

**An Interdisciplinary Look at Generative AI Impacts on Workplace Communication,
Learning, and Planned Organizational Change Models**

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A seminar paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE LEADERSHIP 2024

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Abstract

This seminar paper investigates Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) impacts on workplace communication and learning inside the field of Organizational Change Management (OCM). Getting the best out of GenAI requires a balance between human critical thinking and expertise and machine intelligence. An augmentation of human activity with humans collaborating with GenAI technology to improve ways of working. The act of re-engineering workplace processes with AI makes the current Intelligence AI Revolution an industry-wide organizational change transformation initiative, wherein the solutions to the process changes are GenAI tools. This paper examines the effects of GenAI tools on two specific OCM process elements: workplace communication and cognitive learning for skill assimilation and performance. It also investigates GenAI impacts on three specific organizational planned change models: Prosci's ADKAR, McKinsey's 7S, Kotter's 8-Step. This paper examines the potential misuse and over-reliance on AI's mile-wide, inch-deep instant results, which can undermine human thinking, creativity, innovation, and social interaction. There is a glimpse into the neuroscience behind cognitive learning aspects that AI and GenAI tools influence. While GenAI tools offer incredible efficiency, we must be wary of creating long-term 'skill atrophy.' Over-reliance on automated solutions, like instant recipes, could diminish our ability to adapt to ingredients and resources on hand and problem-solve when faced with unexpected constraints or the need for innovation around restraints. Ultimately, this paper contributes to discussions of organizational change while expanding the activities and role definition of change practitioners.

Keywords: organizational change management, OCM, adult learning, ChatGPT, workplace skill learning, change leadership, change management, cognitive development, creative thought, natural language processing (NLP), Artificial Intelligence, AI. Generative AI, GenAI

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Introduction

With the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative AI (GenAI), the field of organizational change management (OCM) has been significantly impacted and has to evolve (Altman et al., 2024). This seminar paper investigates the impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) on two OCM elements: workplace communication and learning.

This seminar paper research aims to establish a foundational understanding of the strengths and limitations of GenAI tools in the context of workplace change transformations. The review aims to inform recommendations and necessary activity adjustments for current change leaders by highlighting specific areas of the change process affected by these technologies. The research findings will underscore the need for intentional change strategies around human AI utilization that prioritize authentic communication channels and content in all formats, results-oriented workplace learning with mutual understanding, and proper harnessing of AI's transformative potential by organizations.

This paper does not take the side of “GenAI is good for people” or “GenAI is bad for people.” This paper looks at the distinctly human journey of change and acknowledges GenAI's impacts on the outcomes and results of OCM (Griffin & Foster, 2022). While an individual's change journey can be helped, technology cannot replace it (Griffin & Foster, 2022). Getting the value out of GenAI technology requires a balance of human expertise and machine intelligence. The paper does spotlight a few GenAI impacts inside the OCM activities of communication and learning.

My secondary-based research finds GenAI tool implementations fundamentally as

initiatives for process improvements or even a full re-engineering of existing processes (Bodimani, 2021; Leonardi, 2024). The act of re-engineering workplace processes with AI makes GenAI tools implementation projects fundamentally a system and process improvement initiative, with the solution going beyond automation (reduce human touch points) and over into human work argumentation (Marr, 2024). An intentional re-engineering of organizational processes and policies will minimize risks while enhancing the individual user experiences (UX) with GenAI tools (Marr, 2024).

Changes in processes and systems are within the work scope of the many different-titled organizational change leaders. For the rest of this paper, I will refer to them as Change Practitioners. As changes in processes and systems for people fall within the work of the Change Practitioner, a role inside the discipline of Organizational Change Management (OCM), this research investigates GenAI impacts inside three planned OCM models: Prosci's ADKAR, McKinsey's 7S, and Kotter's 8-Step.

This paper argues that AI and GenAI tools are technologies that have, are, and will continue to impact on workplace ways of working, and that organizational change practitioners need to fully understand and competently utilize them within the process of organizational change. To date, GenAI tools can be used to create various artifacts that are commonly used within the discipline of OCM such as text, images, video, music, sound, designs, data analysis, computer code, synthetic data, research, and video games with virtual worlds (Marr, 2024). My tertiary-based research examines how over-reliance on Generative AI tools in the workplace could hinder the development of deep knowledge and skill mastery in employees, ultimately limiting their capacity for creative problem-solving and innovation.

Literature Review

The literature review is broken into three sections. Both the background section and section one provides an overview of AI Agents, Generative AI (GenAI), and its associated tools that could be utilized by change practitioners. It defines in easy-to-understand plain language key elements of AI, GenAI, and AI Agents for organizational change leaders.

The second section provides a deeper dive into GenAI tools and how they impact the key ingredients of both formal planned OCM models and informal change activities inherent in any transformation effort. It reviews the emerging academic literature on the impacts of GenAI in the workplace - particularly its effects on communication, learning, and creative cognition during transformational changes. Given the early stage of these technologies within organizational contexts, this section also considers potential negative and positive impacts of GenAI inside these processes as hypothesized by various authors from multiple industries and academic disciplines. It discusses essential concepts from an interdisciplinary viewpoint, including neuroscience, psychology, education, and adult workplace learning.

The third section examines three prominent OCM methodologies and schools of thought: Prosci's ADKAR, Kotter's 8-Step, and McKinsey's 7S change model. Each emphasizes the importance of effective communication processes and workplace learning in the development of new mindsets and behaviors. I aim to provide insights into their perspectives and correlate the impacts of GenAI on these change practitioner activities. These three models were chosen due to their historical importance, broad applicability, and core elements related to communication and behavioral change.

It is important to note that new families of AI tools have been created and released during the writing of this paper, most notably Google's Gemini, Microsoft's Copilot, and Meta's Llama.

This research is not a commentary on the tools themselves but underscores the change impacts of GenAI tools in general within the field of all versions of the discipline of Organizational Change Management.

Background

To understand the pros and cons of Generative AI (GenAI) tools in the workplace, we need to understand the tools themselves at a fundamental level, starting with how to define and contextualize the categories of Artificial Intelligence (AI). "AI" refers to computer algorithms that simulate existing human cognitive processes, like learning, decision-making, and problem-solving (Marr, 2024).

While there are many categories of AI, this paper focuses on Large Language Model (LLM) Generative AI (GenAI) tools that are beginning to proliferate in organizations like ChatGPT, Google's Bard, Microsoft's Gemini, and many others. Other AI categories of note include Traditional AI (think Netflix and Amazon) to make recommendations based on previous interactions; Supervised Learning AI (think of the power behind self-driving cars) that trains the AI tools to copy human behaviors; Unsupervised Learning AI that looks for patterns and relationships on its own (think market segmentation and anomaly detection); And Reinforcement Learning AI which learns through trial and error using feedback from experiences (think simulated environments in virtual scenarios) (Marr, 2024).

Generative AI is a subset of AI that can create new content based on patterns and structures learned from existing data called "training data." Training data is culled from many sources on the internet, including books, articles, and web pages. The patterns or rules the tool learns from are used to create new data - but not precisely the same as the data the tools have been trained on. The GenAI tools are not sentient (yet), and they have gone past traditional AI

systems that make predictions to help us make better decisions, like product recommendations on Amazon, movies on Netflix, or music on Spotify. GenAI creates new content based on existing data and their learned behavior (Marr, 2024). "Creates" is a keyword that plays into the argument that GenAI are valid stakeholders during change efforts.

GenAI tools are simulating human creativity, not just human cognitive processes like decision-making and problem-solving. Traditional AI excels at pattern recognition, while GenAI excels at pattern creation (Marr, 2024). For example, think of traditional AI as a master strategist in a chess game that knows the rules, predicts moves, and makes up its own moves. GenAI, in theory, could come up with new ways of playing chess that we have yet to invent (Marr, 2024). AI and GenAI are not mutually exclusive. Traditional AI could analyze user behavior on a company website, while GenAI analyzes and creates personalized content for users (Marr, 2024). Partially inside the Generative AI circle are Large Language Models (LLM), a type of AI that predicts texts to mirror human writing. LLMs learn the semantic relationship between words and use that data to generate more language (Marr, 2024). An example of an LLM is GPT-4 (Generative Pre-Trained Transformer), which powers the ChatGPT tool. When asking ChatGPT to compare the categories of "Generative AI" to "LLMs," one telling response given was, "Generative AI is the chatterbox at the cocktail party who keeps the conversation flowing with wild anecdotes (true or not) and potentially never heard before anecdotes. In contrast, LLMs are meticulous librarians cataloging every word ever spoken at every party (Bell, 2023) without creating new words.

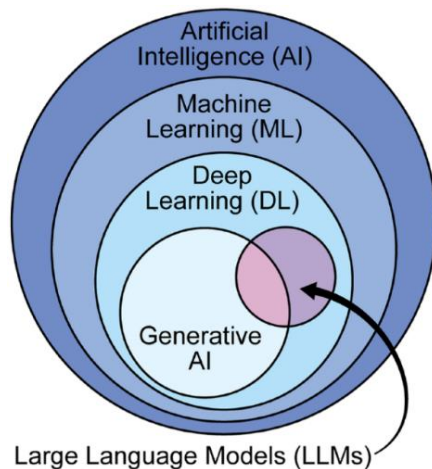
While these differentiations may seem crucial only to those initiated within the Computer Science world, they become important to change and learning practitioners when sorting out how we got here and where we should be going with GenAI tools within all branches of the

Organizational Change Management disciplines.

GenAI grew out of the field of AI study and practice called "Machine Learning" (Marr, 2024), which also falls under the AI taxonomy of Deep Learning (DL). See Figure 1. Deep Learning models are computer programs that can learn from large amounts of data to perform specific tasks (Amazon AWS, 2024). The Machine-learning algorithms created under DL go one step further as they can make decisions based on what they learn from the "deep-learned" data, and the more data they are fed, the better ML algorithms get. Machine Learning (ML) can be either supervised AI or unsupervised AI, depending on the type of data used to train the model. Supervised learning AI uses labeled data (labeled by humans), while unsupervised learning AI uses its programming to discover patterns within the data (Marr, 2024; Bell, 2023).

Figure 1

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Taxonomy



Note. The image depicts Large Language Model (LLMs) tools, such as ChatGPT well within the AI taxonomy in a simplistic form. It was published in 2024 “Large Language Models: A Primer and Gastroenterology Applications” by Shahab, O., El Kurdi, B., Shaukat, A., Nadkarni, G., & Soroush, A. (2024). *Therapeutic Advances in Gastroenterology*. Copyright 2024.

Another component of AI to be understood is Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP

is defined as the ability of a computer program to understand human language as it is spoken and written. Workplace tools such as virtual assistants, search engines, and chatbots (like ChatGPT) utilize NLP (Siontis et al., 2023). GenAI tools utilize the NLP algorithms to function. With advancements in NLP over the past five-plus decades, current GenAI tools were possible (Marr, 2024; Siontis et al., 2023). Two notable examples of GenAI tools that utilize NLP and can be used in Change Management are DALL-E 2 and ChatGPT. DALL-E 2 is a text-to-art platform that allows anyone to generate unique artwork. ChatGPT is a language model and advanced Chatbot that creates texts based on conversational text prompts. However, GenAI is capable of much more. GenAI looks at a lot of data (text, visual, or other) and learns the patterns within the data. It then tries to create something new that fits those patterns (Marr, 2024). Currently, GenAI tools can write books, create end-to-end movies, create new poetry, write computer code from plain language prompts, compose songs, and combine instruments for new melodies, harmonies, and lyrics.

Finally, the authentic look and sound of GenAI outputs exist as they are built on the core technology of neural networks. A neural network is an advanced machine-learning model inspired by how the human brain works. Like how a human learns from trial and error, a neural network can learn patterns and relationships to make decisions. It can learn from its errors (Marr, 2024). The more data the neural networks expose, the better they identify patterns and understand the rules governing data (Marr, 2024).

It is important to note that GenAI intentionally introduces a certain amount of randomness in the generation model to produce slightly different outputs each time it is prompted, even if the learning input stays the same (Marr, 2024). It is intentionally programmed to respond slightly differently, allowing for "unique" outputs. A change practitioner can utilize

this programming to communicate the same message in multiple ways for different audiences and styles.

ChatGPT for Change Practitioners

ChatGPT is an example of a typical AI tool used in the workplace. ChatGPT is fundamentally a language model and advanced chatbot that creates texts based on conversational text prompts (Marr, 2024). What powers ChatGPT is a Large Language Model (LLM) created by OpenAI called GPT-4 (Generative Pre-trained Transformer). Transformers are part of neural networks, an advanced machine-learning model inspired by how the human mind works (AWS, 2024; Marr, 2024). LLMs learn semantic relations between words and use that data to generate more language (Marr, 2024).

ChatGPT utilizes natural language processing (NLP) to analyze and understand human languages in a conversational format rather than typical command lines to program computer tools. ChatGPT allows users to interact naturally (conversation) with an AI system through text-based conversations (George et al., 2023). While ChatGPT is probably the most advanced chatbot we have ever seen, it is just one example of GenAI in action as GenAI uses extend far beyond chatbots (Marr, 2024). Other GenAI tools can interpret medical scans for the health industry or even create entire gaming videos. While ChatGPT can create original content such as text, images, audio, or computer code, their output can also be predicted as hallucinogenic garbage if the learned data set is faulty (Siontis et al., 2023).

How GenAI Tools Impact Human Thought and Behavior in the Workplace

As GenAI holds the power of creation, it can also be harnessed for nefarious uses by the unethical. GenAI is also the technology behind deepfakes, and it will continue to get better at creating fake but entirely realistic content. One famous example was in 2021 when Chris Ume

and Miles Fisher created a deepfake video for TikTok of Tom Cruise for entertainment and to raise awareness of how realistic this technology has become and highlight technology abuse (ABC News, 2021). A series of deep-fake videos from CEOs to politicians have been produced using GenAI technology tools, including political videos attempting to instill distrust in candidates and existing leaders (ABC News, 2021).

As these GenAI tools are introduced to and used in the workplace, their impacts on human behavior and resulting outcomes are relevant to all organizational change practitioners. All changes in workplace behavior require human cognitive processes that precede such behavior and results, as demonstrated in Figure 2 (Welle, 2022). The cognitive processes involved in human learning and skill acquisition are multifaceted, encompassing stages of perception, conceptualization, contextualization, and ultimately, behavioral change with the adoption of new skills and, thus – workplace results (Darrah, 1992; Person et al., 2009; Illeris et al., 2010).

Figure 2

The Cycle of Peak Performance – Iterative Beliefs, Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviors, Results



THE CYCLE OF PEAK PERFORMANCE

Note. This model was produced by psychologist Scott Welle, summarizing the iterative cycle of how human beliefs impact behaviors and results. From “Outperform the Norm,” by Scott Welle, 2022. Copyright 2022. Published with permission from the author.

In summary, AI impacts each point along this iterative cycle of humans achieving workplace results. GenAI tools were created using Deep Learning (DL). DL uses models to mimic the human brain and mind to imitate a perceived understanding of how humans learn (IBM, 2021; Marr, 2024). Thus, those GenAI tools created by deep learning models were intended to impact human learning and perception and the resulting behaviors.

AI Agents vs. Generative AI Tools – the Differences

An AI agent is considered a more advanced evolution of GenAI with added capabilities for decision-making and interaction with its environment (Yee et al., 2024). An AI Agent differs from GenAI (Generative AI) in that an AI agent is designed to generate content, actively take actions, and make decisions based on its situation analysis, acting autonomously to achieve a goal. In comparison, GenAI's primary focus has been creating new content like text, images, or code based on learned patterns without the ability to execute actions in the real world independently.

Section One: GenAI Tools in the Workplace

Section One investigates 2023-2024 workplace readiness for GenAI tools. It contextualizes GenAI and AI Agents implementations as enterprise-wide process and systems change initiatives. For brevity, this research focuses on GenAI's impacts on two key OCM processes: workplace communication and skill learning.

The AI Revolution Impacts Organizational Change Management

In 2023-2024, we are in an "AI Revolution" (Profisee et al., 2024). A new industry of creating and administrating LLM GenAI tools and AI Agents has risen in 2023-2024 (HBR, 2024), impacting the tools change practitioners utilize. Here are just three recent GenAI examples that demonstrate the changes required for formal process changes and daily working

methods. All three tools are available to change practitioners.

GenAI in Education Example

Sal Khan, the founder and CEO of Khan Academy, gave a Ted Talk titled "How AI could save (not destroy) Education." Sal stated, "We are at the cusp of using AI for the biggest, positive transformation that Education has ever seen" (Kahn, 2024). Khan encouraged collaboration with the tool and introduced his education chatbot, Khanmigo™. During the 2023-2024 school year, more than 221.2K individuals used Khanmigo (Khan, 2024). Khan promotes giving every student on the planet their own AI tutor and every teacher on the planet their personal AI assistant. He stressed the increase in speed and turned an average student into an exceptional student and the below-average student into an average student (Kahn, 2024).

GenAI in Change Management Example

Prosci (Professional Science), one of the leaders in OCM, introduced its own GenAI chat box tool, Kaiya™, in July 2024 to provide change practitioners and leaders with rapid research and find answers within their own body of work for those day-to-day change management tasks (Prosci, 2024). The tool is available for purchase by certified Prosci change practitioners – Certified Change Practitioners (Prosci, 2024). To date, several thousands have been said to have utilized Kaiya™ with the familiar feeling that Kaiya allows a change practitioner to quickly find change management information and provide comprehensive answers in plain language (Prosci, 2024). Kaiya has integrated the latest AI into Change Management research (Anderson, 2024) and insights into change management with up-to-date recommendations and guidance for change practitioners (Prosci, 2024). Research by Prosci in October 2023 revealed that 84% of change practitioners were moderately familiar with AI, while in 2024, only 39% of the 656 survey respondents said they use AI in their change management work. Their concerns are

categorized around privacy, security, risk, accuracy, and potential job loss (Anderson, 2024).

GenAI in Project Management Example

Project Management Institute (PMI) has joined the "AI Revolution" (PMI, 2024) to introduce an AI-powered coach for project professionals called PMI Infinity™, enabling project and change practitioners to search and find answers, ideas, and suggestions to project management-related topics. As of January 2024, more than 7,300 project professionals have utilized the tool, and more than 14,000 queries have been answered and downloaded (PMI, 2024). The tool is an exclusive benefit for paid PMI members. One intended objective was to provide personalized support in an AI-powered coach to give guidance and recommendations based on user queries. The answers provided are intended to be aligned with PMI's published Project Management Book of Knowledge, the PMBOK (PMI, 2024).

Preparing Organizations for GenAI Tools and AI Agents

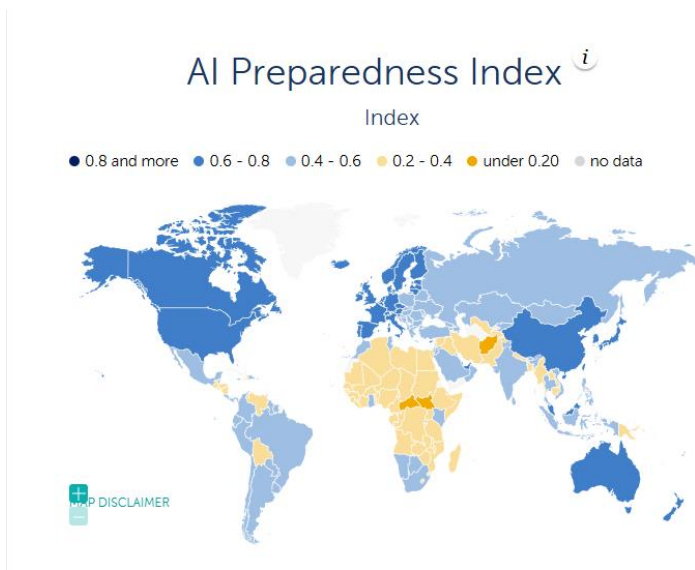
At the start of 2024, the ongoing questions around using GenAI tools, like ChatGPT, Gemini, and others in non-private settings prevail: What are the possibilities? What are the risks? What are the implications? Furthermore, "Do the benefits of the possibilities outweigh the risks?" Fundamental, industry, and academic questions revolved around central organizational change themes of legal, ethical, and administrative issues. Not all planet-wide change practitioners are currently impacted by GenAI tools.

On June 25th, 2024, International Monetary Fund (IMF) research mapped the world's readiness for Artificial Intelligence (see Figure 3). IMF found that AI reshapes the global economy, especially in labor markets. IMF predicted that AI could endanger 33% of jobs in advanced economies, 24% in emerging economies, and 18% in low-income countries (Cazzaniga et al., 2024). Data was correlated for 174 economies based on their readiness in four areas: 1.

Digital infrastructure, 2. Human capital and labor market policies, 3. Innovation and economic integration, and 4. Regulation. While many countries lack the infrastructure or skilled workforces needed to harness AI's benefits, those advanced economies are poised with significant opportunities to utilize AI to boost the productivity of current jobs while creating new jobs and industries (Cazzaniga et al., 2024).

Figure 3

Map of AI preparedness index across 174 economies worldwide as of June 2024 by IMF



Note. From the International Monetary Fund, IMF in June 2024 created to depict how AI-ready 174 economies are based on four areas: digital infrastructure, human capital and labor market policies, innovation, economic integration, and regulation. From Mapping the World's Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Shows Prospects Diverge by G. Melina, 2024. Copyright 2021 International Monetary Fund. Published with permission.

These statistics indicate that GenAI tools are used more frequently in advanced economies. For a change practitioner, understanding how these tools will be employed is crucial as it provides insights into the organization's communication channels, artifact creation,

processes, and systems they must navigate during transformational change initiatives.

AI Agents and LLM Tools in the 2023-2024 Workplace

Examining how LLM tools, like ChatGPT, are utilized in the workplace reveals a consistent list of applications across various industries. Primarily, these tools help alleviate day-to-day administrative tasks, such as writing and responding to emails, creating presentations, summarizing reports, developing coding, and performing calculations. They also enable quicker research results, "how to" inquiries, and the rapid creation of high-quality multimedia content (Marr, 2024; Younger et al., 2024). Most of the current adoption of GenAI and LLM tools is driven by individual employees motivated to accomplish more in less time, reduce cognitive load, and gain a competitive edge over their colleagues (Christian, 2023). Each of these motivations could serve as a topic for further research, and this study touches on the driver of reducing some workers' cognitive load as a driver to gain faster business value.

The availability and creation of market AI Agents and GenAI tools continues to grow since the September 2021 release of ChatGPT (Yee et al., 2024) and is predicted to advance with millions of AI Agents being actively created (Zuckerberg, 2024). Billions of AI Agents will have been created and be on the business market soon (Zuckerberg, 2024).

Channel Futures, among others, has compiled a list of the top 10 predictions for AI use in the workplace for 2024 from influential voices in the industry. There is a strong consensus that organizations will transition from having a few to hundreds of thousands and potentially billions of customized generative AI applications to enhance their operations (Futures, 2024).

A published consultative research paper highlighted one notable case study example of the challenges surrounding the experimental adoption of the GenAI tools ChatGPT, GPT 3.5, GPT-4, and LLMs in government (Lucke & Frank, 2024). Researchers who collaborated with

scientists, administrative staff, and parliamentary decision-makers generated and evaluated 210 proposals for AI applications in parliaments. The consensus revealed that while technical issues were not a barrier, the integration of AI raises ethical, legal, and administrative challenges alongside limitations in practical usage that intersect fundamental democratic principles (Lucke & Frank, 2024).

Joseph B. Fuller, a professor at Harvard Business School and co-leader of its Future of Work initiative, remarked, "Companies both do not have a firm grasp of the implications of letting individual employees engage with such powerful technology nor do they have much faith in their employee's understanding of the issues involved" (Telford & Verma, 2023).

GenAI Tools: As an Enterprise-Wide Process Change Initiative

Implementing GenAI tools and AI Agents in the workplace could be categorized as re-engineering workplace processes with Artificial Intelligence, wherein the re-engineered solution is to automate or augment employee tasks inside their ways of working. The perceived technology for automation or augmentation in this context is GenAI tools (Wilson, 2024; API, 2024).

Employees follow documented or undocumented patterns to achieve their work outputs. Using AI technology to improve how they work is part of the ongoing Intelligence Revolution, or AI Revolution 4.0 (Marr, 2024). GenAI tool implementations represent a fundamental initiative for process improvements or even a full re-engineering of existing processes (Bodimani, 2021; Leonardi, 2024).

While one category of AI tools cannot do everything a person does, new GenAI tools can help with specific activities inside processes. This means some tasks can be augmented, automated, or made more straightforward, reducing the time a person must spend on them

(Leonardi, 2024). AI tools such as Motion and Reclaim can alter how a person does tasks within a person's daily work processes, such as scanning all emails and existing projects and organizing one's calendar to focus on the most important tasks.

Section Two: GenAI on Organizational Change Management Ingredients: Workplace Communication and Skill Learning

Section two places special attention on cognitive enhancements utilizing GenAI technology and cognitive interruptions from GenAI tools. This section also addresses how the overreliance and misuse of GenAI tools can create resistance to current organizational change initiatives by interrupting elements inside the communication and human knowledge attainment process. It offers an interdisciplinary approach that pulls from neuroscience, cognitive behavior, organizational change management, education, and adult workplace skill attainment.

GenAI Impacts on Change Practitioner's Communications

The emergence of GenAI tools is transforming various aspects of workplace communication, including content, frequency, style, and intent. This communication creates, sustains, and shapes change (Altman et al., 2024). Executive change leaders have a choice to be intentional or unintentional with GenAI tool implementation in their organizational processes and systems, a choice that impacts the change practitioner's portfolio of work as a change practitioner's job is to create new mindsets within the act and cycle of communicating which results in behavior changes that add value to the organizations they work with (Ball, 2023; Gibbons, 2019).

GenAI writing tools like ChatGPT, CopyAi, and Jasper can generate high-quality copy for communication and marketing purposes. Image generation tools like Midjourney and Dall-E 2 can create hyper-realistic visual content for change campaigns. The list of potential tools grows

daily in communication development and dissemination. The potential to change the way change practitioners create personalized content from stem to stern, such as brainstorming change tactics to create the communication outputs themselves, is staggering (Marr, 2024).

Communication is a central medium in planned change initiatives, inspiring and facilitating organizational transformations (Deszca et al., 2024; Ford & Ford, 1995). Audience objections to the creation, dissemination, and absorption of GenAI communication outputs create a distraction and resistance to change efforts (Marr, 2024; Voiovich, 2024) "If you didn't write it, why should I read it?" and the flip side "What's the point of taking the time to write something myself if no one actually reads it?" are two resistance statements barring the end goal of the communication itself, diluting or barring the results while lowering of active involvement (Marr, 2024; Voiovich, 2024).

Fundamentally, overreliance, misuse, and misunderstandings of any GenAI tool can be destructive and get in the way of the change practitioners' role of utilizing the cycle of communication to create change (Coccia, 2022). While GenAI provides new and faster ways to craft personalized copy and image communication artifacts, they do not create the change in the individual by themselves (Hiatt,2006; Lewis, 2019).

Change Unfolds Within Communication – GenAI Impacts

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GenAI writing tools like ChatGPT, CopyAi, and Jasper can generate high-quality copy for communication and marketing purposes. Image generation tools like Midjourney and Dall-E 2 can create hyper-realistic visual content for change campaigns. The list of potential tools grows daily in communication development and dissemination. The potential to change the way change practitioners create personalized content from stem to stern, such as brainstorming change tactics to create the communication outputs themselves, is staggering (Marr, 2024).

Communication is a central medium in planned change initiatives, inspiring and facilitating organizational transformations (Deszca et al., 2024; Ford & Ford, 1995). Audience objections exist for GenAI creating and disseminating communication artifacts (Marr, 2024).

Over time, both academic and empirical research have made it clear that communication is not merely a byproduct of change; instead, change unfolds within and through communication (Deszca et al., 2024; Ford & Ford, 1995)—an important distinction. Change is not just a process that utilizes a communication artifact or an output as a tool, but change itself is inherently created, sustained, and shaped by the act and process of communication (Deszca et al., 2024; Donnellon, 1986). Thus, if elements of the communication process did not happen, or any part of the communication process was altered, including the creation, the dissemination, or even the recipient's perception of the authenticity of the communication, then you can positively or negatively alter the resulting change (Deszca et al., 2024; Dutta, 2020). For example, verbal conversations between leaders and employees about change help clarify the involvement and support of those affected, which is essential for managing resistance (Dutta, 2020; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979). These discussions provide insights into the rationale, context, and

significance of the change, allowing individuals to express their concerns and suggestions (e.g., Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1990; Lippitt, Langseth, & Mossop, 1985). If a GenAI-created email is ignored as recipients know "a robot wrote it," or an auto-survey goes unanswered as "there is no real human reading it" then this mindset interrupts vital dialogue around change. Without this two-way dialogue, individuals may feel confused about their roles, leading to increased resistance to change efforts (Ademola, 2024; Ball, 2024; Beer, 1980).

In their scholarly article "The Role of Conversations in Producing Intentional Change in Organizations," two change management academics, Ford and Ford (Cameron & Green, 2024; Ford & Ford, 1995), emphasized that "communication is the context in which change occurs," asserting that the change process unfolds through four distinct types of conversations (Ford & Ford, 1995). Intentional change emerges from organizational conversations that follow specific claims, declarations, and associated requests and promises. Crucially, if these conversations are not initiated, the potential outcomes of change initiatives—such as identifying opportunities, problems, and crises that stimulate action—are likely to be overlooked (Ball, 2024; Dutta, 2020; Ford & Ford, 1995; Mintzberg et al., 1976). The conversations are also the starting point for selling the idea of an existing issue, where managers seek to engage their peers' attention (Cameron & Green, 2024; Dutton, 2020; Dutton & Ashford, 1993).

All underscores the idea that we cannot effect change without communication, making all aspects of communication a top priority for all change practitioners (Cameron & Green, 2024). If confidence in the GenAI tools and content creation are questioned or blocked by the recipient, the change outcomes cannot be achieved. Making GenAI tools that alter how we communicate should also be elevated as a top priority for change practitioners to understand, learn, and competently utilize.

GenAI – Impacts on Learning and Cognitive Functions

Change practitioners bear the responsibility of guiding effective workplace learning in the age of GenAI. These tools can easily generate content, but deep comprehension requires more than just consuming summaries or accepting outputs at face value. By developing a strong conceptual understanding of GenAI themselves, change practitioners can create learning strategies that empower employees to move beyond surface-level knowledge to true mastery. From a cognitive science perspective, LLM GenAI tools have been perceived as both an interruption and an enhancement to workplace communication and learning (Das Swain & Saha, 2024). Recent findings in Cognitive Science indicate that human communication and learning is about sharing concepts rather than mere signals, i.e. words, images, letters, and symbols. While we exchange thoughts, the exact mechanism of this sharing remains unclear. This is crucial because introducing GenAI tools can disrupt this process as conveying concepts is more complex than simply exchanging words (Stolk et al., 2016).

Effective workplace communication and learning rely on a mutual understanding between parties (Dutta, 2020; Margaret, 1994; Sias, 2013). For instance, if I say “oranges” and you understand “oranges,” communication is successful, and learning can continue. However, if your mind interprets “oranges” as “tangerines” or “apples,” then the communication has failed and the learning cycle hiccups. Achieving this mutual understanding requires specific steps and elements; skipping them can hinder our perceived comprehension. From a change practitioner perspective communication artifacts like taglines, emails, newsletters, marketing materials, and intranet sites all act as channels to communicate the underlying reasons and messages of change (Lewis, 2011). These must be accurately interpreted for understanding to be achieved. If misinterpreted the desired mindset is missing. While GenAI can be utilized to enhance

communication, how the message is communicated plays a key role in whether it is accurately interpreted by another person (Sridhar et al., 2023).

One body of evidence supporting the notion that human communication shares concepts rather than mere signals come from the success of infants and tourists, who demonstrate that effective communication doesn't rely solely on pre-assigned signals (Stolk et al., 2016). Mutual understanding arises when communicators employ similar cognitive processes, independent of the specific words used (Stolk et al., 2016). While LLM tools like ChatGPT can generate signals with established meanings (words), the question remains: is this enough to foster true understanding? One example is nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, body language, and vocal tones within human interaction as a necessary contribution to understanding (Knapp et al., 2014). Another example is the necessity of shared experiences and cultural context to properly interpret meaning and achieve understandings beyond literal words (Bruner, 1990). A more recent paper published in 2020 delved into the capabilities and limitations of LLM in understanding and generating human language. The nuances can be missed creating misinterpretations (Fu et al., 2020).

Twenty-first-century breakthroughs in Cognitive Science show that sensory processing and perception are dynamic and largely shaped by attention (Sridhar et al., 2023). This attentional focus creates rhythmic sensory inflow, which requires intentional engagement. Unlike AI, which can maintain constant attention, humans cannot. Disrupting these rhythms—especially when communication is not authored by the original writer and is summarized by AI—can disturb perception and learning cycles (Schroeder et al., 2010). Further exploration is needed to identify the specific human perceptions affected and the extent of that disruption.

Workplace Skills Learning with GenAI Tools

Most organizational changes are an ask to perform and behave differently. This ask usually requires employees to learn new knowledge and skills (Russ-Eft et al., 2024). Using the Prosci ADKAR model, a successful change initiative requires each person fulfill the required gaining of “K = Knowledge” sufficiently, and the competency-proof attainment of skill in “A = Ability” (Hiatt, 2006). Making one of the many change practitioners’ tasks answering employee’s questions like: “How do I do it?” and “Am I doing it well?”.

Building both Knowledge and Ability requires the action of learning. Learning is not “hearing facts”, nor is Knowledge just “acquiring data” (Jia et al., 2021). While the definition of Knowledge has been debated throughout time from Socrates and Plato to modern times (Bolisani & Bratianu, 1970; Foley, 2020), a commonly used definition of Knowledge is: “An understanding, awareness, or familiarity gained through experience, education or learning. It can include facts, information, skills, feelings, and experiences” (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Notice in this definition that data (facts and information) are only pieced elements of acquiring knowledge and not the actual results of having knowledge, i.e. understanding and awareness. An important distinction in learning (Foley, 2020).

How then are LLM tools like ChatGPT impacting people acquiring knowledge and developing skills during change transformational projects? As LLM tools are predictive and can only generate information and data, they play a part in knowledge creation but do not produce full knowledge itself. For example, when you ask Chat GPT for “Ten Interview prep questions for a newly graduated college student to practice before his interview”, you are getting data. How that human college student practices answering questions, internalizing, and contextualizing which answers he uses during the actual interview is now a mixture of learned

knowledge and developed skills in the interviewing process. Full utilization of GenAI technology can create an interactive experience to drill skills with humans, while chatbot tools like ChatGPT give him data. That student's utilization of that data and further practice gives him the knowledge and thus, skill.

The same could apply to workplace change. For instance, consider the scenario where a company wants to enhance its leadership capabilities. A change practitioner could utilize a GenAI tool to generate a series of scenarios that leaders might face in their roles, like managing conflict, increasing team engagement, or even handling resistance to the changes they want to make. The actual business value comes when these leaders engage in role-playing exercises or simulations based on these generated scenarios. They need to practice gaining skills. By practicing their responses, receiving feedback, and reflecting on their experiences they can internalize their strategy, contextualize their learning, and develop long-lasting skills to handle their real-life workplace challenges.

In these ways, GenAI can speed up the process of gaining knowledge as long as the rest of the human journey toward knowledge and competency remains intact, i.e. not interrupted or circumvented (Faisal Rashid et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025). GenAI can accelerate knowledge acquisition, but only if it complements rather than replaces the essential human elements of learning and skill development (Nie, 2023; Wang et al., 2025). While GenAI is still relatively new and more research is being done, some related fields have supporting academic evidence that provide the claim that GenAI can speed up the process of gaining knowledge if the person does the work necessary for them to learn and apply the data they've learned. For instance, there is research in AI-based intelligent tutoring systems which have had decades demonstrating that personalized feedback and adapting the learning to the individual needs does enhance learning

(VanLehn, 2011). Another example is concept mapping software which has been academically shown to have positive impacts on comprehension and knowledge retention (Nesbit & Adesope, 2006). GenAI can rapidly create concept mapping, summarize complex texts, translate languages and even create visuals from text to aid understanding. Thus, utilized in tandem with proven academic education methodology, GenAI can enhance an individual's learning journey.

Overlaps in Adult Workplace Skills Learning and Formal Education

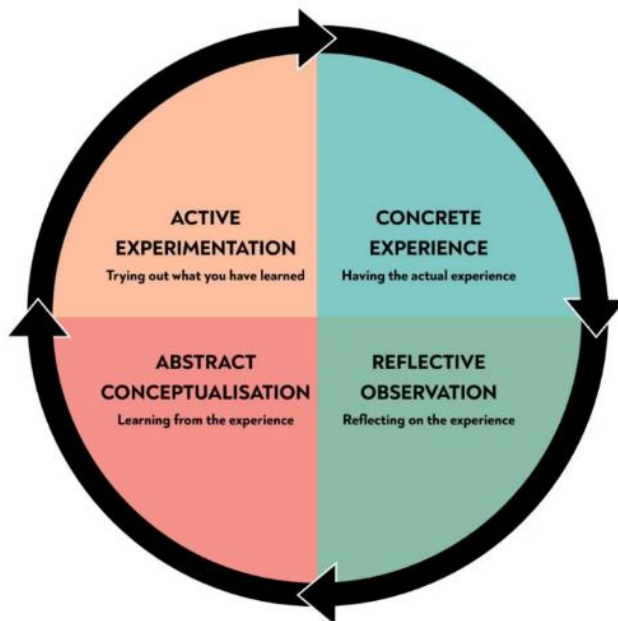
Adult workplace learning and classroom educational instruction share essential overlapping roots. For example, workplace learning has a general empirical maxim that adults are not very inclined to learn something when they cannot see the point based on their situations (Foley, 2020; Illeris, 2003), and classroom education insists children learn inside their situations of play (Broadhead & Burt, 2012; Foley, 2020).

A renowned academic influencer on our modern education process, John Dewey, in his book *How We Think*, lays out the necessary processes to think, to learn, and to understand. Part of the learning and communication processes is reflected in what is being said and written by oneself before it is relayed to another (Dewey, 1909). If that process is interrupted by ChatGPT doing your writing and reflecting for you without you doing the critical thinking part, then the learning process is interrupted within you (Foley, 2020; Kolb & Kolb, 2005; Russ-Eft et al., 2024). For example, if a student fails to read virtual posts in an online course from other students and teachers but instead copy-pastes another's writing into a GenAI tool and asks the tool to create a reply for them, which they post as-is, then little to no learning, writing, or reflection steps have been done. The same scenario can be seen inside the workplace. If an employee robotically takes a presentation, PDF, or other text-based communication and has GenAI read, interpret, and create a reply in that employee's name, no communication process has been

followed. No reflection, conceptual understanding, or creative learning has been achieved. Only the task of “I must reply” has been completed. To bridge the gap between AI-generated knowledge and real-world competence, employees must consciously and intentionally engage in the process of applying, experimenting, and refining their understanding through hands-on work (Foley, 2020).

Figure 4

The Experiential Learning Cycle



Note. The Experiential Learning Cycle was created by David and Alice Kolb in 1984. It reflects on a learner’s internal cognitive processes in a four-stage learning cycle to develop new concepts. Kolb, A. Y., & Kolb, D. A. (2005). Learning styles and learning spaces: Enhancing experiential learning in higher education. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 4(2), 193–212. Copyright

Creative Problem Solving and Workplace Innovation – GenAI Impacts

There is an overlap in the know-how and skills used by educators and change

practitioners alike. Workplace skill development and educational classroom instruction share essential elements such as creativity, exploration, and independent thinking. All are crucial for successful business change expansions and effective teaching methods in education (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). To maximize GenAI's potential for workplace learning—with its rapid research access, simplified texts, and engaging visuals—change practitioners must find the balance between human expertise and AI capabilities to drive organizational transformation.

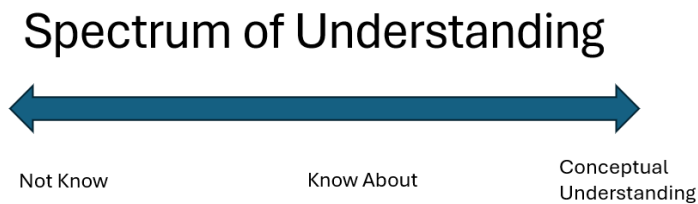
The phrase “Conceptual Understanding” suggests that comprehension exists on a spectrum, with conceptual understanding representing the highest level (Frederiksen et al., 1993). Conceptual understanding represents the pinnacle of learners' knowledge development made up of both declarative knowledge (understanding about something) and procedural knowledge (understanding how to do something) (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2006). These knowledge types are intended to work in harmony, enabling learners to connect conceptual knowledge with content (declarative knowledge) and skills (procedural knowledge).

GenAI tools can enhance declarative and procedural knowledge by summing key concepts and steps in easy-to-understand vocabulary (Marr, 2024). When used improperly GenAI tools can also detract from both declarative and procedural knowledge by over-summarizing to the point of omission or truth distortion, impacting true comprehension (Marr, 2024). For example, a change practitioner might use GenAI to analyze employee data for potential risks related to a proposed change. However, if the practitioner lacks knowledge to interpret the data and its implications, the AI's insights become meaningless. They need declarative knowledge (the identified risks) with procedural knowledge (understanding and acting on the data) to make it useful, limiting their ability to effectively manage the change. GenAI can also assist change practitioners by generating training outlines, activities, and content drafts - saving them

significant time and effort. However, simply delivering AI-generated material does not guarantee learning. The practitioner's skill lies in transforming this output into high-empathetic, engaging experiences that build genuine procedural knowledge, empowering individuals to apply the information effectively on the job.

Figure 5

The Spectrum of Understanding from “Not Know” to “Conceptual Understanding”



Note. This model image is an original and was created by Dana Houston Jackson from a reimagining and contextualizing of multiple references from “Test theory for a new generation of tests,” by Frederiksen, N., Mislevy, R. J., & Bejar, I. I. , 1993. Published by L. Erlbaum Associates. And a reimagining of concepts within the 2011 Idea-based Learning course “A course design process to promote conceptual understanding” by Hansen, E. J. (2011). Published by Routledge.

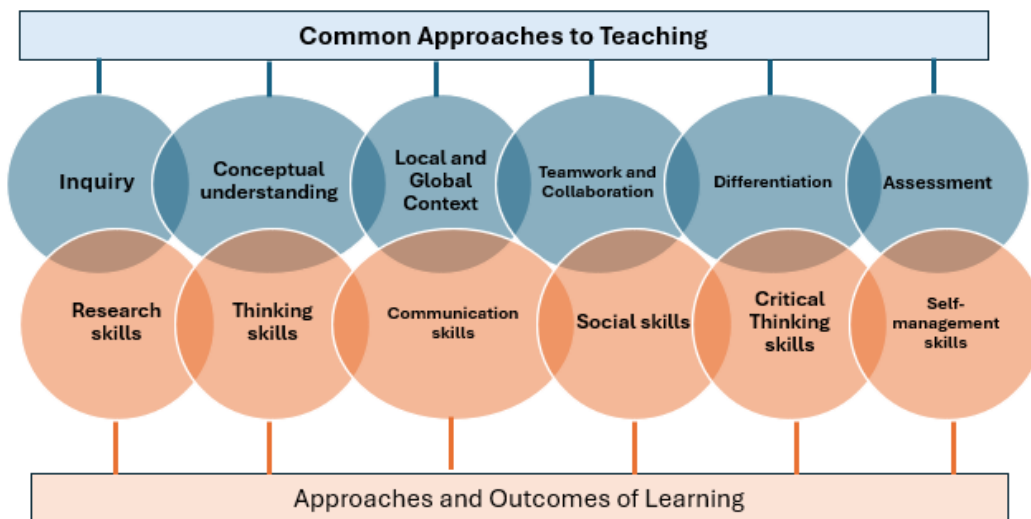
Beyond theories and published knowledge, educators aim to foster students' attitudes, interests, and cognitive skills to encourage critical reflection on ideas they generate or encounter (Eisner, 1965; Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). Renowned educator David Ausubel famously stated over four decades ago that the most crucial factor in learning is what the student already knows. Ausubel advocated for tailoring teaching to this understanding with the goal of learning being to develop individuals who can apply their knowledge to achieve their personal and workplace objectives (Ausubel, 1963). This goal aligns with the change practitioner’s goal to uncover what the employee knows and fill the skill gap until they can perform in the newly

prescribed way (Prosci, 2024; Russ-Eft et al., 2024).

Professor Richard Konicek-Moran has dedicated his work to promoting conceptual understanding in education (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). He asserts that we do not merely discover truths about the world; instead, we create explanations, test their predictive power, and adapt them based on their effectiveness. While the question of whether we find truth in any field—business included—differs, this perspective emphasizes the necessity of the learning process itself in a workplace setting: engaging with ideas, contextualizing them, and projecting them forward; all steps require a personalized experience and time-lapse.

Figure 6

Conceptual Understanding in Education and Workplace Learning – Approaches to Teaching vs. Learning



Note. While there are close intersections of teaching approaches and learning outcomes, the necessary workplace skills stem from original teaching approaches. Image is re-imagined from *How to focus on conceptual understanding while practicing Learner Thinking Skills: Simplifying approaches to Teaching & Learning Series (Part 2)* by P. Meli, 2019 updated 2023.

The state of a person having *conceptual understanding* of thought has been argued as a

necessary attainment for a person to transfer the explanations of the phenomenon to different variants of situations for interpretation and utilization to innovate (Hansen, 2011). For instance, educators in the sciences must achieve a state of conceptual understanding with their students to enable them to creatively propose new theories based on existing knowledge (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). This principle applies across all fields, as conceptual understanding is essential for piecing together complex information (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). It is crucial for transferring explanations of phenomena to various situations (Hansen, 2011). A common analogy is used to illustrate this: making a cake from scratch without a recipe contrasts sharply with using a pre-packaged mix. The latter requires no understanding of the ingredients or their interactions; one follows the instructions. Conversely, baking from scratch demands a grasp of ingredient types and their cause-and-effect relationships, such as someone knowledgeable about baking understands the roles of baking soda and baking powder and knowing how and when to incorporate them for optimal results. This process embodies conceptual understanding rather than simply adhering to a recipe (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). With a solid grasp of cake-making, one could adapt recipes or create new desserts i.e. Innovation. Thus, gaining conceptual understanding necessitates critical thinking (Andayani et al., 2018), innovation and is fundamental to being a true subject matter expert (SME). Anything less than achieving conceptual understanding involves following prescribed methods based on faith rather than comprehension (Frederiksen et al., 1993).

GenAI tools present new channels and produce unique content derived from various inputs that may not be immediately apparent to the reader. If the output is blindly accepted the conceptual understanding of the knowledge acquisition process can be interrupted. Achieving workplace conceptual understanding transcends mere memorization of facts or quick

assimilation of summarized bullet points produced by LLM tools. Change practitioners must first achieve a conceptual understanding around GenAI tools to provide the necessary learning experience for workplace employees.

While GenAI holds immense potential for enhancing employee learning and skill, its misuse can disrupt the fundamental human learning process, leading to surface-level understandings and hindering practical, real-world applications. This misuse can lead to dismissing innovative arguments or perspectives, as individuals may not fully engage with the learning curve necessary for developing their personal insights, retarding creative thought, and innovation. For example, imagine a change practitioner tasked with training in a new customer relationship management (CRM) system. While AI may generate grammatically flawless text and visually nice slides, the lack of human touch, personalization, and experimental learning missed opportunities can lead to passive consumption, hindering active engagement and critical thinking (Mayer, 2022). It can also lead to employee poor knowledge retention without offering the time to contextualize and failing to present applicable opportunities to apply knowledge in practical scenarios (Lovett et al., 2023). Lastly, employee learners with different needs and preferences may find standardized content offered by GenAI tools with similar prompts irrelevant or overwhelming (Coffield et al., 2004).

This section has raised more questions to be answered, many of which are noted in the “additional research” section of the paper. However, the main takeaway is that humans communicate and learn through concepts. Achieving conceptual understanding necessitates following established communication and learning processes. Without a deep conceptual understanding of what is being learned, innovative ideas and creative thought may not emerge (Konicek-Moran & Keeley, 2016). While GenAI can assist in generating initial concepts, relying

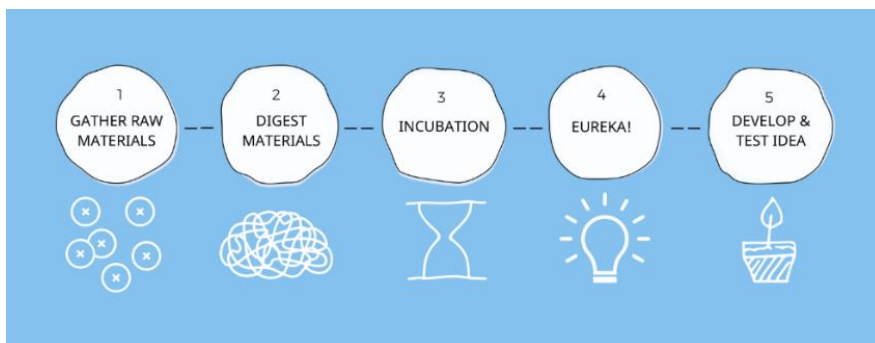
solely on AI outputs can bypass the essential process required for our conceptual comprehension.

Generating New Ideas with AI – Changes in Human Cognitive Processing Elements

During a 2009 interview, Google’s Chief Economist Dr. Hal R. Varian stated, "The ability to take data—to be able to understand it, to process it, to extract value from it, to visualize it, to communicate it—that’s going to be a hugely important skill in the next decades" (Dykes, 2024). Fast forward to 2024, and Varian’s astute assessment takes on a whole new meaning. If the human activities of listening, hearing, processing, understanding, and forming ideas are interrupted or non-existent, then successful change cannot occur (Ball, 2024; Deszca et al., 2024). “Active engagement” in change efforts requires the mind space to listen, hear, process, understand, and form ideas (Deszca et al., 2024). If that mind-space is non-existent or shut down due to mistrust of the AI agent content created human engagement is reduced or blocked (Marr, 2024) resulting in resistance within the change initiative.

Figure 7

Five-Step Process to Generate New Ideas



Note. This image is reimagined use of James Webb Young’s Five-Step Process to generate new ideas as laid out in Webb’s book “A technique for producing ideas: The simple, five-step formula anyone can use to be more creative in business and in life!” By Young, J. W. (2009). Published by Waking Lion Press. The image was reimagined by James Clear, the author of *Atomic Habits*”. Copyrighted.

Depending on someone's understanding and use of GenAI tools, the tools can both enhance and detract from a person's cognitive process to create new ideas (Daugherty et al., 2024). For example, within the technology discipline of UX – User Experience. UX is a discipline often uses a technique oft used to produce new test ideas (Young, 2011). It is a five-step process that includes: 1. Gathering raw materials, 2. Digesting materials, 3. Incubation, 4. Eureka! 5. Develop and test the idea. GenAI tools can change how the first three of five steps of generating new ideas process are accomplished as shown in Figure 7. This can change what Eureka! idea is had (or not had). While GenAI can rapidly cull and pull information from many sources giving new insights and new viewpoints, if misused, it can also interrupt the human gathering, reading, digestion, and learning incubation process of the material if overly summarized without the full journey followed.

On the flip side, if GenAI tools are fully understood and utilized correctly, they can enhance the learning process when multi-model learning artifacts such as images, videos, and films can be rapidly located and digested by the learner. It comes down to this: Did the learner take the time and necessary steps to digest the correct and truthful story to arrive at a conceptual understanding needed before a Eureka moment can be had? (Young, 2007). For example: if “make a change tomorrow” was the intended communication, and “you should have changed yesterday” is what is understood by the recipient, then the wrong story is being digested. During my work as a change manager, I have witnessed a co-worker author a work email or painstakingly put together a communication presentation that laid out time, place, form, and event details around a change to paint the complete mental picture with recommendations. In turn, the reader dumped the PDF or PowerPoint into an LLM GenAI tool to summarize it into a few bullet points in seconds. The full communication journey and resultant necessary mindset to

approve or disapprove recommendations was not achieved by the reader. The reader did not digest the full story, interrupting the process of generating new test ideas.

In the recently published book *Human + Machine: Reimagining Work in the Age of AI*, the authors argue that the interaction with chatbots and virtual assistants removes friction and process steps to gather information rapidly (Daugherty et al., 2024). The authors also argue that the ability to quickly and creatively iterate with feedback loops can improve overall learning (Daugherty et al., 2024). From this perspective, GenAI can enhance the speed and creativity for the Eureka! moments when appropriately utilized.

Proper conceptual understanding of digital transformations with GenAI tools and their uses is necessary to fulfill the role of change practitioner (Prosci, 2023). Overreliance and misuse are destructive to workplace creativity and innovation such as GenAI swiftly compiling information from various online sources while also having the potential to provide overly simplistic summaries in the form of bullet points, hallucinogenic data, or too-brief descriptions. All of which hinder the employee processes of reading, comprehension, and learning which obstruct critical and creative thinking. On the flip side, having rapid access to various learning modalities—such as images, videos, and films—utilized correctly with conceptual understanding as the learning goal can significantly enrich the workplace learning experience.

Section Three: Inside Organizational Change Models: Kotter 8-Step, McKinsey's 7S and Prosci ADKAR

There are dozens of existing organizational change methodologies and models as of the date of this research. Brevity requires focus. This section explores three widely used planned change methodologies: Prosci's ADKAR, John Kotter's 8-Step, and McKinsey's 7S. It provides a spotlight on two specific ingredients inside organizational change that are impacted by GenAI -

workplace communication and workplace learning with required skill application. These three change approaches, ADKAR, Kotter, McKinsey's 7S, emphasize the importance of effective communication processes and workplace employee learning with skill demonstration as necessary ingredients for successful organizational transformational change initiatives.

Informal organizational change does not ascribe to a specific methodology. It relies on personal relationships, word-of-mouth communication, and natural social networks around employees (Olson, 2023; HBR, 2023). While these elements are helpful in any change initiative, they are more challenging to quantify. Thus, I have focused on formal organizational change models for this research. Formal organizational change models provide a helpful starting point in understanding and directing the organizational change process, including the steps and variables necessary to execute said model. "Conceptual models play a key role in the diagnostic process because they help us to decide which aspects of organizational behavior require attention and provide a focus for information gathering" (Hayes, 2018, p.141).

What is Planned Organizational Change?

Planned organizational change is a structured approach involving a systematic process of identifying the need for change, developing a strategy and plan for its implementation, and monitoring the change, to achieve specific goals and improving performance without disruption (Nicotera, 2020). Planned organizational change models result from academic and practitioner-based applications with resultant case studies giving both a theoretical and an empirical framework from which to approach transformational organizational change (Rosenbaum et al., 2017).

Planned, intentional change occurs when a change agent consciously strives to establish new conditions and circumstances, executing through deliberate actions and interventions,

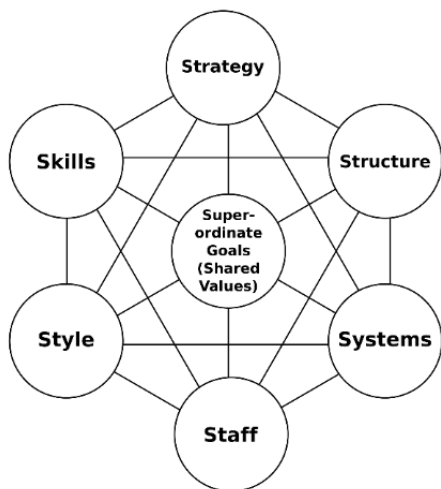
individually or collaboratively. This type of change is produced with intent, positioning the change agent as a driving force (Ford & Ford, 1995). In contrast, unintentional change arises as a byproduct of actions—manifesting as side effects, accidents, or unforeseen consequences (Rossi, 1979).

McKinsey's 7S Model

The McKinsey's 7S model was developed by McKinsey consultants Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, analyzing organizational effectiveness through seven interconnected elements: Strategy, Structure, Systems, Shared Values, Skills, Style, and Staff. It emphasizes aligning these elements for successful change. Open communication is crucial for shared understanding of values and strategy. Skill development ensures that employees can effectively adapt to new systems and structures (Peters & Waterman, 2009).

Figure 8

McKinsey's 7S Planned Change Model



Note. This image is of McKinsey's 7S Model pulled Nov 11, 2024, from Wikimedia Collective Commons. Published August 2007 by Wikimedia.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:McKinsey_7S_framework.svg

A closer look into the skill development section of this McKinsey's 7S planned change model reveals how GenAI tools can both help and hinder elements.

How GenAI Impacts Skill Learning – A Look Through the Lens of McKinsey's 7S Model

To offer a balanced perspective on GenAI's potential to both enhance and detract from learning skills based on its usage, I have included content and examples that illustrate both viewpoints within the context of the McKinsey's 7S Change Model.

GenAI tools can help forward the McKinsey's 7S model for employee skill development by offering personalized learning through AI-powered platforms like Coursera and Degreed which leverage AI to personalize learning pathways, recommending content, and correct pacing based on individual needs and progress (Coursera, 2023; Degreed, 2023),

GenAI tools can provide on-demand knowledge access, as part of the 7S element "Systems". AI chatbots like Google's LaMDA and Microsoft's Azure Bot Service can be integrated into company systems to provide instant answers to employee queries, reducing time spent searching for information. (Chowdhary, 2023; Microsoft, 2023).

GenAI tools can offer simulations and skills practice, as part of the 7S element "Skills", using platforms like Talespin and Strivr. which use AI to create immersive Virtual Reality (VR) simulations for practicing soft skills and technical skills in a safe and controlled environment, boosting confidence and competence. (Talespin, 2023; Strivr, 2023)

GenAI tools can be used to create content and perform faster curation, as part of the 7S element "Shared Values & Strategy", with tools like Grammarly and QuillBot assisting in creating engaging and error-free learning materials. While platforms like Anders Pink and Feedly leverage AI to curate relevant industry news and resources. (Grammarly, 2023; QuillBot, 2023; Anders Pink, 2023; Feedly, 2023). Conversely, while AI can provide quick answers, over-

reliance on these tools might hinder employee's ability to problem-solve and think critically independently. This over-dependence on AI can create "automation bias", where individuals favor AI-generated solutions without proper evaluation (Webb, 2020).

GenAI can also hinder workplace learning by increasing bias and inaccuracy within the McKinsey's 7s "Shared Values" element. AI models are trained on data, which can reflect existing biases. If not carefully curated, AI-generated training content can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misinformation (O'Neil, 2016), "AI models are trained on data, which can reflect existing biases. If not carefully curated, AI-generated training content can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and misinformation" (O'Neil, 2016), which can lead to employees learning biased or inaccurate information, hindering their ability to develop a fair and accurate understanding of the company's values and the wider world.

GenAI can hinder workplace learning by reducing the amount of human interaction as an element of the McKinsey's 7S element "Style". Over-reliance on AI-driven learning can lead to isolation, hindering opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and development of crucial interpersonal skills (Clark, 2019). Social learning involves observation, interaction, and feedback from others, and is crucial for developing a well-rounded skillset that includes communication, teamwork, and emotional intelligence (Clark, 2019).

GenAI tools can exacerbate the digital divide, impacting the McKinsey's 7s element "Staff", through an unequal access to technology or digital literacy. Workplace skills can worsen existing inequalities in learning opportunities which can create a two-tiered system where some employees benefit from AI-powered learning while others are left behind, further widening the skills gap within the organization (OECD, 2021).

This section offered a balanced perspective on GenAI's potential to enhance or detract

from Learning within the McKinsey's 7S model. Now, we will look at Kotter's 8-Step model.

Kotter's 8-Step Model

Current consultant and former Harvard Professor John Kotter's eight-step model, as originally outlined in his seminal work *Leading Change* (1996), still provides a comprehensive framework for successfully implementing organizational transformation. See Figure 9.

In 2014, John Kotter modified his original eight-step change model to incorporate more agile principles, recognizing the need for organizations to adapt quickly in a rapidly changing environment. He emphasized the importance of creating a sense of urgency and fostering a culture of collaboration and continuous feedback. Kotter introduced the concept of "dual operating systems," which combines a traditional hierarchical structure with a more agile network that encourages innovation and adaptability. This approach allows organizations to respond even more flexibly to challenges and opportunities, promoting iterative progress and empowering teams to drive change more effectively (Kotter, 2014).

In 2021, Kotter has further integrated advancements in neuroscience into his framework. Kotter highlights the importance of understanding how the brain responds to change, emphasizing emotional engagement and the role of social connections in driving successful transformations. By focusing on the psychological aspects of change, Kotter's model now incorporates strategies that foster resilience, motivation, and a sense of belonging, which are crucial for navigating the complexities of modern organizational environments (Kotter et al., 2021).

Throughout time Kotter's 8-step model emphasized a holistic approach, beginning with establishing a sense of urgency by highlighting the need for change and its potential benefits. Followed by forming a powerful guiding coalition and creating a clear, inspiring vision. Kotter

then stresses the importance of effectively communicating this vision, empowering employees to act on it, and securing short-term wins to demonstrate progress and maintain momentum. The final steps focus on consolidating gains to produce even greater change and anchoring the new approaches in the organizational culture to ensure lasting transformation (Kotter, 1996). Each one of these actions also requires the fundamental process and output of successful communication and learning that GenAI tools can help or hinder.

Figure 9

Kotter's 8 Step Change Model



Note. Taken from the official John Kotter consulting website

<https://www.kotterinc.com/methodology/8-steps/>. Originally published in *Leading Change*, by J. Kotter, 1996, Harvard Business School Press. Copyright 1996 by Harvard Business School Press. Webpage attributed to Bedard, A. (2024, November 8) The 8-step process for leading change: Dr. John Kotter. Kotter International Inc.

In this change model, communication comes up repeatedly in the context of creating urgency, building coalitions, getting the vision right, communicating it, and keeping it alive.

Without clear and consistent communication, the entire change process is at risk" (Kotter, 1996). "Transformations only succeed when large numbers of people decide to make a genuine, willing, and sustained commitment to change. For that to happen, people need to do more than buy into a vision—they need to emotionally sign up for the journey" (Kotter, 1996). Kotter gives several key elements in effective communication of vision including, simplicity, metaphor, multiple forums, repetition, and leadership by example (Kotter, 1996, p.90). In this step, two-way communication is important to ensure that people feel heard. "Good communication is not just data transfer. You need to show people something that addresses their anxieties, that accepts their anger, that is credible in a very gut-level sense, and that evokes faith in the vision" (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). This step is backed in the research as key to reducing ambiguity, uncertainty, and negative responses to change (Applebaum et al., 2012).

GenAI and Storytelling: A Look Through the Lens of John Kotter's 8 Steps

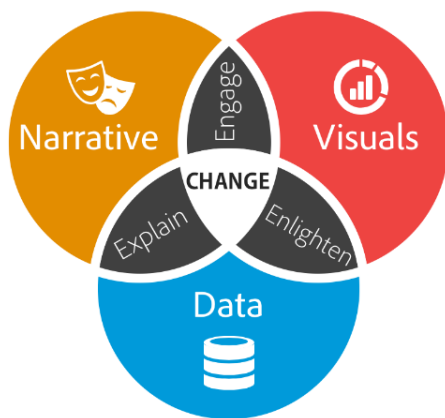
Storytelling is essential for effective communication during organizational change because it transcends simply relaying facts and figures. It creates connections, evokes emotions, and makes change relatable and memorable (Denning, 2011). Storytelling is one example of the successful utilization of GenAI (MIT Bensaïd, 2021). Storytelling through imagery is standard practice in change management (HBR,2023). Images, pictures, drawings, and Audiovisual artifacts all play a role in storytelling. See Figure 10. The need to create an artifact to evoke an emotional response to gain acceptance and willingness for change is taught as a fundamental change leadership skill and a necessary step in organizational transformations (Frei & Morriss, 2023).

Storytelling is also necessary for human-to-human communication (Denning, 2011). However, stories expressed as numbers alone are insufficient to inspire change, "People hear the

statistics, but they feel the stories” (Dykes, Forbes 2024). While GenAI tools like ChatGPT can provide data, numbers, and summarized narrative for the communicator if the recipient does not or cannot fully digest, contextualize and incubate that material, then they will not engage, be enlightened, or be motivated to make a change (Dykes, 2020). Correctly formed narrative stories, charts, and raw statistics can influence decisions and drive change. Moreover, GenAI tools can help generate versions of potentially powerful narratives if appropriately utilized (Dykes, 2020).

Figure 10

Data storytelling in Change: The essential data science skill



Note. This graphic shows the transformation of data into visual communication is only one part of the picture. It is equally important to engage the audience with a narrative – a story with the numbers. From *Effective data storytelling: How to drive change with data, narrative, and visuals* by B. Dykes, 2020, Wiley. Copyright 2019.

While storytelling can significantly enhance planned change models like Kotter’s 8-step model, the integration of generative AI tools can positively and negatively impact this framework. Let us explore storytelling with specific generative AI tools that can either support or undermine Kotter's 8-step change model, depending on how they are utilized.

Kotter's Step 1 is Establishing a Sense of Urgency. Compelling stories about the need for change, highlighting potential threats or missed opportunities, can ignite a sense of urgency and motivate action (Kotter, 1996). Kotter emphasizes authenticity alongside urgency, spotlighting GenAI tools that are there to enhance the message, not replace genuine leadership communication. GenAI tools can help with the speed and ideation of the message with tools like Jasper and Copy.ai to help rapidly draft messages, and Bard/ChatGPT can summarize complex data to highlight urgency. Midjourney/DALL-E 2 generates visuals that evoke urgency-related emotions (e.g., "burning platform").

Conversely, GenAI can hinder Kotter's Step 1 if used poorly by the leader or change practitioner. Over-reliance on AI can make messages sound generic or robotic, undermining the genuine leadership Kotter stresses. AI can hallucinate facts or misinterpret data, leading to inaccurate or misleading narratives (Marr, 2024).

Step 2 is Forming a Powerful Guiding Coalition. Stories about successful change initiatives that influential leaders share can rally support and build a strong coalition for change. Generators of AI-content like Jasper or Copy.ai can help create compelling narratives or case studies about successful change initiatives. These stories can be tailored to resonate with the audience and illustrate the importance of a guiding coalition. Social media tools like Hootsuite or BuzzSumo can analyze trends and identify influential leaders who have successfully led change initiatives. By sharing their stories and insights, you can build credibility and rally support. AI-enhanced collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams incorporate generative AI features that can facilitate brainstorming sessions. They can help teams come together to share their experiences and formulate a collective vision for change.

Step 3 is Creating a Vision. A clear and inspiring vision, often communicated through a

compelling narrative, provides direction and helps employees understand the "why" behind the change (Kotter, 1996). Kotter said, "Use every vehicle possible to communicate the new vision and strategies for achieving it" (Kotter, 1996). This implies going beyond formal presentations and leveraging different mediums, including stories, to reach employees emotionally. GenAI tools like Midjourney or DALL-E 2 can create visuals that bring the future vision to life, making it more tangible and emotionally resonant.

Step 4 is Communicating Vision. Stories make the vision tangible and relatable (Denning, 2011). They translate abstract concepts into concrete examples, making it easier for employees to understand and embrace the change. Platforms like Jasper or Copy.ai can help craft compelling narratives around the change, tailoring messaging to different audiences and formats. These AI assistants can help translate complex ideas into relatable stories, increasing employee understanding and buy-in.

Step 5 is Empowering Action. Stories of early wins and individual successes can inspire and empower others to act, demonstrating that change is possible and achievable. GenAI can personalize communications, highlighting individual employee contributions to successful change initiatives. This personalized recognition, through AI-generated emails or messages, can boost morale and inspire further action.

Step 6 is Generating Short-Term Wins. Celebrating successes through stories reinforces positive momentum and demonstrates the tangible benefits of the organizational change effort, keeping morale high. The tool Canva uses AI features to create visually appealing presentations and infographics highlighting short-term wins and successes, making them easy to share and celebrate. Loom is an AI-enhanced video tool to create quick video updates celebrating wins, allowing teams to share stories and successes in an engaging format.

Step 7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change: Stories about how the change has positively impacted the organization, individuals, and customers can solidify the new ways of working and inspire further transformation.

Step 8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture: Stories become part of the organizational narrative, embedding the change in the company's culture and values for long-term sustainability.

In summary, Storytelling is a necessary art and science for the change practitioner and leader. Use AI strategically to enhance your authentic message, but always maintain human oversight for accuracy, tone, and authenticity. This will align with Kotter's emphasis on genuine leadership communication.

Prosci's ADKAR Individual Change Model

The ADKAR model, developed by Jeff Hiatt (2006), is a practice-based framework that emphasizes individual change adoption as the catalyst for successful organizational change. This prescriptive model, derived from Hiatt's observations of over 700 organizations, outlines five sequential elements crucial for effective change implementation: Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement (ADKAR) (Hiatt, 2006; Rosenbaum et al., 2017). Unlike models focused on organizational change processes, ADKAR centers on understanding and addressing individual resistance as the driver of successful change (Galli, 2018).

Awareness. The first step in ADKAR is "Awareness," which involves ensuring individuals understand what is changing, why it is necessary, the personal impact, and the risks of not changing. This milestone includes communicating how the change aligns with the organization's vision. Once awareness is established, the focus shifts to cultivating the desire to engage with the change. Hiatt (2006) notes that while awareness can initiate the process, it

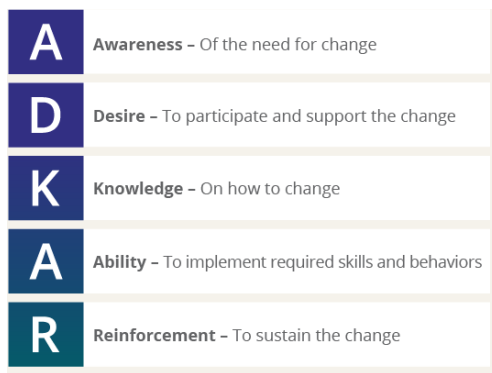
doesn't always lead to a desire to participate, as this is not fully under the change leader's control.

Adequate awareness is crucial for fostering sufficient desire to embrace change (Prosci, 2024). Insufficient awareness can lead to resistance to adopting change (Strebel, 1996).

Additionally, AI hallucinations can undermine trust in the tools and the information they provide (Marr, 2024). If AI outputs are incorrect or misleading, users may distrust the content, perceiving it as insincere or confusing, which can discourage them from engaging with materials meant to build awareness. When an AI system produces incorrect or misleading information, users lose trust that the AI outputs are what an actual person intended to say and not corporate weasel-word speak, generating even more work to clarify (Marr, 2024).

Figure 11

Prosci ADKAR Model



Note. Jeff Hiatt, founder of Prosci (abbreviation for Professional Science) and author of AKDAR – A Model for Change in Business, Government and our Community created ADKAR as an individual change model to be followed both linearly and iteratively to adjudicate where a person was inside their own journey of change. Copyright 2006 by Prosci.

Desire. Creating sufficient "Desire" to embrace change involves understanding four key factors: the nature of the change and the personal "What's In It For Me" (WIIFM), the

organizational context, an individual's personal situation, and intrinsic motivation (ADKAR, pp. 17-22). This stage helps leaders identify potential resistance and build trust through open, two-way communication, allowing individuals to internalize and personalize their response to change.

Active communication is crucial for achieving results at each ADKAR milestone (Kegan & Lahey, 2009). Engaging in change-related conversations helps understand the involvement and support of those participating, which is essential for overcoming resistance (Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Griffin & Foster, 2022). Open dialogue about the change's rationale and context, along with opportunities for feedback, is vital (Kanter et al., 1992; Griffin & Foster, 2022; Lippitt, Langseth, & Mossop, 1985). Interruptions in this process can hinder understanding and clarity about roles in change initiatives (Ademola, 2024; Ball, 2024; Beer, 1980; Lewis, 2019). Without involvement in decisions about technology, training, and adoption speed—or without addressing concerns through dialogue—AI adoption may slow.

Distrust in AI-generated outputs can decrease the desire to engage. Incidents like ChatGPT's misinformation (Hannigan, 2024) or AI "hallucinations" (Younger et al., 2023) reduce willingness to use GenAI tools (Leonardi, 2024). For example, a lawyer cited fake cases from ChatGPT (Bohannon, 2024). This behavior signals a lack of desire to adopt change.

Addressing distrust requires a focus on company policies regarding privacy, security, quality, and utilization before implementing tools (Daugherty et al., 2024). Until trust is established, achieving sufficient desire for GenAI adoption may remain challenging.

Knowledge. Once a person has sufficient awareness of and desire to support a specific change, they must be able to perform any necessary tasks to support the change with action (Galli, 2018). Knowledge includes the employee's current knowledge base, their capacity to gain

additional knowledge, the resources available for education and training, and access to the required knowledge (Hiatt, 2006). Sufficient knowledge is gained when an employee can say “I know how to” (Hiatt, 2006).

There are documented instances when training an employee on how to perform a new skill and with gaining this new knowledge the employee no longer wants to utilize the new technology or perform the new skill due to new concerns that were previously not conceived (Hiatt, 2006; Creasey, 2023) and now need to be addressed. For example, when training an employee with GenAI one of the skills is properly summarizing material. Summarizing is cited as one of the most common uses for LLM tools (OpenAI, 2024). Once this skill is learned by employees it can also be misused to the point of creating new resistance in leaders and employees to allow GenAI tools to be used on the job (Daugherty et al., 2024). For instance: a reader's comprehension of a writer's argument been interrupted when pages of text are summarized into a few bullets or a single paragraph. Has a proper exchange of concepts occurred? Successful organizational changes require active involvement by people impacted by the change. Mindsets and beliefs like: "If you didn't write it, why should I read it?" or the flip side, "What's the point of writing it if no one actually reads it?" are actual statements that I have heard resisting the use of GenAI tools to replace traditional human speech modalities.

Ability. The ADKAR model differentiates between knowing how to do something and having the ability (performance competency) to do something. Step four, Ability, represents the "demonstrated capability to implement the change and achieve the desired performance level" (Hiatt, 2006, p.36). Awareness, desire, and knowledge are all foundational pieces for achieving ability. Ability demonstrates achievement; when a person achieves this, the change is visible somehow (Hiatt, 2006).

Reinforcement. ADKAR's Reinforcement milestone involves actions to ensure lasting change, including metrics, celebrations, and performance feedback (Hiatt, 2006). Generative AI can assist in brainstorming and creating content for these activities. Vendors emphasize benefits like time savings, recognition awards, case studies, and testimonials to reinforce the value of implementing and maintaining subscriptions to GenAI tools (Daugherty et al., 2024).

Using GenAI to Drive Successful Organizational Change Initiatives

Each planned change model (ADKAR, McKinsey's 7S, Kotter's 8-Step) requires focused communication, tailored and targeted training, and engaging storytelling narratives that highlight the benefits of change. Here are a few ways a change practitioner can utilize GenAI to overcome resistance to an organizational change effort no matter what the change model selected.

Enhanced Communication. Generative AI can streamline and enhance communication about the change process. It can be serve as just a personal copy editor or be a full partnering in generating new ideas and content. As Kotter (1996) notes, "Effective communication is critical to ensuring that people understand the reasons for change". AI tools can create personalized messages and offer two-way chatbot interactions with readily accessible FAQs, addressing employees' specific concerns and making them feel more informed and engaged.

Customized Training Programs. Generative AI can develop personalized training content to meet employees' varied needs. As noted by Prosci (2020), "Training should be tailored to the audience to ensure that all employees understand the change and their role in it". AI can assess employee skill levels and create engaging, relevant training materials, helping to alleviate anxiety about the change.

Storytelling and Engagement. AI can craft and create powerful narratives that highlight the benefits of change. Senge (2006) states, "People learn best through stories, which help them

visualize the change". Generative AI can generate success stories from similar organizations or departments that have successfully implemented change, inspiring and motivating employees.

Feedback Mechanisms. Implementing AI-driven feedback tools can help leaders gauge employee sentiment and address concerns in real-time. According to Kotter (1996), "Listening to feedback is essential to adapt and refine the change process". Generative AI can analyze feedback and generate insights, enabling leaders to respond proactively to resistance.

Reinforcing Positive Outcomes. AI can monitor and celebrate small victories during the change process. Hiatt (2006) highlights that "Recognizing and reinforcing successes builds momentum and reduces resistance." GenAI can automatically create reports or visualizations to showcase progress, boosting morale and reminding employees of the change benefits.

Accelerating Workplace Skill Adoption. As one of McKinsey's 7Ss, "Skills" are crucial for an organization to achieve its strategy and tackle environmental challenges (Peters, 2011). GenAI can offer personalized, rapid resources to employees adapting to new processes. For instance, a marketing team shifting to AI-driven analytics can use tools like LinkedIn Learning or Salesforce Trailhead to create customized modules based on individual skill levels and learning preferences. If an employee struggles with data interpretation, identified through surveys or quizzes, AI can generate targeted tutorials and practice exercises. This tailored approach can speed up the learning curve and boost employee confidence in effectively using AI tools by clearly demonstrating the benefits.

Recommendations

With the advent of newer technologies within AI and resulting GenAI tools, the change practitioner's activities can be enhanced and hindered during the organizational change process. Understanding this technology and the specific impacts on each element of planned OCM

through an academic lens will lead to more robust change models and subscribed change activities. Based on insights gained through this research, I offer the following summarized recommendations:

1. Changes in processes and systems are within the work of the change management practitioner. While GenAI is a tool, it can and should be incorporated into an organizational change strategy and plans. Discuss the best ways to leverage its capabilities and prevent over-reliance or misuse of the GenAI tool's outputs.

2. Ensure communication remains authentic. Effective communication during change must originate from credible sources and be perceived as authentic, e.g., from the actual person to whom the words are attributed. Communication must be contextualized to foster mutual understanding. Utilize GenAI tools only if they contribute positively to this outcome. If they detract from effective communication and understanding, be prepared to modify or discontinue their use.

3. Focus on gaining a level of Conceptual Understanding in workplace skill education as measured by an employee's ability to competently perform and utilize creative thought for innovation around the same concepts. Critical problem-solving skills require a higher level of understanding and knowledge.

4. Change practitioners should deepen their understanding of the processes involved in conceptual learning and application. If GenAI tools can enhance this process, they can be considered valuable. However, avoid prioritizing artifact generation as a measure of success; artifacts alone do not equate to gaining conceptual understanding in a person.

5. Facilitate mutual understanding utilizing communication enhanced by GenAI. Actively coach team members towards achieving mutual and conceptual knowledge through

communication mediums, including those created by AI. Be prepared to demonstrate the effective use of GenAI tools in ways that enhance, rather than undermine, the shared understanding process. However, do not fail to demonstrate how GenAI tools can decrease conceptual understanding and create new communication pitfalls.

By implementing these recommendations, change practitioners can better harness the potential of generative AI while fostering an environment conducive to growth and effective adaptation.

Areas for Further Research

Several additional areas around this topic need deeper and broader analysis and research. I have summarized a few of the choice areas that I feel would impact most the discipline of OCM and could be topics of study for additional student researchers.

Employee Motivations for AI Adoption

Further investigation into the motivation driving individual employee's adoption of AI tools is essential. Understanding these motivations can help leaders implement necessary adjustments to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. Key motivations include increasing productivity by saving time and effort, reducing cognitive load, and gaining a competitive edge over colleagues (Christian, 2023).

Generative AI as a Moral Agent

More research is needed to explore the concept of generative AI as a moral agent and whether change practitioners should consider it a stakeholder. Suppose AI is actively used to generate content, strategies, and behavior-shifting artifacts that the human stakeholders would not have conceived in those roles. In that case, it warrants recognition as a stakeholder. This necessitates understanding the ideas, concepts, strategies, and directions produced by AI rather

than focusing solely on the human operators.

Conceptual Understanding and Creative Output

It is important to examine the role of conceptual understanding in fostering creative output, innovation, and critical thinking. Specifically, we need to investigate whether true conceptual understanding occurs when outputs are generated by large language models (LLM) and how this impacts the quality and originality of thought and products.

Impact of AI on Sensory Processing and Perception

Recent advances in cognitive science highlight that sensory processing and perception are active processes influenced by attentional sampling routines (Schroeder et al., 2010). When AI generates communication, the reader's perception may be disrupted, particularly if the original author is not the writer. This interruption can hinder the cycle of learning and distort perception pathways. Further research is required to identify which perceptions are affected and quantify this disruption's extent. This alone could be a topic of a PhD study, and we will need a full interdisciplinary deep dive to flush out how impactful LLMs are in enhancing and disrupting perception.

While this research paper spotlights both the cognitive enhancements and disruptions of GenAI tools in an empirical (real-world) setting, a deeper dive and experimentation on the human cycle of learning and distorted or enhanced perceptions created by these tools are necessary and beneficial to the discipline of Education—adult and otherwise.

Conclusion

Generative AI (GenAI) tools are pivotal in shaping workplace dynamics and influencing change transformations (Davenport & Foutty, 2020). Currently, these tools serve as resources for humans to employ at key moments within change models to achieve desired and documented

process outcomes. The re-engineering of workplace processes with GenAI marks an industry-wide transformation, where solutions for process changes rely on these AI tools.

Amid ongoing discussions about governance, policy, and ethics, change practitioners should not be swayed by hype. Instead, they should deepen their understanding of how these tools function and their implications for current and future change initiatives. Leaders and practitioners are encouraged to embrace AI and GenAI, enhancing their knowledge and competence for personal and organizational growth.

To navigate the ever-evolving landscape effectively, organizational change leaders and practitioners must adapt, prioritizing creativity, adaptability, and skill acquisition. Without this focus, future change initiatives may fall short. While GenAI can aid in brainstorming and planning, reliance solely on its outputs can hinder personal learning and impact creative and problem-solving skills.

The emphasis should be on achieving meaningful, human-centric outcomes through effective communication and cultivating knowledge that drives critical thinking. GenAI tools should be leveraged when they contribute positively to these goals but adjusted or even eliminated if they detract from essential real-world outcomes.

Integrating GenAI into OCM practices presents both opportunities and challenges. By enhancing human capabilities and focusing on desired business outcomes, change leaders can ensure AI empowers rather than hinders transformative processes. With this technology the roles of both the organizational change leaders and the change management practitioners must adapt to prioritize the protection and enhancement of human capacity for creativity, adaptability, and skill acquisition. Without this focus, future change initiatives risk falling short.

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