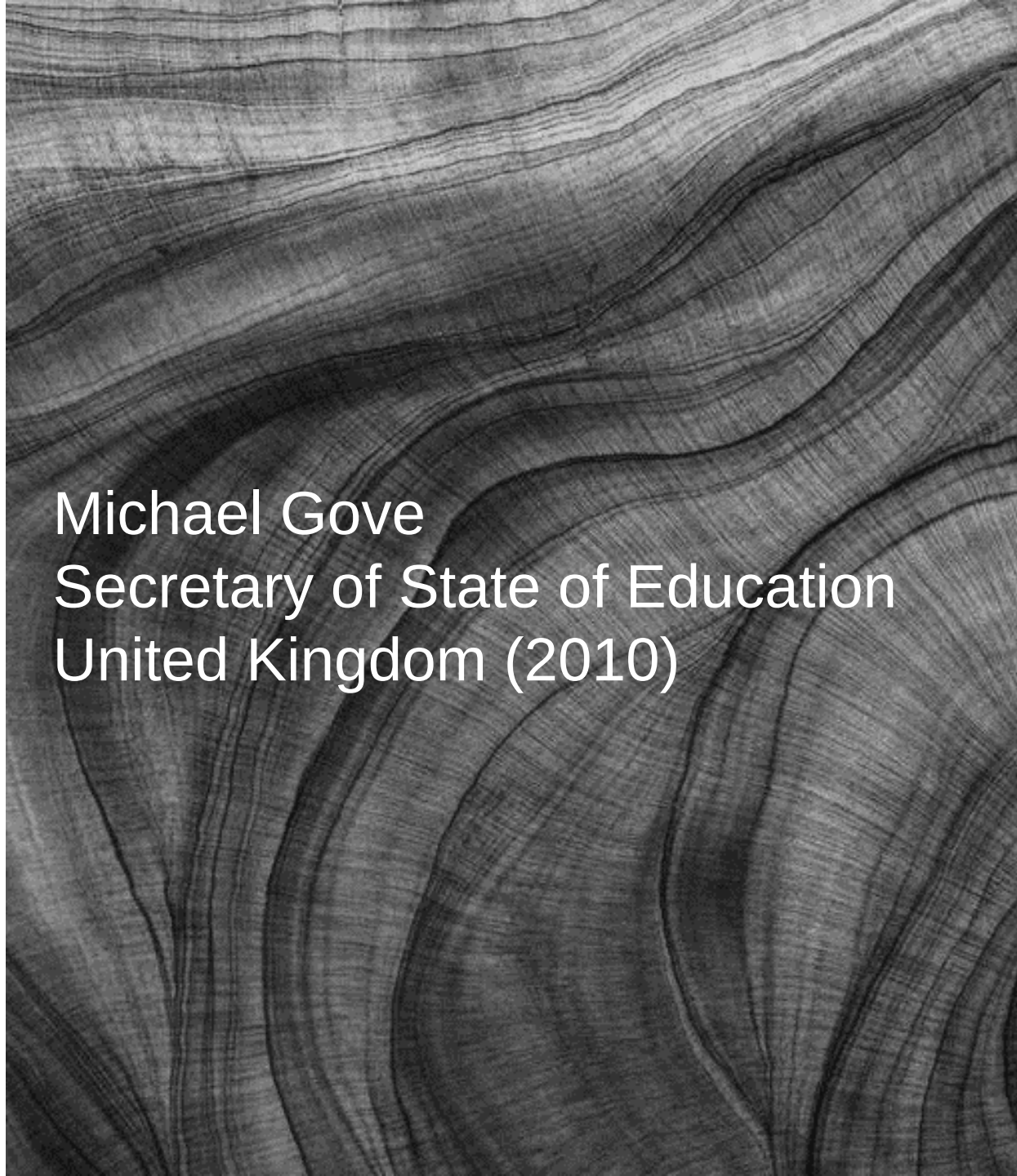
# Micro-credentials in Higher Education Institutions for Teacher Professional Development

Dick O. Eugenio, PhD
University of the Philippines - Los Baños

# OUTLINE

- Introduction: Teacher Professional Development
- Personalized Teacher Professional Development
- Using Micro-credentials for TPD in Higher Education Institutions

“The single most important thing in education is improving the quality of the educational experience for each child by investing in higher-quality teaching… There is simply no way of generating educational improvement more effectively than by having the best qualified, most highly motivated and most talented teachers in the classroom.”



# Teacher Professional Development

- proliferation of literature since the middle of the 20th century
- related to lifelong learning and career advancement discussions
- perceived inadequacy of pre-service teacher training in the light of rapid information and technological advances
- re-skilling and upskilling for various teacher roles
- definitions of professional development are as numerous as the authors writing on the topic

“Professional development consists of all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school, which contribute through these, to the quality of education in the classroom. It is the process by which, alone and with others, teachers review, renew and extend their commitment as change agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and develop critically the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence essential to good professional thinking, planning and practice with children, young people and colleagues throughout each phase of their teaching lives.”

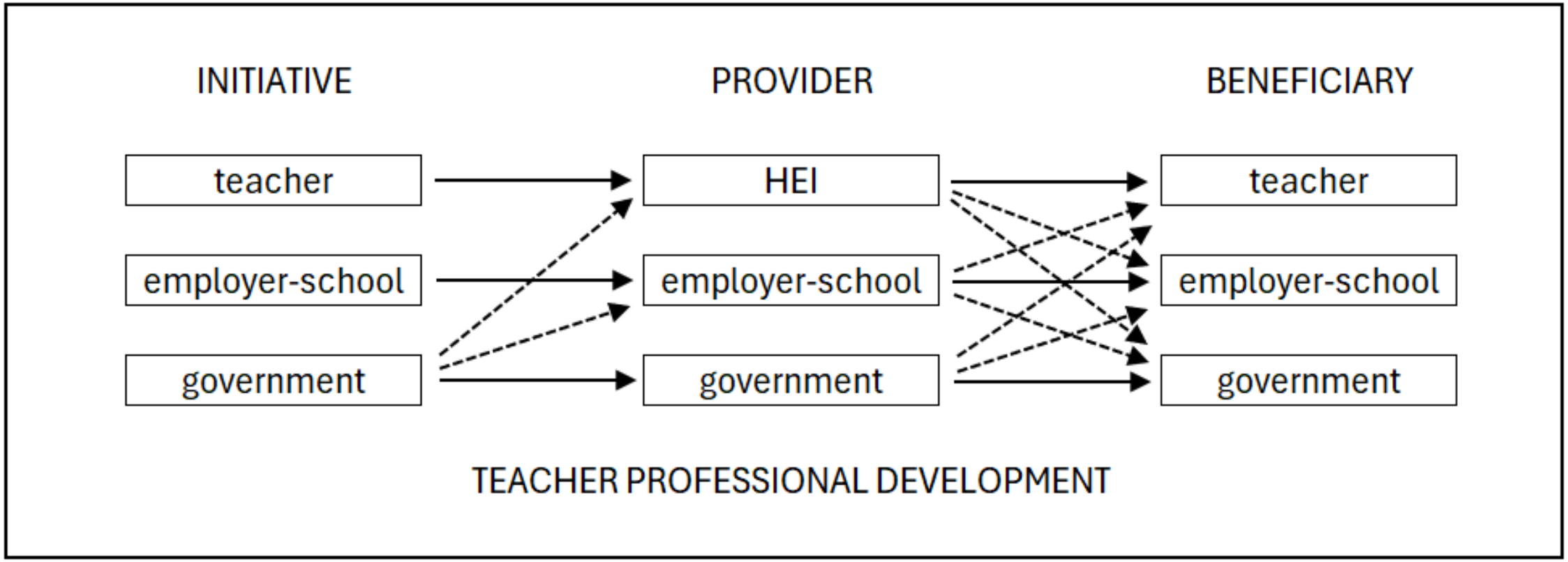
**Day (1999), p. 4**

# Effective Teacher PD

- teacher ownership of PD
- embedded and practice-based
- content-specific
- sustained over time
- critical reflection
- feedback and coaching
- culture of learning
- strong institutional support

**These characteristics are challenging for top-down TPD to achieve.**

# *Initiator, provider, and beneficiary of TPD*



# Bottom-up and personalized TPD

- concerns regarding access and inclusivity
- teacher interest and career path
- availability of TPD opportunities
- teacher motivation and autonomy

The emergence of micro-credentials and badges correspond with the necessity for flexible, self-regulated learning in an increasingly busy world (Besser & Newby, 2019; Cheng et al., 2018), especially among working adults (Hunt et al., 2020; Ahmat et al., 2021).

# Micro-credentials in HEIs

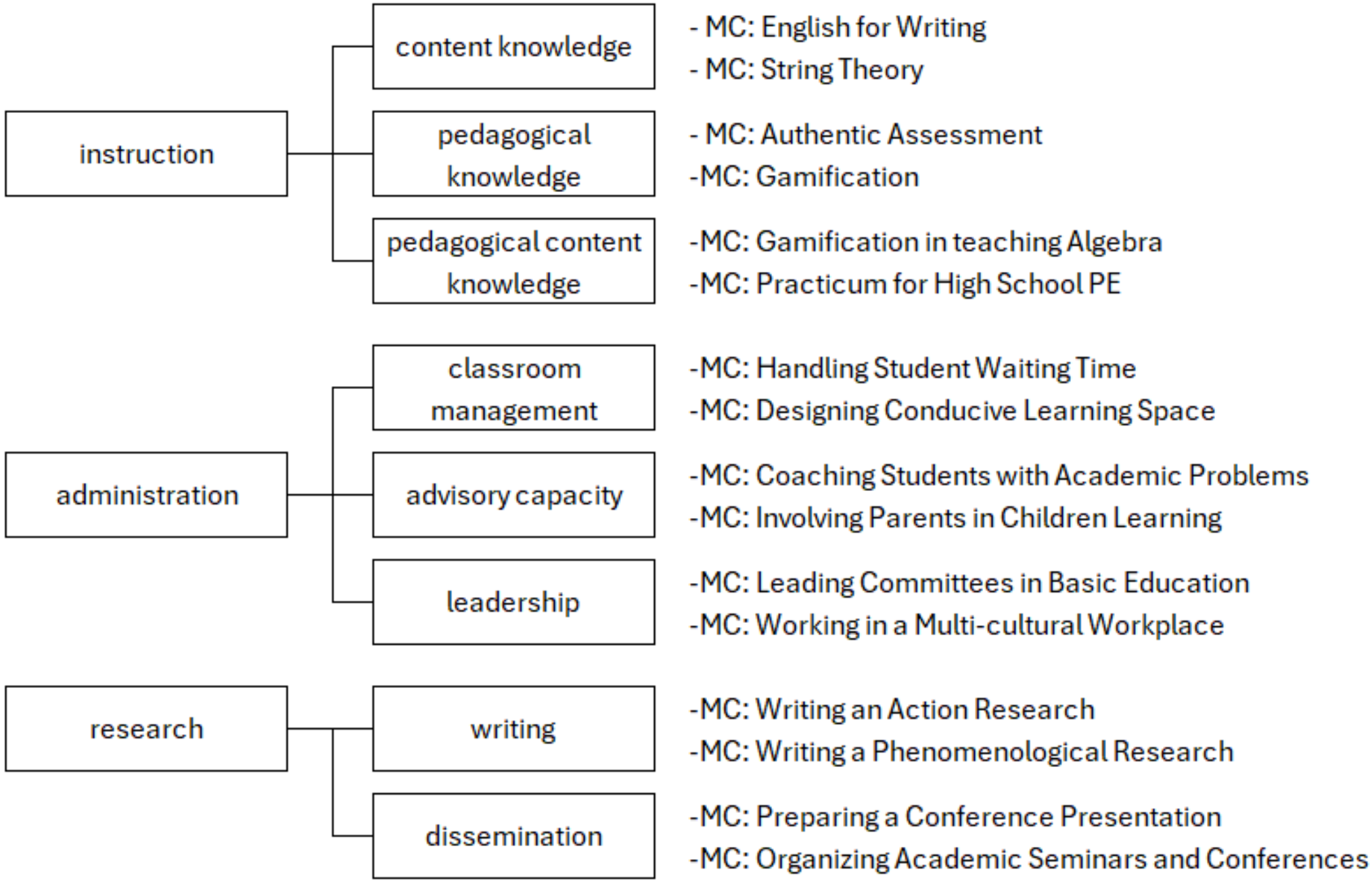
- Digital Promise (2015)
- emerging policies in Europe, NZ, Australia and U.S.A.
- “the latest shiny new thing” (Brown & Nic-Giolla-Mhichil, 2022)
- increasing learning opportunities and educational flexibility
- expanding enrollment
- earning revenue

# Micro-credentials in HEIs

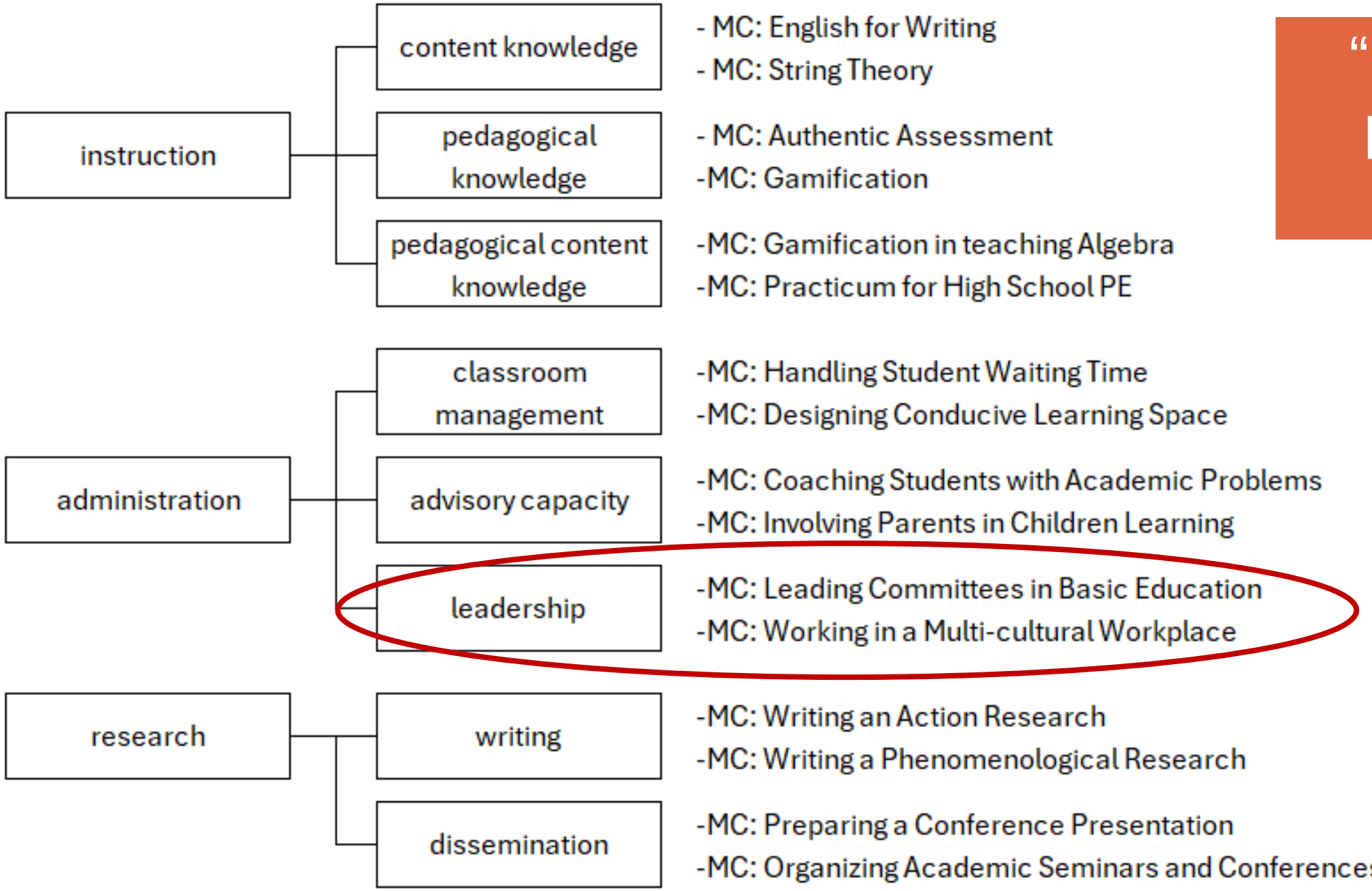
- “an extension of the discourse of employability skills” (e.g. AU) (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2021)
- HEIs pressured by industry to equip workers with appropriate skills (e.g. BSHM)
- MCs as opportunity for HEIs to perform “a strategic reset” (Brown, McGreal, & Peters, 2023; McGreal & Olcott, 2022; Olcott, 2022; Velvaratnam & Sankey, 2020)
- challenging the status of traditional credentialing

# TPD pathways using micro-credentials

- “responsibilization” of learning agents (Reynoldson, 2023)
- “shoppers of learning” (Reynoldson, 2023)
- the diversity of teacher responsibilities and the need for a diversity of teacher skills
- strategic positions of HEIs


instruction
content knowledge
- MC: English for Writing
- MC: String Theory
pedagogical knowledge
- MC: Authentic Assessment
-MC: Gamification
pedagogical content knowledge
-MC: Gamification in teaching Algebra
-MC: Practicum for High School PE
administration
classroom management
-MC: Handling Student Waiting Time
-MC: Designing Conducive Learning Space
advisory capacity
-MC: Coaching Students with Academic Problems
-MC: Involving Parents in Children Learning
leadership
-MC: Leading Committees in Basic Education
-MC: Working in a Multi-cultural Workplace
research
writing
-MC: Writing an Action Research
-MC: Writing a Phenomenological Research
dissemination
-MC: Preparing a Conference Presentation
-MC: Organizing Academic Seminars and Conferences

# personalized pathway option




"mentored pathway" option

# Unbundling courses to micro-credentials

- “granular learning” (Berry, 2017; Tooley & Hood, 2021b)
- focus on learning one small thing at a time (Park, 2018)
- achieving mastery of a specific content or skill (Zhang & West, 2020; Maytin et al., 2023)
- unbundling courses to grain-sized micro-credentials

**Course goals** Learn the historical and theoretical view of distance education as basis in structuring one's understanding of the field and develop a more specialized theory, research and practice. Accept that distance education is best understood and best practiced when viewed as a total system. Appreciate distance education as a study about change.

| Course schedule | Course objective | Topic | Activities, references and/or requirements |
|---|---|---|---|
| Week 1<br>Jun 16 | Express ones thought about the course.<br>Be familiar with the structure and requirement of the course. | Introduction, expectation and student survey<br>Course orientation | Student questionnaire<br>Course syllabus<br>**Assignment 1: Get your email account and join the class eGroup.** |
| Week 2<br>Jun 23 | Discuss one's perception of the current situation of DE in the RP. | My concept of DE. | **Assignment 2: Check online resources of the UP Open University and other DE providers in the country.** |
| Week 3<br>Jun 30 | Review basic ideas about DE. Agree on the systems approach in the study and practice of DE. | Basic concepts of distance education | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chapter 1 |
| Week 4<br>Jul 7 | Trace the historical background of distance education. Compare the characteristics of the 5 generations of DE. | The historical context | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chapter 2 |
| Week 5<br>Jul 14 | Examine the current models and concept of DE. | The scope of distance education | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chapter 3 and Otto Peters' "Models & Concepts of ODL"<br>**Agree on the rubric for poster.** |
| Week 6<br>Jul 21 | Evaluate the pedagogical characteristics of communication technologies and media and the appropriateness to DE. | Technologies and Media | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chapter 4<br>**Submit journal extract 1 based on Weeks 2 to 5**<br>**Assignment 3: Choose and get approval of a DE leader and institution you will work on.** |
| Week 7<br>Jul 28 | Analyze the course design and development methods used in DE. Describe roles of different specialist in the production of DE learning materials. | Course design and development | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chapter 5<br>**Assignment 4: Present a research topic in DE for approval.**<br>**Agree on the rubric for research abstract.** |
| Week 8<br>Aug 4 | Define interaction. Discuss different roles of a distance teacher. | Teaching and the roles of the | Read Moore and Kearsley, Chap 6 |

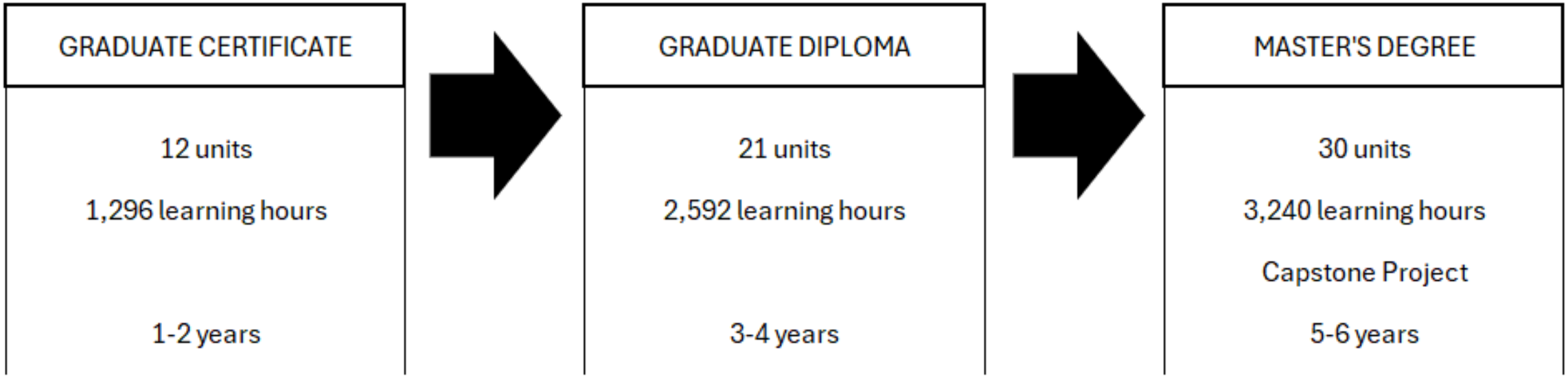
*Courtesy to Dr. Greg T. Pawilen for the image*

**Micro-credential**

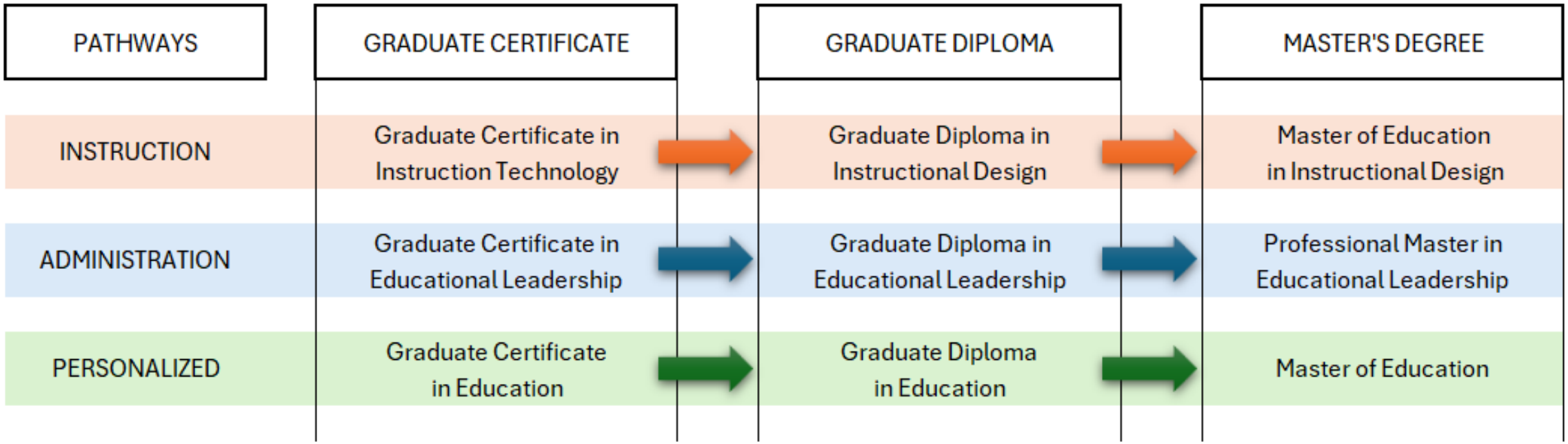
# Stackable, credit-bearing micro-credentials

- micro- to macro-credentials
- possibility of earning academic learning awards, whether students pursue formal qualifications or not
- Australia and New Zealand HEIs focus on credit-bearing post-graduate MCs
- absence of recognized policies on awarding, converting, combining, or transferring credits

# *"incremental credentialing" pathway* (Rasmussen & Zanville, 2021)

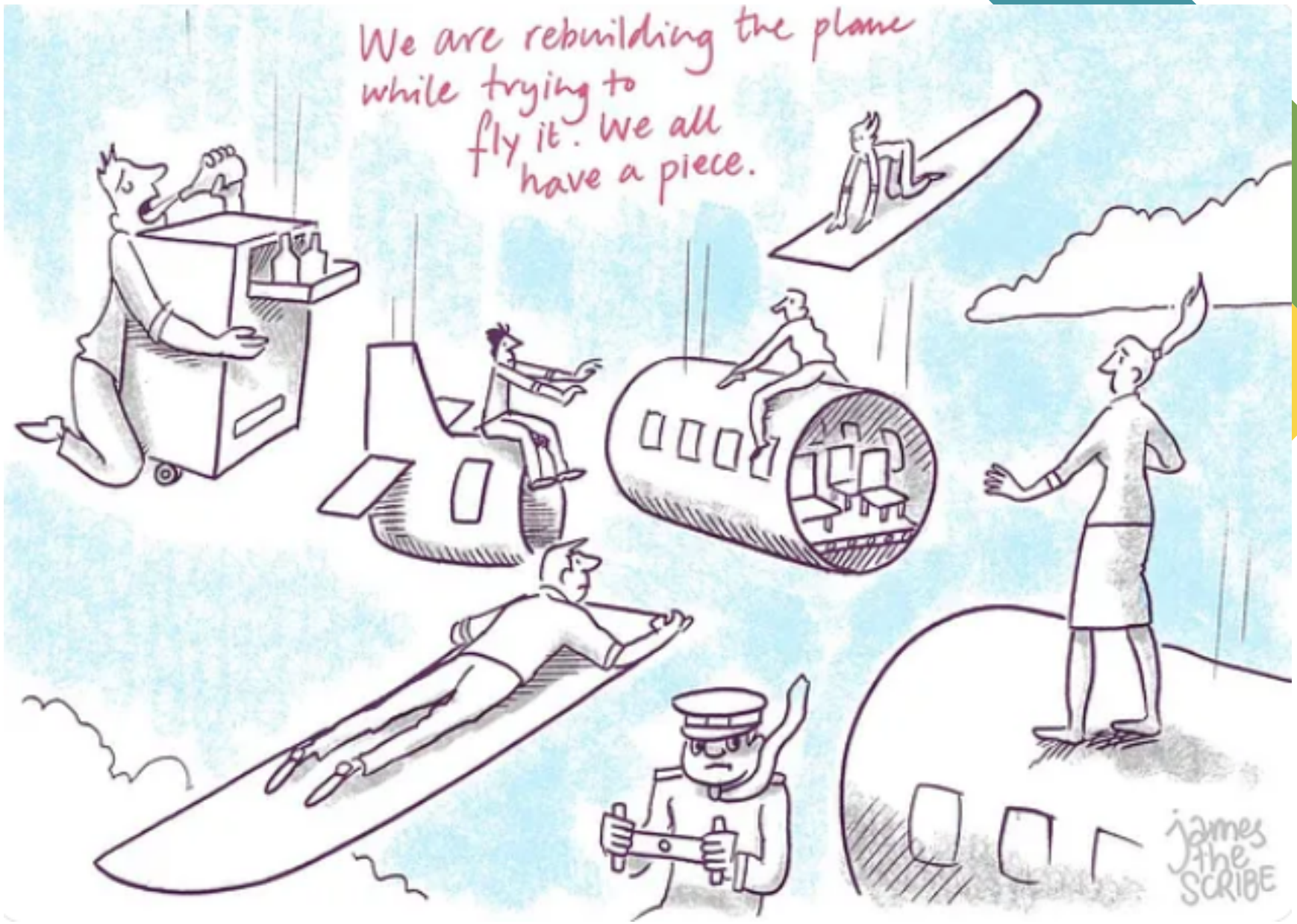


# *"incremental credentialing" pathway* (Rasmussen & Zanville, 2021)



# Issues to Address for HEIs

- lack of common understanding of micro-credentials
- absence of common quality and accreditation frameworks
- no empirical data on micro- to macro-credentialing
- awarding, converting, combining, & transferring credits
- economic gains versus academic standards
- institutional changes in structure, funding, and direction
- micro-credentials ecosystem


We are rebuilding the plane while trying to fly it. We all have a piece.
James the SCRIBE

# Thank you

**Dick O. Eugenio, PhD**
**University of the Philippines – Los Baños**
**doeugenio@up.edu.ph**
**+638175336978**