



AI & LEARNING SUMMARY

Executive Summary

March
2026

2025 SENSE AI & LEARNING OVERVIEW

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) measures students' early experiences during their first weeks of college and identifies institutional practices that support student persistence and success. The special-focus part of the survey explores the intersection of artificial intelligence and the learning environment.

INSTITUTIONAL INSIGHTS

Analysis of the AI and Learning items in the SENSE survey indicates that many Panola College students are beginning to incorporate artificial intelligence tools into their academic work. While the overall levels of AI usage vary across student groups, several important patterns emerge.

1. AI Is Already Being Used by Many Students for Coursework

Student responses indicate that AI tools are being used to assist with coursework tasks such as generating ideas, clarifying concepts, and supporting assignments. This suggests that AI is already becoming part of the academic learning environment, even when it may not be explicitly addressed in course instruction.

2. Instruction About AI Use Appears Inconsistent

Students report varying levels of exposure to instruction regarding how to evaluate AI-generated information and how AI tools should be used responsibly in academic work. This pattern suggests that discussions about AI use may currently depend on individual instructors or courses rather than consistent institutional guidance.

3. Traditional-Age Students Report Higher Levels of AI Use

Younger students appear more likely to report using AI tools to assist with coursework. This likely reflects greater familiarity with emerging technologies and may indicate that these students are integrating AI tools into their learning practices more readily than older students.

4. First-Generation Students May Be Using AI as a Learning Support Tool

First-generation students report similar or slightly higher levels of engagement with AI tools compared with non-first-generation students. This suggests that AI may function as an informal academic support resource for students who may have fewer external academic supports.

5. Online Students May Rely More on AI but Receive Less Guidance

Students enrolled in online courses appear more likely to rely on technology tools, including AI, when completing coursework. However, some online students report less guidance from instructors regarding appropriate AI use, indicating a potential need for clearer expectations within online learning environments.





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Instructional Summary

March
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The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) measures students' early experiences during their first weeks of college and identifies institutional practices that support student persistence and success. The special-focus part of the survey explores the intersection of artificial intelligence and the learning environment

INSTITUTIONAL INSIGHTS

The AI and Learning items in the SENSE survey provide insight into how students are interacting with emerging artificial intelligence tools in their coursework. These findings may be particularly relevant for faculty as they consider instructional strategies and academic integrity policies.

1. Students Are Experimenting with AI Tools

Student responses suggest that many students are already experimenting with AI tools to assist with coursework. These tools may be used to help students:

- brainstorm ideas
- clarify concepts
- generate outlines or draft content
- review information while studying.

Because students may be using these tools independently, faculty awareness of AI use in coursework is increasingly important.

2. Students Need Guidance on Evaluating AI Output

A key theme in the survey responses is that students report varying levels of instruction regarding how to evaluate AI-generated information. AI systems can produce inaccurate or misleading information, making it important for students to develop skills in evaluating the reliability and accuracy of AI-generated content.

Faculty can help support these skills by encouraging students to:

- Verify AI-generated information with credible sources
- Evaluate the accuracy of AI responses
- Reflect critically on AI-generated material.

3. Expectations for AI Use May Need to Be Clarified

Survey responses suggest that students may not always be clear about when or how AI tools are appropriate for coursework. Providing clear guidance in course syllabi or assignment instructions can help students understand expectations regarding the use of AI tools.

4. AI Literacy May Become an Important Academic Skill

As AI technologies continue to evolve, helping students develop responsible AI usage skills may become an increasingly important part of information literacy and critical thinking instruction. Integrating discussions about AI into coursework may help students develop the ability to use these tools thoughtfully and responsibly.