



Consolidated Research Report: AI Usage Among Students in Croatia, Czechia, and Slovakia

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Overview and Methodology

This consolidated report brings together the findings of the student research conducted in Croatia, Czechia, and Slovakia as part of the Erasmus+ project Artificial Intelligence – Literacy, Ethics, and Responsible Navigation (2025-1-HR01-KA210-VET-000359037).

The research aimed to examine how students understand and use Artificial Intelligence, how AI is shaping their learning practices, which benefits and risks they associate with it, and what support they expect from schools. Over a four-month research period, the partner schools used a jointly developed questionnaire to ensure a comparable approach across the three national contexts. Focus groups and interviews were also conducted at the national level to complement the individual national reports and provide additional contextual insight into students' and teachers' experiences with AI in education; however, the consolidated analysis presented in this report is based primarily on the quantitative student survey data.

The consolidated quantitative analysis draws on 529 student survey submissions: 349 from Croatia, 93 from Czechia, and 87 from Slovakia. The sample had a strong focus on students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET) programmes, while also including students from general secondary education (gymnasium).

The survey consisted of 57 substantive questions covering AI awareness, frequency and purpose of use, digital and AI literacy, academic integrity, information verification, privacy, personal use, training needs, and expectations for future education and employment.

The findings should be interpreted as reflecting the experiences of participating students and schools rather than as statistically representative of all students in the three countries.

However, the results provide a strong evidence base for the project's activities, school-level guidance, and wider dissemination work.

1. AI Is Already Part of Everyday Student Life

Across all three countries, AI is no longer a new or occasional technology. It is already embedded in students' everyday learning, information-search, and communication practices. A total of 84.4% of respondents reported using AI at least several times per week, while 79.5% used it for school-related work regularly or sometimes. ChatGPT was used by 98.3% of students, making it by far the most widespread AI tool across the entire sample. Gemini was the second most common tool (54.1%), followed by Canva AI (42.3%) and Copilot (21.4%). Students most commonly used AI for information search and answers to questions (89.8%), followed by studying and academic tasks (67.6%). Writing assistance, language learning, brainstorming, and image generation were also widely used. This confirms that AI has become a normal part of how students approach homework, research, writing, and day-to-day problem-solving.

AI is also changing students' information-search behaviour. Overall, 72.1% of respondents reported using AI either primarily or equally alongside traditional search engines. This is one of the most important findings of the research, because students increasingly receive information through conversational AI systems rather than through direct engagement with sources.

2. Practical Familiarity Is High, but Deeper AI Literacy Remains Uneven

Students generally felt familiar with AI. The average familiarity score across the three countries was 3.98 out of 5. However, practical exposure does not necessarily mean conceptual understanding.

Only 50.5% of respondents stated that they understood the difference between Generative AI, such as ChatGPT, and Narrow AI, such as recommendation systems.

The average self-assessment of digital skills was 3.84 out of 5, while self-assessed AI literacy was lower, at 3.61 out of 5. This difference is important: students tend to feel confident using digital devices and AI tools, but are less confident in understanding how AI works, how it generates responses, or how its limitations affect reliability.

The largest gap appeared in Slovakia, where students reported a relatively high familiarity with AI but the lowest average self-assessed AI literacy of the three samples. This suggests that future activities should not assume that regular use automatically creates critical or informed users.

3. Students Value AI for Efficiency, but Fear Its Effect on Thinking and Creativity

Across all three countries, students saw AI mainly as a practical tool. The most commonly identified benefits were saving time on repetitive or boring tasks (61.9%), having a tutor available at any time (50.1%), and quickly summarising large amounts of information (37.6%). At the same time, students were clearly aware of the risks. The strongest concern across the entire sample was over-reliance and the possible loss of critical-thinking skills (63.2%). This was followed by loss of human creativity and connection (49.3%), privacy and security concerns (36.1%), deepfakes and misinformation (35.3%), and possible job loss in future career fields (33.4%).

This tension is central to the findings. Students do not reject AI, nor do they see it as automatically harmful. Instead, they recognise that AI can make learning faster and more accessible while also making it easier to avoid effort, reflection, and independent problem-solving.

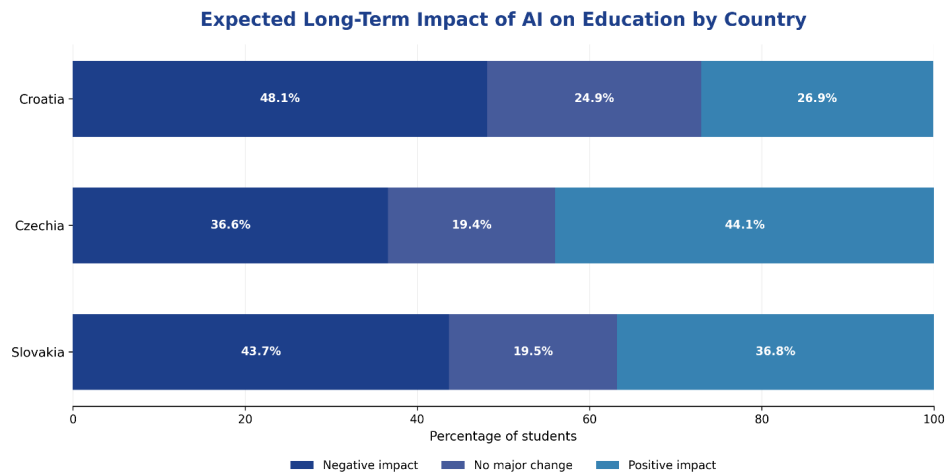
Students' views on academic integrity reflect the same balanced perspective. More than half of respondents (52.4%) believed that AI becomes cheating when a student copies an answer without understanding it. Only 10.8% viewed all AI-supported schoolwork as automatically unoriginal. This suggests that students distinguish between using AI as a learning support tool and using it as a replacement for their own work.

4. Students Are Cautious About AI's Long-Term Impact on Education

Despite frequent use, students were not uniformly optimistic about AI's future role in education. Across the full sample, 45.4% expected AI to have a mostly or significantly negative long-term effect on the quality of education, compared with 31.5% who expected a mostly or

significantly positive effect.

The country comparison is particularly interesting. Croatian students were the most cautious, with 48.1% expecting a negative educational impact. Czech students were more positive, with 43.3% expecting AI to improve education. Slovak students were divided, but also showed a stronger negative than positive tendency.



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These differences may reflect the distinct school profiles of the samples. The Czech sample was strongly represented by IT and Engineering students, who also used coding tools more frequently and were more likely to see AI as necessary for future employment. The Croatian and Slovak samples included more general and business-oriented students, whose responses placed greater emphasis on the wider educational, ethical, and social consequences of AI use.

5. Critical Information Literacy Is the Main Educational Gap

Students are not fully trusting of AI-generated information. The average trust score was 3.18 out of 5, which suggests caution rather than unquestioning acceptance.

However, their verification practices remain inconsistent. Just over half of respondents (53.3%) said that they often or always double-check information provided by AI. Only 38.7% reported opening AI-generated links and checking whether the information actually exists in the original source. Nearly one quarter of students (24.9%) only checked whether a link looked legitimate, while 8.9% trusted the AI source without checking it.

Knowledge of AI citation was also limited. Only 49.7% of students stated that they knew how to cite an AI tool in a school project or paper.

¹ Figure 1. Expected Long-Term Impact of AI on Education by Country. Source: Erasmus+ National Student Surveys, 2026.

² Indicator	Croatia (n = 349)	Czechia (n = 93)	Slovakia (n = 87)
Understand the difference between Generative AI and Narrow AI	50.4%	54.8%	44.8%
Rate their own AI literacy at level 4 or 5 out of 5	62.2%	55.9%	37.9%
Often or always double-check AI-provided facts using a secondary source	49.6%	58.1%	64.4%
Open an AI-generated link and check whether the information exists in the original source	37.0%	47.3%	35.6%
Know how to cite an AI tool in a school project or paper	51.0%	49.5%	44.8%

Note: Each row represents a separate survey question. Self-assessed AI literacy reflects students' own perception of their competence; the other indicators describe specific knowledge or verification practices.

This is a key result for the project. Students are already using AI for information search, writing, research, and schoolwork, but many do not yet have consistent habits for checking sources, recognising unreliable references, citing AI use transparently, or identifying hallucinated information.

Future teacher training and learning resources should therefore focus not only on how to use AI tools effectively, but also on deep research, source evaluation, fact-checking, citation, and responsible academic use.

6. Privacy and Personal Use Require More Attention

² Table 1. Critical AI Literacy and Verification Practices Across the Three Countries. *Source: Erasmus+ National Student Surveys, 2026.*

Just over half of respondents (53.7%) stated that they knew prompts and data entered into AI tools could be used to further train models and that they were careful about what they shared. However, 33.8% had heard about this issue but did not consider it important, while 12.5% were not aware of it at all.

Students commonly shared school assignments or essay drafts with AI tools (75.1%). More concerningly, many also reported sharing medical symptoms or health-related questions (38.9%), personal feelings or secrets (27.1%), and future plans or career goals (19.9%).

Personal use was also widespread. A total of 58.1% of respondents reported asking AI for advice or help with personal problems at least rarely, while 14.4% did so frequently.

<i>Indicator³</i>	<i>Croatia (n = 349)</i>	<i>Czechia (n = 93)</i>	<i>Slovakia (n = 87)</i>
<i>Aware that prompts and data may be used to train AI models, and careful about what they share</i>	52.7%	57.0%	52.9%
<i>Share medical symptoms or health-related questions with AI</i>	37.0%	43.0%	42.5%
<i>Share personal feelings, moods, or secrets with AI</i>	25.5%	24.7%	36.8%
<i>Share future plans or career goals with AI</i>	16.9%	28.0%	23.0%
<i>Ask AI for advice or help with personal problems at least rarely</i>	56.7%	60.2%	62.0%

Note: Each row represents a separate survey question. "At least rarely" includes students who selected either "Yes, but rarely" or "Yes, frequently".

Slovak students reported the highest share of personal AI use, although this pattern was present across all three countries. This indicates that AI literacy work should include not only privacy and data protection, but also emotional reliance, health-related questions, and the limits of AI-generated advice.

Students need clear guidance that AI tools are not substitutes for teachers, parents, trusted adults, counsellors, medical professionals, or mental-health support services.

³ Table 2. Privacy Awareness and Personal Use of AI Across the Three Countries. Source: Erasmus+ National Student Surveys, 2026.

7. Formal AI Education Has Not Kept Pace with Student Use

Only 13.3% of students across the three countries had attended any AI-related course or training. Most students reported learning to use AI independently, through experimentation, peer learning, or simply by using tools without structured guidance.

At the same time, 75.0% of respondents believed that students themselves are primarily responsible for learning how to use AI responsibly. This points to a significant self-navigation gap: students are expected to manage AI use independently, despite limited formal instruction in how to evaluate sources, cite AI, protect privacy, or recognise risks.

Students still expect schools to provide support. The most frequently selected forms of support were seminars or guest lectures on AI (33.8%), guided classroom practice with AI tools (32.6%), and courses or workshops on AI tools and concepts (30.6%).

Students were cautious about making AI a mandatory formal curriculum topic. More than half of respondents (51.8%) preferred AI to be included through extracurricular activities, while only 19.5% supported full integration into the official curriculum. This suggests that students favour practical AI learning opportunities rather than a purely theoretical approach.

8. Country Profiles

Croatia (Srednja škola Tina Ujevića, Kutina)

The Croatian sample was the largest and included a strong general secondary education profile. Students showed high exposure to AI and regular school use, but were the most cautious about AI's long-term effect on education. They also showed weaker fact-checking consistency than the other groups. The main need in Croatia is broad critical AI literacy that can be applied across general education, language learning, schoolwork, and everyday online information use.

Czech Republic (EDUCAnet Brno: Střední odborná škola)

The Czech sample was strongly shaped by IT and Engineering education. Students reported the highest level of frequent AI use and were much more likely to use AI for coding and technical tasks. They were also the most likely to see AI as a required future professional skill. Their responses show the importance of combining technical AI competence with ethical guidance, academic integrity, source verification, and responsible use.

Slovakia (Obchodná akadémia Senica)

The Slovak sample was strongly concentrated in Economics and Business education. Students used AI frequently, especially for information search, studying, writing, and language-related tasks. However, they reported the lowest self-assessed AI literacy and the lowest level of formal AI training. Privacy, personal advice, and self-directed learning emerged as particularly important themes. Future activities should prioritise structured support for

responsible use, privacy awareness, and critical AI literacy.

Recommendations

The combined findings support five shared priorities for the project:

1. Develop practical AI literacy activities that move beyond tool use and focus on how AI works, how it can fail, and when it should not be used.
 2. Provide clear school-level guidance on academic integrity, acceptable AI use, disclosure, authorship, citation, and assessment.
 3. Teach source verification and deep research skills, including how to check AI-generated links, compare information with reliable sources, and recognise hallucinated citations.
 4. Include privacy, emotional reliance, health-related questions, and safe data-sharing practices in all AI literacy activities.
 5. Create flexible learning formats for students and teachers, combining workshops, guided classroom practice, guest lectures, project-based learning, and Digital Resource Library materials.
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Conclusion

The consolidated findings show that AI is already embedded in students' learning practices across Croatia, Czechia, and Slovakia. Students use it frequently, value its speed and accessibility, and see it as useful for information search, studying, writing, translation, research, and technical tasks.

At the same time, practical use is developing faster than critical understanding. Students are still uncertain about how AI works, how to verify information, how to cite AI transparently, what data should not be shared, and how to use AI without replacing independent learning. The main challenge is therefore not introducing students to AI. AI is already present in their lives. The task for schools is to help students use it critically, ethically, safely, and in ways that strengthen learning rather than weaken independent thinking.



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