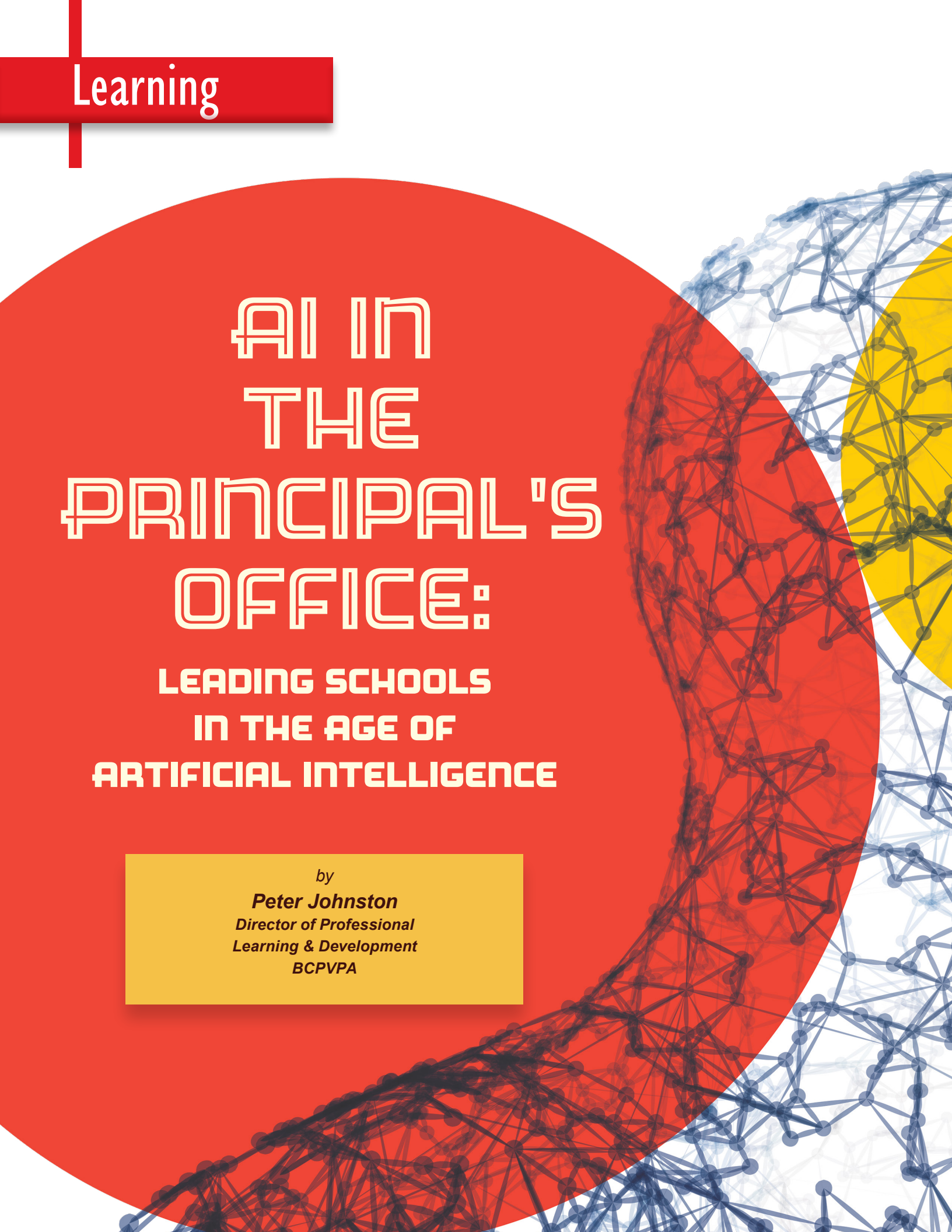




Learning



AI IN THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE:

LEADING SCHOOLS
IN THE AGE OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

by
Peter Johnston
*Director of Professional
Learning & Development
BCPVPA*



COLLEAGUES: THE FUTURE IS HERE!

You thought leading a school was all about juggling timetables, defusing the occasional food fight, and deciphering cryptic messages in student bathrooms. Well, it's time to add to that list: you need to become an Artificial Intelligence whisperer. Yes, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has entered our schools, and it is not just another tech fad like the overhead projector, or the infamous laser disc player.

Artificial Intelligence can now see, hear, and speak. Artificial Intelligence can write essays, pose philosophical questions, and even provide therapy. Artificial Intelligence can create a computer program that will write whatever you want, quickly and convincingly, *and* with good grammar.

When Open AI released its wildly popular ChatGPT in November 2022, it made the science fiction version of Artificial Intelligence seem very, very real. *"Open the pod bay doors, HAL... I'm sorry, Dave. I can't do that."*

Suddenly, anyone with a Wi-Fi connection had an endless source of knowledge right at their fingertips in a convenient, open-source chatbot. Nothing was off-limits. You name it: university admission exams, cover letters, novels, computer codes.

And the team at Open AI, headed by Sam Altman, promised that artificial general intelligence, that can complete any task a human can, was on the horizon. This will be one of the greatest technologies humanity has yet developed. We can all have an incredible educator in our pocket that is customized for us, and helps us achieve what we want. Sam Altman has said the biggest surprise about his ChatGPT was how quickly education adopted Artificial Intelligence into their classrooms.

Now, as educators, we cannot open an educational magazine or go to an educational conference without an expert in AI telling us how Artificial Intelligence has impacted our school system.

It has been said that, at present, Artificial Intelligence is neither artificial nor intelligent... Or is it?

Calling the computer program 'Artificial Intelligence' is a bit like calling a microwave a 'Miniature Personal Chef'. Sure, it heats your food, but it can't discern between gourmet cuisine and last night's pizza. Similarly, Artificial Intelligence in schools might grade tests or personalize learning experiences, but AI is not yet about acting out Shakespeare or solving the mystery of why kids can't keep their desks tidy.



Intelligence, as we know it, involves learning from experiences, understanding complex concepts, and using knowledge in new situations. Artificial Intelligence, on the other hand, is like the student

who memorizes facts for a test but forgets everything the next day. It operates on algorithms and data - it's more about processing information than pondering the meaning of life or why the school mascot should be a narwhal.

So, why do we call it Artificial Intelligence? Well, 'A Remarkably Efficient Data Processing and Pattern Recognition System' hardly rolls off the tongue, does it? Plus, 'Artificial Intelligence' has a certain sci-fi charm that makes us all feel like we are living in the future.

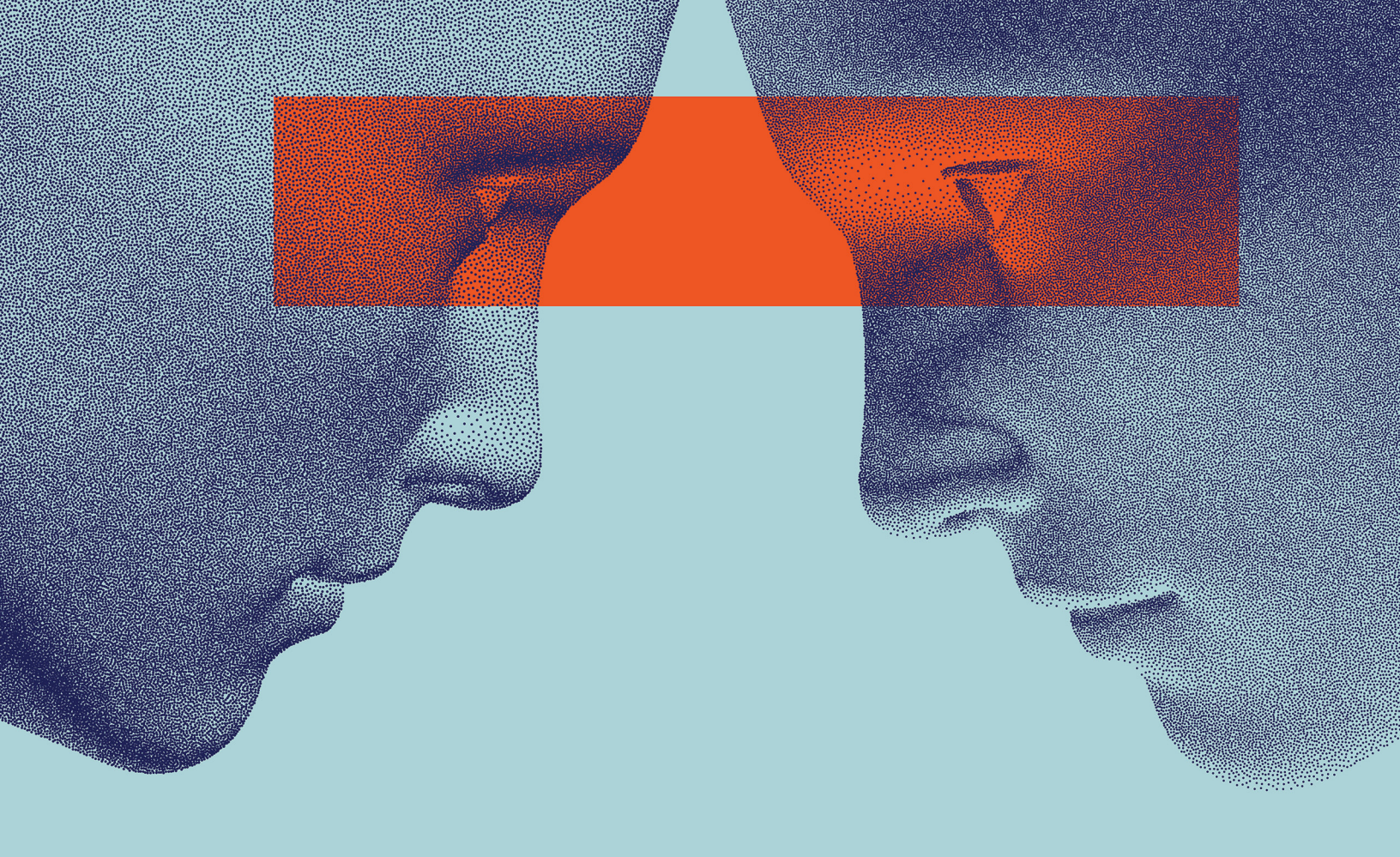
In the classroom, Artificial Intelligence is the quiet digital assistant that helps teachers without ever needing a coffee break. It is the magical genie in the school's computer lab that can generate test questions faster than you can say 'pop quiz'. But, let's be honest, it is not about to replace the wisdom and guidance of a real-life Principal. After all, can Artificial Intelligence understand the art of managing a cafeteria during pizza day? I think not.

Artificial Intelligence in education: not quite artificial, not entirely intelligent, but an incredibly useful tool in our ever-evolving schools.

SCI-FI CHARM

My office includes a collection of posters and artifacts of Star Wars, Star Trek (yes, I am a Trekkie), Dr. Who, and J.R.R. Tolkien. I clearly remember when Artificial Intelligence was something you only saw in sci-fi movies, usually playing the bad computer or robot trying to outsmart human civilization.

Well, it is time to welcome our new Artificial Intelligence colleagues (and no, they don't look like the Terminator). Artificial Intelligence is now a part of our educational landscape, helping to personalize learning, automate administrative tasks, and even grade those essays so that your teachers can finally rest their red pens.



LEADING THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHARGE

As a Principal, you are no longer just an educational leader; you are now the Captain of the USS Enterprise (NCC-1701) on an exploratory mission in the AI galaxy. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, involves guiding your school through the exciting yet sometimes bewildering galaxy of Artificial Intelligence. Here are a few steps that will help you become one of the Guardians of the AI Galaxy.

EMBRACE THE CHANGE (AND KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOUR)

First things first: don't panic. You've handled fidget spinners and TikTok dances; you can handle Artificial Intelligence. Approach this new challenge with an open mind – a growth mindset – and perhaps a bit of humour. After

all, laughing is better than crying when your new AI home phoning system mistakenly calls a snow day in June.

BUILD YOUR AI FANTASTIC FOUR, OR FIVE, OR SIX...

You need a team. Gather the tech-savvy teachers, the curious students, and maybe that one staff member who always has the latest gadgets. Together, you will explore how Artificial Intelligence can benefit your school. Remember, there is no 'I' in 'team,' but there are in 'Artificial Intelligence,' so maybe let J.A.R.V.I.S. join too.

TRAIN LIKE YOU'RE IN A MONTAGE

It's time for a training montage: every superhero movie has one. Think Rocky training to face Apollo Creed, and start running those Artificial Intelligence stairs. Start reading from the

massive amounts of ‘Artificial Intelligence In Education’ materials that are out there. Learn alongside your teachers, your students, and your colleagues by attending workshops, and start experimenting with AI tools in your office. Cue the inspirational music: you are “Gonna Fly Now”!

ETHICAL ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS HAPPY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence comes with great power and, you guessed it, great responsibility. Use your spidey senses to ensure that your Artificial Intelligence initiatives are ethical, transparent, and equitable. You don't want Skynet on your hands, do you?

INNOVATE, ITERATE, CELEBRATE

Try new things. Some will work (celebrate those!) and some will flop (learn from those!) Maybe Artificial Intelligence can help with personalized learning paths or provide insights into student performance. Or perhaps it can finally solve the mystery of who keeps stealing sandwiches from the staff room.

COMMUNICATE LIKE AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (BUT STAY HUMAN)

Keep everyone in the loop. Communicate with your staff, students, and community about how

Artificial Intelligence is being used in your school. Transparency is critical, and it deters rumours that the school is being run by robots (though that could be cool, right?)

PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE, BUT DON'T FORGET THE PRESENT

While you're preparing your staff and students for a future with Artificial Intelligence, don't forget the present. Balancing tech with traditional teaching methods is like trying to connect with Wi-Fi in a 100-year-old school building – challenging, but possible.

THE PRINCIPAL, THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE FUTURE

So, there you have it, brave school leaders. Leading a school in an Artificial Intelligence environment might sound daunting, but remember, you are not alone. You have your staff, students, the BCPVPA, and – yes – even Artificial Intelligence to help you navigate this journey.

Embrace the change, lead with confidence, and ask for assistance from the latest AI. After all, if you can manage ‘failure to fill’ each day, you can certainly handle a little Artificial Intelligence. And, who knows? Maybe, one day, Artificial Intelligence will figure out how to get that photocopier to work properly. Until then, keep leading in the age of Artificial Intelligence with humour and wisdom – no algorithm can match that!



Visit the BCPVPA website and select Professional Learning

You can choose to register for an upcoming program or event, and find out more about the available workshops and networking opportunities. Members can select My BCPVPA to explore content in our member portal. *See you there!*