NEWS BREAK

Article: For hard-hit tech workers, AI is a silver lining

Section: BUSINESS, C11

Sunday’s News Break selects an article from Sunday, April 14, 2024 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will learn more about how AI is impacting those employed in the tech firms. The article discusses both job displacement and job creation due to AI-students will discuss ethical considerations surrounding AI development and implementation in the workplace. They will talk about the skills becoming increasingly important in the tech fields and how schools can prepare students for the changing job market. They will also talk about AI and whether it is a potential threat to humankind, or not.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

“They’ve had AI for a very long time. But they’re finding ways now to monetize that and actually promote that and sell that as a solution to other businesses. Every industry is now having those conversations.”

Monetize Guess:

Monetize Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. For the thousands of tech workers recently laid off in Washington and across the country, the future may not be as bleak as it looks right now: Many are likely to retrain fairly quickly for new jobs in the burgeoning field of ____________________________.

2. The massive rounds of layoffs at tech giants and many smaller companies were largely the result of stricter investor demands. What does that mean?

3. Not only is AI taking over more standard computer programming once done entirely by __________, it is also starting to spur waves of new
applications — and with them, jobs, both tech and non-tech, in a wide range of industries.

4. Where is most of the AI action taking place today?

5. In February, _____% of companies in the Bay Area said they already use AI, compared with a little more than ____% in the U.S. as a whole, according to the Census Bureau.

6. In the Los Angeles area, which has emerged as a home for companies focusing on AI and augmented reality, firms are hiring for hundreds of AI-related jobs, including content writers and software developers who will do what?

7. Tom Case, a founder at Atticus Growth Partners, a tech recruiting firm in San Francisco, said the proliferation of AI entrepreneurs and startups translates into what?

8. In the last few years, companies have been hiring primarily for research labs, he said, but the industry is beginning to move from AI models to getting them into production. “We’re in an almost _______ where everybody’s building an AI company model,” he said. “Very little AI is deployed in production. At the moment, it feels like the dawn of job creation.”

9. “If cookies are gone, you’re blind to _______________,” Pratiher said. She said she’s had difficulty finding qualified data scientists and other AI engineers with deep experience in machine language learning.

10. Isbell is pushing for classroom emphasis on AI data-driven simulations and so-called deep learning, which uses multiple layers of what are called “_____________” — complex algorithms designed to mimic the human brain to generate new data.

11. More than __________ job cuts by tech firms nationwide were announced in the first two months of this year, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas, an outplacement and research firm.

12. But the correction may be ending soon, as new tech jobs come into view and workers adjust. Ayanna Howard, a robotics expert and dean of the engineering college at Ohio State University, said it wasn’t long ago that ___________ was all the rage, and people were flocking to computer boot camps.

13. She remembers how hard it once was for people to create a ________________.

14. Now, with AI tools, you can build one within ______________ by simply putting in blocks of information, she noted. AI can also do coding on backend servers, the side responsible for storing and organizing data, including security.

15. AI may ultimately lead to a smaller ______________, said Howard of Ohio State. But there will also be AI-augmented jobs, as well as new jobs. One position in high demand is prompt engineer, who designs prompts and other processes to get optimal performance from generative AI tools, whether text or images.

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:
**Discussion Questions:**

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought ______________, but now I think ____________?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?

"AI is going to help us. It's going to assist us in growing and becoming more effective and efficient," said Kamran. "It's going to supercharge our lives."

- What are your thoughts on the quote above?

"If you're trained to learn, you can evolve," she said, just as those who began by using Pascal and BASIC learned to program in Assembly and Python, used for many machine learning and AI solutions.

- Do you agree or disagree that if you're willing and trained to learn, you can evolve and change to meet the new demands?

"You need to have a human with expertise and knowledge about the customer and the business problem. There needs to be someone pulling the strings, because it can't just be automated by AI and just go out as is."

- Do you think this is true, that humans will still have a place working in the tech firms? Why or why not?

**Diving Deeper-Journal & Discussion Prompts:**

1. The article discusses both job displacement and job creation due to AI. What are some of the ethical considerations surrounding AI development and implementation in the workplace?
2. Should there be limitations on how AI is used to replace human workers? If so, what might those limitations look like?
3. The article mentions the importance of "soft skills" like problem-solving in the age of AI. Why are these skills becoming increasingly important, even in tech fields?
4. How can educational institutions better prepare students for the changing job market brought about by AI?
5. Imagine you are a worker whose job is being replaced by AI. What steps would you take to adapt and find new opportunities?
6. Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming many industries. Analyze the potential benefits and drawbacks of AI for society as a whole.
7. Should everyone learn some basic coding or AI skills to stay competitive in the workforce? Why or why not?
8. The article mentions the concept of "AI-augmented jobs." Describe a possible future career path that combines human and artificial intelligence in a unique way.
9. AI is often portrayed in science fiction as a potential threat to humanity. Do you believe this is a realistic concern? Explain your reasoning.

News Break is posted to the Web on Tuesday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please register online or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

Copyright © 2024 The Seattle Times Company