TAI Challenge Start Session Summary (March 15, 2026)

(ACTION REQUIRED) Participants Poll form that was shared at the Start Session - https://forms.gle/yLjd6eLb4qR5CTqn8 - PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM IF YOU ALREADY HAVE NOT.

Link to the Challenge Start session video: https://forms.gle/6bDZFPg3HfrXDucZ9

Registration link for the TAI challenge (open till March 21 for new enrollments including new teammates) - https://forms.gle/ZeiBm6KwSByZWhVw9

Links TAI Challenge Info Session of March 1:
Use this link to open the AI Summary of the Info Session
Link to the Info session video of March 1: https://youtu.be/ERIy4fyhItg

TAI Challenge Start Session Summary (March 15, 2026)

The TAI Challenge officially kicked off with a highly interactive Start Session, bringing together a diverse cohort of high school students across schools, grades, and backgrounds. Students introduced themselves, shared whether they were working individually or in teams, and began forming connections within the cohort.

Launch of the Challenge

The session marked the formal start of the TAI Challenge. With strong early interest and growing participation, students were welcomed into a collaborative and exploratory program focused on understanding life in an AI-influenced world.

Participants were reminded that:

- The Challenge is **free and open to high school students**
- Additional participants can still join until **March 21**
- Teams of up to 3 are encouraged, but **individual participation is allowed**

What the Challenge is About

The Challenge centers on a powerful idea:

Understanding how the brain and AI make decisions—and how this shapes the life of teens.

Students will explore:

- How human thinking works (including biases and illusions)
- How AI systems generate outputs
- How both interact in real-world situations

This is positioned not just as a project, but as a **life skill experience**—helping students build awareness that will benefit them long-term.

Not a Traditional Competition

Unlike typical academic competitions:

- This is **not about memorization**
- It is **not about a single winner**
- It emphasizes **curiosity, creativity, and collaboration**

Students are encouraged to:

- Learn from each other
- Work with AI as a tool
- Reflect on their own thinking

There are **no lectures or formal instruction**—learning happens through guided exploration, discussion, and creation.

Key Learning Themes

The session introduced core ideas students will explore:

1. Brain Illusions and Heuristics

- Demonstrations showed how perception can be misleading
- Even when we “know” something is wrong, the brain can still be fooled
- This highlights built-in shortcuts (heuristics) in human thinking

2. Fast vs Slow Thinking

- Quick mental responses (fast thinking) often lead to intuitive but incorrect answers
- Deeper reasoning (slow thinking) helps correct them
- Students will explore how this affects real decisions

3. Biases in Thinking

Students will study key cognitive biases such as:

- Confirmation bias
- Sunk cost fallacy
- Availability bias

These are described as **“thinking illusions”** that affect everyone—including AI systems.

Challenge Components

Students will work across four components:

- **MindStory**: Creative writing (story or reflection)
- **VibeApp**: Build a no-code AI app
- **StageX**: Present ideas through talks, skits, or performances
- **InsightX**: Explore topics and take a quiz

Students can connect themes across components or explore different ideas in each.

Learning Approach

The program combines:

- Light reading (selected neuroscience chapters)
- Videos and real-world examples
- AI-assisted exploration (used responsibly)
- Peer discussions and collaboration

Students are encouraged to **use AI thoughtfully**, documenting how it supports their thinking rather than replacing it.

Timeline and Key Dates

- **Challenge Start**: March 15
- **Project Work Period**: March 15 – April 5 (flexible if needed)
- **Tutorial**: March 21 (was planned as hybrid with free lunch but now it will be only virtual based on participants' poll, only a few can make it in-person)
- **Challenge Day (In-person)**: April 19 at CSU East Bay

Attendance on Challenge Day is required.

Cohort and Collaboration

- ~50+ total registrations
- ~22 participants already in teams (~8 teams)
- Others participating individually or seeking teams

Support for collaboration includes:

- Participant directory
- Discord / communication channels
- Tutorial session

Students are encouraged to:

- Form teams if possible

- Reach out within the cohort
- Invite peers to join before the deadline

Awards and Recognition

- Awards across all components
- Approximately **30–40% of participants** may receive recognition
- Focus is on **quality, creativity, and effort**, not just ranking

Evaluation includes:

- Creativity
- Depth of thinking
- Relevance
- Presentation

Peer feedback is also part of the learning process.

Additional Opportunities

- Potential **internship opportunities** with Life in AI Center
- Exposure to neuroscience (BrainFacts resource)
- Optional connection to programs like Brain Bee

Closing Note

The session emphasized that this is more than a challenge—it is a **shared journey**:

A cohort of students exploring ideas, building projects, and reflecting on how AI and human thinking shape their lives and future.