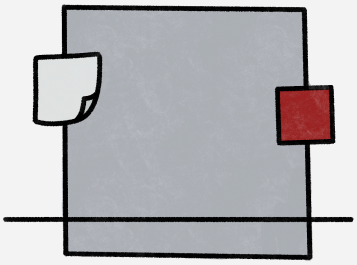
HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

CENTER FOR DIGITAL THRIVING

ALIGN ON THE LINE

BETA VERSION



Think about the different ways AI could be used and decide where you draw the line. Then, align on the line together.

1. **Brainstorm:** List all the ways AI could be used for a specific example (an assignment/task/policy).
2. **Map:** Place each use on the scale.
3. **Compare:** Share your map with others. Where do we agree and disagree?
4. **Align:** Together, decide where the line is for this example.

As AI tools evolve, building shared understanding of ethical use for different kinds of schoolwork is crucial. The reality is we're all developing our comfort zones about when and how to use AI — drawing different lines about what feels appropriate based on person, assignment, and learning goal. WHERE IS YOUR LINE — AND WHERE SHOULD OUR LINE BE AS A CLASS? This routine helps you map out different AI uses, see where others draw their lines, and work together to decide what's appropriate for a specific learning context (like an assignment, a task, or even a larger class policy).

PURPOSE

This practice helps students explore a broad range of AI uses through open, judgment-free dialogue and consider where they draw their ethical lines. It helps the class clarify shared norms for a specific learning goal or assignment while building AI literacy. It builds the habit of pausing to consider AI's role before using it. These conversations can be difficult to have, but by elevating different uses and discussing them openly, students learn both how to use AI and contexts for appropriate use. Through repeated practice, students not only develop a disposition to navigate AI use ethically but also to consider how learning goals themselves may need to evolve as the world changes with AI.

WHEN TO USE THIS PRACTICE

This practice works best with concrete, specific contexts. Single assignments or tasks are generally better than broad policies, but the routine is flexible. It can be particularly valuable when introducing a common assignment, a big project, or at the beginning of a unit, when expectations around AI use may not have been set. Consider running this practice multiple times throughout the year with different assignments, or even the same ones as students develop foundational skills and may be ready for different AI supports.

STEPS

1. **Brainstorm all possible AI uses.** Have students generate a comprehensive list of the different ways AI could be used for a specific assignment or task. Frame this as a judgment-free zone — you're exploring what *could* be done, not what students *have* done. Write each use on a sticky note or in a shared list.
2. **Collect and select.** Select a representative set of uses to map as a group (8–12 is best). Choose uses that are distinct from one another and cover the spectrum from clearly appropriate to potentially problematic — this ensures rich discussion across the gray areas. You can select these uses for students or decide as a group.
3. **Map gray areas.** Working individually, students map where each AI use falls on one of five categories: Totally Fine, Mostly OK, Not Really Sure, Feels Sketchy, Crosses a Line. This helps students reflect on their own ethical boundaries before discussing them.
4. **Compare maps and align on shared norms.** First in pairs, then as a whole class, students examine how their mappings align and differ, and discuss why. Together, decide where the class line will be for this specific assignment.
5. **Document.** Share a final version of the map so everyone has clarity moving forward.

VARIATIONS

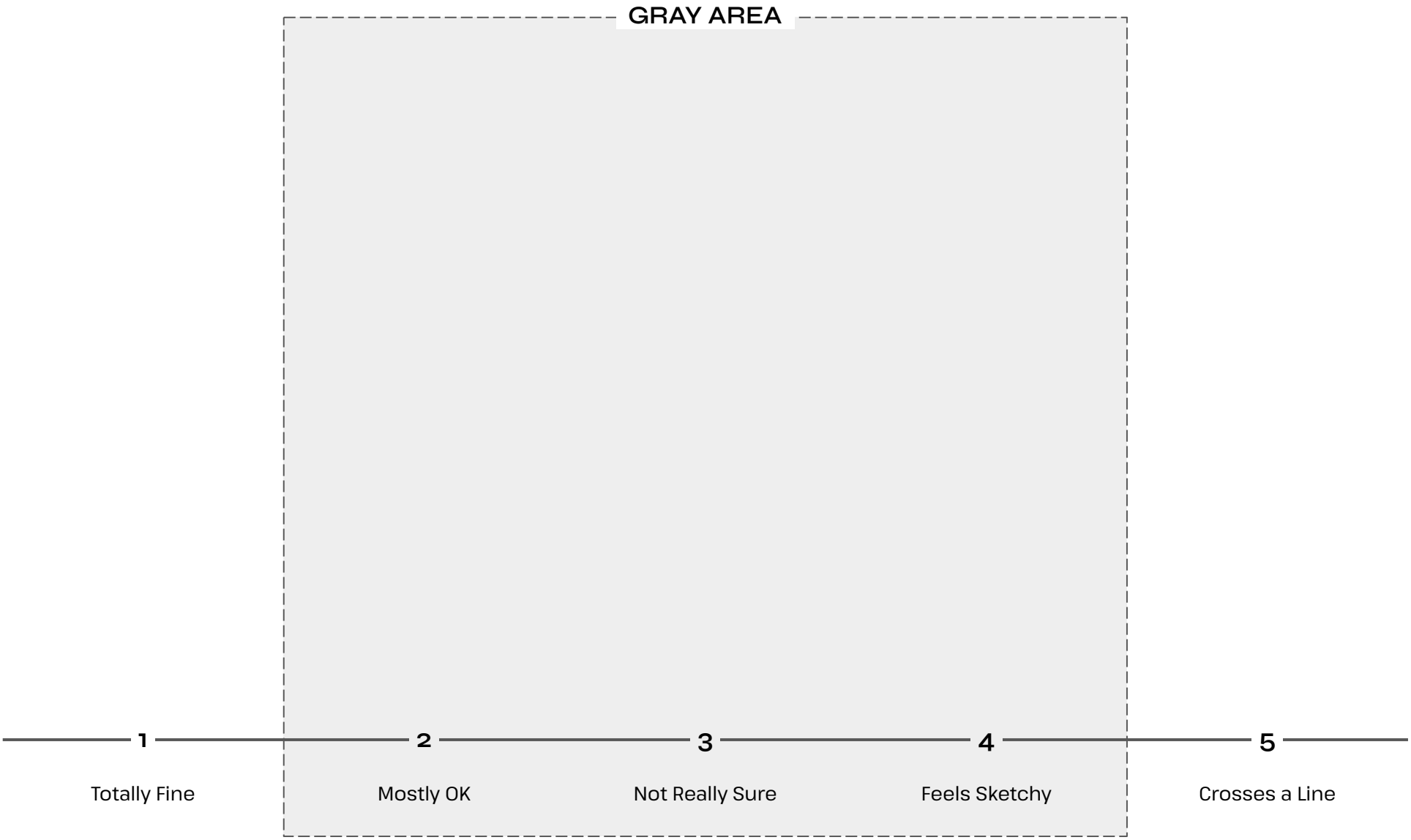
Live Polling Version: Instead of individual mapping, use app.graidients.ai to vote on each AI use as a class. Display a QR code for each use, and have students vote where it falls on the scale. The results appear instantly as a visual distribution, showing where the class collectively stands. Discuss why certain uses may be resulting in more disagreement than others, then record the class decision for each use. This variation works well when you want to see patterns emerge in real-time and spark discussion about disagreements.

Role Assignment Version: For each AI use, have students define what role AI is playing (e.g., editor, tutor, co-writer, researcher, creator). Then consider whether certain roles feel more or less appropriate for this assignment. This adds a layer of reflection about the relationship between the student and AI, and what kinds of help are acceptable.

Skill Development Version: Before mapping uses, have students first categorize each AI use based on their own skill level: (1) where they already excel, (2) where they're developing, or (3) where they're just beginning to learn. Then discuss how this might influence where they draw the line. This variation builds self literacy and surfaces important questions about when AI support helps versus hinders learning.

TIPS

Frame brainstorming as "*what someone could do with AI*" to support psychological safety and encourage a broad range of uses. Be clear about how decisions will be made — whether students vote, you facilitate consensus, or you decide. Document and post the final map where students can reference it while working. Remind students that norms may vary across classes, and today's decisions are specific to this assignment. If you veto or adjust any student decisions, share your thinking. This helps students understand the learning goals behind the boundaries.



HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

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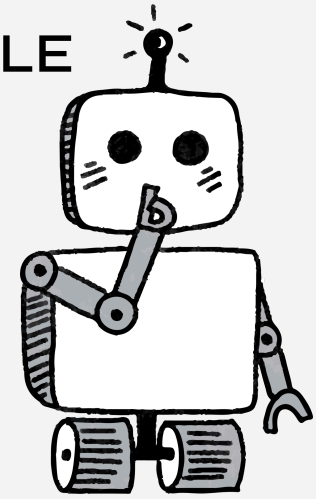
MAKING AI PRESSURES VISIBLE

BETA VERSION



Think about when and why people keep their AI use a secret.

1. **Define:** Understand what a "Secret Cyborg" is (using AI but keeping it hidden).
2. **Surface:** Brainstorm and share moments when you or others have felt pressure to hide AI use.
3. **Notice:** Identify patterns across experiences and what they reveal about hidden pressures.

When we use AI and keep it a secret, we become what Ethan Mollick calls a "*secret cyborg*." We might be worried others will judge us. We might not have someone we trust to talk to. Or we simply don't have the time or energy. We may feel like our task lacks meaning, so we just want to get it done. Some people use AI because they feel like it's the only way to keep up with others, or to meet expectations. Keeping secrets can cause feelings of shame and isolation. WHEN WE MAKE THESE EXPERIENCES VISIBLE, WE OFTEN DISCOVER WE'RE NOT ALONE — AND WE CREATE SPACE TO REFLECT ON HOW AI FITS INTO OUR LIVES.

PURPOSE

This practice creates space to talk about the pressures students face around AI use and the complicated feelings that come with it. It focuses especially on moments when those pressures push students toward secrecy. These pressures affect students in a range of ways, but they rarely get discussed openly (and even less often with teachers present). By surfacing when and why people hide AI use, students discover they're not alone in facing these tensions. It also provides a natural opportunity for reflection on what pushes us out of alignment with our values, whether that's the pressure to hide use, the pressure to use AI when we'd rather not, or other forces that make choosing with integrity harder.

WHEN TO USE THIS PRACTICE

This practice works well as a foundation for other AI conversations. It helps students connect over shared experiences and invites you to identify and name pressures you may not have known they were feeling. Understanding these pressures together creates space to address them, so students can navigate AI use with more intention and integrity. This practice can be particularly valuable to do before MAP A MOMENT to seed a generative AI experience. It also pairs with ALIGN ON THE LINE to surface gray area uses of AI.

STEPS

1. **Introduce the term.** “Secret Cyborg” moments happen when someone uses AI but keeps that use hidden. They're acting as part-human, part-robot (which is why it's called a *cyborg*), but because they want to keep their use hidden, it's *secret*. Whether it was for academic work, emotional support, social guidance, or personal validation — the key is they used AI and don't want others to know.

2. **Generate reasons privately.** Display the prompt: "*When or why do people feel pressure to keep AI use a secret? (You can think of your own experiences or stories you know from friends or relatives.)"* Students write their answers on slips of paper, stickies, or the handout. Encourage thinking about different contexts: specific classes, types of assignments, social dynamics, or family expectations.

3. **Post and vote.** Invite students to post their answers on a shared wall. Invite them to add dot stickers to those pressures that resonate most with them.

4. **See, think, wonder.** Invite students to share: What patterns do we notice? What do they suggest about why secrecy happens? What do we wonder about these pressures?

VARIATIONS

Anonymous Version: Use a digital tool (e.g. Padlet, Miro, Mentimeter) where students can submit pressures without names attached. Instead of stickers, students can add digital "+1's" or hearts to pressures that resonate with them. This helps everyone see shared experiences without anyone having to claim specific pressures as their own.

“Secret Human” Version: The “Secret Cyborg” activity explores when students feel pressure to keep AI use hidden. This flips the direction: when do students feel pressure to use AI even though they'd rather not? Ask: "*What creates pressure to use AI even when you'd rather not?*" Students share times they felt pushed to use AI against their preference — to keep up with peers, meet impossible deadlines, or because "everyone else is doing it." This variation surfaces how AI can feel less like a choice and more like a requirement, revealing systemic pressures that push students away from their own learning preferences.

TIPS

Consider running this when you’re setting norms, culture, and core practices for your class. It builds rapport and surfaces issues that can inform how you approach other activities like MAP A MOMENT or ALIGN ON THE LINE. Remember that disclosing AI use can be more vulnerable for some students — not because their use is illegitimate, but because sharing *why* they used AI might reveal personal information they want to keep private (e.g., learning differences, language background, access to technology). Keep focus on understanding patterns and pressures, not catching rule-breakers or venting about cheating in other classes. The goal is to reduce isolation and shame to pave the way to more understanding, reflection, and integrity around AI use; creating a context where students end up feeling more shame is counterproductive. If sensitive pressures emerge (mental health, family situations), acknowledge them without dwelling, then follow up individually if needed.

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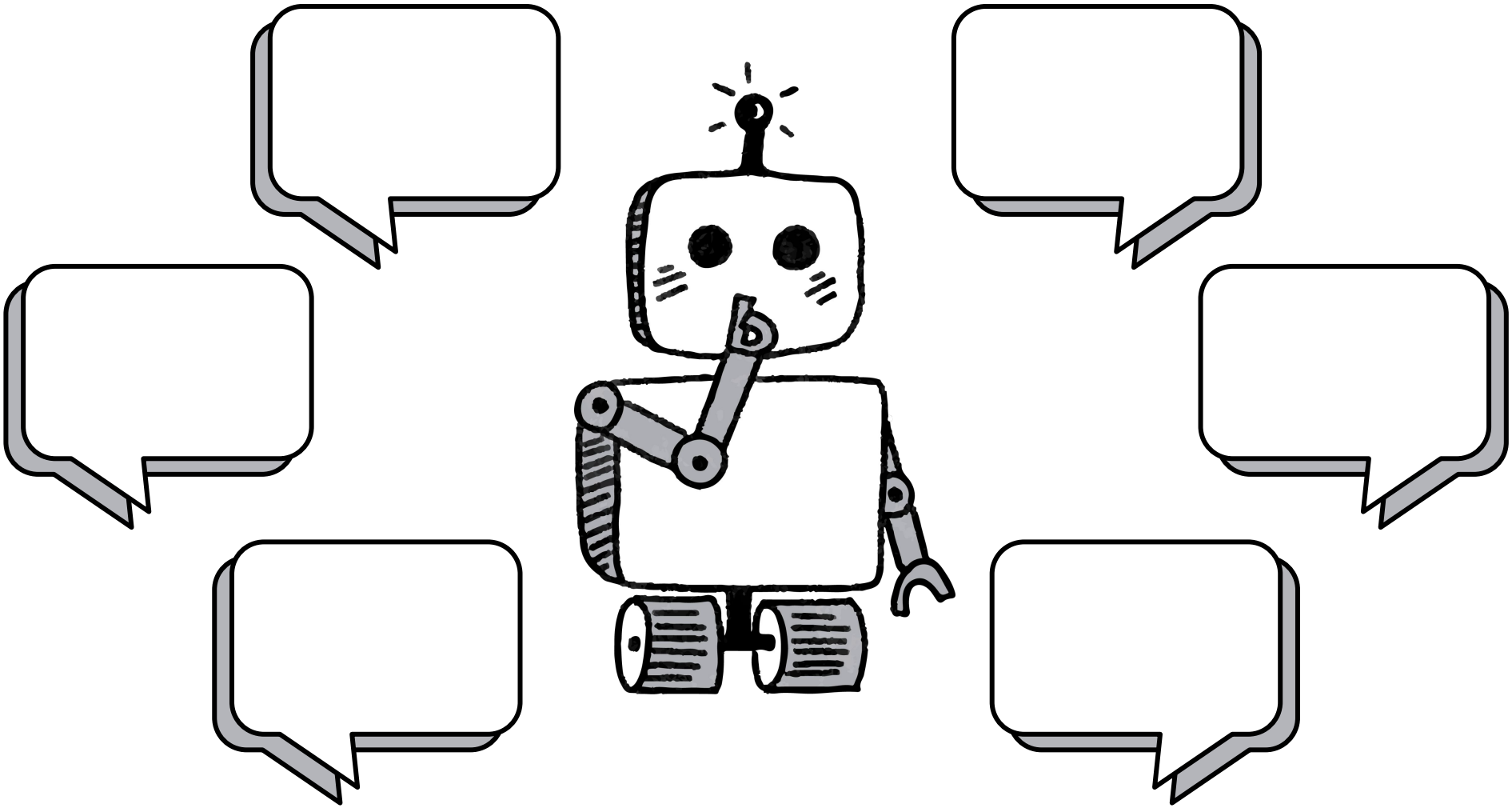
WHEN OR WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL PRESSURE TO KEEP HOW THEY USE AI SECRET?

(You can think of your own experiences or stories you know from friends or relatives.)



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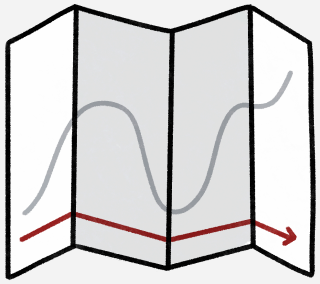
MAP A MOMENT

BETA VERSION



Think about a time when using AI felt complicated and map the experience from start to finish.

1. **Choose:** Select a real AI experience that felt important, or took an unexpected turn.
2. **Map:** Draw the emotional arc of your experience, showing the highs and lows.
3. **Annotate:** Mark key moments with what you felt and why.
4. **Reflect:** Identify what you'll do differently (or the same) next time, and why.

When we use AI, it can be easy to ignore the emotional and ethical complexity of our experience. Maybe we're rushing to get something done, maybe we'd rather not pause and reflect too deeply. BUT WHAT IF WE COULD SLOW OUR AI USE DOWN AND STRETCH TIME OUT LIKE AN ACCORDION TO SEE EACH MOMENT CLEARLY? This practice helps you map the emotional and ethical contours of an AI experience, making visible moments where you felt confident, uncertain, or compromised. By reflecting on what happened, you build awareness that can help you pause and navigate future moments more intentionally.

PURPOSE

We rarely talk about what it actually feels like to use AI — the emotions and tensions that come up as we're using it, and the thoughts that accompany our interactions. This practice creates that opportunity, providing a structure for unpacking experiences that have been emotionally or ethically charged. By mapping a real AI experience, students make their experience visible. Use this to help them reflect on how their actual AI use in a particular moment aligned with (or challenged) their values and moral compass. By reflecting on past experiences, students develop awareness that helps them recognize and pause in similar moments when AI decisions are actively unfolding.

WHEN TO USE THIS PRACTICE

This practice works best when students have a real AI experience to examine, whether it's their own or one they've heard about. It can be valuable after your students have done an assignment where AI use was allowed, or when students have used new AI tools. It pairs well with MAKING AI PRESSURES VISIBLE, which surfaces experiences where students felt pressure to hide their AI use. These moments provide rich material for mapping.

STEPS

1. **Choose a specific AI moment.** Have students recall a time when AI use felt complicated. Maybe they hid their use, weren't sure if it was okay, or experienced both exciting and frustrating moments. Emphasize choosing a real experience.

2. **Create the map.** Students fold a piece of paper accordion-style. They then draw their thoughts and emotions over time as a line graph showing emotional highs and lows.

3. **Annotate key moments.** Students mark pivotal points in their journey with brief notes about what they felt *and why*. Focus on peaks and valleys, adding stars to decisions.

4. **Share insights.** In pairs or small groups, students share one significant moment from their map. Together, they identify what helped (or would have helped) to navigate that moment in a way they'd feel good about.

5. **Create a personal algorithm.** Students look at their starred decision points and choose the most important one. They write a simple rule for that moment using the format: "WHEN [THAT EXACT SITUATION HAPPENS], I WILL [ONE SPECIFIC ACTION]." Students write it on a sticky note for their laptop. Frame as "*your algorithm vs. their algorithm*" to emphasize agency over platforms designed to manipulate behavior.

VARIATIONS

"Grids and Gestures" Version: Instead of mapping emotions over time as a line graph, students use abstract drawing to capture how each moment felt. Divide a blank sheet of paper into panels representing different stages of the experience. In each panel, invite students to fill the space with lines, shapes, and patterns that express what was happening for them *internally* — smooth flowing lines might show ease, jagged zigzags for anxiety, tight spirals for confusion, scattered dots for uncertainty, bold strokes for confidence — whatever feels right to them. Annotate key moments and share insights as suggested above.

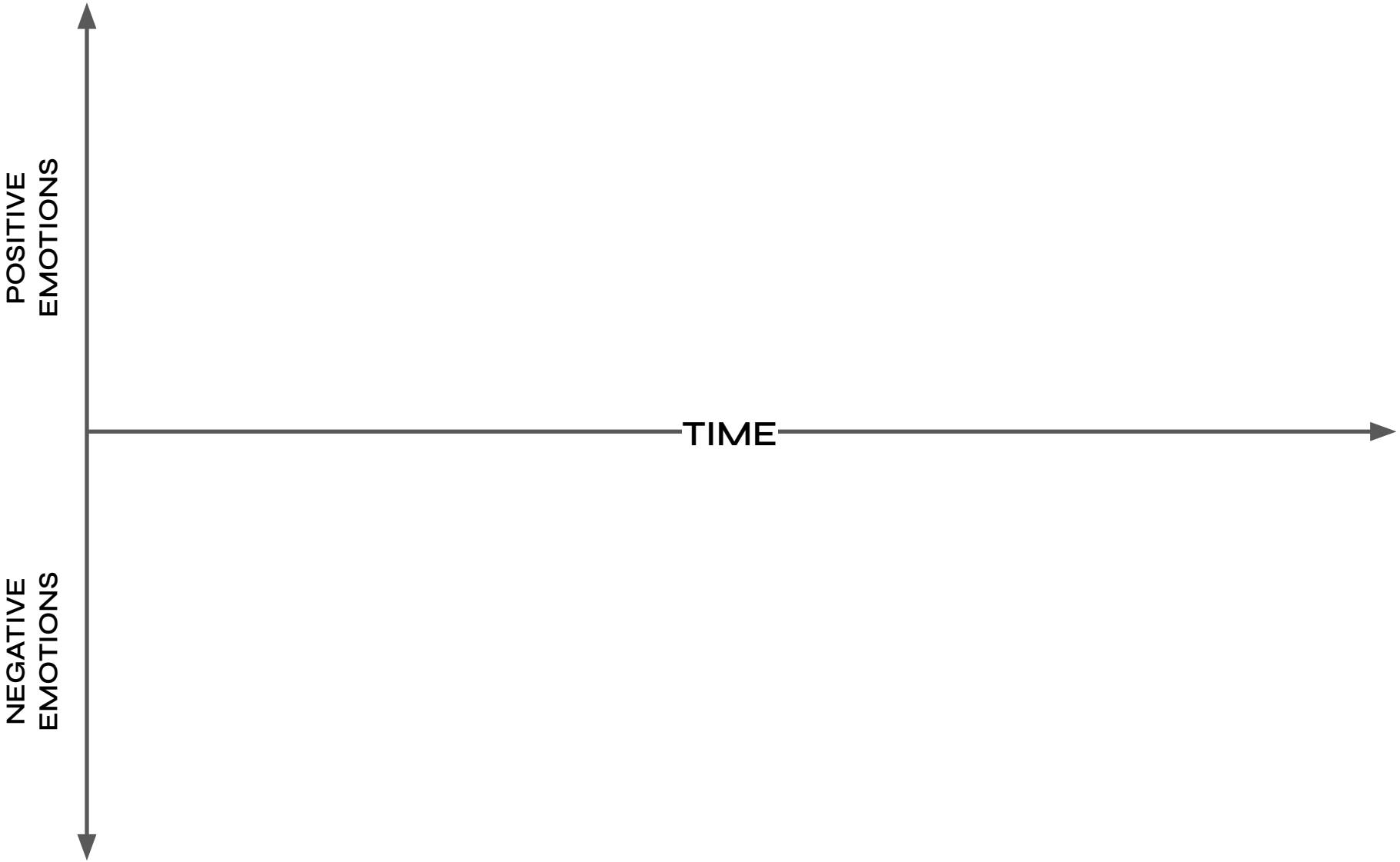
Values Version: Pair with VALUES BRIDGE, and invite students to annotate their maps with the values and ethical questions listed in that activity. Consider key moments where values showed up or were challenged, or where an ethical question was or could have been asked.

Gallery Walk Extension: Post maps on the wall and have students do a silent gallery walk. Students can gather around and ask questions or leave sticky notes that individual map makers respond to, sharing more about what happened.

TIPS

The goal is connecting with the experience and learning from it, not harsh self-judgment. Guide students away from *"shoulding"* themselves or each other while also not dismissing clear missteps. If choices violated expectations, caused harm, or didn't align with their values, acknowledge that honestly while focusing on understanding what happened and making better choices going forward. For students who don't use AI, encourage them to map real experiences they've heard about. If students struggle to identify a specific moment, prompt them with: "*Think about a time when you almost asked AI for help but stopped*," or "*Have you caught yourself wondering if you were letting AI do too much*?"

This resource was created by the Center for Digital Thriving at Harvard Graduate School of Education. It was made possible through the support of Grant 63220 from the John Templeton Foundation. Suggested attribution: Tench, B., Kim, D.B., Landesman, R. (2025). *Map a Moment: A framework reflecting on experiences.* Cambridge, MA, USA,: Center for Digital Thriving.



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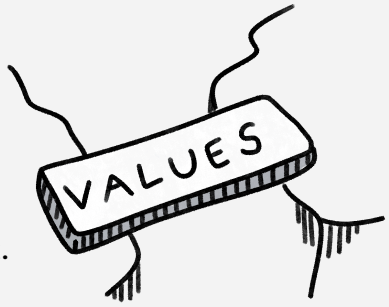
VALUES BRIDGE

BETA VERSION

Identify your core values and discover questions that help you live by them (especially when using AI).



1. **Sort:** Identify your top three values with a values sort.
2. **Connect:** Link your top values to ethical questions that help you live them.
3. **Compare:** Notice which questions you ask in everyday life versus when using AI.
4. **Reflect:** As a group, notice patterns in the questions you ask — or want to start asking — when using AI.

We all have values that guide our decisions like creativity, justice, or independence. But when we face tough choices, it's not always clear how to honor them. WHAT IF WE HAD A SET OF QUESTIONS THAT COULD HELP US STAY TRUE TO WHAT MATTERS MOST TO US? This practice helps us identify our core values and connect them to ethical perspectives that can inform our choices. It also helps us consider our ethical priorities when using AI. By making these differences visible and identifying patterns in the questions we orient to, we can better navigate AI use in ways that align with who we want to be.

PURPOSE

This practice helps students clarify their values and identify ethical perspectives that support those values. Values shift over time and context: what matters most in this class might differ from what matters in other parts of life. By naming what matters most *right now* (whether for an assignment, class, or life in general), students clarify their values in a situated context. By connecting those values to ethical touchstone questions, they see that they already use ethical perspectives to navigate their choices. By layering in AI, they may notice that they ask different questions when using AI. This shift exposes how AI tools embed their own values that can nudge us away from what matters most to us.

WHEN TO USE THIS PRACTICE

This practice works best early in the year as a foundation for values-based conversations and decision-making. It can also be repeated throughout the year with increasingly narrow focus — moving from "What matters most this semester?" to "What matters most for this assignment?" This repetition helps students see how values shift over time and context, and how different situations activate different ethical questions.

STEPS

1. **Sort your values.** Using a printed values deck, app, or handout, students sort values into three columns: Most Important Right Now (limit to three), Important Right Now, and Less Important Right Now. Students can skip values that don't resonate or add their own. This helps students clarify what matters most in their current context.

2. **Connect values to ethical questions.** Introduce seven questions that represent different ethical perspectives people use to guide decisions. Using the top three "Most Important Right Now Values," students draw lines from each value to questions that help them live that value. Download a printable activity for this handout here.

3. **Compare everyday vs. AI contexts.** In pairs, students share which questions they connected to most. Then, they discuss: "*Do you ask similar or different questions when you use AI?*"

4. **Reflect on what changes with AI.** As a class, notice patterns: "*Where do our everyday questions and AI questions align and diverge? Do we want to ask different questions going forward? What does this reveal about how technology shapes our choices?*"

VARIATIONS

Dot Vote Extension: Post the seven ethical questions as large posters around the room. Give each student dots in two colors, five of each (orange and blue are colorblind-friendly). Students place one color on questions that help them live their values *in their personal life*. Then, they place the other color on questions they most often consider *when using AI*. Students can distribute their dots however they choose, including placing all five on a single question. After voting, step back as a group and notice the distributions. "*Where do the dots cluster? Where does one color dominate? Where are there few or no stickers?*"

Zoom Out Extension: Close by shifting perspective from personal to societal. Pair students up and ask: *"When you zoom out from 'my AI use' to 'AI's impact on everyone in society,' do the questions change?"* Ask pairs to identify one question they'd ask about society that they might not ask when considering personal AI use. Then, bring the full group together and ask: *"What gaps did you notice between your personal and societal questions? What does this tell us?"* Listen for insights about broader impacts, shared consequences, or community effects that don't surface when thinking individually. This helps students recognize that ethical decisions happen at different scales and contexts.

TIPS

There are no "right" values or "correct" questions. The seven questions are lenses that help us notice the trade-offs inherent in most choices. Acknowledge that values are shaped by identities, cultures, and contexts. If students struggle to connect values to questions, prompt with: *"Think about a time when this value mattered to you—what question helped you honor it?"*

This resource was created by the Center for Digital Thriving at Harvard Graduate School of Education. It was made possible through the support of Grant 63220 from the John Templeton Foundation. The seven ethical questions are adapted from the Moral Spectrum Exploration Exercise created for PLATO: Philosophy Learning and Teaching Organization by David Shapiro, from his book, *Choosing the Right Thing to Do: In Life, At Work, in Relationships, and For the Planet* and used with permission under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Suggested attribution: Kim, D.B., Tench, B., James, C., Weinstein, E., Lara, E. (2025). *Values Bridge: A framework connecting values to ethical perspectives.* Cambridge, MA, USA: Center for Digital Thriving.

WHICH QUESTIONS HELP YOU LIVE YOUR TOP VALUES?

(Draw lines from each value to any questions that help you live it. Connect to as many questions as you'd like.)

TOP VALUES

1

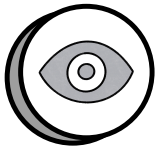
2

3

THE FREEDOM QUESTION
What helps everyone feel most free, true to themselves, or empowered?

THE COLLECTIVE QUESTION
What could happen — both good and bad — if everyone did what I'm about to do?

THE RELATIONSHIP QUESTION
What will help me be there for the people I care about and keep our relationships strong?



THE NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH QUESTION
Would I still do this if everyone in my community around me knew?

THE EVERYONE WINS QUESTION
What leads to the best overall outcome for everyone in the world?

THE ROLE MODEL QUESTION
What would the most virtuous person I know of do?

THE SELF QUESTION
What helps me meet my goals and take care of myself — both now and later?

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