

Supporting Educators Through AI

A Review of the Literature

By

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has quickly become one of the most discussed innovations in education. Across recent studies, AI has been recognized for its ability to save teachers valuable time, reduce administrative burdens, and open opportunities for more creative and student-centered work (Nittle, 2025). Teachers who receive structured support in using AI report greater autonomy and lower levels of burnout, while those left without guidance often experience digital fatigue and frustration (Duan & Zhao, 2024). While these findings highlight the potential of AI use in schools, much of the focus on educational innovation is on classroom teachers. The afterschool field, particularly programs in Title I schools like Texas ACE, often go unrecognized and understudied.

As an afterschool coordinator, I am tasked with managing staffing, forging community partnerships, facilitating contracts, balancing a grant-funded budget, developing curriculum, managing students, communicating with parents, facilitating family events, and so much more. I have witnessed the weight of these responsibilities lead to increased burnout and work-related stress in my colleagues, and it was not until I introduced AI into my daily work interactions that I started to feel that load lighten. I have seen how beneficial AI can be in helping me organize, communicate, and reduce the time I spend on repetitive administrative tasks. At the same time, I recognize that many OST programs lack structured professional learning or systemwide support for adopting new technologies (Lantos et al, 2024). This gap means that while coordinators stand to benefit greatly from AI, we may continue to be overlooked. My study seeks to introduce elementary afterschool coordinators in Austin Independent School District to generative AI tools and explore how AI adoption impacts their workload, efficiency, and digital confidence.

Review of the Literature

Definition of AI Adoption in Afterschool Program Coordination

Artificial intelligence (AI) adoption in education is described as the integration of tools that automate repetitive tasks, analyze data, and generate content to support teaching and administrative responsibilities (Vashita et al., 2023). In classroom settings, studies define AI adoption through its impact on efficiency, such as saving teachers time on lesson planning, grading, and communication (Duran, 2024). Other researchers describe adoption as the process of not only accessing these tools but also building the digital competence necessary to use them effectively, since educators with stronger digital skills report lower levels of stress and we greater confidence in their professional roles (Marais, 2023; Bayrak Karsli et al., 2023).

While these definitions are centered on classroom contexts, they translate directly to out of school time (OST) programs where coordinators carry similar responsibilities (Bailey et al., 2025).

Types of AI Adoption in Education

There are several common ways artificial intelligence (AI) is adopted in educational settings. Generative tools are used to create text, reports, and summaries that educators can adapt, reducing time spent on repetitive writing tasks and improving workflow efficiency (Duran, 2024; Vashista et al., 2023). Automation tools support scheduling, attendance tracking, and compliance reporting, which helps relieve administrative burdens and frees time for meaningful work (Nittle, 2025). Data analysis systems allow educators to organize and interpret information for decision-making and program evaluation, strengthening data-driven planning (Vashista et al., 2023). Researchers also highlight AI's potential to foster creativity by allowing educators to focus less on routine tasks and more on designing innovative, student-centered experiences (Pont-Niclòs et al., 2024; Magrill & Magrill, 2024). For afterschool coordinators, who manage

communication, reporting, and curriculum development in addition to daily program operations, these types of adoption represent opportunities to streamline workload and redirect attention to program quality and sustainability (Bailey et al., 2025).

Advantages of AI Adoption

Research consistently highlights the advantages of AI adoption in education, particularly in its ability to reduce workload and improve efficiency. Teachers using AI report saving nearly six hours per week on routine responsibilities, freeing time for instructional planning and student support (Nittle, 2025). Studies also show that when administrative burdens are reduced, educators are able to devote more energy to creative program design and student-centered work (Magrill & Magrill, 2024). Beyond efficiency, AI tools can enhance motivation and professional autonomy, with prospective teachers reporting that AI improved both workflow and learning outcomes (Duran, 2024). Other research emphasizes the connection between digital competence and professional well-being, finding that as educators strengthen their skills, they report greater confidence, resilience, and lower stress levels (Marais, 2023).

These findings are particularly relevant for OST programs, which continue to face major challenges related to staffing and capacity. Recent survey data show that nearly 8 in 10 providers remain concerned about hiring and retaining staff, and more than half report operating with waitlists because of limited resources (Afterschool Alliance, 2025). In this context, AI adoption offers practical relief by automating scheduling, compliance, and communication, giving coordinators the space to focus on program quality and family engagement. By applying AI in these ways, coordinators can shift their focus from administrative survival to higher-value work that strengthens student experiences and supports sustainability (Bailey et al., 2025).

Barriers to Implementing AI Adoption

Although the potential benefits of AI adoption in education are significant, research also identifies several barriers that complicate its implementation. One of the most common concerns is digital fatigue. Teachers who adopt AI tools without structured support often report feelings of overwhelm rather than relief, suggesting that the success of adoption depends heavily on professional learning opportunities (Duan & Zhao, 2024). Similarly, studies note that educators with limited digital competence face higher levels of stress when required to integrate unfamiliar tools, which highlights the importance of training and proper implementation (Marais, 2023). Without appropriate guidance, AI can compound the very workload challenges it is intended to reduce.

Another barrier to AI adoption is ethical and privacy concerns. Educators have expressed uncertainty about how to use AI responsibly, raising concerns about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the potential for misuse like plagiarism (Delello et al., 2025). In the afterschool setting, protecting student and family information is just as important as school day protections.

However, OST providers struggle with limited infrastructure for secure data collection and reporting, a challenge confirmed in recent research showing that many programs lack reliable systems and staff training for digital management (Lantos et al., 2024). This raises the concern that they may not have the necessary resources or policies in place to safely adopt AI.

Additionally, barriers to AI adoption are compounded by the broader capacity and sustainability challenges facing OST programs. National survey data indicate that nearly eight in 10 program providers remain very or extremely concerned about staffing shortages, and more than half report operating with waitlists due to lack of capacity (Afterschool Alliance, 2025). With coordinators already overextended, introducing new technologies without clear supports risks being perceived as *one more thing* rather than a solution to existing problems. Researchers also note that

coordinators in Texas ACE (Afterschool Centers on Education) programs identify compliance and reporting as significant stressors (Bailey et al., 2025), which could make the adoption of new digital systems daunting if implementation is not paired with meaningful training. While AI has the potential to reduce workload and improve efficiency, barriers related to digital fatigue, ethics, infrastructure, and sustainability must be addressed for implementation to be successful in afterschool settings.

AI Adoption in Afterschool Settings

While direct research on AI adoption by afterschool coordinators is limited, findings from similar education contexts provide valuable insights for the future of AI use. Classroom and higher education studies consistently show that AI reduces administrative workload, fosters creativity, and supports data-driven decision-making (Pont-Niclòs et al., 2024). Strengthening digital competence is also linked to lower stress and stronger professional identity among educators (Marais, 2023). These findings suggest that coordinators, who manage scheduling, reporting, communication, and curriculum, could experience similar benefits from AI adoption. At the same time, research on the OST workforce highlights the conditions that shape coordinators' capacity to adopt new technologies. The *Power of Us Workforce Survey* (Moroney et al., 2025) found that nearly half of youth serving professionals reported feeling burned out, and more than one-third identified “less stress” as the most needed change in their role. Many staff, particularly younger or part-time workers, also reported limited access to professional learning outside employer-provided training, leaving gaps in opportunities to build digital confidence and leadership skills. These findings align with other OST studies showing that programs often struggle with staffing shortages, waitlists, and insufficient infrastructure for data management and reporting (Afterschool Alliance, 2025; Bailey et al., 2025).

Together, this evidence indicates that while AI adoption could provide afterschool coordinators with much-needed relief from administrative demands, it cannot be viewed as a standalone solution. Coordinators operate within systems marked by burnout, low compensation, and limited professional learning opportunities (Bailey et al., 2025). For AI to truly strengthen coordinator capacity, it must be integrated alongside workforce development and support that addresses these underlying challenges.

Summary

Research demonstrates that AI adoption in education has been consistently linked to reductions in administrative workload, improvements in efficiency, and increases in creativity and autonomy for educators. Studies on digital competence reinforce that stronger technology skills correlate with lower stress and greater professional identity, while surveys of OST programs highlight the persistent challenges of staffing shortages, burnout, and limited infrastructure. Together, these findings suggest that AI has strong potential to help afterschool coordinators manage the wide range of responsibilities they carry, but adoption must be supported by professional learning and systemic investment to be sustainable.

This Review and the Field of Education

This review adds to the field of education by extending the conversation about AI adoption beyond classroom teachers to include afterschool program coordinators. While most research has examined AI's role in lesson planning, grading, and instructional support, little has been written about its application to program administration, compliance, and family engagement. These tasks are equally essential to student success but severely underresearched. By synthesizing findings from general education AI research with OST workforce studies, this review levels the playing

field to be more inclusive to afterschool coordinators. It emphasizes that workforce well-being and program sustainability are critical dimensions of educational innovation that deserve attention alongside classroom instruction.

Strengths and Weaknesses of this Body of Literature

Current available research contains consistent evidence that AI adoption provides stark benefits to educators. Multiple studies portray that AI can streamline routine tasks, foster opportunities for creativity, and strengthen educators' digital confidence. Surveys and evaluation reports also contribute valuable insight into the specific challenges of the OST workforce, ensuring that coordinators' realities are not overlooked when discussing innovation in education.

However, weaknesses are also clear. Much of the research on AI adoption is concentrated on classroom teachers, pre-service educators, or higher education contexts, with little to no direct attention to afterschool coordinators. While OST surveys provide context on workforce challenges, they do not measure the impact of AI or other emerging technologies on coordinator workload, efficiency, or confidence. This absence represents a gap in the literature that limits our understanding of how AI adoption functions in non-classroom educational spaces. Addressing this gap is essential for ensuring that AI integration strategies are equitable and inclusive across the full spectrum of learning environments.

Focus of the Current Study

This review directly informs my action research project, which introduces elementary afterschool coordinators in Austin Independent School District to generative AI tools and examines how adoption influences their workload, efficiency, and digital confidence. The evidence suggests that AI can reduce administrative burdens and support digital competence, but that coordinators will require training and systemic backing to experience these benefits fully. While I recognize

that my implementation method does not provide extensive professional development for AI use, conducting this study on how AI adoption impacts coordinators is an essential stepping stone. By capturing coordinator perspectives and documenting their experiences, this project aims to build a foundation for more structured support and sustainable approaches to AI integration in OST contexts. Ultimately, the study seeks to fill a gap in the literature and provide practical insights that can guide afterschool leaders in making thoughtful, sustainable decisions about technology adoption, while improving both coordinator well-being and program quality in Title I schools.

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