

De Anza College Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Accreditation

To: De Anza Committee in Online Learning

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From: Lisa Ly, Acting Director of IRPA

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Subject: AI in Teaching and Learning, Student Survey Winter 2026

Overview

The Committee in Online Learning (COOL) wanted to gather students' opinions about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in teaching and learning environments, and reached out to the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Accreditation to conduct a survey.

Methodology

An online survey was administered from March 3 to April 3, 2026, a period encompassing winter quarter finals and spring break. A random and representative sample of 3,000 winter 2026 enrolled students, aged 18 or older with an email on file, was invited to participate. While 89 students accessed the survey link, 88 consented to participate and 84 completed the survey. Four respondents provided no data and were excluded from this memo. The response rate was 3%.

Summary of Findings

- **Respondent Demographics:** Respondents primarily identified as Asian (33%), White (19%), and Latinx (14%), though Asian and Latinx populations were underrepresented. Nearly half of the participants opted not to specify their gender (n=34); among those who did, slightly more identified as female than male. Similarly, 24% of respondents (n=20) did not disclose their age; those who did were ages 18–24, followed by ages 25–49.
- **AI Usage:** Most respondents use AI frequently—either a few times a week (n=24) or daily (n=18)—with the vast majority utilizing free plans (n=51).
- **Usage Correlation:** Data suggests that respondents with paid AI subscriptions use the technology more frequently than those on free plans.
- **Instructor Guidance:** AI guidance is scarce; while 17 students reported "often" receiving guidance in winter 2026, most indicated they "never" (n=38) or infrequently (n=26) received instructor support.
- **Student Comfort with AI:** Respondents are nearly evenly split on their comfort level using AI for learning, with 31 feeling comfortable and 28 feeling uncomfortable.

- [AI Literacy](#): There is a strong consensus on the importance of AI literacy, with 53 respondents viewing it as important compared to only 12 who do not.
- [AI Training Interests](#): Most respondents (n=52) are interested in AI workshops. Top topics include Study Assistance (n=38) and Research (n=38), followed by Writing, Ethics, and Privacy. Preferred delivery formats include live workshops and pre-recorded tutorials.
- [Instructor AI Use](#): Respondents are generally more uncomfortable (n=38) than comfortable (n=20) with instructors using AI for teaching purposes. Reasons cited include resentment toward paying tuition for AI-generated instruction, hypocrisy regarding instructors who forbid student AI use but use it themselves, and concerns regarding critical thinking, environmental impact, and the potential for false plagiarism accusations.

Survey Results

AI Usage: While 50% of respondents (n=42) use AI frequently—either daily or weekly—40% (n=34) rarely or never utilize it for academic or personal tasks.

Table 1: How often do you currently use AI tools (e.g., Google Translate, ChatGPT, Grammarly or other AI-powered apps) for schoolwork or personal tasks?

	n	Percent
Daily	18	21%
A few times a week	24	29%
Once a week	8	10%
Rarely	17	20%
Never	17	20%
Total	84	100%

AI Plan Type: More than half (n=51) of survey respondents use a free AI plan.

Table 2: What type of AI plan do you use?

	n	Percent
Free plan only	51	61%
Paid service plan only	6	7%
Both	10	12%
No response	17	20%
Total	84	100%

Table 3 cross-tabulates AI plan types with usage frequency. While the correlation between plan type and frequency was not a standalone survey question, the relationship is inferred from the data:

- Free Plan Users (n=51): Usage was mostly a few times a week (37%) or rarely (29%).
- Paid Plan Users (n=6): A majority (67%) use AI daily.
- Dual Plan Users (n=10): Respondents used AI daily (50%) or a few times a week (30%).

Table 3: AI Plan Type and AI Usage

AI Usage	AI Plan Type					
	n			Percent		
	Free Plan	Paid Plan	Both	Free Plan	Paid Plan	Both
Daily	9	4	5	18%	67%	50%
A few times a week	19	2	3	37%	33%	30%
Once a week	8			16%	0%	0%
Rarely	15		2	29%	0%	20%
Total	51	6	10	100%	100%	100%

Instructor Guidance: Most respondents indicated their instructors never (n=38) provided AI guidance during the winter 2026 quarter. Another 26 respondents received AI guidance infrequently—only once or a few times during the quarter.

Table 4: In a typical week this winter quarter, how often did your instructor(s) provide guidance on AI across all your classes?

	n	Percent
Often	17	20%
A few times a quarter	13	15%
Once a quarter	13	15%
Never	38	45%
No response	3	4%
Total	84	100%

Student Comfort with AI: When it comes to using AI for learning, there was no majority response of 51% or more. Respondents were nearly evenly split on their comfort level using AI for learning, with 31 feeling comfortable and 28 feeling uncomfortable.

Table 5: How comfortable do you feel using AI tools to support your learning (e.g., writing help, study assistance, problem solving, research)?

	n	Percent
Very comfortable	14	17%
Somewhat comfortable	17	20%
Neutral	18	21%
Somewhat uncomfortable	8	10%
Very uncomfortable	20	24%
No response	7	8%
Total	84	100%

Importance of AI Literacy: When it comes to the importance of learning about AI, 53 respondents viewed it as important compared to only 12 who do not.

Table 6: How important do you think it is for you to learn about AI literacy (understanding how AI works, its ethical use, and its impact on careers) in your classes?

	n	Percent
Very important	31	37%
Somewhat important	22	26%
Neutral	12	14%
Not very important	8	10%
Not important at all	4	5%
No response	7	8%
Total	84	100%

AI Training Interests: When it comes to attending a college-hosted AI training workshop, 52 expressed interests compared to 22 who did not.

Table 7: How interested are you in attending a training or workshop at De Anza to help you use AI tools effectively and responsibly?

	n	Percent
Very interested	14	17%
Somewhat interested	21	25%
Neutral	12	14%
Not very interested	5	6%
Not interested at all	22	26%
No response	10	12%
Total	84	100%

Table 8 summarizes the preferred topics and delivery formats for the 52 respondents interested in AI training. Study Assistance (n=38) and Research (n=38) were the top two AI topics for a training workshop, followed by Writing (n=23). Ethics (n=20) and Privacy (n=20) rounded out the bottom two. Overall, the preferred training formats are live workshops and pre-recorded video tutorials.

- Study Assistance respondents (n=38): equally preferred live workshops (37%) and pre-recorded video tutorials (37%).
- Research respondents (n=38): preferred live workshops (37%) followed by pre-recorded video tutorials (34%).
- Writing respondents (n=23): preferred pre-recorded video tutorials (52%).
- Ethics respondents (n=20): preferred live workshops (50%).
- Privacy respondents (n=20): preferred pre-recorded video tutorials (45%) followed by live workshop (35%).

Table 8: What types of AI usage are you interested in learning more about? Mark all that apply. The AI usage you want to learn more about is listed below. If De Anza offered training, what format would you prefer?

Preferred Format	AI Training Workshop Topic									
	n					Percent				
	Study					Study				
	Assistance	Research	Writing	Ethics	Privacy	Assistance	Research	Writing	Ethics	Privacy
Live workshops (in-person or online)	14	14	6	10	7	37%	37%	26%	50%	35%
Pre-recorded video tutorials	14	13	12	6	9	37%	34%	52%	30%	45%
Step-by-step written guides	4	6	3	3	2	11%	16%	13%	15%	10%
Peer-led sessions or student mentors	4	3	1	0	0	11%	8%	4%	0%	0%
No response	2	2	1	1	2	5%	5%	4%	5%	10%
Total	38	38	23	20	20	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Instructor AI Use: Student respondents are generally more uncomfortable (n=38) than comfortable (n=20) with instructors using AI for teaching purposes.

Table 9: How comfortable are you with instructors using AI in teaching (e.g., course design, grading, responding to student emails)?

	n	Percent
Very comfortable	8	9%
Somewhat comfortable	12	14%
Neither	13	15%
Somewhat uncomfortable	8	9%
Very uncomfortable	30	35%
No response	15	17%
Total	86	100%

Respondents were invited to elaborate on their answers; the themes identified from their open-ended comments and narrative responses are summarized below.

Very/Somewhat Uncomfortable (n=33): Respondents who were uncomfortable with instructors using AI cited resentment toward the idea of paying for human expertise and communication only to receive AI-generated lectures or feedback, sharp criticism of double standards with instructors who forbid student AI use while using it themselves for grading or course design, and concern regarding critical thinking, environmental impact, and the false flagging of plagiarism.

- *“AI can have its uses for sure, but only to supplement certain tasks like data entry. However I still would like AI to not be present in the classroom at all, it causes more harm than it does anything else. It destroys the environment, it destroys students critical thinking skills, if we hope to have a future we need to heavily consider having a zero tolerance policy towards AI.”*
- *“AI is bad for the environment and studies have shown detrimental effects on people’s brains. It also can very easily hallucinate and not provide the correct information and needs to be double checked, at which point it didn’t save time or energy. There may be a time that AI is more useful than detrimental. But we are not there yet.”*
- *“I think that using AI to respond to student email and to grade assignments (especially essay type) is impersonal and crappy. Might as well get rid of the instructor then.”*
- *“Instructors need to be engaged with their coursework to design a well-crafted course. They need to think and engage intellectually with course material. If an AI designs coursework, grades papers, and responds to student emails then why do we even need the professor there at all.”*
- *“Using AI is lazy. It takes out human care and emotion, and promotes mindlessly finishing tasks. There is not critical thinking being done by either party, and is taking the thought and care out of courses designed by teachers, and work submitted by students. It is important for students and teachers to understand AI and think critically about using it. However, I do NOT believe classes should be promoting its use, nor requiring students to utilize it. Higher education should have little to no AI, the point of college is to think critically and expand your mind. How are you going to do this with students and staff using AI for everything?”*
- *“Teachers false flag assignments using AI. It’s considered academic dishonesty for students to use AI and can result in expulsion; yet instructors are encouraged to use it and use it for grading. This creates distrust between students and professors. Instructors are relying on AI to do aspects of their job for them, while students aren’t allowed to use it at all... If students aren’t allowed to use it, instructors shouldn’t be allowed to use it either... Generative AI should be not be allowed at all in the education system. It does not benefit instructors or students. I’ve had a paper flagged for AI and had to submit my Google Drive edit history to prove I didn’t use AI. This is a ridiculous situation for students to be in, especially when students who are against AI are accused of using it to cheat.”*

Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (n=7): Respondents who expressed neutrality regarding instructor AI use were often uncertain about how the technology was being applied. While some supported AI for administrative tasks—such as organization and management—they viewed its use for interpersonal communication, such as responding to emails, as inappropriate.

- *“I am not sure whether the instructors are using AI in teaching, so I do not know.”*
- *“I don’t feel like AI is a bad or good thing. So I think they may use it but I know sometimes AI can be wrong so its better to not completely depend on AI. Maybe if needed AI would be a good help but not to completely do all the teaching or all the work.”*
- *“It depends on how they use it. If they use to manage their tasks instead of making them do the actual task, then I'm totally comfortable with that.”*
- *“... a teacher doesn't need to be using that for replying to emails. I could see it being used by them to gather info about what the student is asking whether that be internal or external info, but they don't need to use it to reply.”*

Very comfortable/Somewhat comfortable (n=13): Respondents who expressed comfort with instructor AI use generally viewed the technology as an inevitable and beneficial tool for teaching and learning, particularly for clarifying and summarizing complex concepts. However, these respondents still emphasized the need for responsible use, citing concerns regarding critical thinking, environmental impact, and the necessity of fact-checking for accuracy.

- *“Everyone is using AI in some way, shape, or form and it’s a necessary skill to learn at this point. I’ve been working in tech for 13 years and everyone I’ve talked to has told me it’s expected to leverage AI in the workplace.”*
- *“I fully accept AI-generated works as long as the instructors has responsibly checked and proofread them before publishing them.”*
- *“It’s helpful for instructors to empower AI to visualize or represent a concept or materials to improve understanding on complex concepts and internalize learning, making it easier for students to overcome barriers of learning difficult subjects and for those whose native language is not English.”*
- *“The expectation is that they [instructors] already have a strong core of knowledge already and they are using AI to keep up to date on topics. I would be very disappointed if they used AI to construct their class plans. I think that a teacher should use their knowledge to come up with class plans.”*