# USING A.I. AS A LEARNING PARTNER

**A MENTOR GUIDE • ATHLETICS ACADEMIC SERVICES • DEGREE PROGRAM**

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

***Teach students to use A.I. as a thinking partner that strengthens their own understanding — never as a substitute for doing the work themselves.***

*Model these strategies in your sessions so students learn to drive the tool — not the other way around. Remind them never to submit A.I. text directly: professors can and do check written work for similarity.*

## Learning & Study Support

Help students use A.I. to organize and clarify their own thinking — before, during, and after they write.

### BRAINSTORMING & OUTLINING

- Before drafting a paper or presentation, have students ask A.I. to pose questions that surface ideas and reveal gaps in their argument.
- Use A.I. to turn a rough idea into a suggested outline structure, then have the student rewrite it in their own words and order.

### CLARIFYING DIFFICULT CONCEPTS

- When a lecture, textbook, or reading doesn't click, ask A.I. to explain the concept a different way — a simpler explanation, a real-world analogy, or a step-by-step breakdown.
- Encourage follow-up questions ("explain that part again") so the student keeps probing until it truly makes sense, rather than accepting the first answer.
- For compare/contrast assignments, ask A.I. to pose questions that surface both sides of a topic — the student still forms and defends their own position.

### WRITING & PROOFREADING

- Ask A.I. for feedback on a draft's organization, structure, and tone, or for help getting unstuck on an opening paragraph — the student still writes and owns the final draft.
- Use A.I. as a first-pass proofreader for grammar and sentence-level readability before submitting, the same way a student might use Grammarly.

### REPHRASING & ORGANIZING NOTES

- Paste in messy, handwritten, or stream-of-consciousness notes and ask A.I. to reorganize them into clear sections — the student edits and personalizes the result.
- Use A.I. to identify the notes' vocabulary, headers or logical flow to review before an exam.

### BUILDING STUDY GUIDES

- Convert a set of lecture notes into a structured study guide: key terms, summarized concepts, and self-test questions.
- Ask A.I. to generate practice questions from the notes so the student can check recall before quizzing themselves.
- Have students paste in a reading selection and ask A.I. to generate review questions to self-test their comprehension.

## Research Support

Help students use A.I. to work smarter with sources — while still finding, reading, and writing in their own words.

### REFINING TOPICS & KEYWORDS

- When a topic is too broad, ask A.I. to help narrow the focus and suggest effective search terms and synonyms to try in a database.
- Use A.I. to map out related subtopics or angles the student hadn't considered before they start searching.
- Ask A.I. for general pointers on how to approach researching a topic — strategy and structure, not the paper's content itself.

### LOCATING ORIGINAL SOURCES

- Use A.I. to suggest where to look — library databases, course textbooks, peer-reviewed journals — then have the student retrieve and read the actual source.
- Always verify a source A.I. references truly exists and says what it claims; never cite a source without confirming it firsthand.

### READING & COMPREHENSION SUPPORT

- Ask A.I. to summarize a dense article or chapter first, to help the student judge relevance before committing to a full read.
- Use A.I. to define unfamiliar terms or explain a confusing passage encountered while reading the original source.

### NOTE-TAKING & SYNTHESIS

- Students should write notes and summaries in their own words first — then use A.I. only to check understanding or spot connections between sources.
- Ask A.I. to identify how two sources agree, disagree, or build on each other, to help the student synthesize ideas for a paper.

## HELPFUL A.I. TOOLS & APPS

**TitanGPT**
CSUF's own secure A.I. tool, built on ChatGPT-4o and free to every student with a campus login — a safe, campus-backed first stop for the strategies in this guide.

**Google Gemini**
Built into Docs, Slides & Gmail — great for quick brainstorming, drafting outline structure, and clarifying concepts right where students already work.

**NotebookLM**
Upload lecture slides, readings, or notes and get grounded summaries, Q&A, and audio overviews — answers stay tied to the student's own source material.

**Claude**
Strong at walking through step-by-step explanations, reorganizing messy notes, and asking follow-up questions that check real comprehension.

**ChatGPT**
A general-purpose A.I. chatbot for brainstorming, explaining concepts, and drafting outlines — remind students TitanGPT gives them this same model for free through CSUF.

**Obsidian**
A note-taking app for linking lecture notes, readings, and study guides into one organized system that builds over the whole semester.

**Otter.ai**
Transcribes and summarizes live lectures in real time, so students can stay focused on listening instead of racing to write everything down.

**Quizlet**
Turns notes or study guides into flashcards and practice tests automatically — useful for self-testing recall before an exam.

*This guidance is reinforced through University 115, preseason team meetings, and ongoing mentor trainings.*