

An Insider's Guide to Learning with AI

What AI Can and Can't Do for You as a Learner

It takes a lot of work to get into college, and it's also a significant financial investment. How can you get the most out of the experience? The truth is, the more effort you put into your learning, the more you gain: skills and strengths that serve you well both now and in the future. But this won't happen if you lean on AI to do your work for you.

Northeastern is all about experiential learning, learning by doing, with you in charge of making connections and charting a special path. In contrast, AI-generated work is generic, even to the point of being boring. It's also sometimes flat-out wrong! AI doesn't know about your unique life experiences, thoughts, and goals. When you *invest yourself* into your work, the products are unique and irreplaceable.

It also is true that AI is becoming integral to many aspects of our lives. In the near future most jobs will involve some form of AI, and generative AI tools can be extremely useful when used appropriately. Learning how to work with AI wisely and creatively – becoming AI “literate” – can position you for success in high demand jobs of the future. So there is a legitimate place for AI in learning, but you need to be actively involved to gain the benefit. As you consider whether to use generative AI in your classes or while on co-op, keep the following 5 tips in mind.

AI @ Northeastern: Top 5 Tips

1. **Talk with your instructor:** Expectations for AI will vary across disciplines and courses, so it's important to read the syllabus and check with your instructor to find out what's allowed. If you're not sure what's allowed, be sure to ask before using it.
2. **When using AI, stay in the driver's seat:** Let AI challenge and aid you, but never let it take over. AI outputs can be inaccurate, incomplete, or even biased. It should never be used as the sole source. Consider also the strengths and limitations of what the tool puts out. Critique what it produces. Refine your prompts to get a result that's more accurate and closer to what you need. Remember that it's important to make the product your own, because originality matters. This will almost always involve a *lot* of revising and refining on your part.
3. **Remember that the process of learning is as important as the product:** Keep track of how you go about your work, for example prompts and iterations of AI output and how you use or modify what you generate. This will help you explain what you've created to others and cite your use of AI properly. Some instructors will even require that you submit this documentation along with the completed assignment. Be prepared to speak to your learning process.
4. **Learning is a human endeavor:** Don't be afraid to ask your instructor or TA for feedback on works-in-progress and get feedback from peers if that is also allowed. It's not just you and the computer on your own!
5. **Cite AI Properly:** Always cite AI if you use it in assignments. For example: *In response to the question "Why is feedback important?", ChatGPT suggested "feedback acts as a compass in learning..." (OpenAI, 2023).* The [APA](#) and [MLA](#) provide style guides for citing Generative AI.