Is Your Free AI Learning a Hidden Tax?

The real cost isn't money—it's effort, attention, and risk.

Swipe for insights →

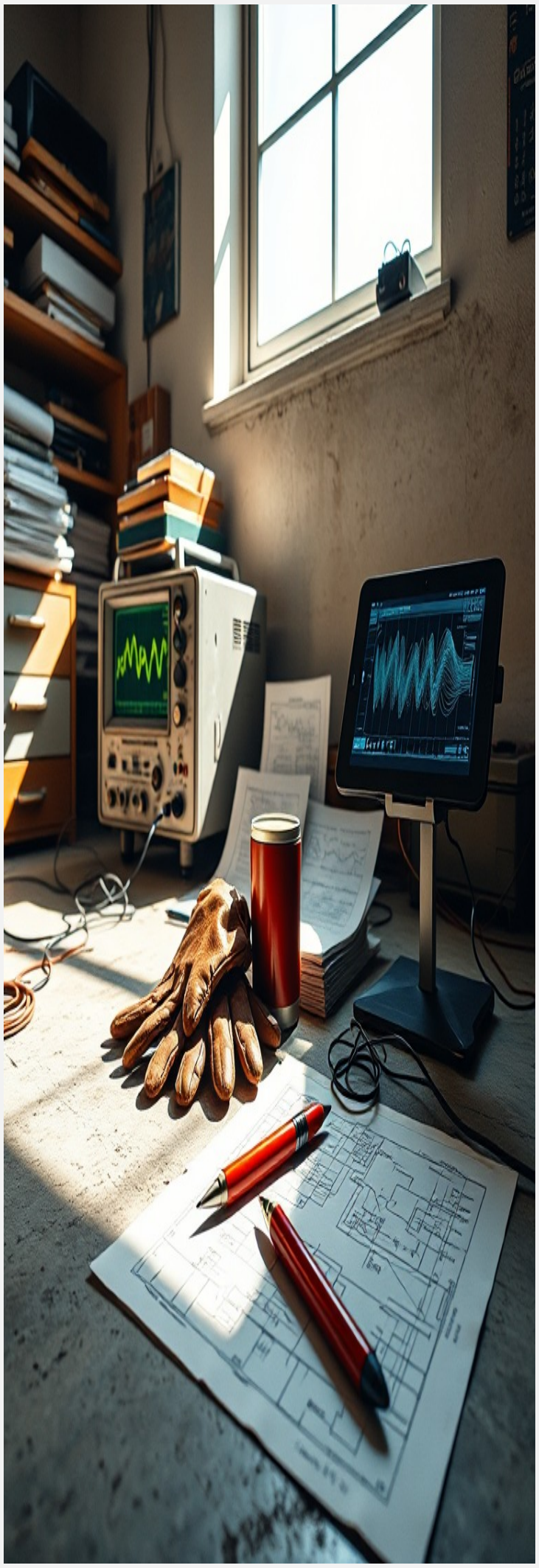
THE DATA

52

Studies Reviewed

A comprehensive review of AI in education found only 52 high-quality studies on student and teacher use of generative AI.

Of 1,686 papers in the AI Hub’s research repository, only 52 met the criteria for causal claims about student outcomes. This means the evidence base for AI in learning is still in its infancy—most 'proven' claims are speculative. The scarcity of reliable data suggests that today’s free AI learning materials are often built on untested assumptions.

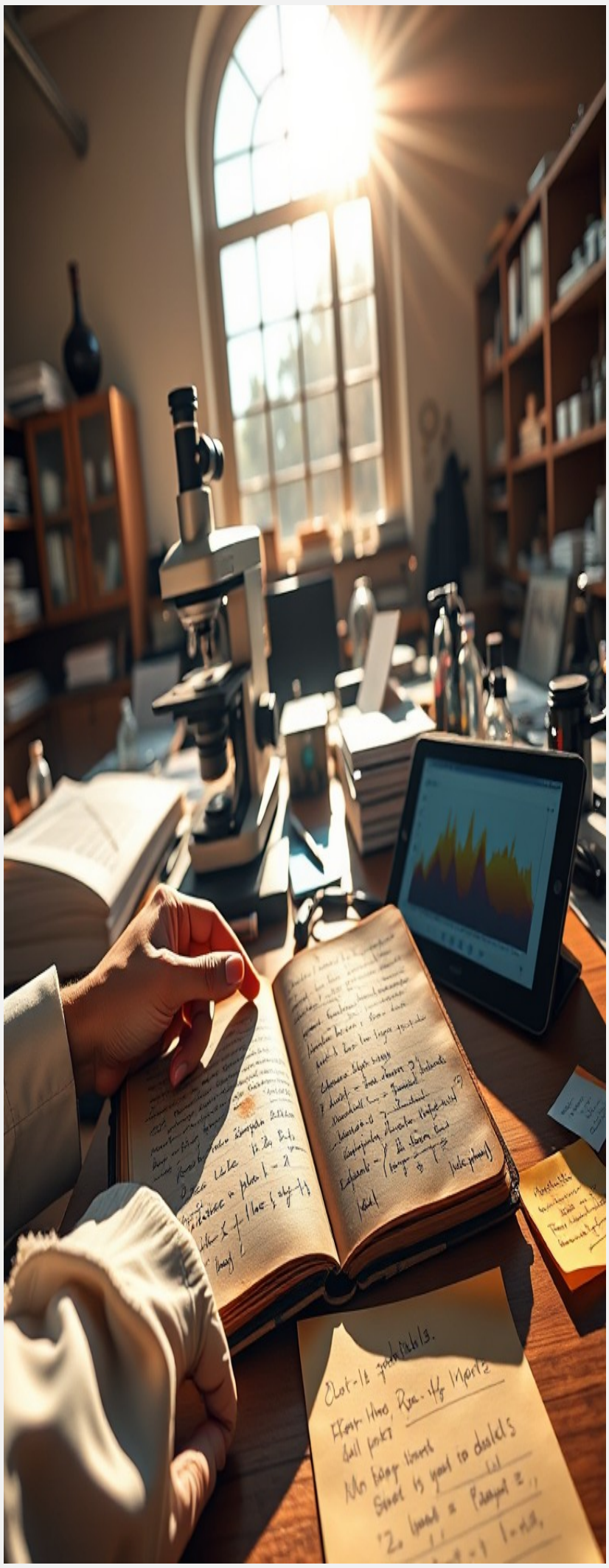


Source: Education Week · Published November 16, 2026
https://www.edweek.org/technology/is-ai-good-or-bad-for-learning-the-answer-isnt-so-simple/2026/11

01

Effort is the true cost of free AI learning

The real cost of free AI learning isn’t the price tag—it’s the erosion of effort, attention, and self-regulation. When AI does the thinking, learners don’t develop the metacognitive skills that enable deeper mastery.



02

AI tools don’t replace judgment—they expose it

Free AI learning materials often ignore this tension. They present AI as a plug-and-play solution, but real mastery comes from learning when to use it, when to resist it, and how to verify its output. The most valuable skill in free AI learning is discernment, not consumption.

George Arnold Alexander III, MPA

Partner, ALEX Companies
Associate Broker, Alexander Tiffany Southwest, LLC
Licensed Broker in TX, CO, NC, AL

george@alex.realestate · +1 713.918.9951



ALEX

ALEX Intelligence
deep intelligence

ALEX Real Estate
genius real estate

ALEX Advisory
uncontested strategy

ALEX Cares
purposeful philanthropy