



## Can the use of AI in school allow students to become more independent learners.

Teacher, Penryn College, June 2026

### Background

The use of AI is currently restricted within the school's IT system. Therefore, student use of AI comes from unfiltered and unguided access on their personal home devices. This research explored Year 10 (age 14-15 years) Computer Science students' use and perception of AI.

### Research Question:

How can AI develop students' creativity, independence and autonomy?

### What I did

A set of questions was designed and interviews conducted with groups of students from a Y10 Computer Science class. This consisted of 10 students in total across a range of ability.

The data was collected as audio recordings that were then transcribed. These transcripts were then analysed using AI to look for traits within the feedback. The analysis was then cross checked for accuracy with the original recordings.

### What I found out

Students demonstrated a **capacity to develop independence and autonomy in their learning by using AI** to generate explanations for homework tasks in the absence of teacher support, and as a revision tool.

"If you get the answer wrong... press explain AI." - Group 2

"If you don't have a teacher at home... use AI and it helps you." - Group 1

"What do I need to learn at GCSE level for this certain topic?" - Group 3

There was less evidence of them using it iteratively as a creative tool for larger, longer tasks. However, students did describe using it to **help with sentence starters, quotes and summaries**.

"Sentence starters for English homework." - Group 1

"What type of story I want... it generates a small story." - Group 3

A recurring theme was that students **understood the responsible use of AI** and made clear distinction between using AI as a learning aid and using it as a shortcut.

"A resource to help you, not a resource to do it for you." - Group 2

"If you're using it during the test, then that's cheating." - Group 3

Interviewees showed significant variation in their AI use, suggesting unequal understanding of its potential to enhance learning.

### What next?

Provide teaching on effective use of AI for learning to student groups.

Trial guided use of AI within the school environment in lessons.

Provide staff training for teachers and teaching assistants.

### Links