Do Androids Dream? Teaching AI Literacy Through Literature

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Workshop Objectives:

- Explore how literature can help build AI literacy

- Offer a model unit that opens and deepens conversations with students about AI

- Share titles that could generate discussions about the impact of AI and opportunities to develop AI literacy

Inspiration
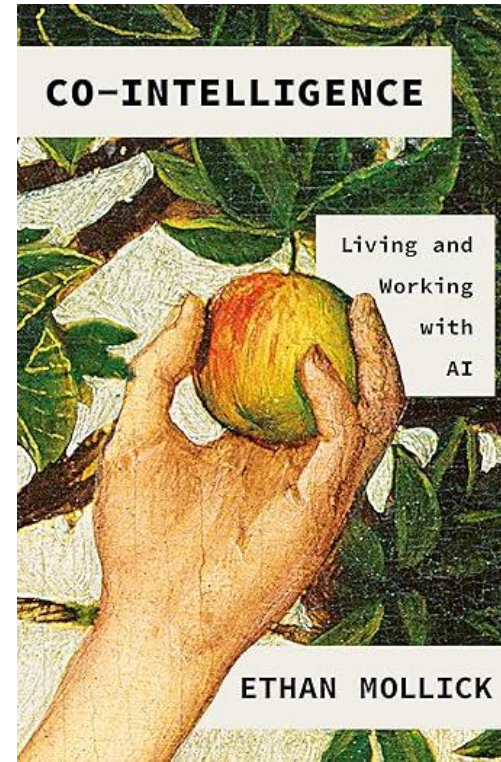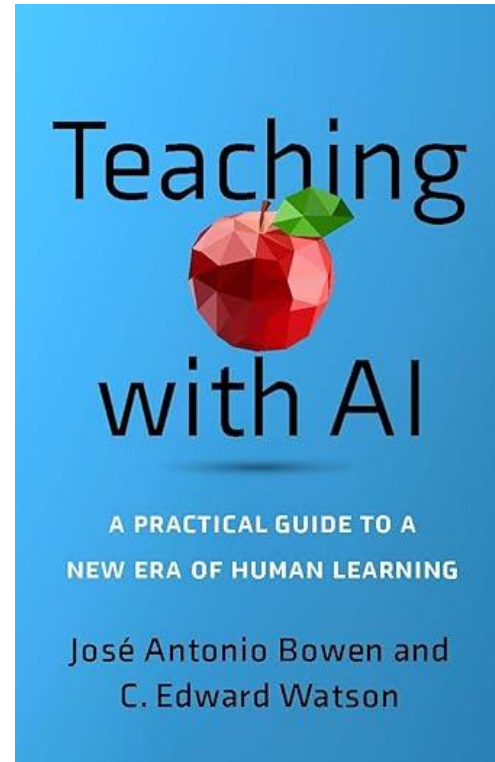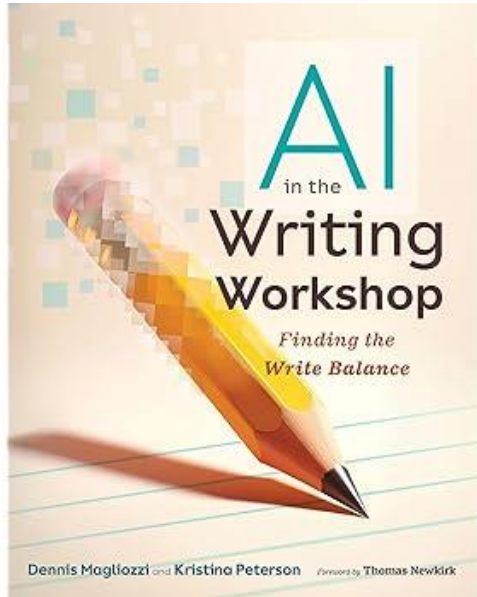
Student Perspectives on generative AI:

- "The worst experiences I have had with AI is not from going to it myself, but when teachers tell me to as Chat GPT instead of teach me, because it is not very helpful, and I am forced to use this **absolutely horrible detesting tool of environmental destruction**."

- "I think its important how to **use AI responsibly** because it's only becoming a bigger part of society every day so it's important to learn how to use it right instead of seeing it as something negative, because it can be both depending how you use it."

- "**chat gpt forever**, he helps me with everything"

Teaching AI Literacy through Literature
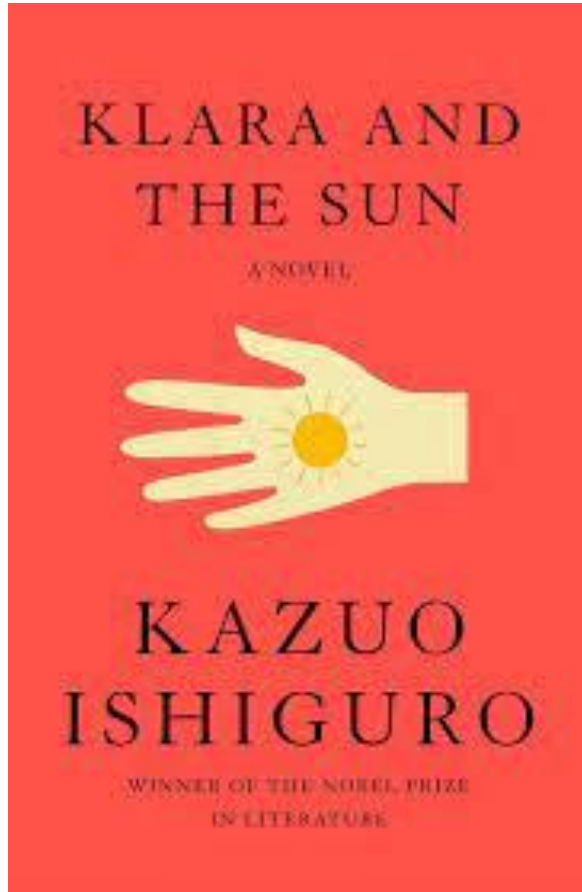
Outline of Unit:

Grade Level: 9th Grade English, Kimball Union Academy

Timeline: 8 Weeks (2 - 3 classes a week; January – First Week of March)

I. Introducing Essential Questions and Concepts

- **Spectrum Discussion:** Students stand to show agreement/disagreement with provocative statements about AI

- **"Ink Think":** *What does it mean to be human?* Collaborative silent writing on whiteboards to surface initial ideas and beliefs

Ink Think:
What does it mean to be human?
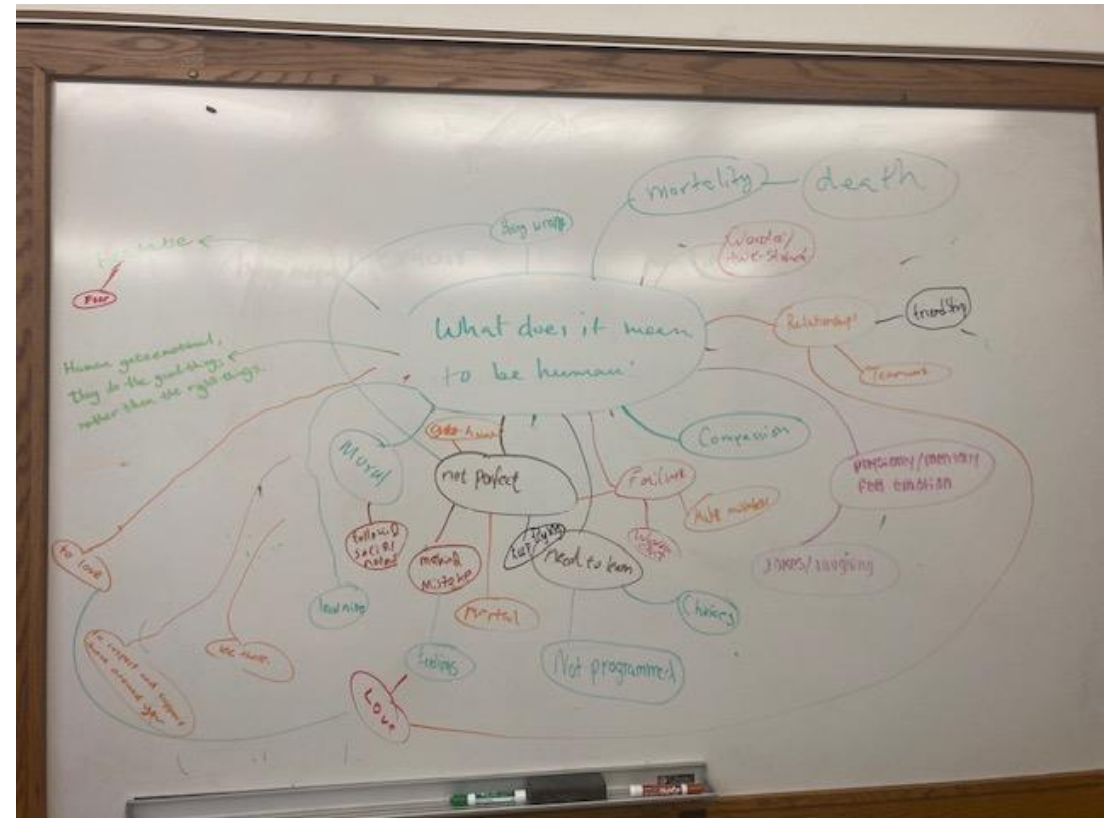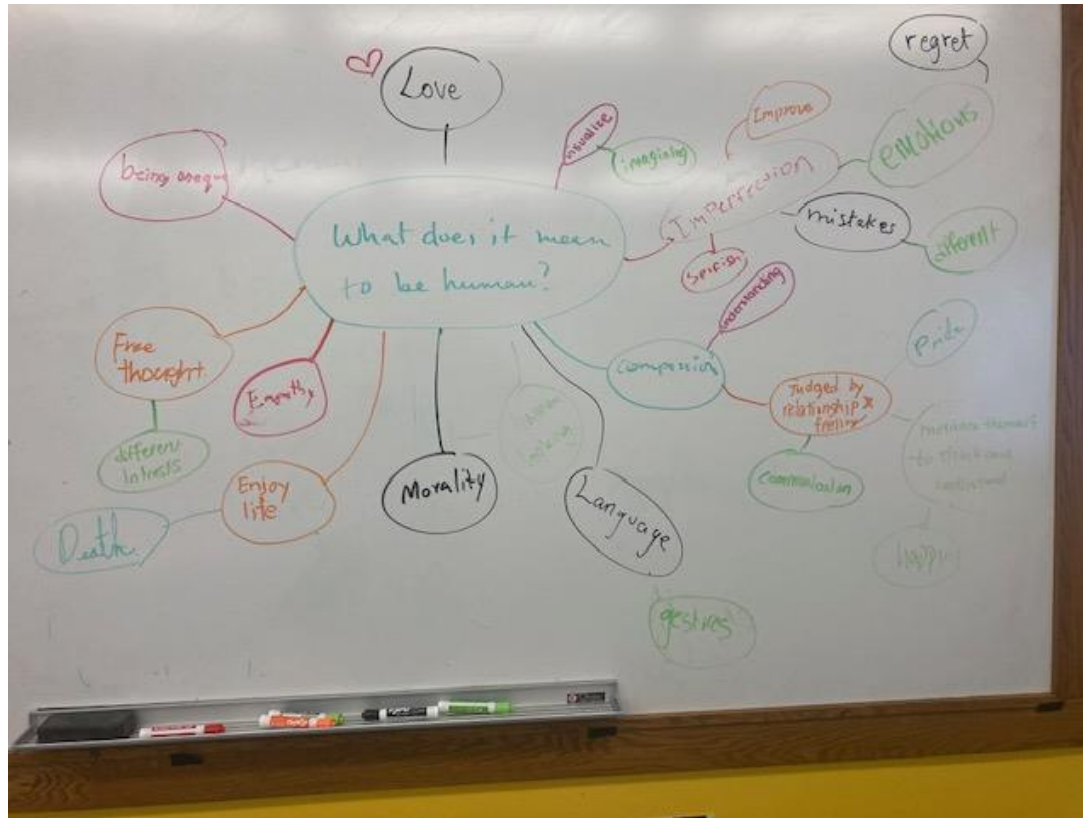
II. Developing Literacy

- **Introductory Video:** Watch Museum of Science video: *What Is AI?*

- **AGI vs. Generative AI Mini-Lesson:** Compare and contrast their capabilities

- **Think-Alouds with Visualization Cues:** Modeled reading using Linda Mood-Bell's visualization strategies

Aspect	Generative AI (GenAI)	Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)
Definition	AI that can create new content (text, images, music, etc.) based on patterns in data	AI with human-level intelligence and the ability to understand and reason
Capabilities	Specialized content generation in narrow domains (e.g., writing, coding, image synthesis)	Broad, flexible thinking across any domain, similar to human cognitive abilities
Examples	ChatGPT, DALL·E, Midjourney, GitHub Copilot	None yet—AGI does not currently exist
Learning Style	Trained on large datasets using deep learning models	Would need to learn adaptively and autonomously like a human
Task Flexibility	Limited to specific tasks it was trained for	Capable of performing *any* intellectual task a human can do
Current Use Cases	Writing assistance, customer service, code generation, art creation	No real-world use cases yet—remains a theoretical goal
Level of Intelligence	Mimics understanding; lacks consciousness or self-awareness	Would require true understanding, reasoning, and possibly consciousness
Human Supervision	Requires prompts and oversight to function effectively	Would operate independently, possibly making its own goals
Development Status	Widely available and in active development	Still under theoretical and early experimental exploration

(ChatGPT)

TECH

AI that can match humans at any task will be here in five to 10 years, Google DeepMind CEO says

PUBLISHED MON, MAR 17 2025·10:05 AM EDT

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KEY POINTS

- Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis said he thinks artificial general intelligence, or AGI, will emerge in the next five or 10 years.

- AGI broadly relates to AI that is as smart or smarter than humans.

- "We're not quite there yet. These systems are very impressive at certain things. But there are other things they can't do yet, and we've still got quite a lot of research work to go before that," Hassabis said.

III. Literary Analysis

- **Claim-Evidence-Analysis Charts:** *Klara is more artificial than human/ Klara is more human than artificial*

- **Socratic Seminars:** Structured student-led discussions exploring philosophical and ethical questions raised by the novel

- **Ethical Dilemmas:** informal writing prompts throughout the unit (see slide)

Sample informal writing prompt

Ethical Dilemma #3

"'I'm sure, sir, there are all kinds of ethical issues. But in the end, it's for the legislators to decide how these things get regulated, not people like me. For now, I just want to learn as much as I can, so I can take my understanding to the next level'" (Ishiguro 245).

Do you think Rick carries some responsibility for the "'potential applications'" of how his drone birds get used by other people? Note that he admits that they could be used for "'privacy-invasive activity'" (244).

Socratic Seminar Prompt

"But then suppose you stepped into one of those rooms,' he said, 'and discovered another room within it. And inside that room, another room still. Rooms within rooms within rooms. Isn't that how it might be, trying to learn Josie's heart? No matter how long you wandered through those rooms, wouldn't there always be others you'd not yet entered?"

— **Kazuo Ishiguro, Klara and the Sun**

Rooms by the Sea, Edward Hopper (1951)

Socratic Seminar Prompt

"I think I hate Capaldi because deep down I suspect he may be right. That what he claims is true. That science has now proved beyond doubt there's nothing so unique about my daughter, nothing there our modern tools can't excavate, copy, transfer. That people have been living with one another all this time, centuries, loving and hating each other, and all on a mistaken premise. A kind of superstition we kept going while we didn't know better."

— **Kazuo Ishiguro, Klara and the Sun**

Nighthawks, Edward Hopper (1942)

IV. Synthesis and Argumentation

- **Nonfiction Reading:** Students read and summarize contemporary articles that align with central essay question: *Does AI enhance or threaten what it means to be human?*

- **Persuasive Essay:** Students write a formal argumentative essay responding to the essentialquestion, incorporating evidence from both fiction and nonfiction sources.

- **Debate:** Students participate in a formal debate on the proposition: *AI enhances what itmeans to be human.*

Essay: Does AI threaten or enhance what it means to be human?

The sources below were written before Chat GPT came on the scene in 2022, but they contain good insights into the relationship between AI and humans.

⬇ **How Frightened Should We be of AI?**

⬇ **Will Robots Change Human Relationships?**

"Already, a diverse group of researchers and practitioners—computer scientists, engineers, zoologists, and social scientists, among others—is coming together to develop the field of 'machine behavior,' in hopes of putting our understanding of AI on a sounder theoretical and technical foundation. This field does not see robots merely as human-made objects, but as a new class of social actors" (Christakis).

These sources are related to the themes of grief and loneliness.

⬇ **The Anti-Social Century**

Americans are now spending more time alone than ever. It's changing our personalities, our politics, and even our relationship to reality.

KAZUO ISHIGURO
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

Please use these references for the Debate Project.

DEPT. OF SPECULATION

HOW FRIGHTENED SHOULD WE BE OF A.I.?

Thinking about artificial intelligence can help clarify what makes us human—for better and for worse.
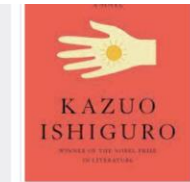
By Tad Friend

May 7, 2018

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▶ **Good Bot, Bad Bot | Part III: Life, death and AI**

⟳ </> 34:39

November 18, 2022   By Megan Cattel   f ✉

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI for Enhancing—Not Replacing—Human Creativity

AI can produce art, but better still, it can give you time to be the artist.

Posted July 5, 2024 | 🛡 Reviewed by Davia Sills

Melissa A. Wheeler Ph.D.
Ethically Speaking

Neuroscience News.com

AI Outperforms Humans in Creativity Test

Featured   Neuroscience   · July 6, 2023

Debate Proposition: Artificial Intelligence enhances what it means to be human.

Student Feedback on the Unit

- "We are living under a world affected by AI. Only when we are clear with its pros and cons can we utilize it in a proper way."

- "Whether you like it or not in this generation AI will be a huge part of our lives, making understanding its impacts important."

- "Debating was a great way to unlock hidden enthusiasm for a topic that I previously had little interest in."

"Mr Capaldi believed there was nothing special inside Josie that couldn't be continued. He told the Mother he'd searched and searched and found nothing like that. But I believe now he was searching in the wrong place. There was something very special, but it wasn't inside Josie. It was inside those who loved her."

— **Kazuo Ishiguro, Klara and the Sun**

Leveraging Literature for AI Literacy

Frankenstein (Shelley)

The Tempest (Shakespeare)

Fahrenheit 451 (Bradbury)

Ender's Game (Card)

"Valedictorian" (Jemisin)

"Standard Loneliness Package" (Yu)

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