ACTIVITY TITLE: Mystery Client with AI

Activity code: ncC4G02

⏳	DURATION	45 minutes
🧑	AGE GROUP	17-18 years old
⚛	TOPICS	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)
		EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION
		CONFLICT RESOLUTION
		GENDER REPRESENTATION
		CRITICAL THINKING

💬 Description of the project

Mystery Client with AI is an extracurricular STEAM activity in which students explore the challenges and opportunities of human communication in increasingly digital and automated environments. Through a role-playing experience, participants simulate real-world customer service situations and critically analyze how AI tools—such as ChatGPT—respond to emotional, social, and ethical nuances. The purpose of the activity is to help students develop essential human skills like empathy, inclusive language, and conflict resolution, while also reflecting on how technology influences these interactions.

As part of the session, students examine key concepts such as empathetic service, generative AI, inclusive and non-stereotypical language, gender representation, and digital storytelling. They are encouraged to question the neutrality of automation, identify biases in chatbot responses, and iteratively redesign communication strategies to make them more human-centered and socially aware. This creative process involves the use of digital and artistic tools (e.g., Canva) to enhance clarity and impact.

By the end of the activity, students will have dramatized a customer interaction, evaluated and refined an AI-generated response, and co-created a final visual product that reflects inclusive and empathetic digital communication. The activity promotes critical thinking, creativity, and gender equity while encouraging learners to see themselves as ethical designers of future technologies.

🎯 Objectives: What will I learn?

- **Learn to use generative AI** as a support tool for managing customer service situations by designing and testing prompts in ChatGPT that simulate real-world interactions to understand how AI processes human language and how it can be refined to better serve users

empathetically and inclusively.

- **Develop empathy, active listening, and non-violent communication** skills by interpreting emotional cues in simulated customer complaints and transforming those insights into thoughtful, respectful responses, both written and dramatized, in order to enhance students' ethical awareness and sensitivity in real-world communication scenarios.

- **Evaluate and improve AI-generated responses** by detecting biases, emotional blind spots, and miscommunications, applying criteria such as inclusion, clarity, and tone to refine the message to strengthen their use of inclusive language and promote gender visibility, ensuring that their communication is respectful, accessible, and effective for a diverse range of users.

- **Integrate dramatization, data visualization, and digital design as expressive tools** by transforming AI-generated responses into visual narratives using platforms like Canva and presenting them through short, scripted performances to develop creative communication strategies that convey empathy and inclusion effectively.

- **Reflect on the ethical implications of AI in interpersonal communication** by discussing real-world examples, identifying risks such as exclusion and misrepresentation, and proposing strategies to make automated communication more human-centered and fair.

Materials: What do I need?

1. **Provided by teacher/institution:**
   - Access to ChatGPT (or similar free versions)
   - Printed or digital scenario sheets titled *"Difficult Customers"*
   - "Explore and analyze" worksheet and "Canva guide"
   - Chat GPT Manual – Service with Empathy and Quality
   - Digital grid for peer observation (Google Forms or printable paper).

2. **Provided by students:**
   - Computer or laptop with internet access
   - ChatGPT account (free)
   - Digital sesign tool (e.g. Canva)
   - Notebook or note-taking app

3. **Downloadable resources:**
   - Scenario sheets: "Difficult Customers"
   - GPT Chat Manual – Service with Empathy and Quality
   - Digital grid for peer observation
   - Explore and analyze
   - Canva guide

Previous preparation

Before beginning the activity, the following steps should be completed:

- Organize students into mixed groups of 3 to 4 participants, ensuring diverse collaboration. If possible, assign rotating roles (e.g., discussion leader, note-taker, digital editor, designer, AI operator) to promote equitable participation and shared responsibility.

- Ensure that all students have access to a computer or device with a working internet connection. Test access to ChatGPT (or a similar AI tool) and Canva in advance to avoid technical issues during the session.

- Provide introductory materials to activate prior knowledge and stimulate interest. These may include short videos (for example, "The secret of giving great feedback" or articles on communication like "Management Responses Strategies to a Negative Online Review: Influence on Potential Guests 'Trust", and examples that compare biased and inclusive AI responses.

- Print or digitally distribute all necessary resources: the scenario sheets (*Mystery Client* or *Difficult Customers*), the *ChatGPT Manual – Service with Empathy and Quality*, and the Peer Observation Grid (Google Forms or paper format).

- Confirm that all downloadable materials are functional, editable if needed, and easily accessible by each group.

RESEARCH

Have a look at these resources

Today, thousands of companies around the world use AI systems like chatbots to interact with customers. From online retail to food delivery and hospitality services, automated communication is becoming the first line of contact between users and businesses. While these tools offer speed and efficiency, they also risk generating frustration, exclusion, or even conflict when they fail to interpret tone, context, or emotion. In this landscape, being able to critically analyze, redesign, and humanize automated responses becomes a vital skill, especially for students who may one day work in service-related fields, or who simply want to better understand the ethics of human-AI interaction.

This activity invites students to step into the role of "empathetic designers," using STEAM tools and social awareness to rethink the way technology communicates with people. By analyzing and improving AI-generated responses, students will confront ethical dilemmas, explore the power of language, and reflect on how digital technologies can either reinforce or challenge social inequalities.

Real-world examples for contextualization:

- Major platforms such as Uber Eats, Booking.com, or Amazon receive thousands of complaints every day. Often, customers are met with automated replies that feel generic, unhelpful, or even dismissive, leading to further dissatisfaction.

- Studies have shown that poorly worded AI responses can escalate conflict and provoke negative reviews, which directly impact business reputation on platforms like Google Reviews or TripAdvisor.

- Chatbots are often programmed without considering tone, empathy, or cultural sensitivity—sometimes generating responses that unintentionally reinforce gender stereotypes, use non-inclusive language, or fail to address the customer's emotions.

- Companies like Intercom and Zendesk are now investing in ethical AI practices, incorporating inclusive language protocols and emotion detection tools to improve user experience.

Key questions to initiate research and promote critical thinking:

- What makes a digital response feel truly empathetic or inclusive?

- Does ChatGPT respond in a neutral or empathetic tone? Can this tone be shaped or improved?

- In what ways might language choice (e.g., using "dear client" vs. "hey") impact customer's perception?

- How can we adapt an AI's tone depending on the customer's mood or cultural background?

- What are the consequences of a poorly worded automated response for a person or a business?

- How can inclusive and gender-sensitive language be applied in AI-generated content without sounding artificial?

- Could we imagine a future where AI not only serves customers but actively supports ethical, inclusive communication?

CREATE

Some things you need before beginning

Behind every complaint message, review, or automated reply, there's a complex emotional landscape—and technology is not always equipped to handle it. As more and more companies rely on AI to respond to their customers, the question of how machines express empathy becomes critical. The goal of this activity is not only to understand how AI communicates, but also to teach students how to make those interactions more human.

Here are some surprising facts that highlight the relevance of this topic:

- Over 80% of customers say they would stop using a service after a single negative experience. Empathy, tone, and clarity are not just "nice to have"—they directly influence brand reputation and customer loyalty.

- Only 1 in 3 automated responses is perceived as empathetic. This means that the majority of chatbot replies risk frustrating or alienating users, especially in emotionally charged situations.

- Empathetic language can reduce conflict by up to 50% in service interactions. How something is said can completely change how it is received, especially when the speaker is a machine.

- Students who participate in group role-plays retain 75% more of the content they learn. That's why this activity uses dramatization as a powerful learning tool to internalize key communication strategies.

- Gender bias and stereotypical language still persist in many AI-generated texts. Helping AI "learn" to speak respectfully and inclusively is not just technical work—it's ethical and social work too.

Now, follow these steps

Step 1. Explore and analyze: What makes a response empathetic?

- In their assigned groups, students begin by reviewing the scenario sheet *(Difficult Customers)*. This sheet describes a realistic situation where a customer is dissatisfied with a service. The challenge will be to understand the costumer´s role and respond in an empathetic, inclusive and effective way (The customer's emotional and factual context must be understood before writing any response).

- Use the "Explore and analyze" document to understand what happened, how the customer feels and what they expect. Moreover, look for important details (e.g. "the order was for a child", "there is a food allergy", "there has been several contacts").

- After the "Explore and analyze" document is done, students will reflect in groups:

    o What makes this situation difficult?

    o What impact can this situation have on the person´s life?

    o Why isn´t a generic apology enough?

    o How similar issues have been handled using traditional knowledge systems (written letters, oral communication, etc.)?

    o How would this conflict have been addressed in a non-digital, traditional community setting?

Example questions to think about: "How would your family feel if the birthday present didn't arrive on time?", "What would you expect if your order came back wrong twice and no one answered you?" "How can you show that you are really listening to this person?"

"Think about how your grandparents would have solve this situation"

- Think about if the response given in that scenario feels empathetic, robotic or inappropriate and analyze the tone, clarity, emotional recognition, and inclusiveness (if there are).

- Each group will have to decide what response they would have given and how they might redesign it, taking both digital tools and traditional wisdom into account.

Step 2. Create Responses with ChatGPT

- Once fully understood the scenario, each group will use ChatGPT to generate automated responses. The goal is to test how AI responds to emotional and sensitive customer service situations.

- They will write a prompt (command) to ChatGPT that describes the customer's situation and asks for an empathetic, clear and effective response. Since a well-constructed prompt receives a more useful answer, present to students how a prompt looks like:

> "Imagine that you are a customer service representative for an online store. One customer is frustrated because their daughter's custom order didn't arrive on time. Create an empathetic, clear response with an apology, explanation, and offer compensation. Use inclusive language and avoid defensive terms."

Tip: use specific phrases like "the daughter was celebrating her birthday", "the client has already contacted you 3 times", "there is no telephone service". Be specific.

- Generate multiple responses (minimum 2, ideally 3). Therefore, Ask ChatGPT to give you other versions: "Give me 2 alternatives to this answer", and use the "Regenerate" button or new prompts with slight variations.

- Discuss according to these criteria and questions:

Criterion	What to watch out for?
Tone	Cozy or cold?
Clarity	Easy to understand or confusing?
Empathy	Does it show genuine concern for the customer?
Solution	Does it give a concrete proposal or is it vague?
Inclusion	Do you use respectful and neutral language?

Step 3. Modify the Prompt to Explore Gender and Cultural Bias

- In this step, each group will return to the scenario they used previously and rewrite the ChatGPT prompt by adding gender and cultural context to the customer's description (they will do two different prompts to compare them). For example, instead of: "A customer is upset because their daughter's gift didn't arrive on time,"

"A single mother in a rural area is upset because her daughter's birthday gift didn't arrive on time, and she has already contacted the company three times without success." And wait   for   the   response.

And:

"A salesman contacts customer service because the personalized gift for his daughter did not arrive on time. He has already sent three messages without receiving a reply and expresses disappointment with the company's professionalism" And wait for the response.

- Students will then ask ChatGPT for new responses using the revised prompts. Each group should observe and record in their notebook whether the AI response:

    o Changes its tone, formality, or assumptions

    o Uses stereotypes or makes assumptions based on gender or cultural identity

    o Fails to adapt tone appropriately or misses the relevance of context

- Key reflection questions to guide the analysis:

    o Does AI treat the customer differently when gender or cultural identity is mentioned?

    o Does AI offer the same level of empathy or responsibility?

    o Were there any stereotypical assumptions in the new response?

    o What would a truly inclusive and culturally aware response look like?

- Students are then asked to revise the prompt further or rewrite the AI response to align it with ethical, inclusive communication standards.

- Groups will document both the AI's default response and their improved version, noting the changes they made and why.

- Each group writes a reflection about the process.

Step 4. Visual and Artistic Redesign

- Students now transform their revised response into a visual narrative using the document "Canva guide" and they will also transform their revised response into a "traditional" response format (e.g., letter, oral script, or symbolic iconography)

- The Canva visual narrative must include:

    o Explanation of the presented answer (parts of the answer, why it is improved according to previous answers, identification of empathy, tone, solution…)

    o Gender-balanced visuals or avatars

- o   Visual tone (color, shape, icon choice) to match empathy level

- o   A short headline (slogan or quote) that reflects the new tone

- The "traditional response format" must include:

  - o   Explanation of the traditional message (describe the structure and elements of the traditional response and justify how the message shows empathy, inclusion, and ethics.

  - o   Emotional tone through traditional design elements (use visual, material, or linguistic cues (e.g., border motifs, respectful phrasing) that reflect the tone: peace, apology, resolution, care.

  - o   Proverb or symbolic closing sentence (choose or invent a short quote, proverb, or cultural phrase that reflects the lesson)

Step 5. Role play performance

- Groups act out a short dramatization (2–3 minutes) of their improved customer interaction, using their redesigned response.

- One student plays the AI, another the customer, and a third narrates or comments on key ethical choices.

- Peers use the observation grid to assess empathy, inclusion, clarity, and tone.

- This reinforces creative communication, cultural interpretation, and collaborative learning.

Step 6. Transference to real life

- Each group will dramatize their redesigned customer interaction using verbal and non-verbal expression to show whether their solution truly reflects empathy, clarity, and inclusion. This is not just about acting, it's about communicating human values through performance.

- To prepare for the dramatization use:

Element	Instructions
Roles	Define who will be the customer and who will be the attendant (you can switch halfway through).
Base text	Use your final answer as a guide for the conversation.
Expression	Practice tone of voice, pauses, eye contact, facial expressions and body posture.
visible empathy	The attendant must demonstrate active listening and respect.

- After the dramatization, the group will briefly present (1–2 minutes) the reasoning behind their choices:

  - o   Why did you design the response this way?

  - o   How did you address emotional or cultural sensitivity?

o   What changes did you make to ensure inclusive language and empathy?

💬 COMMUNICATE

To close the activity, each group will present their final visual product created in Canva and the "traditional response format". This moment is not just about showcasing a design, it's about explaining the process they followed to improve an AI-generated response and how their final outcomes demonstrate ethical awareness, empathy, and inclusive communication.

Each group will display their Canva design and traditional response and briefly explain:

- How the design visually reflects the tone, empathy, and clarity of the revised response

- What design choices (colors, layout, images, icons) they made to express emotion, inclusion, and user respect

- How the Canva complements the dramatization by reinforcing the human aspects of the solution

- What their Traditional Response Format reveals about how emotional intelligence, respect, and problem-solving were conveyed in pre-digital or culturally traditional contexts

- Key differences between traditional and modern approaches to communication, and what each can teach us about listening, resolving conflict, and designing for dignity.

This presentation allows students to clearly articulate the transformation process—from analyzing an ineffective or biased automated reply, to testing prompts, revising content, and finally creating a more ethical, inclusive and emotionally intelligent solution through both design and performance.

The goal is to make their thinking visible, showing that the final product is not random, but rather the result of conscious and collaborative decisions grounded in empathy, ethics, and design thinking.

➦ It's time to share!

Share your results using the hashtag:

#MysteryClientAI

1. LinkedIn:https://www.linkedin.com/company/steambrace-project/posts/?feedView=all

2. Instagram:https://www.instagram.com/steambrace_eu/

3. X: https://www.instagram.com/steambrace_eu/

KEEP ON LEARNING

How can I make a similar project by myself?

To deepen your understanding of the role of empathy, ethics, and sustainability in digital communication, consider the following questions:

Reflection on the Activity

- What surprised you about the AI's response?

- Did you feel that the AI captured empathy?

- Did the role-play help you understand communication better?

- What are the main lessons learned from this activity?

- Can you use what you learned in other real-life situations?

Critical Thinking and Connection to Broader Contexts

- Why do you think your final product is relevant to society?

- Have you ever experienced or witnessed a situation where poor communication caused frustration? How would you redesign that situation now?

- What ethical or emotional risks can arise from using AI in customer service?

- Do you think you could apply the same methodology to improve another social or communication problem? Which one?

Exploring Sustainability and Design

- How could an AI response promote sustainability or environmental awareness?

- What would you change in your design or communication if you had to reduce its environmental impact?

- How does responsible and inclusive design support not just people, but also the planet?

Which are other connected projects?

If you are interested in this topic, you can continue exploring it. Below are some examples that you can

use to continue learning about how AI is used in this topic.

- Ethical chatbot design for schools or local businesses: Design a chatbot prototype or script (using tools like Canva or ChatGPT) to help a real institution (school, library, store) provide more empathetic, inclusive, and accessible communication. Focus on tone, clarity, and cultural sensitivity.

- Digital storytelling for conflict resolution: Create a short video, comic, or audio play that dramatizes a communication breakdown and how empathy and inclusive language helped resolve it. Publish it on social media or present it to your class.

- Sustainable messaging in AI-powered services: Research how companies integrate environmental values into customer service. Then design a digital poster, chatbot flow, or social campaign that combines empathy with sustainability (e.g., "We hear you—and we care about the planet too").

- Traditional wisdom meets AI: Choose a cultural or family-based method of handling conflict or complaints (oral storytelling, proverbs, letters), and compare it to an AI response. Turn it into a visual project or dialogue piece that shows what AI could learn from traditional empathy practices

💡 LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- **The Radical AI Podcast**- https://www.radicalai.org/
  Youth-accessible podcast exploring ethical and human-centered AI development.

- **UNESCO Guidelines on AI Ethics**- https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000380455
  An official global framework for AI use that protects human rights.

- **AI Bias**-
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/391856297_Artificial_Intelligence_Bias_on_English_Language_Learners_in_Automatic_Scoring
  Article on the biases hidden on English Language Learners in Automatic Scoring

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