dr Donovan said.

“Emerging evidence on AI points to both potential opportunities, such as supporting teachers with planning, scaffolding and workload reduction, but risks too.

“While AI can generate content, solve problems and complete tasks on demand, the flipside is that it can lead to students outsourcing the essential cognitive processes that lead to learning.”

AERO recommends school leaders and teachers ensure that a sound understanding of how students learn — particularly the process for acquiring, retaining, and applying knowledge — underpins decisions about whether, when and how AI is used in education settings.

Considerations for teachers and school leaders include:

1. Prioritising evidence-based teaching and learning in decisions around using AI
2. Monitoring for risks to student learning and supporting students to develop strong foundational knowledge, metacognitive strategies and self-regulated learning techniques
3. Establishing clear, schoolwide expectations for AI use
4. Considering approaches to assessment and feedback

5. Applying a culturally responsive and reflexive lens that respects First Nations knowledges.

AERO has also identified three broad considerations for policymakers, including developing clear, evidence-informed policies and guidance to inform decisions about AI; supporting effective implementation through access to quality AI tools and building capability; and strengthening the evidence base through ongoing research, monitoring and evaluation.

AERO's analysis of the emerging evidence base identified various limitations: most studies were recent, short-term, exploratory and conducted outside Australia. Many studies focused on student engagement or perceptions rather than robust measures of learning, and very limited research was conducted in primary school settings.

"AI is a pressing issue for Australian educators and AERO will continue to monitor the evidence and provide updated guidance as the evidence base strengthens and matures," Dr Donovan said.

"What we do have, however, is a strong, well-established evidence base on how students learn, and that gives us a sound place to start.

"This knowledge can help teachers and school leaders make informed decisions about whether AI can meaningfully support the learning process or whether established teaching approaches remain the better choice."

AERO's AI in Schools explainers are available on the AERO website:

- <https://www.edresearch.edu.au/resource-collections/ai-schools>

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## About Us

AERO is Australia's independent education evidence body, established in 2021 and funded by the Commonwealth, state, and territory governments.

Our vision is to achieve excellence and equity in education outcomes for all children and young people through the effective use of evidence. AERO's role is to generate high-quality evidence, make it accessible, and encourage the adoption and effective implementation of evidence into practice and policy.