

Artificial Intelligence in Classrooms and Lecture Halls: WKW Research Project Shows Intensive AI Use in Education

Around 1,600 pupils and students in Vienna surveyed. University of applied sciences students lead in AI use: 32 percent use it daily. The main motivation is saving time. Teachers prefer ChatGPT.

Vienna, August 27, 2025 – Artificial intelligence has firmly arrived in Vienna’s classrooms and lecture halls. This is shown by the research project “AI in WKW’s Educational Institutions,” conducted by FHWien der WKW in the 2024/25 winter semester on behalf of the Vienna Economic Chamber’s Education Management Department. A total of 1,537 pupils and students from the MODUL Tourism Schools, the Vienna Business School, and FHWien der WKW, as well as 40 participants from WIFI Vienna courses, were surveyed.

“As Austria’s largest private education provider, it is our responsibility at the Vienna Economic Chamber not only to keep pace with the times but to lead the way. That’s why we integrated digital elements into our educational programs at an early stage. Over the past years, digitalization has gained tremendous momentum, and this trend is accelerating even more rapidly with artificial intelligence. The use of AI tools is spreading even faster than digitalization as a whole. Our university’s research project clearly demonstrates this. With these insights, we are laying the foundation for the future development of our educational institutions,” says Walter Ruck, President of the Vienna Economic Chamber.

Key findings:

Most students use AI several times a week

- 23% of pupils use AI tools daily, and another 32% two to three times a week.
- 32% of university students use AI daily, and another 43% two to three times a week.
- 11% of pupils and 2% of university students rarely or never use digital aids.

Why learners use artificial intelligence

- For 41% of university students and 39% of pupils, saving time is the main reason for using ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and similar tools.
- Other motives include generating more content (pupils: 24%, students: 22%) and improving and refining texts (pupils: 23%, students: 21%).
- 14% of pupils and 9% of university students use AI because they consider its results superior to their own work.

AI programs are used to summarize and translate texts, assist with writing, and generate ideas. While university students primarily use AI for text optimization, pupils value it more as a learning assistant. Some respondents voiced concerns that AI might make them too complacent and weaken their own thinking processes.

Students rate their own AI skills highly

When assessing their competence in using AI, young learners were confident:

- More than 50% of university students and just under 50% of pupils rated themselves as having advanced or expert competence.
- Among WIFI course participants, only about 15% claimed advanced or expert competence.
- Conversely, just 4% of pupils and fewer than 1% of university if applied sciences students described AI as completely new to them, compared to one-third of WIFI learners.

Teamwork outperforms AI use in experiments

In six experiments, learners worked on complex tasks – with and without AI. The results: success depended less on AI use than on clear communication, defined roles, and mutual support. One team without AI achieved better results than another with AI because it was well organized. On the other hand, AI helped some teams generate innovative ideas.

According to project leader Tilia Stingl de Vasconcelos Guedes, *“Studies like this provide valuable orientation, helping education quickly and effectively respond to the developments in generative AI.”* The FH Wien professor adds that while little is yet known about the long-term effects of AI on people and society, *“there is no question that we need to actively address the challenges. That requires motivated staff and learners who use technology in ways that genuinely improve quality of life.”*

Teachers and AI – great potential, but also uncertainty

Teachers and lecturers were also surveyed in focus groups with 23 participants in total.

- 60% of teachers at schools and university lecturers reported using AI very often or often to prepare lessons.
- Among WIFI instructors, only 20% said the same.
- 54% of teachers and lecturers named ChatGPT as their preferred AI tool.

Teachers and lecturers also reported uncertainty – especially when grading AI-assisted work, handling data privacy, or correcting AI-generated responses. They also pointed to a lack of technical resources. At the same time, they believe AI can make teaching more efficient and creative.

AI skills at work – more than just good prompting

The project was based on an analysis of public discourse on AI skills in German-language online media, conducted over two twelve-month periods (2023/24 and 2024/25). During this time, the importance of the following aspects of AI use in the workplace grew significantly:

- AI awareness – understanding the possibilities and limitations of artificial intelligence
- AI-informed decision-making – integrating AI results thoughtfully into professional decisions
- Data protection and legal frameworks

Seven tasks for educational institutions

For Barbara Kluger-Schieder, Head of Education Management at the Vienna Economic Chamber, the project paints a nuanced picture of the challenges facing schools, universities, and training providers regarding AI: *“The findings show how important the human factor is when working with AI. Analytical thinking, teamwork, and ethical awareness are just as crucial as technical know-how. Our educational institutions address all of these aspects – both internally and in their training and development programs.”*

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To ensure that AI tools are used meaningfully, efficiently, and in compliance with the law, the researchers recommend that educational institutions tackle the following tasks:

1. Expand technical infrastructure
2. Clarify legal frameworks
3. Provide practical training for educators
4. Strengthen critical media literacy
5. Further develop teaching methods
6. Foster teamwork and social dynamics
7. Share best-practice examples

Images:

AI tools are already being used intensively in Vienna's classrooms and lecture halls – by learners and teachers alike. This is shown by a research project conducted by FHWien der WKW on behalf of the Vienna Economic Chamber.

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Presentation of the research project “*AI in WKW's Educational Institutions*” with moderator Bernhard Weingartner, Barbara Kluger-Schieder from the Vienna Economic Chamber, and Tilia Stingl from FHWien der WKW (from left).

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