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The Principal's AI Playbook

The South Africa Principals Association

13th September, 2025

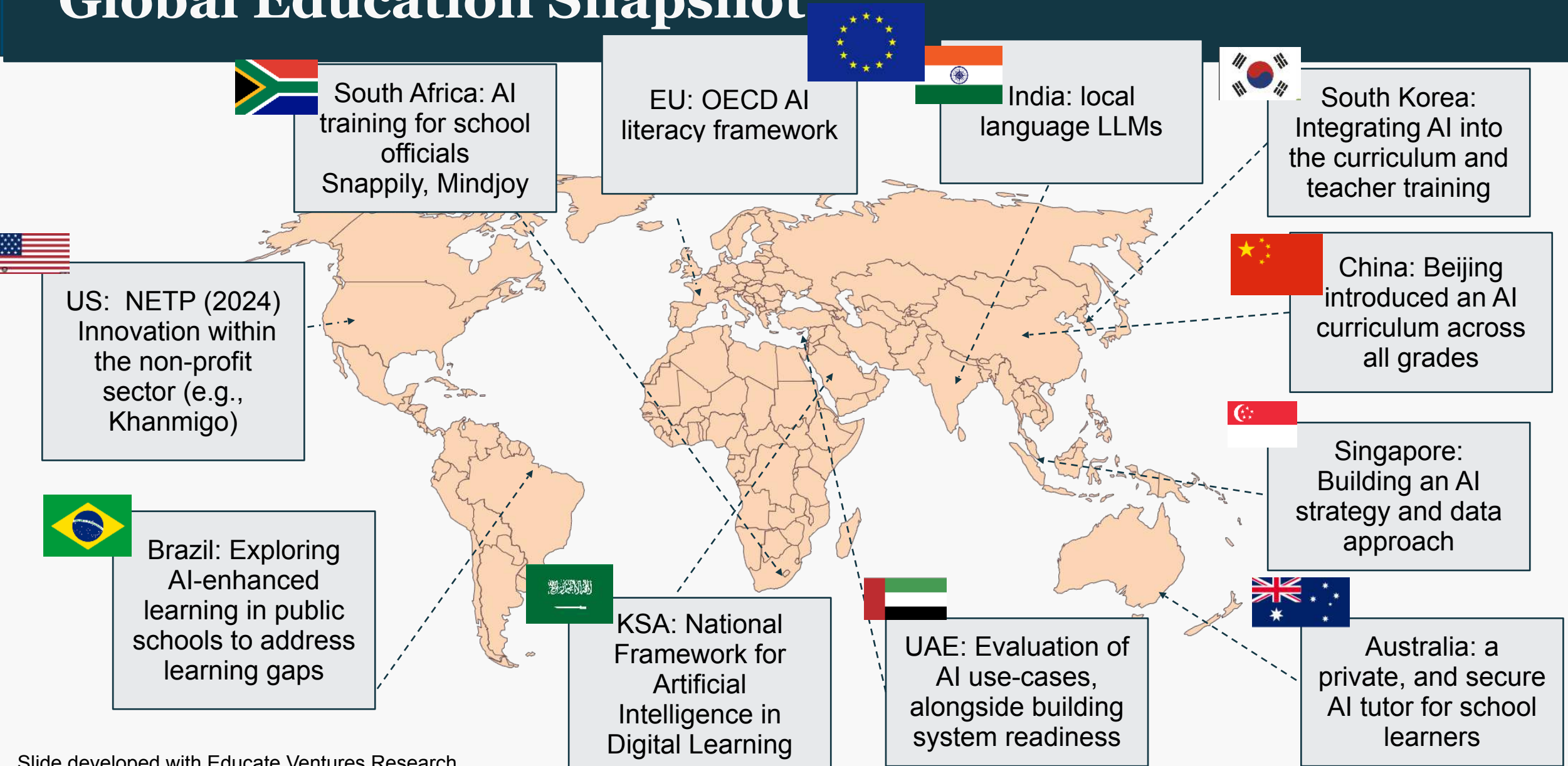
What is the future of work?

- AI and automation **change job roles** and tasks in the knowledge economy
- Increased demand for **digital literacy and AI skills**
- Importance of **lifelong learning and adaptability**
- Rise of new job categories in **AI solution management** and related fields such as AI ethics and data sovereignty (also job loss - e.g. translators).

Future Skills: Using AI as Tool

- Potential increase in **productivity** and **efficiency** by allowing faster work
- Assists with **repetitive** and **technical** tasks (searching, summarisation, coding)
- Provides data-driven **insights** and recommendations
- Augments human creativity and **problem-solving abilities**
- **Main skill - understanding how and when to use AI, what data to give it access to and what it can do without human oversight!**

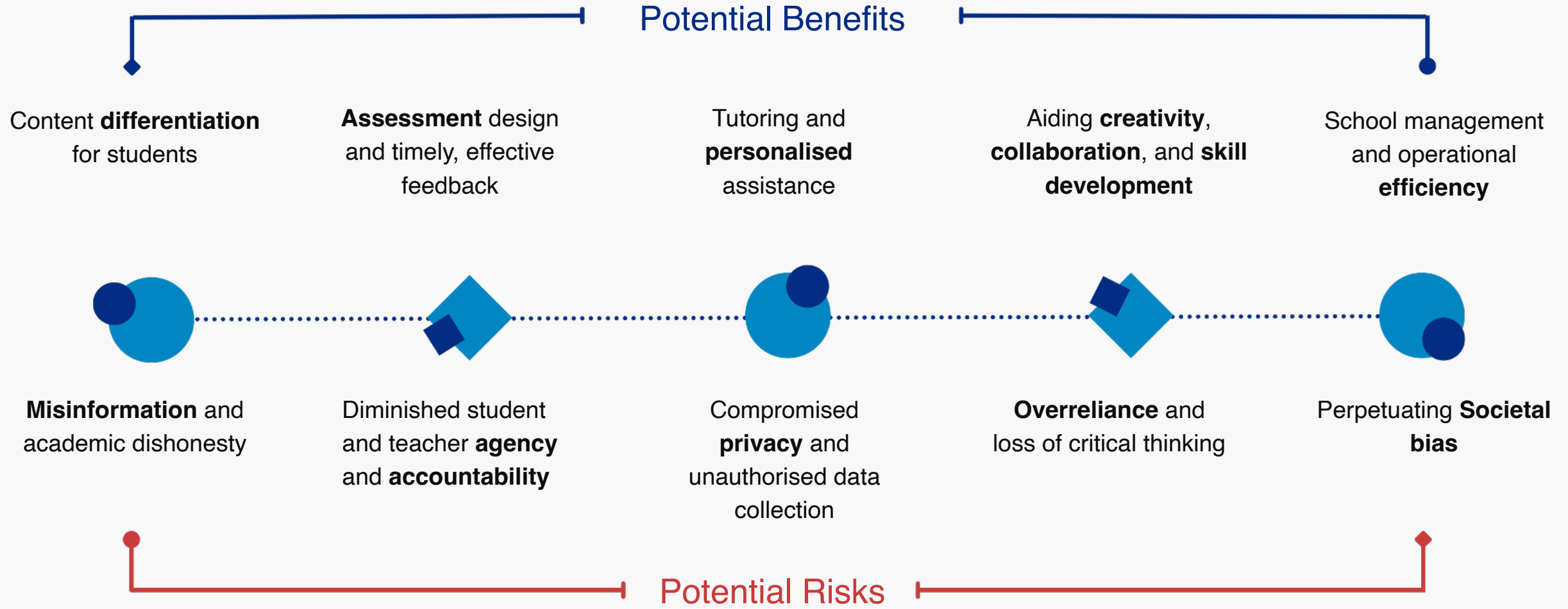
Global Education Snapshot



Examples of AI Use Cases

	Teacher admin	Lesson planning and enrichment	Lesson delivery	Student assessments	Teacher professional development and feedback
Potential AI use-cases	Streamlining administrative processes to boost productivity	Generate lessons in a range of topics, enrich lessons and boost productivity	Support teachers in lesson delivery AI tutoring	Automate assessments, diagnose gaps in learning and recommend tailored interventions	Evidence teacher skills and support mentor-teacher interactions. Identify areas for improvement
Examples of tools					
					

Benefits and Risks



Pedagogic Sovereignty

How does my school approach teaching?

What curriculum, resources, classroom context, teaching notes, guidelines and policies do we work with

Agentic AI in Education

AI now has access to tools, data and a task to complete
Who in the school defines how it works and with what tools/data?

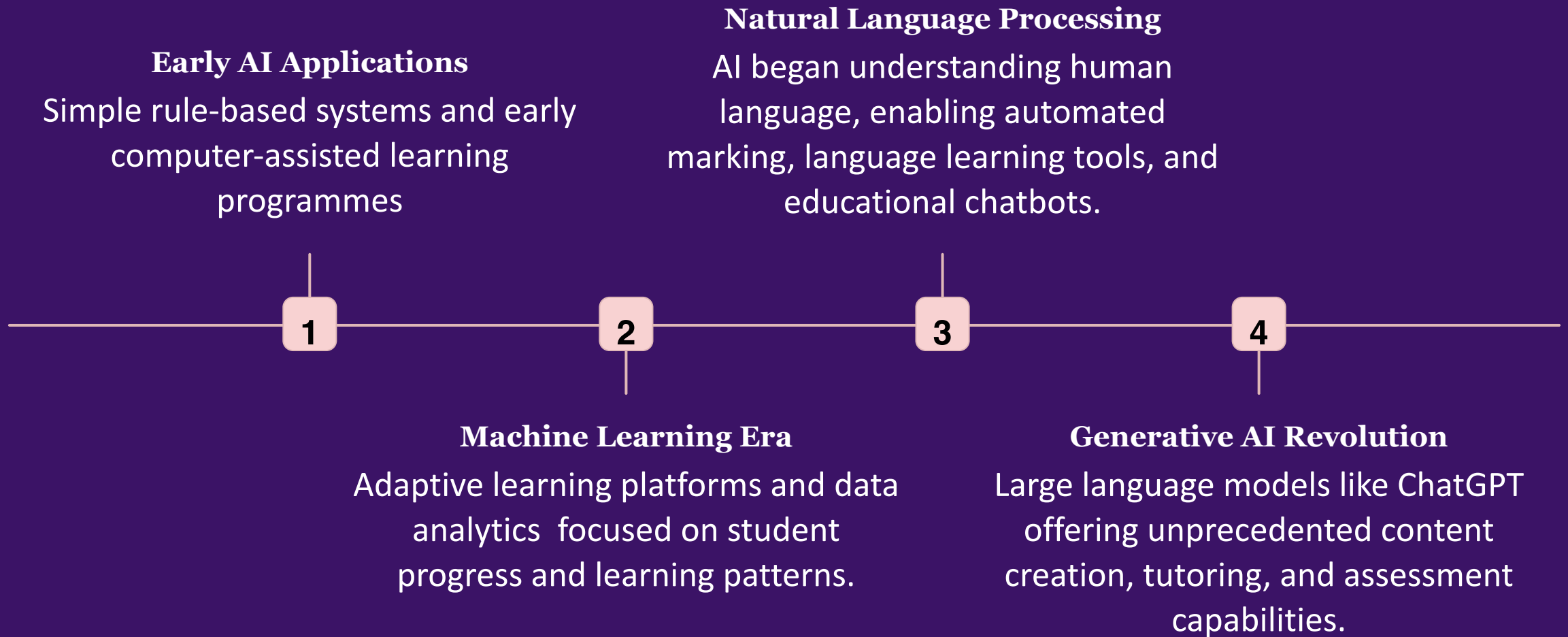
Beyond the Technology, Leadership Matters Most

- Policies, frameworks and cultural shifts that school leaders must champion
- Essential foundations: safe use protocols, ethical boundaries, and data protection
- Identify risks, particularly when AI generates or analyses student content!
- Success requires **strategic** thinking, not just technical deployment
- The difference between transformative implementation and expensive failure lies in the preparation, governance and ongoing support structures you establish.

AI Foundations

We need to understand the technology in order to put in processes and policies to control how we want it used in our schools

Understanding AI's Educational Journey



AI's Educational Impact Analysis

Benefits

Personalised Learning

AI adapts content delivery to individual student needs and pace, creating truly differentiated instruction at scale.

Administrative Efficiency

Automated scheduling, report generation, and data analysis free up valuable time for educational leadership and student support.

Enhanced Assessment

Immediate feedback, adaptive testing and analytics provide deeper insights into student progress and learning gaps.

Risks to Navigate

Data Privacy Concerns

Student information security, consent management, and compliance with educational data protection regulations require careful oversight.

Algorithmic Bias

AI systems may perpetuate or amplify existing inequalities, affecting student opportunities and educational outcomes unfairly.

Over-dependence Risk

Excessive reliance on AI tools may diminish critical thinking skills and human judgement in educational decision-making.

Building Comprehensive AI Literacy

AI literacy extends far beyond technical competency. Its knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to understand, evaluate and effectively use AI systems whilst maintaining critical thinking and human agency.

1

Technical Understanding

How AI systems work, their capabilities and limitations, without requiring programming expertise.

2

Critical Evaluation

Develop skills to assess AI outputs for accuracy, bias and appropriateness within educational contexts.

3

Ethical Reasoning

Apply ethical frameworks to AI use, considering impacts on students, sustainability and educational equity.

4

Practical Application

Implement AI tools while maintaining pedagogical best practices and student-centred learning.

The Five Dimensions of AI Readiness

Governance

Clear policies, decision-making structures and oversight that guide AI implementation and accountability.

Educational Integration

Pedagogical strategies, curriculum alignment and assessment approaches that use AI for learning outcomes.



Policy Framework

Guidelines covering privacy, ethics, acceptable use and compliance with educational regulations.

Data Management

Systems for collecting, storing, and protecting educational data while accessible for AI applications.

Technical Infrastructure

Reliable computing, networking, and security systems capable of supporting AI tools and applications.

Ethical AI Implementation

Technology is not neutral. It reflects the values and biases embedded in its data and design.



Fairness & Equity

Ensure AI systems don't discriminate against students based on background or other characteristics. Regular auditing and bias testing are essential.



Transparency

Maintain openness about how AI systems make decisions when they affect student outcomes or educational pathways.



Accountability

Establish responsibility for AI decisions and outcomes, with human oversight central to educational processes.



Human Agency

Preserve human choice and control in educational decisions, ensuring AI enhances rather than replaces human judgement.

Building Sustainable Capacity

AI implementation requires skilled educators!



AI-Enhanced Pedagogy

Develop skills to use AI tools meaningfully in teaching practice, focus on learning objectives and student needs.



Ethical Decision-Making

Assess AI bias and make responsible choices about technology use in educational contexts.



Critical AI Literacy

Ability to evaluate AI outputs, understand limitations and help students develop similar critical thinking skills about AI.

Professional development requires job-based learning, ongoing support and collaborative problem-solving rather than one-off training sessions.

Measuring AI Impact Effectively

Key Impact Dimensions

Educational outcomes, equity and inclusion, resource efficiency and stakeholder experience

Reviews

Regular evaluation cycles to guide implementation decisions and course corrections

Beyond basic usage statistics to understand how AI affects student learning, teacher effectiveness and institutional goals.

Develop frameworks that capture both quantitative data and qualitative insights from educators and students.



Think through context, data and tools to solve a specific problem for your school ...

AI workflows become unique to your school environment

From theory to practice ...

AI Literacy for Teachers (Half-Day SACE-Accredited)

- Master AI fundamentals and tool proficiency (ChatGPT, Gemini)
- Learn effective prompting for curriculum content
- Understand risks and develop responsible use guidelines
- Access multilingual capabilities for diverse classrooms

Teaching with AI (Two-Day SACE-Accredited)

- Design CAPS-aligned AI-enhanced teaching strategies
- Create multimodal content and authentic assessments
- Implement ethical frameworks and 21st-century skills integration
- Lead AI adoption initiatives in educational communities



Next Steps for School Leaders

- Assess your institution's current AI readiness across all five dimensions
- Develop a comprehensive AI policy framework with stakeholder input
- Design sustained professional development programmes for educators
- Establish measurement frameworks to track meaningful impact
- Begin with pilot projects that demonstrate clear educational value

Remember: successful AI implementation is a journey, not a destination.

Start with strong foundations, maintain ethical focus and prioritise human agency through the process.

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