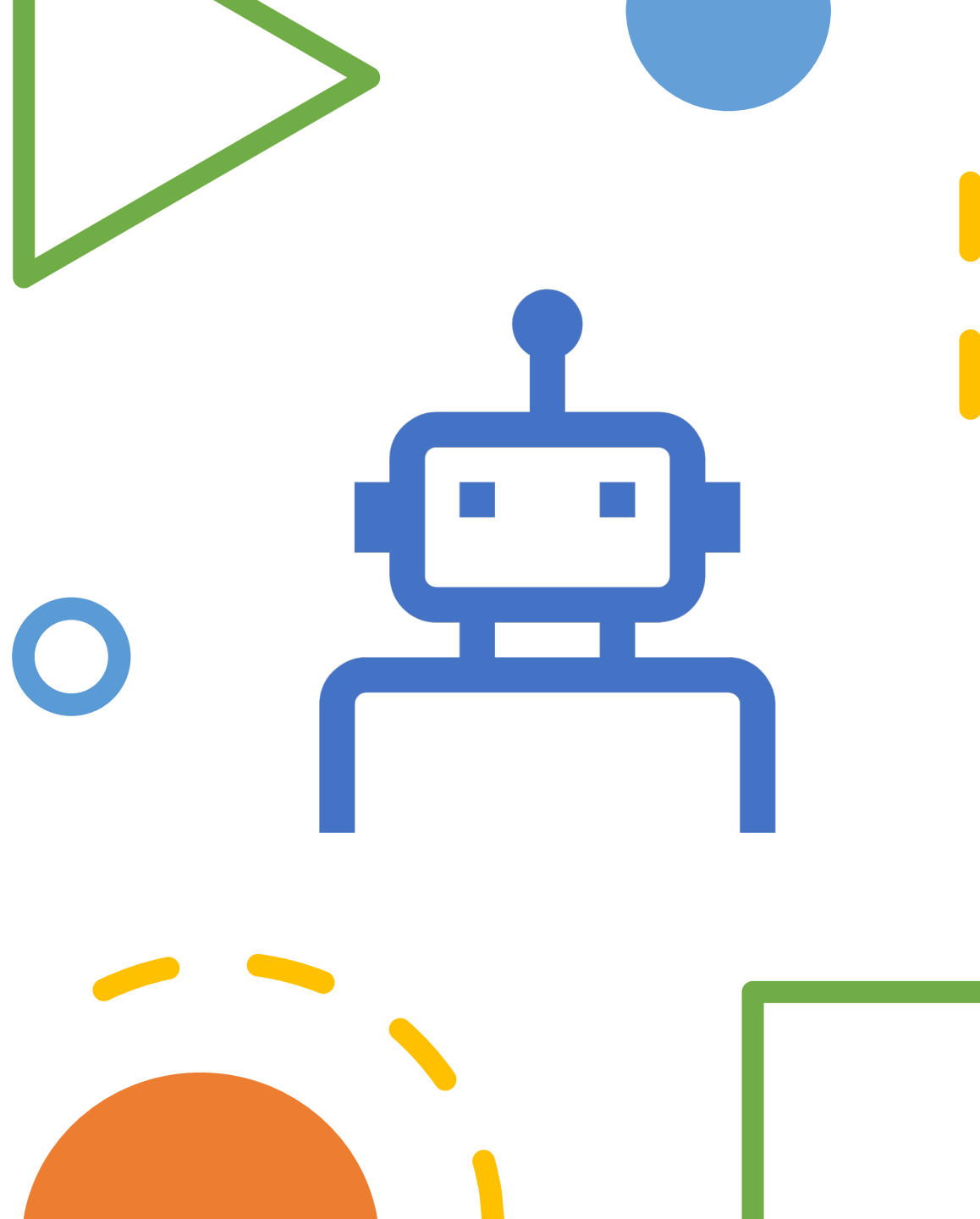# Pair Programming

Supporting your Jr. Devs Right

Kisha Delain

SPS Commerce
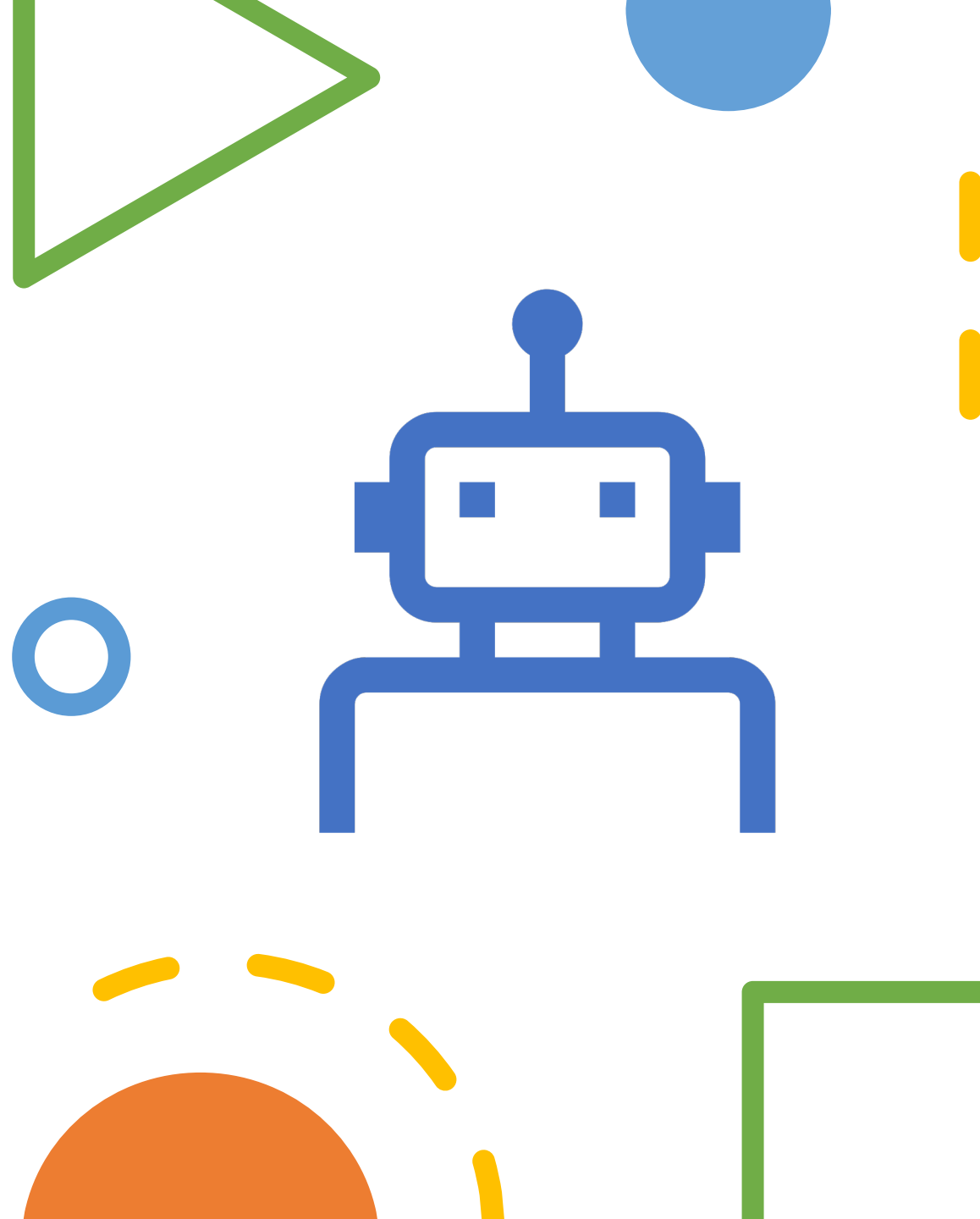
Who am I?

- Hi I'm Kisha!

- Currently an associate software engineer at SPS commerce. ☺

- I have experience teaching students for 20+ years in physics/astronomy

- Master's degree in science education

Challenges

- Everyone is different:
    - Backgrounds & experiences
    - Bootcamp? CS undergrad degree? Self taught? All valid!
    - Different personalities
- Many Jr Devs feel very nervous / imposter-y
- Power differentials are a thing! Be aware of your axes of power

- No one "magic answer" for pair programming

Team Working Agreement
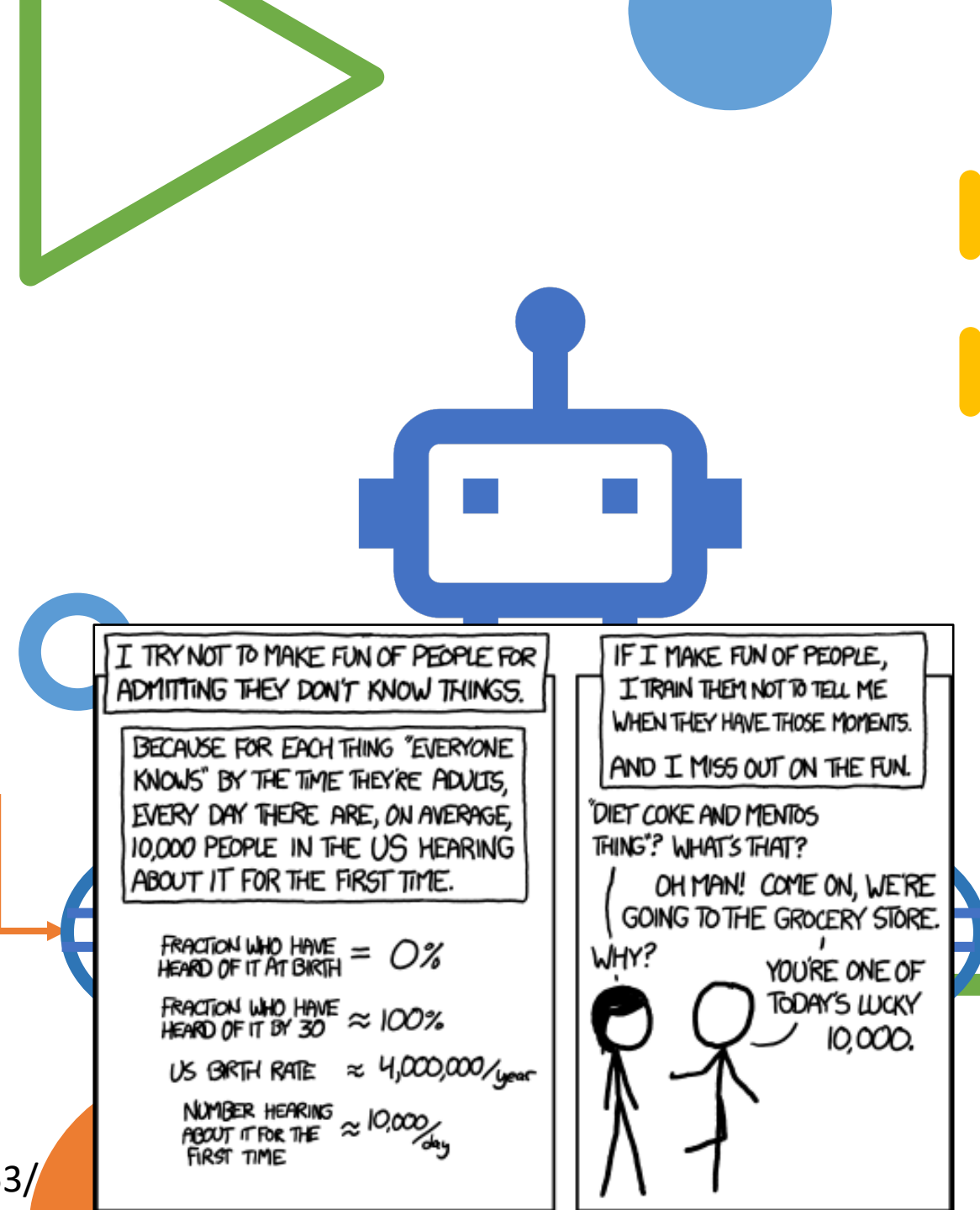## and how it can help

Buy-in from the team and managers on pair programming makes it easier to pair

Building trust is important!

- Communicate, don't assume. Err on the side of over-communication

- No specialists: knowledge sharing is important

- Everyone helps everyone. Don't be afraid to ask

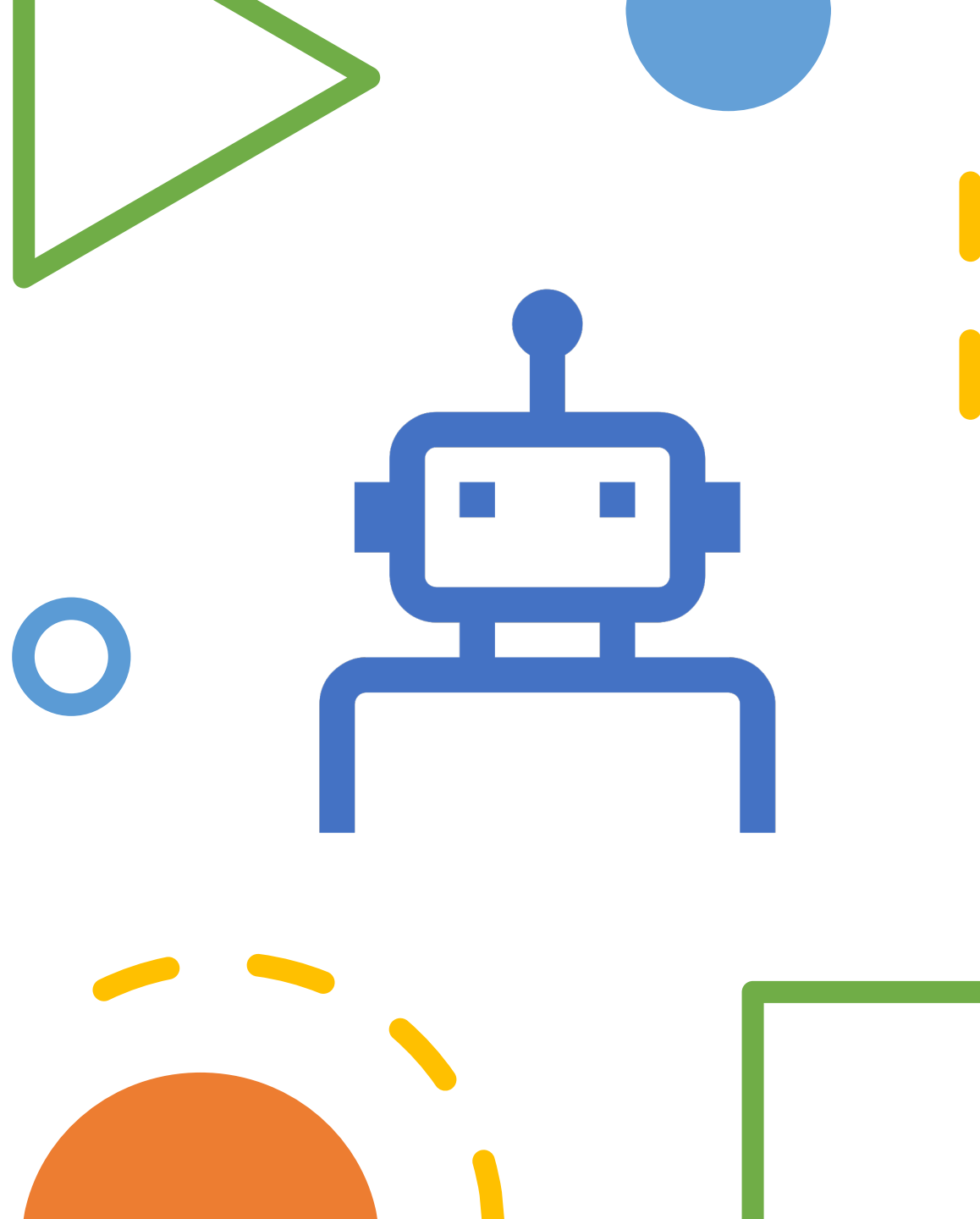- [Shared excitement about being one of today's 10,000](#)

→We're doing this *together*

XKCD # 1053
https://xkcd.com/1053/

Prepare Ahead!

- Think: what are you trying to accomplish in this particular pair?
    - Learning the code base?
    - Teaching a concept?
    - Building something specific?
    - Debugging? Normalize debugging as a part of the *process*

- What scaffolding is needed for the task?
    - What key *concepts* are needed?
    - What *context* is needed?
    - What *tools* are useful for the task?
    - Pare down what is needed to know
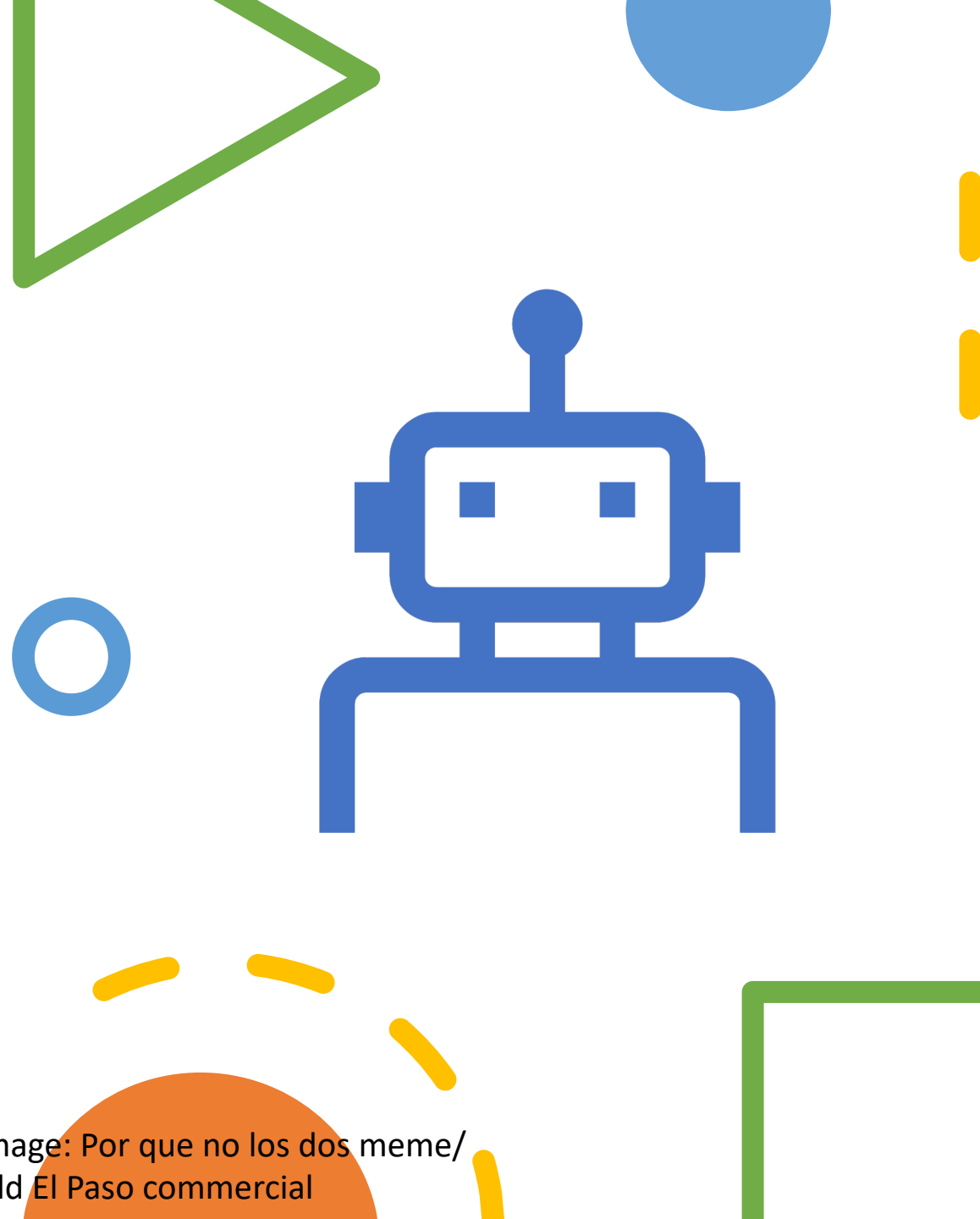   - Tool: Whiteboard some of the key conceptual connections / flow

Learning Styles:
are they a thing?

- Kind of and kind of not

- Big picture vs dive to details?

- Visuals? Kinesthetic? Aural? Reading? Social? Solitary?
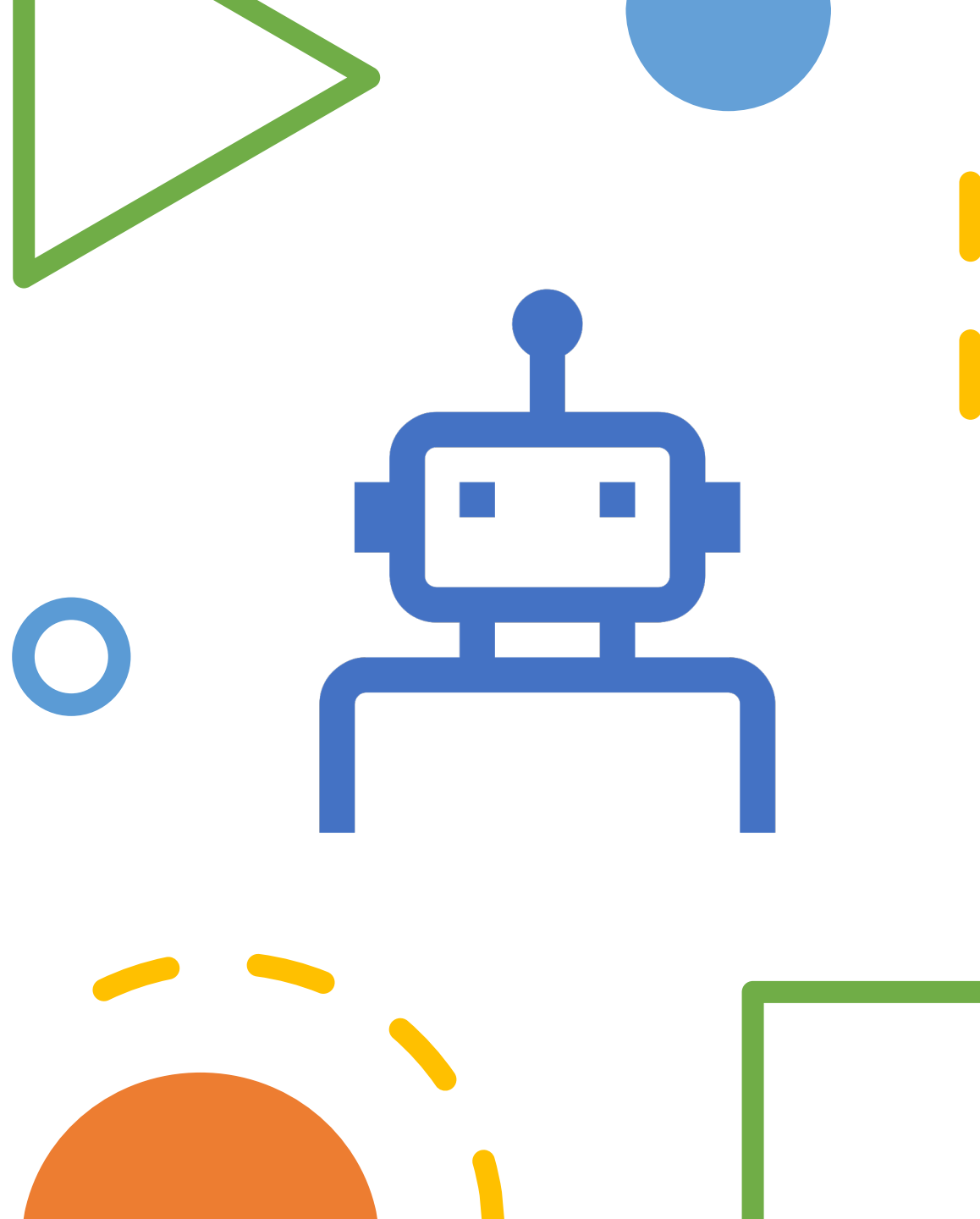

¿Por qué no todos ellos?

Image: Por que no los dos meme/ Old El Paso commercial

Pairing Tips!
Just what you were waiting for

- Check in often

- Give enough time to absorb & ask questions

- Assume competence

- Ask how they want to approach the question at hand

MOAR Pairing Tips!

- Don't "hover" behind them: this is stressful!

- Manage taking breaks / changing things up

- *Communication & Empathy is key*

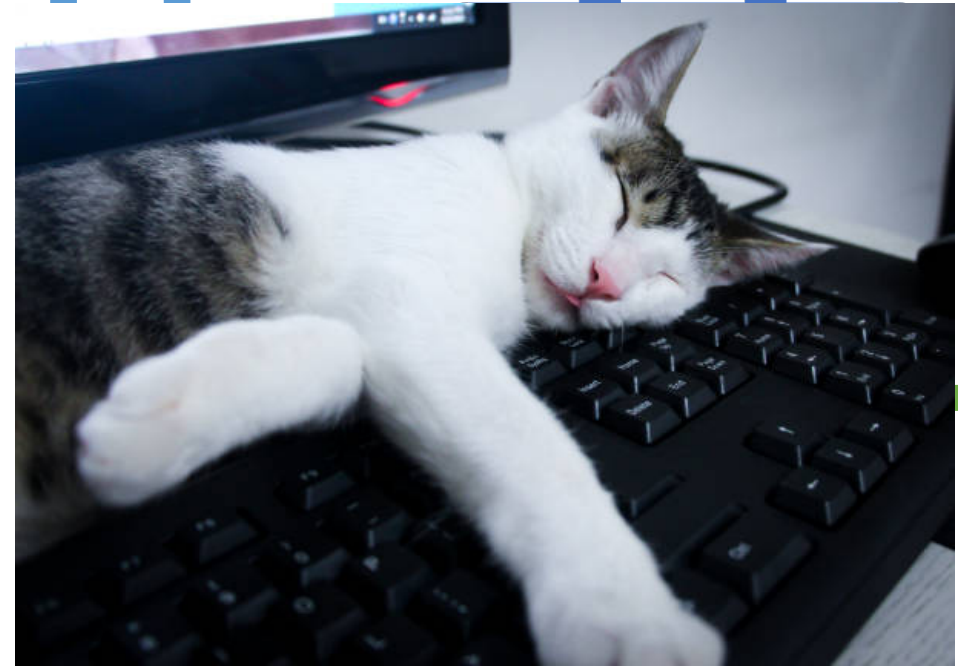- Don't make it your Jr Dev's job to manage *you*

Image: sleeping cat from iStock

THANK YOU

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