Approaches to AI in Research & Writing

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AI & Student Formation

The Seattle School's policy on student use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (see the Academic Catalog) centers student formation. The question of formation reframes the issue of AI-use away from an exclusive emphasis on AI's impact on end products and end goals. Rather, a formation-centered approach asks whether a given use of AI might divert us from the slow work of listening, reflecting, and inquiring, through which we are transformed into new selves. The process of formation is not charted by students alone but is a negotiation between students' aspirations for their own growth and the values through which the institution seeks to form its students.

The purpose of identifying this dynamic is to clarify the nature of formation. The coursework that students are assigned at TSS is designed to cultivate knowledge and skills that students will apply in their professional lives. Assignments are not boxes to check off but opportunities to engage in deep learning that requires one's whole body, mind, and spirit to complete.

AI, in its many forms, can and likely will be a part of academic study at TSS and elsewhere going forward. How it can serve formation and learning, rather than bypass it, is a complex and evolving question. The resources below offer critical perspectives (not necessarily those of TSS) on student AI-use, preliminary guidelines for citing AI from the two citation styles used at TSS, and more general resources for understanding AI in cultural, historical, and economic contexts.

Perspectives on Generative AI

General Advice

APA – The Promise and Perils of Using AI for Research and Writing, by Charlotte Huff (10/01/2024) [Archived]: An article from the American Psychological Association (APA) discussing precautions students should take in using AI, how to cite AI, and thinking about AI's long-term impacts on academic research.

Purdue LibGuides – Artificial Intelligence, by Jing Liu [Archived]: A collection of various short guides to different aspects of AI use in the academy, including comparison of various AI tools and tips for how to use AI in research and how to cite AI.

AI & Writing

Rutgers-Newark – Student Guide: Ethical AI Use in College, by VidCruiter (09/22/2025) [Archived]: A short guide that offers examples of ethical and unethical ways to use AI, while also focusing on the impact of AI-use on one's learning.

LibreTexts – Reasons Not to Let AI Brainstorm, Write, Revise, or Edit (in College), by Anna Millis [Archived, 2]: A brief chapter covering ways that AI-use can deprive students of opportunities to use writing to think while also potentially flattening and altering the meaning of one's writing. Another author's perspective on this topic from a more pedagogical perspective can be read here.

I'm Kenyan. I Don't Write Like ChatGPT. ChatGPT Writes Like Me., by Marcus Olang' (07/08/2025) [Archived]: An essay drawing attention to the ways that assumptions about what AI-produced writing "sounds like" may lead us to misjudge writing by those who have learned English as a second language. This piece asks us to consider written English in its historical–especially colonial–dimensions and how the current AI moment impacts non-native English speakers.

Citation Guidelines

APA - Citing Generative AI in APA Style: Part 1—Reference Formats, by Timothy McAdoo, et al. (09/09/2025) [Archived, 2, 3]: Preliminary guidance on how to cite AI in the APA citation style. Further advice in Part 2 and Part 3 of this blog post.

CMOS - How to Cite Content Developed or Generated by AI [Archived]: Preliminary guidance on how to cite AI according to the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), 17th ed.; can be applied to Chicago Turabian.

Ethical Dimensions

Vox – The Biggest Lie Tech People Tell Themselves — And The Rest of Us, by Reo (Rose) Eveleth (10/08/2019) [Archived]: An article challenging the notion of technological inevitability, situating this discourse within the history of US narratives of evolution and progress, which are contemporarily repurposed by technologists. Demystifying narratives of inevitability is important for cultivating discipline, stewardship, and integrity towards AI and all technology.

Business Insider – A History Professor Says AI Didn't Break College — It Exposed How Broken It Already Was, by Thibault Spirlet (10/30/2025) [Archived, 2, 3]: An article summarizing the arguments of history professor Steven Mintz that AI has not so much *caused* a crisis in education as *revealed* problems inherent in its industrialization. Mintz's pedagogically oriented essay, which is the subject of the article, can be found here. A longform essay by another author meditating on similar topics can be found here.

404 Media – 'AI Is African Intelligence': The Workers Who Train AI Are Fighting Back, by Jason Koebler (03/12/2026) [Archived]: An investigative article discussing the labor conditions of the Kenyan data labelers who train major AI models as well as their demands for better compensation and mental health care.

Appendix A: Exercising Our Judgment

As the TSS policy on generative AI states: "[D]isciplined learning to leverage and steward generative AI tools with integrity is an emergent skillset." It is not possible–nor would it be useful–to present a definitive list of good and bad uses of AI. The ability to properly use (or not use) AI in an academic context requires *exercising* one's judgment–in conversation with one's instructor. "Exercising," here, implies both *using* and *strengthening* one's critical thinking skills. To this end, you can complete the following exercise by writing a few sentences in answer to the questions below:

1. List some things that might be gained or lost by using AI in this scenario.
2. Would you choose to use AI in this scenario? Why or why not?
    a. If yes, briefly describe specific strategies for ethical AI-use that you would use in this case.

Scenario A: You are short on time and need to finish your bibliography entries.

Scenario B: You are struggling to understand a complicated topic in a course reading.

Scenario C: You have written and rewritten a section of your paper multiple times but just can't seem to articulate what you are trying to say.

Scenario D: You are finding it difficult to start writing anything at all for an assignment, and you really need to begin.

Scenario E: You have been doing research in academic databases but are not having luck finding sources that fit the argument you want to make in your paper.

Scenario F: You have finished a draft of your paper but have a vague feeling that it is not quite right.