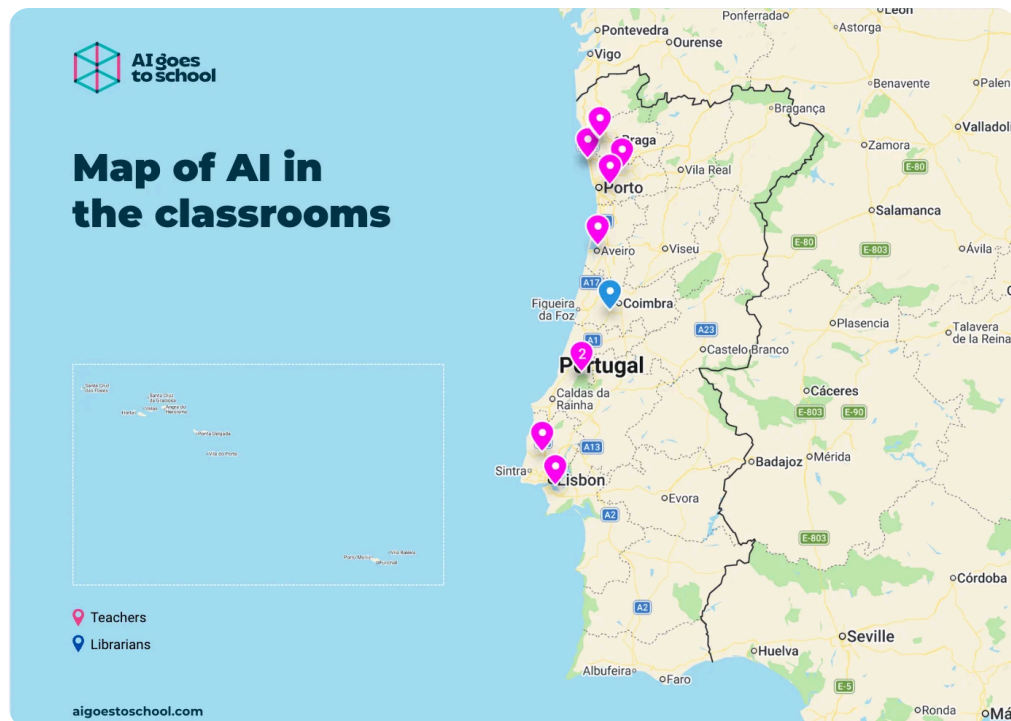




AI goes to school

Newsletter #3, October 2026

Map of AI in the classrooms in Portugal



We have launched the first edition of the interactive map of AI in classrooms in Portugal, and newsletter subscribers are the first to hear about it, before we announce it on social media.

5

Oct

On Monday, 5 October, World Teachers' Day, the map will be launched on our social media!

Each dot on the map represents a teacher or school librarian who has already taught about AI or with AI, and shared their lesson plan with AI goes to school. Every submission is curated by Marta Pinto, highlighting those that put pedagogy at the centre, combined with a responsible, critical and ethical use of AI.

The map in numbers

13

lesson plans

12

educators

12educational
institutions**7**

districts

And the map will keep growing throughout the school year.

[Explore the map](#)[Add your lesson to the map](#)

To add your lesson and school, fill in the form. It takes less than 10 minutes.

Try it out

Empowering Learners for the Age of AI

An AI Literacy Framework for Primary and Secondary Education



An accepted compass for AI literacy

The AI Literacy Framework was published by the European Commission and the OECD as a reference for AI literacy in primary and secondary education. It has four core domains: engaging with AI, creating with AI, managing AI and designing AI.

Instead of starting with the whole document, look first at the **"In the classroom"** tables, full of ready-to-use ideas. One example is "AI for Oceans":

[Play the AI for Oceans educational game](#)

[Download the full framework \(PDF\)](#)

Portugal: AI for Oceans in a primary school classroom

The "AI for Oceans" educational game has already been used in a Portuguese classroom by teacher **Cláudia Meirinhos**. With one of her primary school classes, the pupils trained real machine learning (AI) models through play: they discussed whether the data was enough, whether it is fair to choose fish by their shape or colour, and what it means to use AI for good.

[See the full lesson plan](#)

Teachers' reflections

A pedagogical shift!

"One change I made regarding AI was simple... I don't forbid it, I encourage it, but with rules. I believe this method has had some impact because they stopped being afraid to say they used it and started explaining how, what worked and what produced unacceptable results. (...) The value of the project, therefore, does not lie in reaching a perfect solution. It lies in the ability to build a well-grounded solution, understand its limitations, learn from the process and communicate that reasoning clearly."

Susana Brás, a higher education professor, made a pedagogical change with one central goal: to focus students' attention on the process that led to the final result.

Professor Susana Brás, University of Aveiro

[Read the full reflection](#)

The whole point is to teach!

"I've tried AI for things like student feedback and been very surprised. We had a 10-mark Geography assignment on Google Docs. I thought the AI would be hopeless, but I put in a list of criteria that I wanted it to mark and the comments were spot on. In fact, there were a few things that it picked up that I thought I should have focused on more.

So, I showed it to the students who were very impressed as well. And I said to them that morally I find that a bit weird. I'm not going to use AI grading with them. I want students to know that I'm working for them in terms of building relationships. I don't want them to think that I just go home, press a button and the work gets marked."

Ben, a Geography teacher for more than 15 years, tested an AI plug-in to mark students' work, but decided not to use it because he believes doing the marking himself is essential to getting to know each student.

Ben, Geography teacher

[Read the full reflection](#)

Students' stories

One in four Portuguese teenagers turns to ChatGPT for emotional support

A national study by EU Kids Online Portugal (NOVA FCSH), with 2,111 children and young people aged 9 to 17, shows that 85% already use generative AI, above the European average. Almost half use it for schoolwork; one in four uses these tools for emotional support.

It's no reason to panic, but it is a useful warning sign: for some students, this may already be one of their closest everyday relationships. It's worth teachers knowing about it.

[Read the full report](#) (Ponte, Batista & Luna, 2026)

An AI policy written entirely by students

Students from all 50 US states came together to draft a national framework of AI recommendations for education policymakers in American schools. The text, the STUDENTS FIRST Act of 2026, was approved by 82 votes to 16 by a "Student Senate" with two representatives from each state.

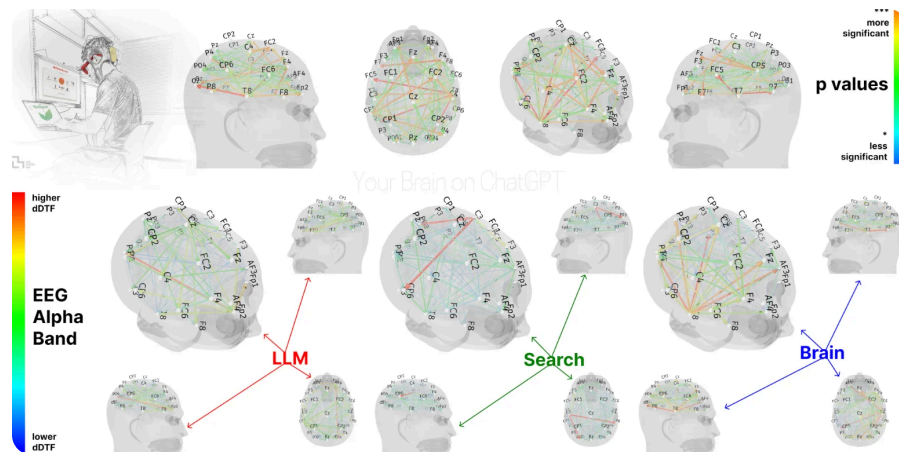
Key measures drafted by the students:

- **Authentic learning:** from 9th grade, AI only with the teacher's permission, for brainstorming, studying and editing, never to replace original work.
- **Literacy from an early age:** mandatory AI training from students' first contact with digital devices at school, for both students and teachers.
- **Privacy and identity:** students must know what data about them is collected and how it is used; if accused of misusing AI, they have the right to appeal, with guaranteed human review.
- **High-stakes decisions stay with humans:** grades, discipline and hiring must never depend on AI alone. Even when teachers use it to plan lessons or give feedback, they remain responsible for reviewing everything.
- **Emotional support can't be delegated:** AI does not replace school psychologists or trusted adults; students who need real support

must be referred to qualified professionals.

[Read more at AASA](#)

Science



Your brain on ChatGPT

A study by the MIT Media Lab followed around 55 university students as they wrote essays under three conditions: with ChatGPT, with internet search, or with no tools at all. Each participant wrote essays across several sessions over a period of months. In a fourth session, the roles were swapped: those who had used ChatGPT wrote without help, and vice versa. Brain activity was measured by electroencephalography (EEG) and the essays were assessed by teachers.

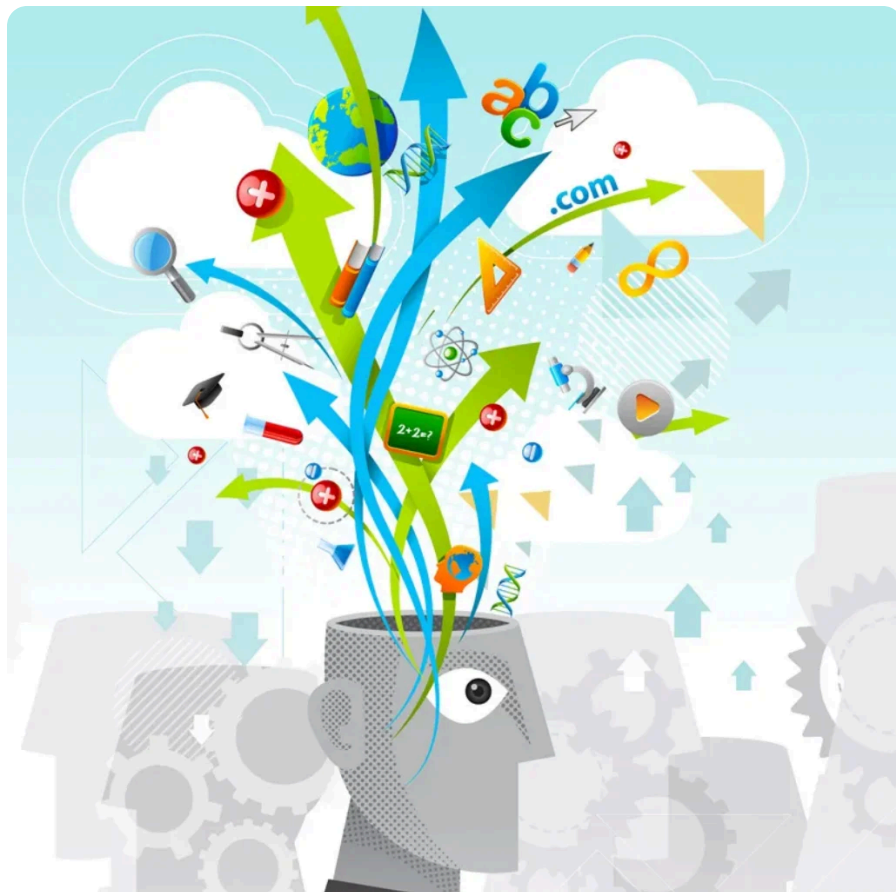
Key findings:

- **Less external support, more brain activity.** The no-tools group showed the strongest and most widespread brain networks, the internet search group fell in between, and the ChatGPT group showed the weakest engagement.
- **Weaker memory and ownership with ChatGPT.** Most users struggled to accurately quote what they had written

and felt less ownership of and satisfaction with their work.

- **Order matters.** Students who wrote on their own first and only then used ChatGPT showed better memory and broader brain activity than those who started with AI.
- **"Cognitive debt".** This is the name the authors give to this effect.

[Read the paper](#)



A coach, not a crutch

A review article in *Science News* brings together several recent studies on AI and learning, including the study shared in our September newsletter (Sungu et al., on maths students). The same conclusion appears across very different fields: doctors who relied on AI to detect polyps during colonoscopies "forgot what to look for" when they could no longer use it; students

who practised for a reading test with AI support gave up more easily on difficult questions once the AI was taken away.

But there is an encouraging counterpoint: when AI gives hints instead of ready-made answers, students seem to learn just as well as when they have no access to the technology.

"If you're not engaging with the cognitive work, you're not going to learn the skill."

Trent Cash, behavioural scientist

[Read the full article](#)

News

UNESCO

700 students gathered at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to [discuss their future with AI alongside experts](#), at the start of the new school year.

USA

The New York and Los Angeles school districts [have restricted the use of AI in classrooms for students up to 8th grade](#). There are still many exceptions, but it is a sign of slowing down after years of rapid adoption.

Portugal

Portugal [has signed the international call for safe AI](#), which urges coordinated joint action between industry, governments and society. The aim is to strengthen oversight without increasing inequality. (24 September 2026)

Quote of the day

"We need to raise a generation of children who know that they are the ones who get to write, and even rewrite, the rules of AI."

Randi Williams, AI and education researcher

[Watch the full TED Talk](#)

Have you seen the map above?

If you teach with AI at any level, from primary school to higher education, add your lesson plan to the map. It takes less than 10 minutes, and you could be the next dot other teachers discover.

Add your lesson to the map

With ♥ for the classroom,

Marta, AI goes to school

AI goes to school

Portugal



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