



Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Braver Together

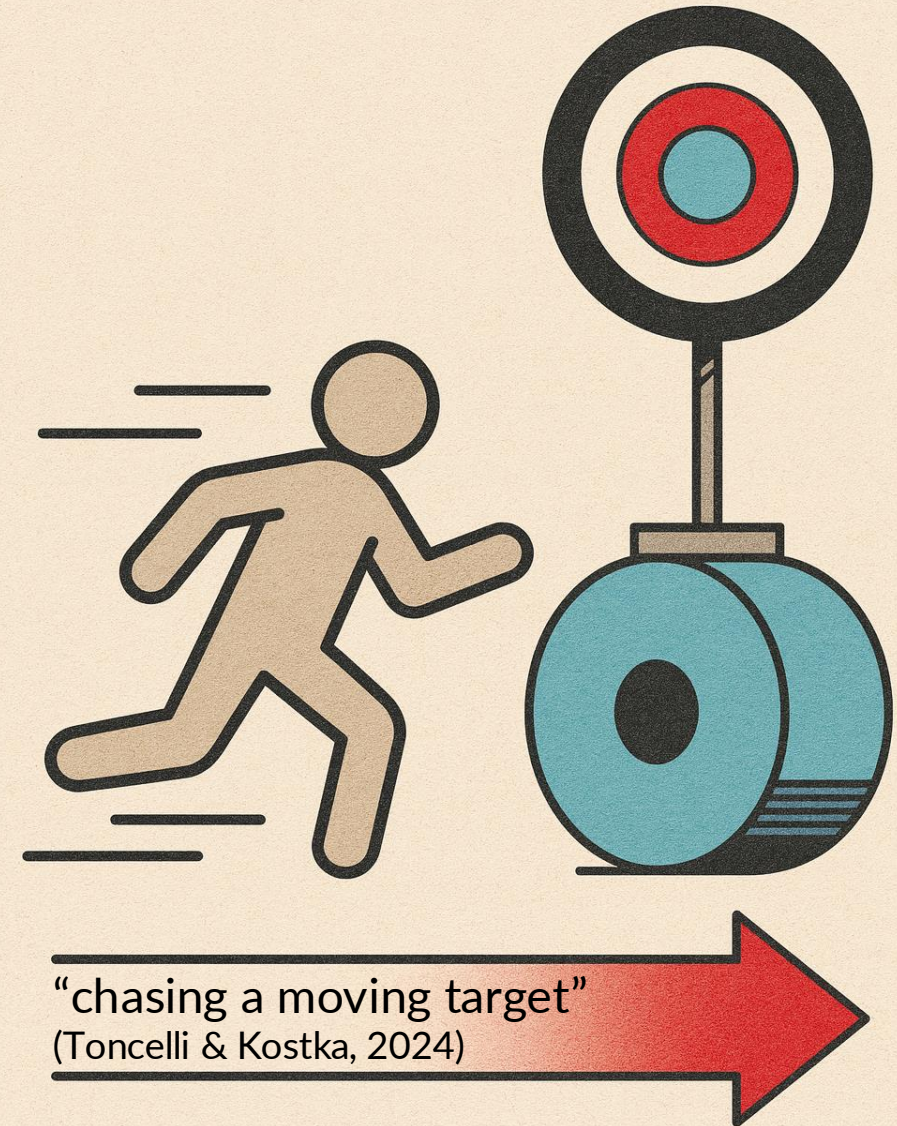
Book club communities for educator professional learning in AI

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Acknowledgement: This project was conducted with
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An unprecedented challenge:

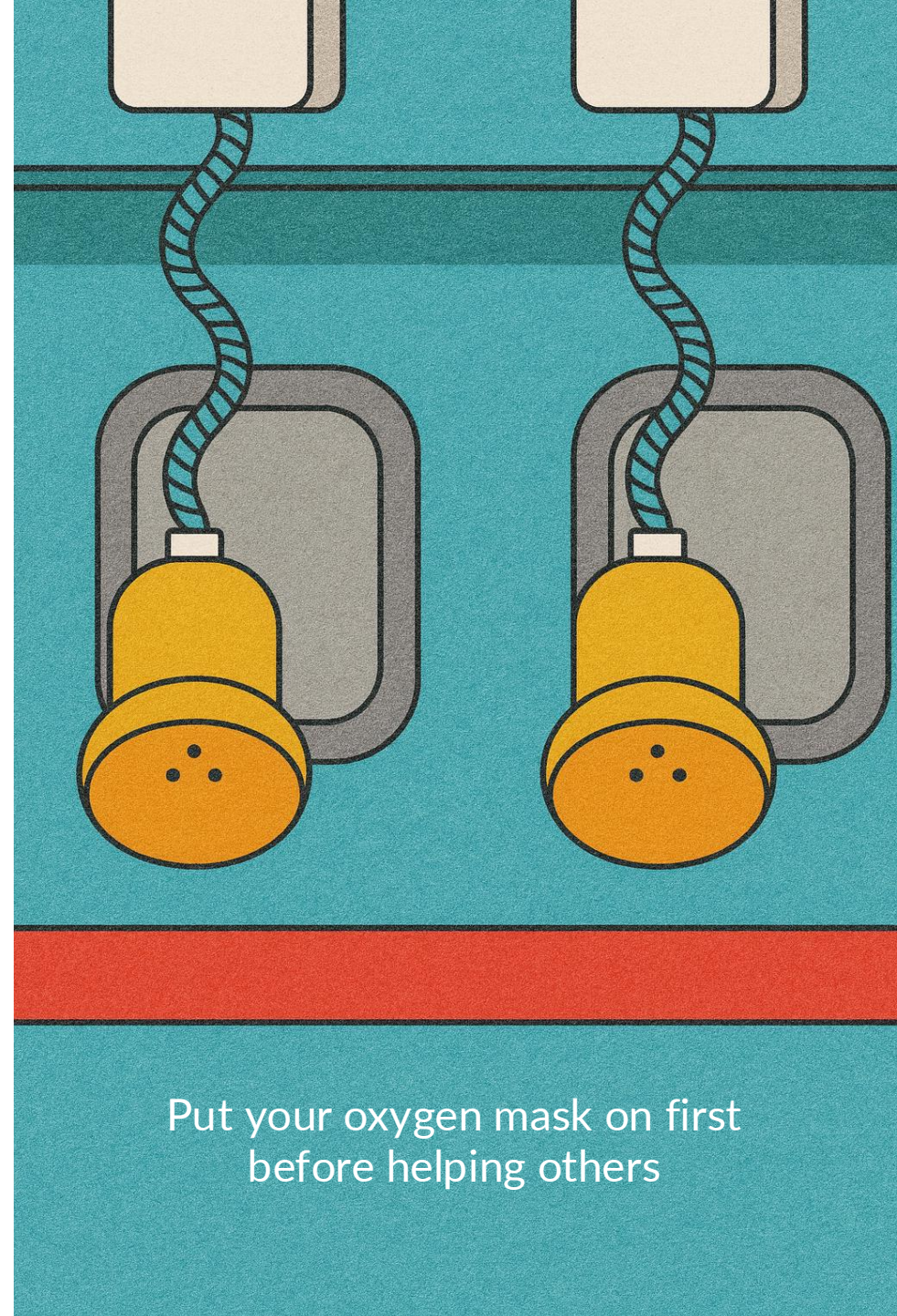
Developing professional competencies in technologies that advance faster than traditional training models can accommodate



AI literacy

"Critical AI literacy can be broadly defined as the ability to **understand, evaluate, and ethically use artificial intelligence**, recognizing its capabilities, limitations, and societal impacts, particularly in the context of education and daily life."

(Paiz et al., 2025, p. 20)



Put your oxygen mask on first
before helping others

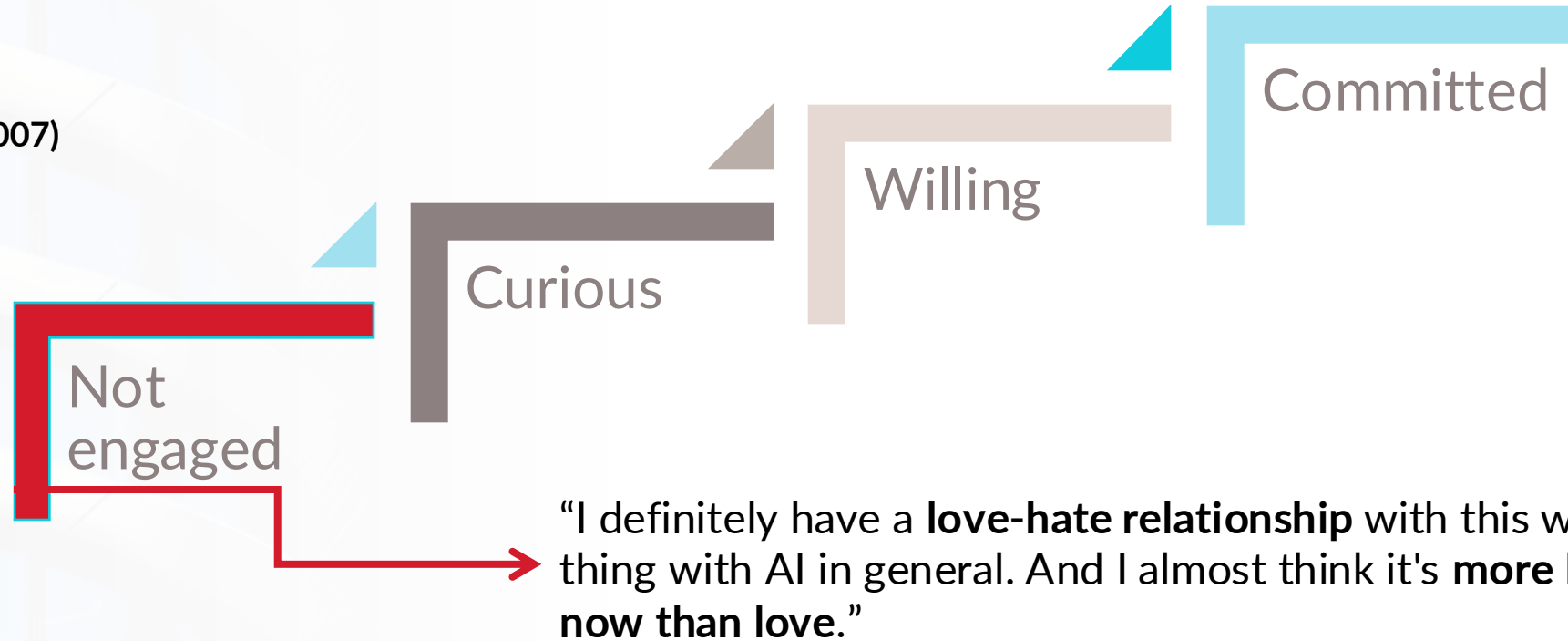
Challenges to developing teachers' AI literacy skills



- Range of instructor skills
 - 40%: beginning AI journey (Digital Education Council, 2025)
- Pace of AI development (Crompton et al., 2024)
- Lack of institutional support (Kohnke et al., 2025)
- Possible unpaid extra labor (MLA-CCCC, 2023)
- Range of feelings about AI (Alm & Ohashi, 2024; Toncelli & Kostka, 2024)

Phases of change in education

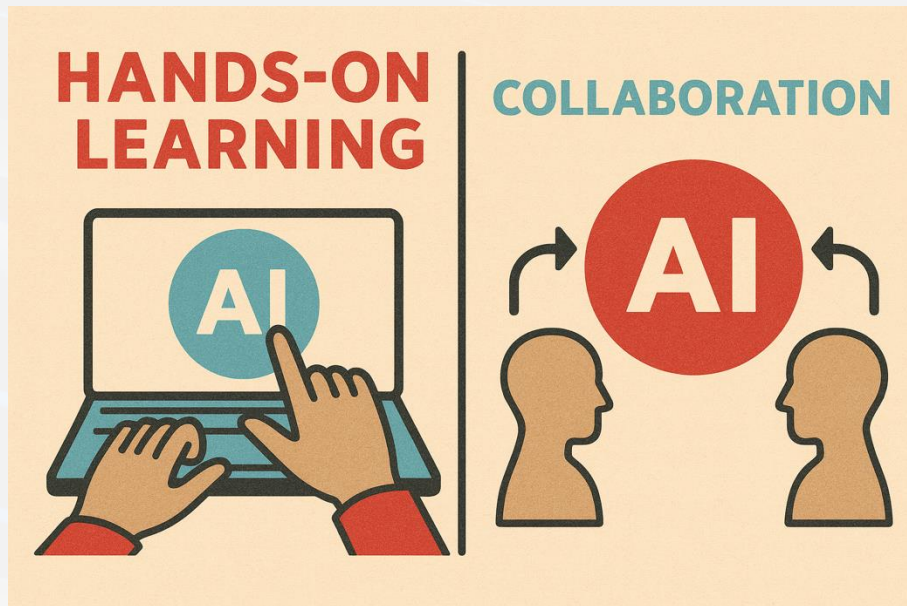
(adapted from Fullan, 2007)



(Toncelli & Kostka, 2024)

How do we advance professional competencies at each of these levels?

Approaches that can guide us in professional learning about AI



- Hands-on learning (Toncelli & Kostka, 2024)
- Contextualized exploration (Godwin-Jones, 2025)
- Collaboration (Liu & Bates, 2025)
- Increased AI literacy leads to increased confidence (Digital Education Council, 2025)

A simple idea: **A Book Club**

- Enact community-based professional learning
- Manage change together
- Mentor each other
- Leverage strengths

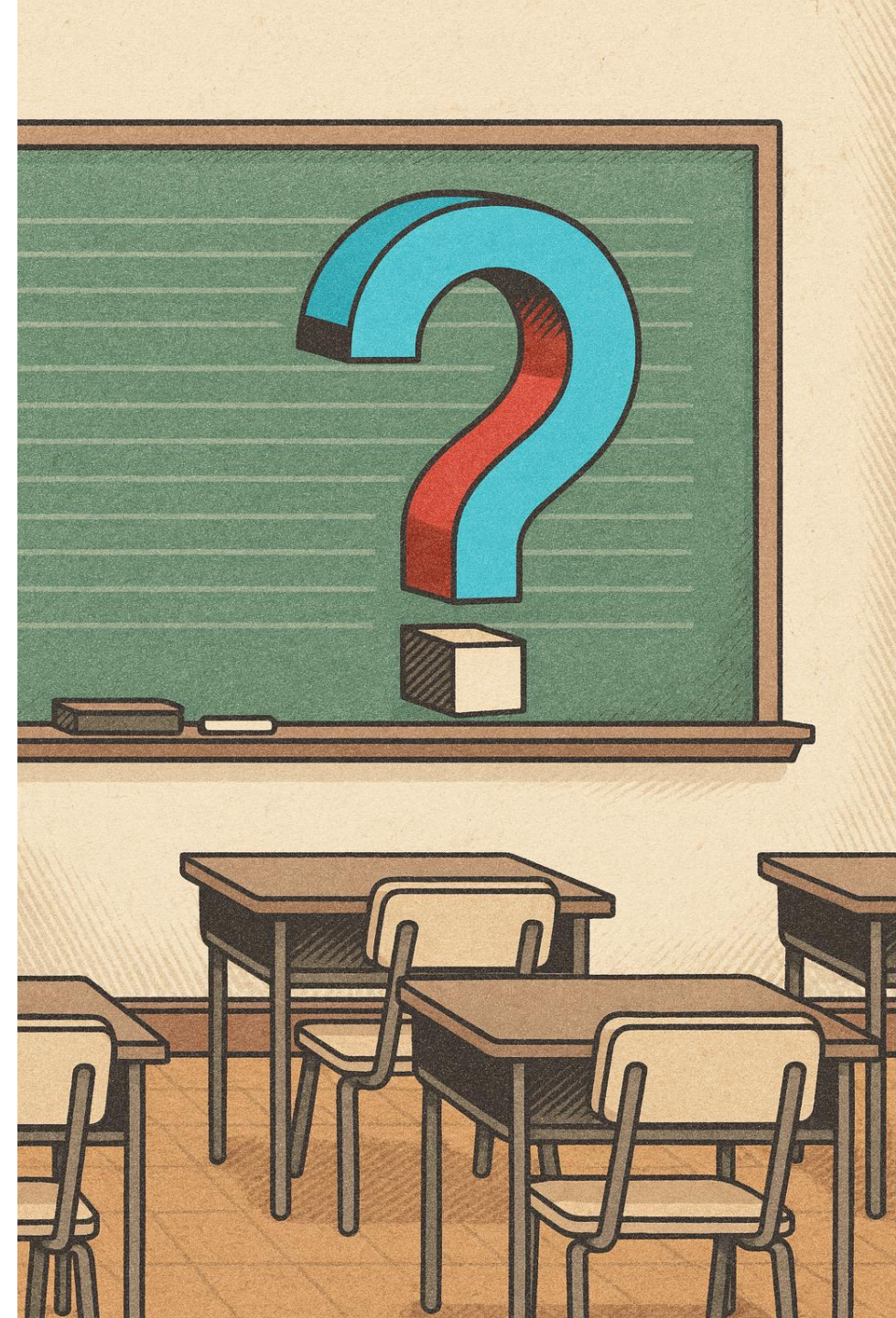


Guiding Questions

Q1: What motivated participants to join the book club?

Q2: What were the benefits and challenges of running a book club?

Q3: How was the book club mutually beneficial to researchers?



Methods

February-April 2025

Setting

English language program at a private university in the U.S.

Participants

Instructors, staff, and administrators

Data

Initial survey

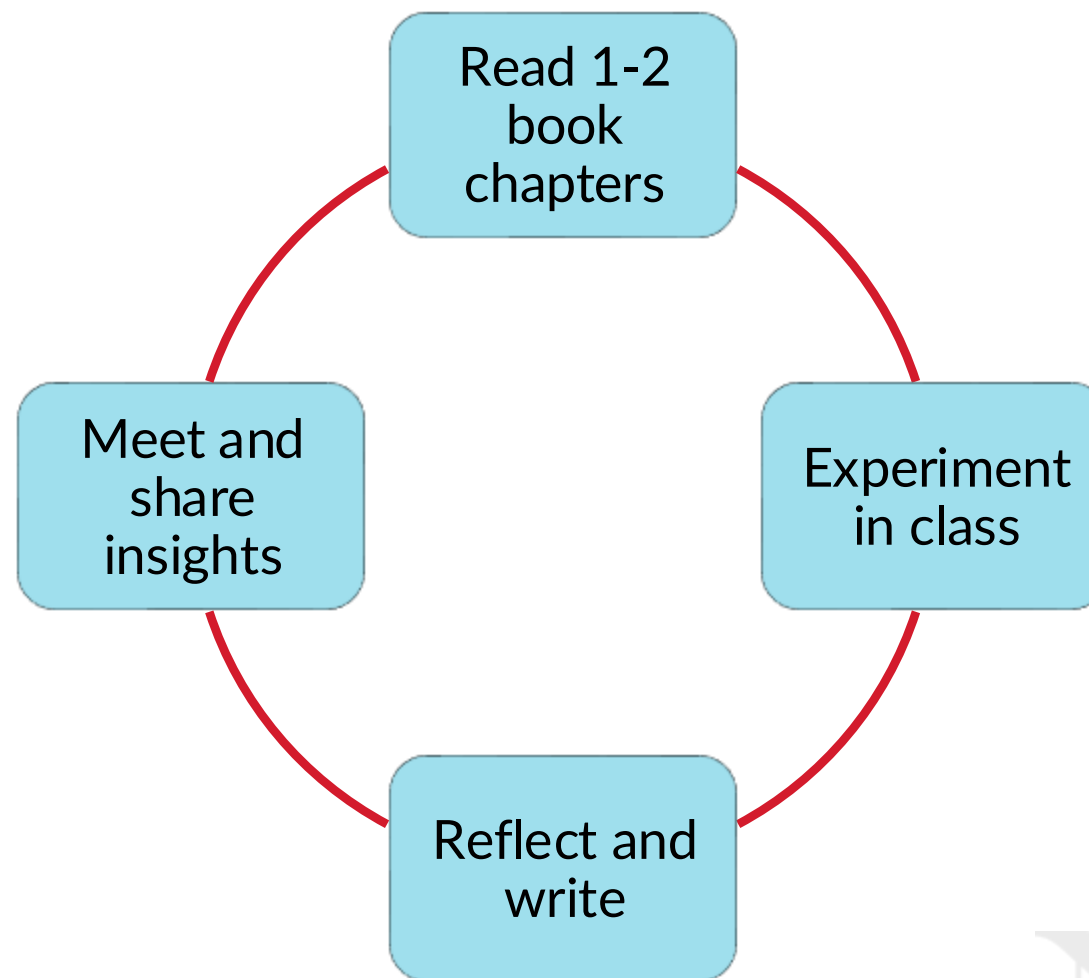
Reflections between meetings

Meeting transcripts

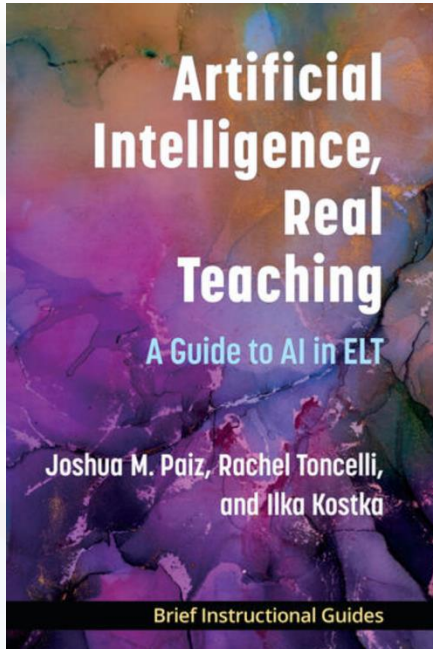
Closing survey

Administrator interviews

A Scaffolded Approach



The Book



- Concise and research-based overview
- Accessible for a variety of AI proficiency levels
- “Make it your own” applied learning exercises

From Skepticism to Enthusiasm

- Discovering shared uncertainties

“Those of us who were not as experienced were reminded just how this is an evolving knowledge base and really supported our learning wherever we were in the roadmap.”

- Establishing mutual empathy proved essential for developing critical, ethical approaches to AI integration





Findings

— Q1: What motivated participants to join the book club?

Professional Learning



MOTIVATION

Desire to:

- Expand their knowledge about GenAI
- See what others are doing
- Understand GenAI tools & the changing landscape of GenAI in education

— Q1: What motivated participants to join the book club?

“The more that I know and I can learn, I feel like I can help us and anyone that I supervise.”

Program
Administrator

— Q1: What motivated participants to join the book club?

"I don't think as an educator right now, you can ignore this and I think we need training and we need help and we need focus. We need direction, and we need guidance."

Instructor

"I have been trying to integrate it more into student activities and I want to get better at helping students understand how it works, the ethical implications of using ai. And because it's changing so quickly, I just feel like it's something I need to be learning about on an ongoing basis."

Instructor

Q2: What were the benefits and challenges of running a book club?



Collaborative learning
Mutual empathy
Structure
Safe and supportive
environment



Mix of participant needs and
roles
Lack of time
Unequal participation
among teachers

Q2: What were the benefits and challenges of running a book club?



"I started small but quickly sped ahead as I got braver and more comfortable and more confident."

"Keeping everyone energized on this topic and trying to get others who are afraid... or insecure about their skills an opportunity to explore."

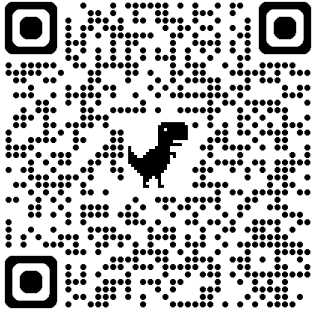
"I think we had a decent following, but I wish I could make something like this mandatory. Perhaps with some kind of certificate or something. there are a couple of others who would really benefit from this who did not attend-- how can reach those people?"

Q3: How was the book club mutually beneficial?

Participants	Researchers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Got to learn alongside instructors outside our institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuing conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support other colleagues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand faculty development best practices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sense of change



— Lessons learned & implications



— “Tearing off off a band-aid”



Implications



- Encourage hands-on application and experimentation



- Create a supportive and collegial environment



- Support on-going learning

Lessons learned



Start with local resources

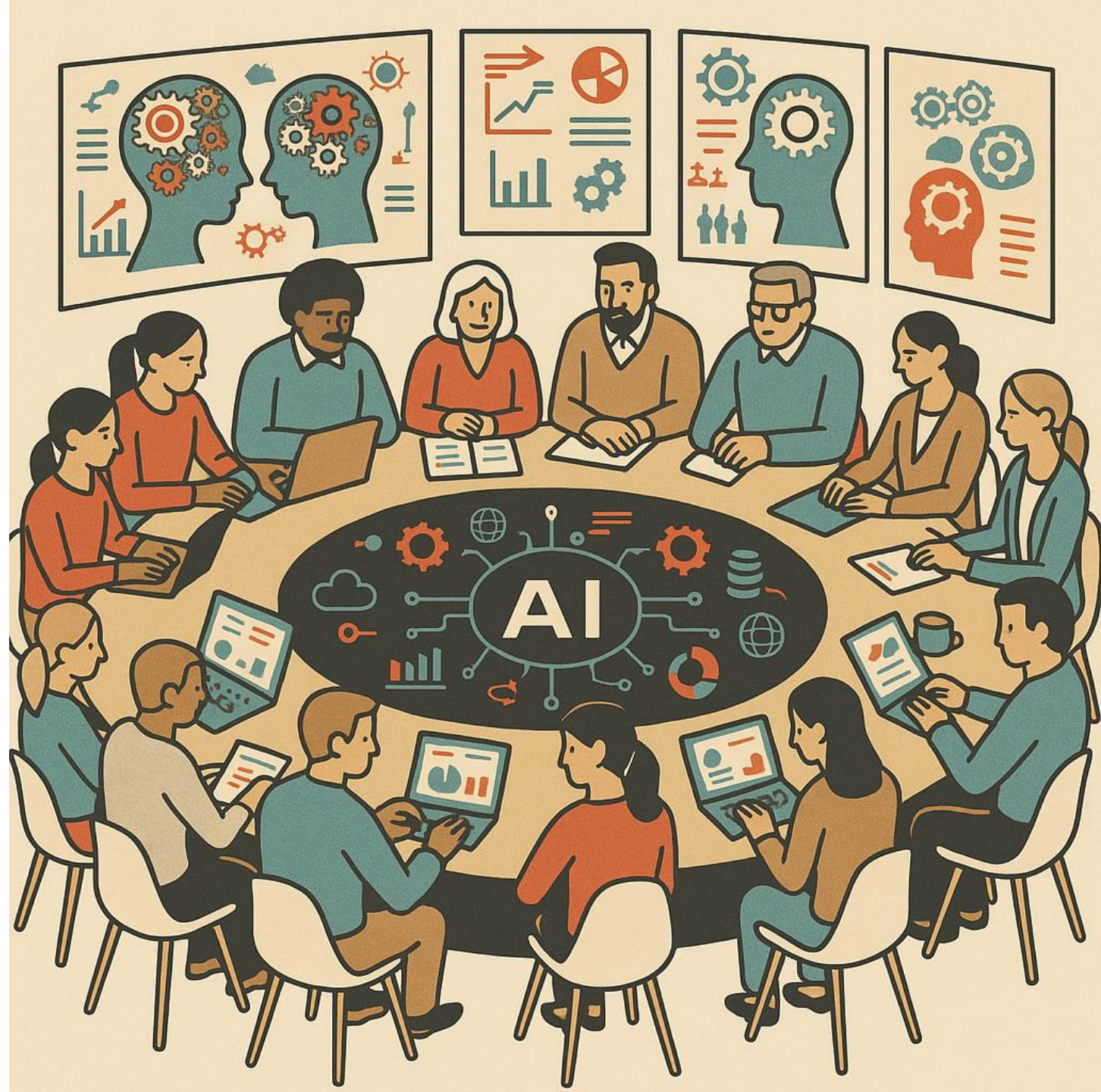


Motivate the need for learning



Ensure access and affordability for all participants

— Braver together





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Thank you

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