

Free AI Learning Has a Hidden Scale Tax

Why most open programs fail to scale beyond pilot status

Swipe for insights →

THE DATA

1 million

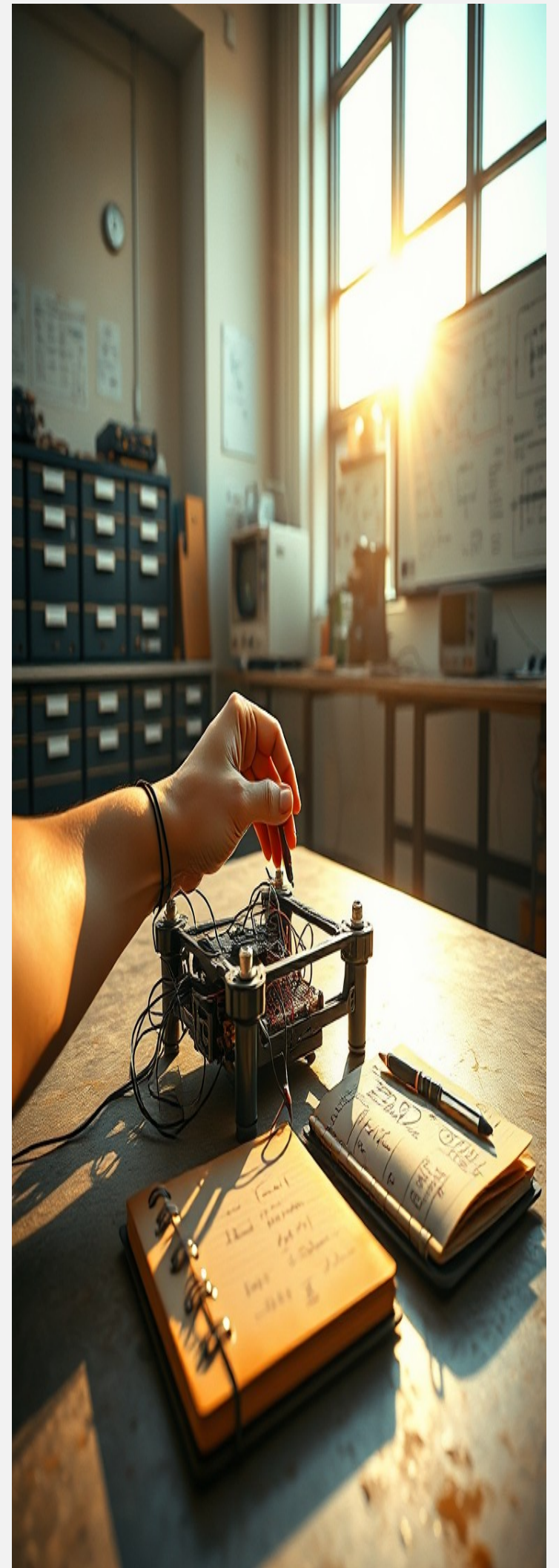
Students reached

By MIT RAISE's Day of AI event earlier this year

This number reflects the scale of engagement possible when AI education is designed for distribution, not just delivery. The MIT RAISE program demonstrates that open, community-driven initiatives can achieve national reach without institutional barriers.

Source: MIT News • Published October 06, 2026

<https://news.mit.edu/2026/mit-america-initiative-strengthens-stem-education-across-country-1006>



01

Mentorship Is the Scalability Engine

The MIT for America initiative's success hinges not on content alone, but on deploying trained volunteers—MIT undergraduates and alumni—to deliver calculus tutoring and AI education. This model proves that scalable learning requires human touchpoints, not just digital access. Without active mentorship, even free courses become isolated, self-directed dead ends.



02

AI Fluency Needs Co-Construction

MIT RAISE's emphasis on teacher training and student-led AI dialogue shows that effective AI learning isn't about consuming pre-packaged content. It requires co-creation: students and educators jointly shaping how AI is used in classrooms. This second-order effect means that true AI literacy emerges not from passive consumption, but from participatory design—making every learner a co-developer of the system.

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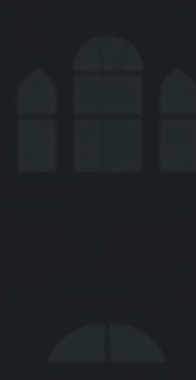
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