

Reflections on Curriculum Reform and Learning

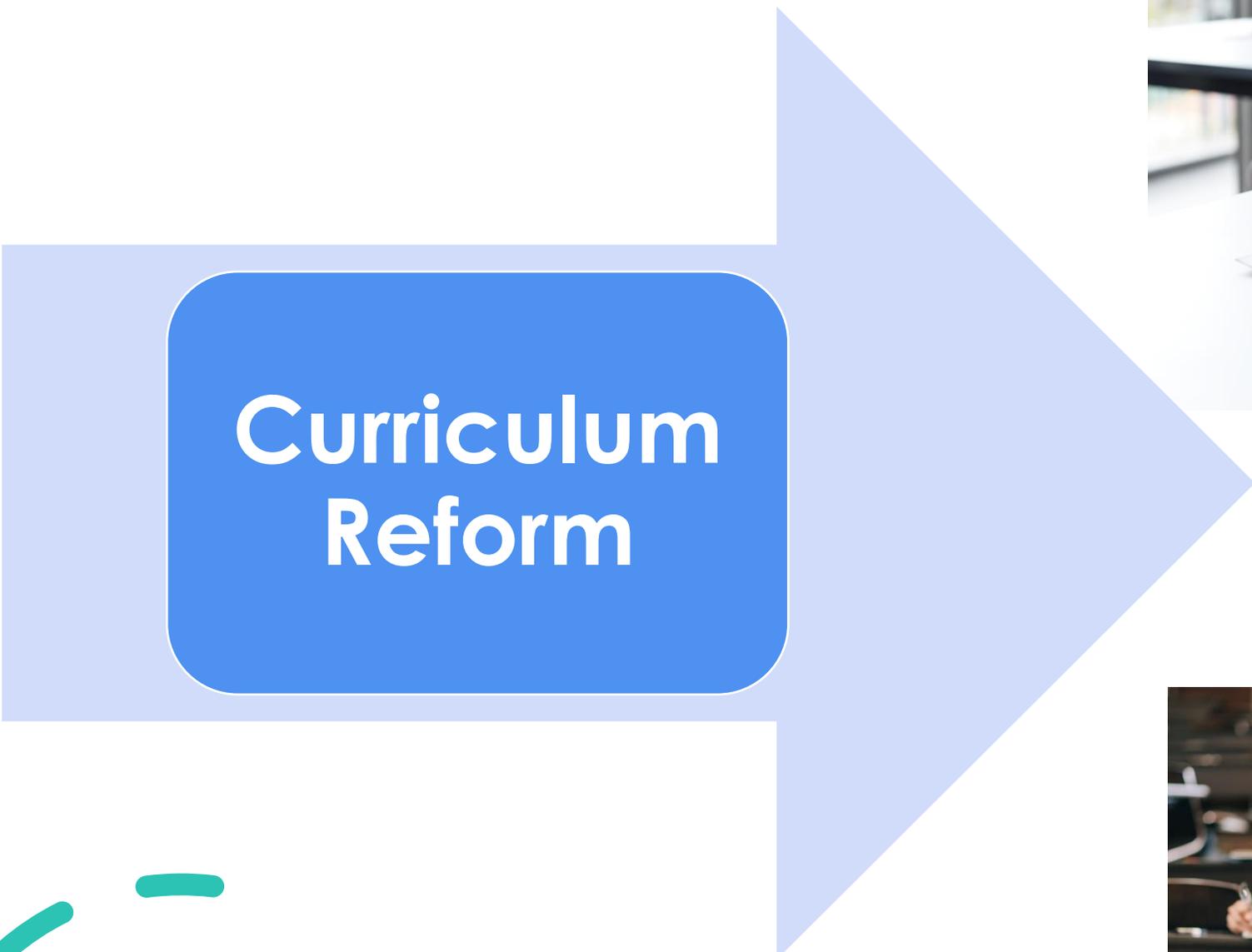


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2023 Philippine Education Conference
Inspiring Reforms that Transform Philippine Education
6 December 2023
SMX Convention Center, Pasay City





**Curriculum
Reform**



**Improved
Student
Learning**



National level actors

- DepEd
- CHED
- Congress
- PRC

Curriculum
Reform

School actors

- Classroom teachers
- Students

**Improved
Student
Learning**

National level actors

Curriculum Reform

National/Central offices and bureaus

Regions and regional offices

Divisions and districts offices

Schools, colleges, universities

School actors: classroom teachers & students

Improved Student Learning

National level actors

Curriculum Reform

ONE SIZE FITS ALL

CHASM OF IMPLEMENTATION

HETEROGENEITY

RESOURCES

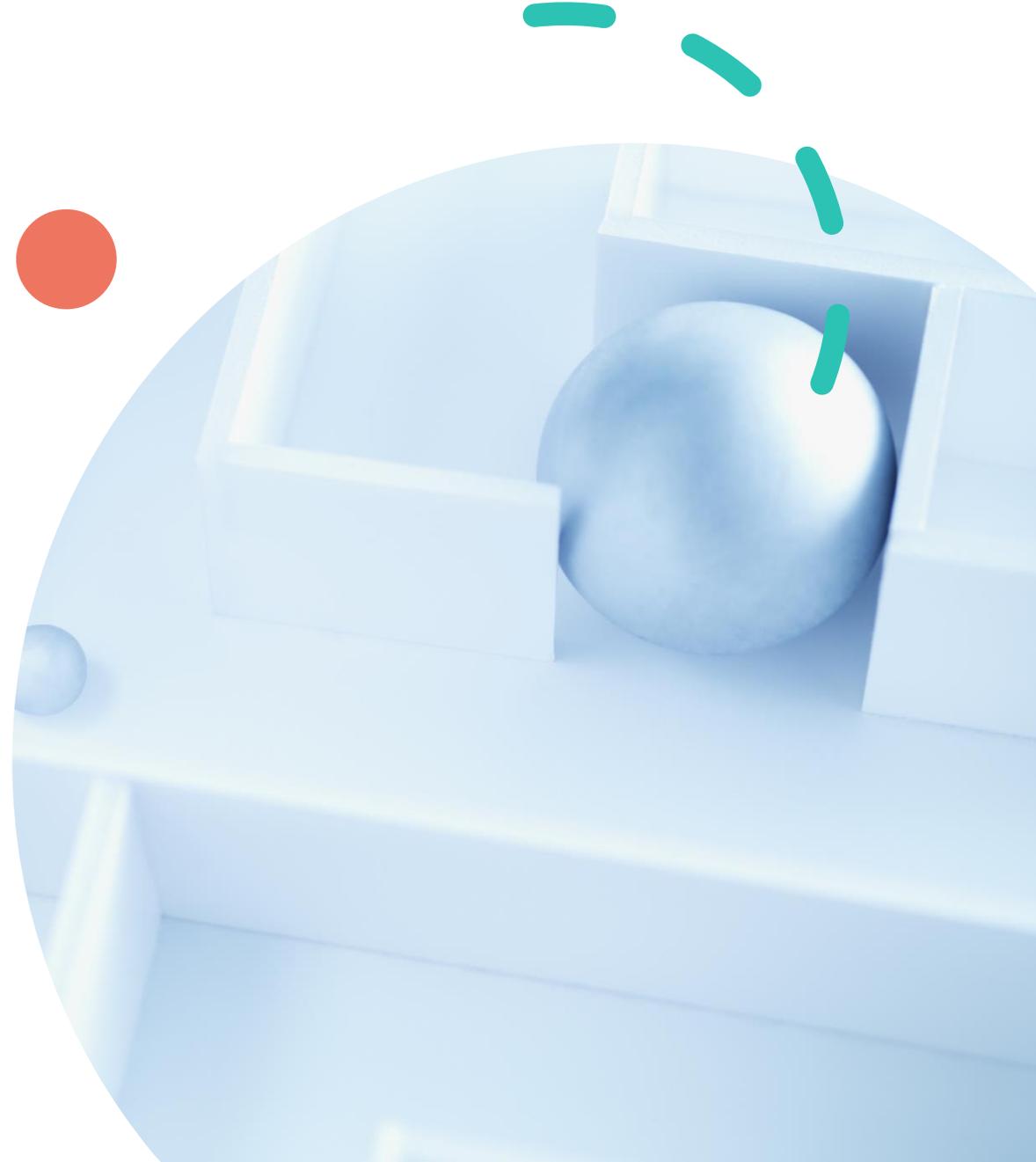
ACCOUNTABILITIES

School actors: classroom teachers & students

Improved Student Learning

Naïvetés of Curriculum Reform

- ...implementation of reforms will cascade or trickle down the system
- ...reform that comes from the center will be understood and implemented consistently across the heterogeneous system
- ...reform that comes from the center will result in changes in the classroom experiences of teachers and students



Curriculum as document that defines outcomes and guides for attaining

The TEACHER planning and organizing all these components to teach just one unit of the “curriculum”

Knowledge and skills

Books

Learning standards

Learning objects

Learning standards

Materials

Units and lessons

Summative assessment

Activities and assignments

Projects

Use of technology

Formative assessments



Realistic View of Curriculum Reform

- Implementation of curriculum reforms will need to address understandings and resources of actors at all levels
- Pace of implementation of curriculum reforms will inevitably be variable and necessarily slow
- Teachers are the key actors in any curriculum reform effort
- The effects of national curriculum on student learning can be observed only after years of continuous support for teachers who are striving to improve their instructional practices to implement the curriculum.

Misconceptions about student learning in curriculum reform

- Covering it means teaching it.
- Teaching it means students will learn it.
- Teaching should simplify concepts because easier concepts are better remembered
- Teaching complex concepts can only be possible after simple concepts are mastered



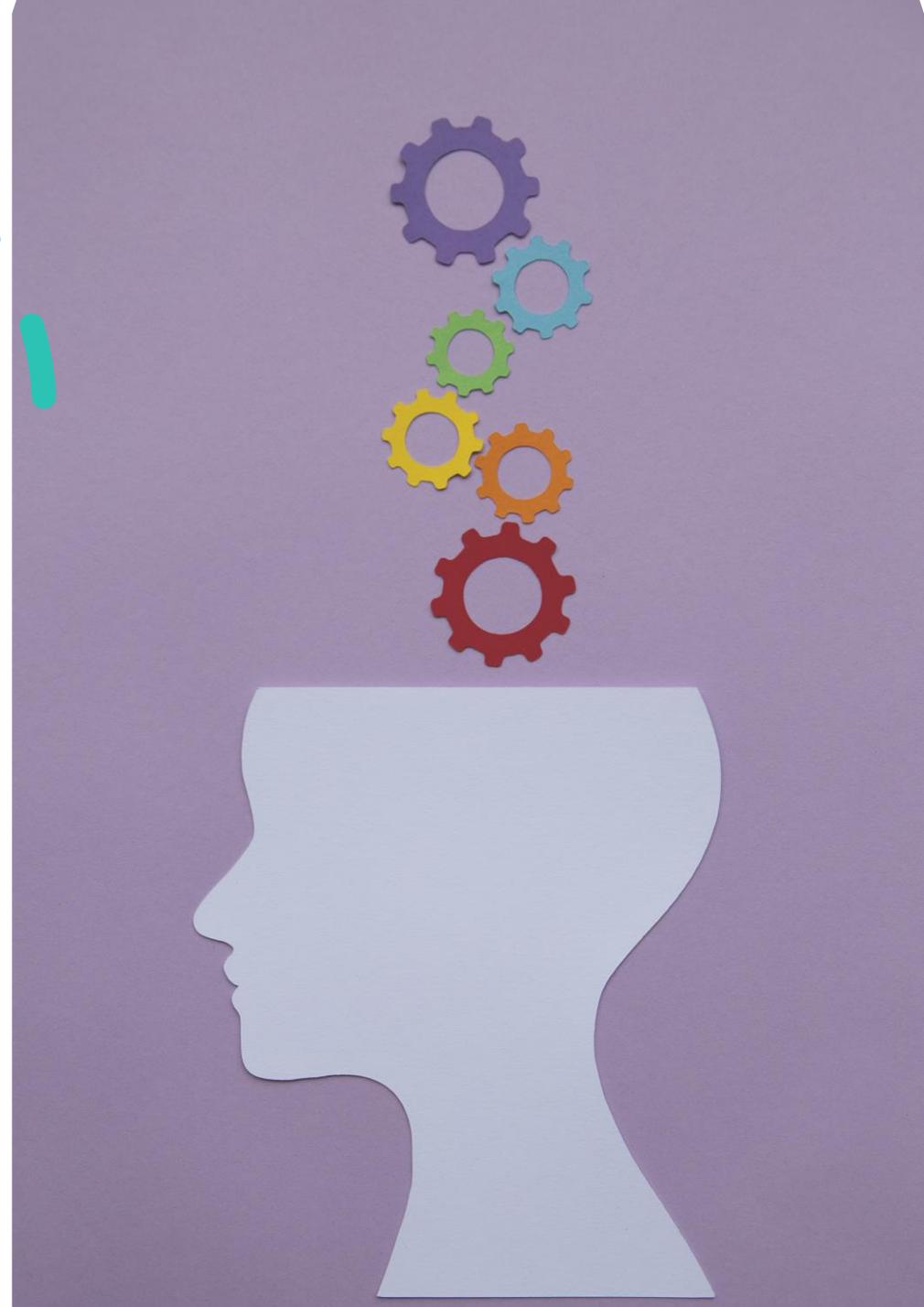


Acknowledging the complexity of student learning

- Learning is not simply collecting knowledge and skills in a linear sequence over time
- Learning involves myriad processes that interact over time to influence the way a student make sense of the world
- These interacting learning processes are biological, cognitive, affective, developmental, social, and cultural (and happen outside school)

Effective learning processes ...

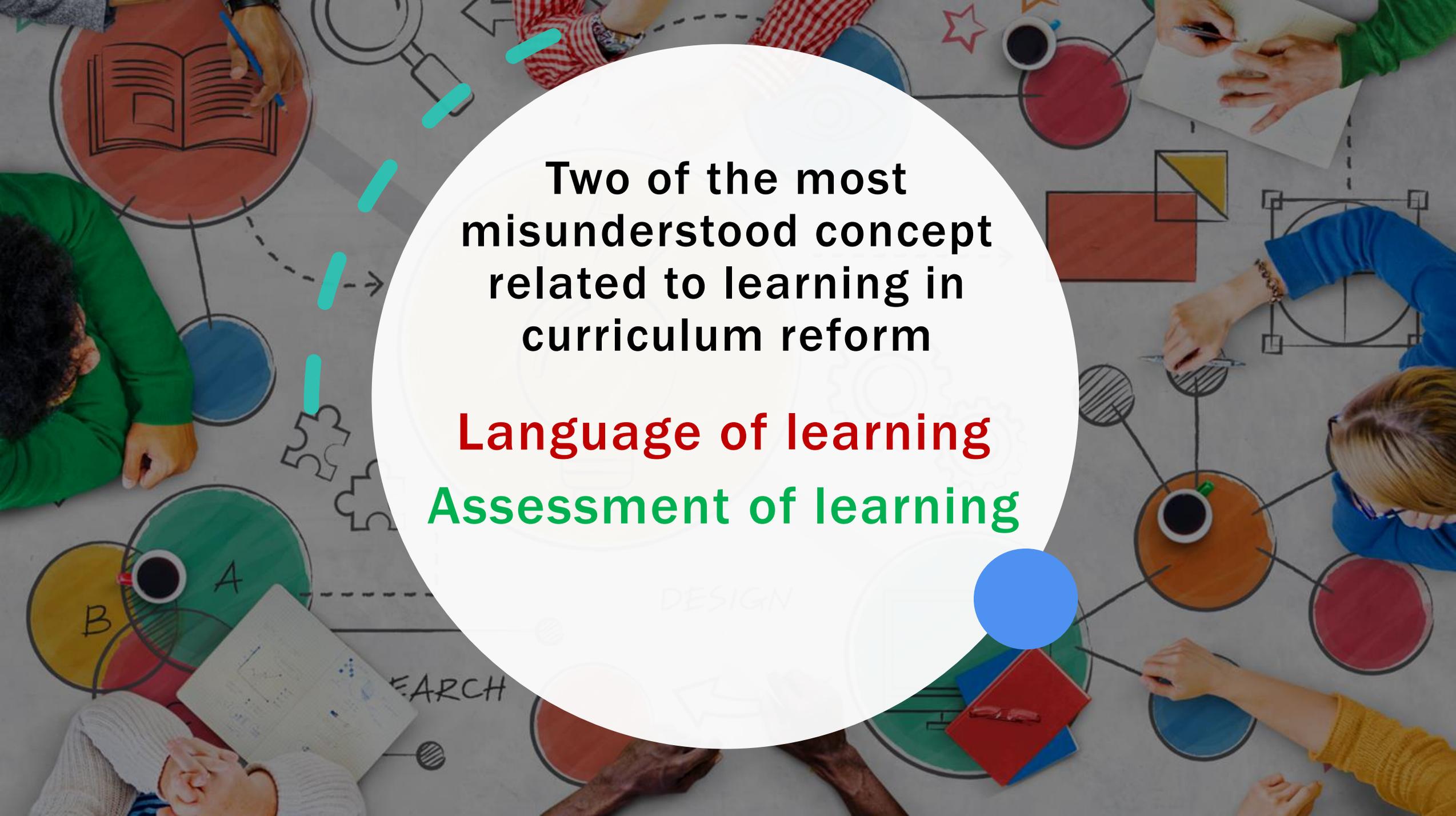
- build on and reorganize prior knowledge
- involve coordination of information processes of different levels of complexity
- are non-linear, adaptive, divergent,
- benefit from complex & difficult tasks





Effective learning processes

- are sometimes strenuous and gradual, but are sometimes effortless and fast
- require intentionality and self-regulation on the part of the learner
- are supported by motivational, interpersonal, social experiences
- are best when aligned with modes of knowing and thinking valued in society and culture



**Two of the most
misunderstood concept
related to learning in
curriculum reform**

Language of learning
Assessment of learning



In current curriculum reform debates

- **Lack of appreciation of the role of the learner's language(s)**
 - as a scaffold for basic and functional literacy
 - as a requirement for knowing and understanding
 - as a tool for engaging complex concepts

In current curriculum reform debates

- Lack of appreciation of the role of the learner's language(s)
 - as a tool for accessing relevant prior knowledge
 - as a scaffold for acquiring proficiency in other languages
 - as a motivator for cognitive and affective engagement of learning in different domains





Functions of assessment

- Assessment as measure of learning achievement
- Assessment as quality check of the learning /educational system
- Assessment as a tool for facilitating learning
- Assessment as a tool for improving teaching

Observations

- We lack an appreciation of how assessment can be used to improve student learning
- We tend to use assessments as an accountability instrument
- Assessment tends to be “weaponized” to control actors in the educational spaces



Large-scale assessments

ELLNA, NAT, PISA, PRC, etc.

- How have data from these assessments been used to help improve learning?
- **Very few education researchers have analyzed PISA 2018 data with rigor and depth**
- **Who actually analyzes DepEd's and PRC's data on learning in depth? These data are "secret"**
- For what purposes are assessment scores actually used?





Quality Assurance Assessment

Observation

- Accreditation bodies have not focused as much on student learning
- The focus so far has been on documentation of learning activities and learning outcomes
- Beyond the volumes of documents, templates, and forms completed, do we know how QA processes contributed to improved student learning?
- Or maybe it is not realistic to expect accreditation systems to impact on student learning.

Summary of reflections

- Curriculum reform should be about improving learning
- But curriculum reform from the center creates a chasm of implementation, many degrees removed from teachers & students
- Naivete of the narrow view of “curriculum” vs. the reality of teachers’ implemented curriculum
- Marginalizing of students’ learning and the science of learning in curriculum reform





- **Rethink our assumptions about curriculum reform**
- **Ground it on an honest appreciation of the complexity of curriculum work**
- **Center student learning in the curriculum reform processes**
- **Acknowledge how some curriculum reform processes have ignored or even failed our learners**



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THANK YOU VERY
MUCH FOR
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