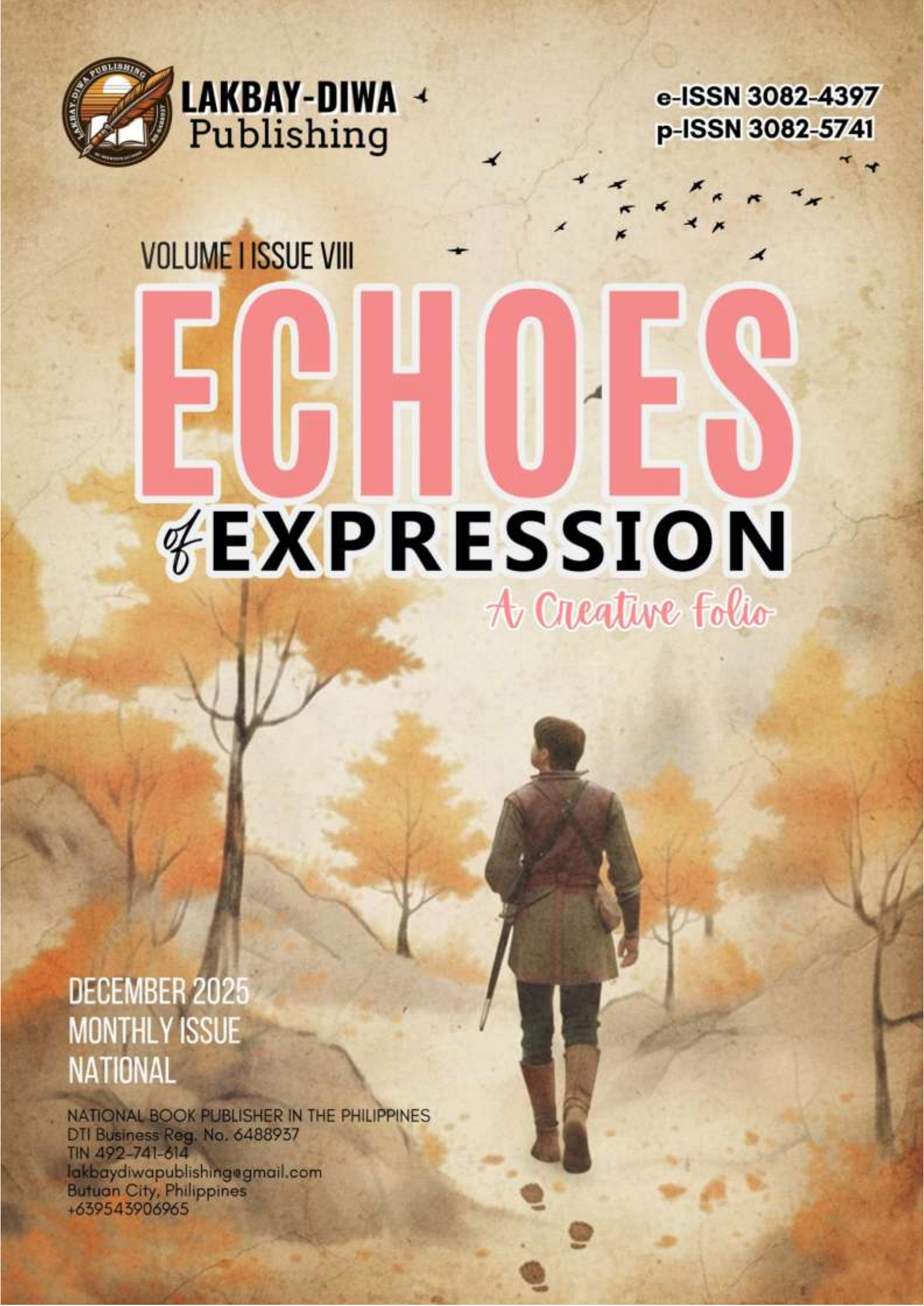
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A Creative Folio



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A Creative Folio

ECHOES OF EXPRESSION is a peer-reviewed, national-level creative folio published by Lakbay-Diwa Publishing. Dedicated to promoting creative expression, the creative folio features poems, essays, short stories, and other forms of imaginative works from both emerging and established voices. To celebrate diverse literary forms, ECHOES OF EXPRESSION provides a platform for writers and artists to share their original creations. Published both online and in print every month, the magazine invites contributions that reflect the evolving landscape of literature and the arts. All works published herein may not be reproduced, copied, or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the publisher.



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ECHOES of EXPRESSION
A Creative Folio

FOREWORD

It is with immense pride and excitement that we welcome you to this issue of ECHOES OF EXPRESSION. As a platform for creative voices, we strive to present a dynamic collection of poetry, essays, short stories, and other artistic works that reflect the diverse and vibrant landscape of human expression. Our mission is to provide a space where writers, artists, and creatives can share their stories, ideas, and visions, offering readers a window into the depths of imagination and creativity.

In the following pages, you will encounter a selection of works that challenge, inspire, and provoke thought. Each piece, carefully chosen for its artistic merit and emotional depth, contributes to the broader conversation about the role of creative expression in shaping our world. From the poetic to the narrative, the words in this creative folio serve as proof of the power of art to connect, inspire, and heal.

At ECHOES OF EXPRESSION, we believe that creative works are essential to the human experience. Our commitment to showcasing a diverse range of voices, from emerging talent to seasoned writers, reflects our adherence to fostering an inclusive literary community. In every issue, we celebrate the courage of creatives who push boundaries, challenge norms, and explore new horizons through their art.

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to our contributors, whose creativity and commitment have brought this journal to life. We also want to express our heartfelt thanks to our readers, whose support makes ECHOES OF EXPRESSION a meaningful and vibrant space for sharing ideas, emotions, and art. It is through your involvement that this creative folio continues to thrive and evolve.

As you explore this issue, we invite you to engage with the diverse voices and perspectives that exist within it. Let these works spark reflection, stir emotions, and deepen your appreciation for the beauty and power of creative expression. Together, let us celebrate the echoes of voices that inspire us to see the world in new ways.

Thank you for being a part of ECHOES OF EXPRESSION.

With warm regards,

LAKBAY-DIWA PUBLISHING

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KAPMAGINAR

Paramata Bantogen was resting on Talatakan a Wato in the middle of the sea when all of a sudden, the Nori named Sampiri Kagadongan appeared flying near the Lakongan Malipantaw. Bantogen was amazed looking such pretty bird possibly owned by a beautiful royal princess. The prince asked about the bird's queen and region but the nori seemed silence and the question remained unanswered. The bird apologized for not answering directly so the nori asked the prince in return about his name, his king, region, and he has a sister. The prince answered politely thinking that the bird would reveal her secrets in return.

He introduced himself as Paramata Bantogen of Iliyan a Bembaran. Pasandalan a Morog is his king and Princess Lawanen as his sister. After hearing all the details, the nori answered in return stating that she came from Babalayan a Anonen where Bolentay a Maginar is her queen. The nori warned the prince from not crossing that place for anyone who dared to go lost their names and died.

The prince strongly decided to visit the place and so he asked the nori to describe the direction of the place. The nori explained that he has to pass a valley with its dangerous big river and crossing the plain with its deep stream. After moving forward, you will encounter an overgrown path of big tall palm trees. As you approach the place, beware for the flowers on top of the big rock spread a spell of rare perfume. At this point, the bird flapped her wings and made farewell to Bantogen.

Prince Bantogen dared to visit the place to look for the beautiful princess. He saw the valley with its rattling river. He crossed the deep stream and then there he saw the tall palm trees. He was trapped and could not escape until he asked help from the tonong named Inaikat a Lonsan. There appeared a strong wind, darkness, and rain to lash all the tall standing trees. Quickening his pace, he now reached the dreaded ring of fire with huge flame. He then took a huge flying leap jumping over the big monolith rock. He now soon arrived in front of the cogon grass, the place of perpetual daylight. Feeling trapped for five full days where no tree nor bush to cover him against the burning glare of sun rays, only his shield to cover his forehead. He now asked help from his own Pinatola i Kilid, a crocodile, to let some rain fall

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to refresh his suffering and requested Inodar a Magaog to bring him alongside the vast seashore. Now, there came a sudden change, a curtain of darkness hid the place. Not long after, a rain of hailstone befell the place. This time, he had arrived at the enchanted waters where the rocks were compared to human heads, the grave as human teeth, and the floating long seaweeds were really the hair of the dead. Trying to find a way out, he took a huge jump to the Lakongan Mariyamat then turning to the left, he once saw the huge palaw a Polo Manggar by a yellow sea with its green waters where witches loves to stay. Not long after, he now reached the igang tree with its giant roots where big crabs hid. He had now arrived at Talatalak a Wato, used as mortar to pond flowers by the women of Babalayan Anonen.

Prince Bantogen began to survey the place but he found no one, no painted torogan, only the ancient balete tree. As of this moment, he took a nap and suddenly dreamt of a beautiful princess addressing him to go at once for he shall be killed right there in Lakongan Mariyamat. In an instant, the prince awakened from his deep restful sleep. There appeared five huge crocodiles in front of him asking about his name, place, and his ruler. The prince told them the truth so they moved away, opening a path for the prince along the vast seashore. Along the way, he saw roof of houses but in closer look, these were not really houses but simply giant rocks, being fooled again by the tonongs. After some time had elapsed, a very old ugly woman appeared calling him sweetheart, offering him betelnut quid. The prince was truly angry and glared to the old ugly woman using his kampilan i pagerag. At last, darkness descended and the old ugly woman was nowhere to be seen. He once realized that he had again been fooled by the tonongs.

Suddenly, the nori Sampiri Kagadongan saw the prince and flew directly towards him, telling him that it is time to visit the spacious lamin of her queen, the Walain a Maginar of Babalayan a Anonen.

When the prince entered the palace, there a little girl greeted him, praising the prince for his bravery and persistence for anyone who dared to visit the palace lost his life. When the prince turned a good look to this little girl, he was no longer a little girl but a lovely princess. He suddenly became afraid and asked helped from the Diwata I Ndawan and Diwata Makapanton not to play jokes on him in this place. As soon as he had seen her, she just quickly disappeared. Before he began climbing the five steps, there appeared a princess offering him sliced of betelnut quid. The prince was so happy seeing the beautiful princess, ended up calling him dear brother telling him that she was his sister, and threatening him by placing a sharp knife pointing her towards her lovely head. After the acceptance of Bantogen, he now invited him to the upper part of the lamin where Walain a Maginar awaits. Her younger sister Limbowan asked her to offer betelnut quid to the prince but she refused for the prince caused her grief once.

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The Quiet Kindness: A Plea for Respect in Public Spaces

"Consideration for the rights and feelings of others is not merely a rule for behavior in public but the very foundation upon which social life is built."
- Emily Post

The Bird's-Eye View

This essay reflects that fellow travelers and passengers in all public places should practice respect. In a busy, digital world, public places served as shared ground for different people in different walks of life. Buses, ships, airports, and terminals are places where people stop for a while to wait for their travel different places. Yet, in these shared spaces, a simple truth is often forgotten and neglected: we are not alone. The way we act in public shows not only who we are but also how much we value others.

An Annoying Experience in Public Places

"Tumatanda ka na kasi!" (You are getting older!) This is a jest I commonly heard from my friend Vina whenever I rant about the noise of people watching reels on their smartphones and talking too loudly in public places like bus terminals, port terminals, and the like.

As a frequent traveler from the island of Oriental Mindoro, I have come to know the long journey that many island residents must take. I started travelling from our province to Batangas in Manila when I enrolled in the graduate programs. To reach Manila, one must first endure a boat ride of one and a half to three hours to Batangas, followed by another two to three hours by land. This journey is really tiring, and for many passengers, travel time is also rest time. However, this much-needed peace is often broken by those who seem unaware of the people around them. This is the time I easily get irritated.

One of the most common problems I have noticed is the loud playing of short videos or reels on smartphones. This easily annoys me. I hate the sounds of noise while on travel. Many unconscious passengers watch comedy clips, lifestyle content, and confession videos without using headphones. The sounds fill the cabin and make it hard for others to rest or think. I often judged them as selfish human being. These people believe that they are just along in their living room or resting place rather than in a shared public space. A simple pair of earphones would solve this problem, yet many choose not to use them. I often associate

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this with lack of considerations. Mostly, old people are doing this. This lack of awareness is not just rude; it shows a failure to recognize that other people also have needs.

I always approach them in my pleading voice " Pwede pong pakihinaan ang volume ng inyong pinapanood? Nais ko rin pong magpahinga habang nasa byahe.." [Could you please lower the volume of the videos you are watching? I want to rest while on travel…]. Most people have positive response towards this request. But there are some who is inconsiderate and I must say heartless. At this time, I always being with me my portable speaker, play an annoying music. I wanted them to feel how annoying their habit was.

Another issue is loud talking, whether in person or on the phone. Some passengers speak as though everyone around them wants to hear their conversation. They laugh loudly, shout into their phones, and carry on as if the bus or boat were their private space. I heard a lot of stories. A story of teenage pregnancy, rants about their bosses, delayed salaries, family problems, and many more. I keep on asking, "Why do I or we need to hear those stories?" "Why do these people don't have *kahihiyan*?"

At this juncture, I wanted to ask: Are we not concerned that some people need quiet? Are we not aware that others may be tired, unwell, or simply in need of peace? A little care in lowering our voices can go a long way in making public travel more pleasant for everyone.

The behavior of children in public places is another matter that deserves attention. Yes, children will be children. They laugh, cry, and move about. However, there is a clear difference between children who are taught to behave in public and those who are not. Some parents take the time to train their children to speak softly, stay seated, and respect the space of others. Other parents seem to let their children do as they please, no matter how much noise or trouble they cause. While we must always be patient with young ones, parents also have a duty to teach their children that public spaces require a different kind of behavior than home.

A Call to Action: A Respect in Public Places

Respect in public places is not about strict rules or harsh judgment. It is about kindness. A little consideration. An empathy. It is about remembering that the person sitting next to you may have woken up early, may be going through a hard time, or may simply need a moment of calm. When we lower our voices, use headphones, and teach our children to be mindful, we are saying to others: I see you, and I care about your comfort too. This is the quiet kindness that makes life in society bearable and even beautiful.

In buses, terminals, ports, and airports, we share not just space but also moments of our lives. Let us make those moments easier for one another. Let us show empathy. Let us put on our headphones or headsets before playing a video. Let us speak softly on our phones. Let us guide our children to be respectful of others. These small acts cost us nothing; they are really free, and yet they give so much to those around us. In the end, respect in public places is not a burden. It is a gift we give to strangers, and in doing so, we make our shared world a kinder place to live.

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The Healing Strokes: Finding Solace in Calligraphy During a Mother's Darkest Moments

"When words are not enough, art speaks."
- Unknown

The Bird's-eye View

This recount explores how calligraphy and hand lettering became a tunnel and coping mechanism for anxiety and depression during a profound family crisis. This essay also examines how reconnecting with childhood artistic passion became a healing therapy. The piece will also narrate a mother's experience with her son's gaming addiction and intermittent behavioral challenges. Simple art can be therapeutic and can provide emotional refuge and could foster psychological resilience. The narrative will track the painful journey from emotional storm to creative fulfillment, demonstrating the transformative power of art therapy in managing mental health during times of extreme stress, anxiety, and depression.

At the Porch

Truly, there is no perfect parenting style. One may work for one, the other may not. It was my ultimate dream to be a mother. I want the best for my son. He is my world and my happiness. As I unexpectedly enter a tunnel of darkness, I find myself filling my working table with calligraphy pens, brush markers, gel pens, and the forgotten dreams of my childhood. It turns out that my cluttered working table became an avenue of therapeutic relief: the ancient art of calligraphy and hand lettering became my lifeline during the most devastating period of my life as a mother. As I write this essay, I am looking at the scar on my right hand. The turmoil has subsided.

The Crisis: A Son Who Enters the World of Online Gaming

Like any other mother, I am determined not to let my son fall behind. He was born at the age of digital technology. At thirteen, my son is engaging in the world of online gaming addiction. At first, I thought it was just a strategic game that would be beneficial and casual entertainment after school. His behavioral crisis threatened our family. The symptoms escalated with alarming rapidity: explosive anger, verbal aggression, and property destruction at home became our new normal. It was devastating. He would destroy his phone in a rage and out of anger towards his online playmates. When I tried to stop him, he became aggressive and hurt me. I almost feel powerless. I am 5'2", and he is an almost 6 ft young man. He is threatening to kill me, and he would be happy if I vanished. This cycle is really devastating. As months became years of fear and worrying.

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One morning, I found myself trapped in a prison of fear and helplessness within my home. That home was supposed to be my kingdom. His frequent absences and refusal to participate in school activities compounded the crisis. His adviser always sends a message looking for him and asking where he is. I also began to fear opening and reading my inbox. He also started vaping. Stealing money from me and her nanay (my mother). The money was used to buy gems and other online weapons. All these things became a weight of burden that crushed my spirit. Every day my eyes were flooded with tears. I became the epicenter of my own anxiety and depression; every morning wake-up became a flood of emotions I could neither control nor escape. Worrying, lack of interest, unmotivated—it feels like you are a thing with no purpose. In my darkest moments, I think the only solution is suicide—a permanent escape from what feels like a hell situation. I began to think about how to vanish, and it should appear like an accident. I have a lot of insurance; I will surely leave millions of pesos to my husband and my dear son.

The New Tunnel: Rediscovering Art

In the midst of this catastrophe, I discovered an unlikely paradise. As my son's rage episodes erupted, I began to close my room to seek peace and avoid the emotional warfare. It was during my loneliness and self-imposed exiles, as I watched reels and short videos posted on social media, that hand lettering and calligraphy ignited my interest. At first, I do not think of it as therapeutic; to me it is a desperate destruction. Day by day, I spent quiet moments of focused creativity that became my emotional armor. It became a soft pillow that hugged me. A series of nights looking at my output, reclaiming bits and pieces of peace from turbulent moments with my son.

My relationship with art had deep roots, though I had allowed them to vanish. On the father's side, my uncles, aunties, and most of my cousins know how to draw. One of my uncles really wanted to pursue fine arts. As a child, I passionately loved coloring materials, though my family's modest means limited my supplies to six or eight colored pens. There was a time I enviously eyed my class valedictorian's collection of twenty-four colored pens.

Despite recognizing my artistic inclinations, I never considered myself talented at calligraphy and drawing. Although I was always elected as class secretary due to my good handwriting, to me, nothing is special about it. My elementary school days earned victories in slogan-making contests advancing through district and division levels. These moments should have validated my abilities, yet I remained wrapped by self-doubt and dissatisfaction with my own work of art.

The challenges of adulthood, professional life as a teacher, and motherhood buried these artistic yearnings beneath layers of tasks, responsibilities, and striving hard for promotion. For several years, I forgot the joy that art once brought me, allowing that part of my identity hidden in a box.

The Pandemic Catalyst: Learning, Investing, and Enjoying

Confined at home during the COVID-19 pandemic, I began watching reels, short videos, and calligraphy tutorial videos online, initially without any expectation of mastery. It was purely for entertainment. To my surprise, I found myself not merely watching but imitating and learning. I discovered that quality calligraphy required specific tools—the right pens, quality papers, and materials could transform amateur attempts into genuine artistry. A good hand writing is an advantage but it is not required to have a nice penmanship. I began to ask, why is it only now that I discovered

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that the key for nice calligraphy is using the right tools?! It's quite expensive to collect those pens…huh!

Since watching videos became my hobby, I want to build a collection of pens. This realization ignited a significant financial and emotional investment on my part in self-fulfillment. I began with Staedtler calligraphy pens, then progressed to extensive Tombow brush pen collections, investing between 16,000 and 20,000 pesos per set—a substantial sum that I justified by waiting for Amazon and Lazada sales. My collection expanded to include Speedball nibs, inks, and specialized calligraphy instruction books. I remember when I began to be obsessed with different types and sizes of Speedball nibs. One of my best friends gave me a collection of Speedball C nibs. He also helped me to search in different art supply stores in Manila. It was very satisfying when he sent me an old collection of Speedball Calligraphy books. In addition, Zebra Sarasa gel pens became my addiction too. Every time I visited Japan, looking for Zebra Sarasa collections became my passion. I never thought that white pens were valuable. When I was a child, I didn't know what the value of white crayons and white pens was. To me it was a useless color. But now I considered white gel pens essential for creating calligraphy and hand lettering on black paper, providing opaque, crisp lines that make the writing stand out. Uniball Signo and Sakura Jelly Roll white pens became my next addition. Zig dot pens also added a vibrant dimension to my work, as did Stabilo desk sets, acrylic markers, and Writech pens and markers. Each tool represented not just an artistic resource but a commitment to my healing and growth.

I know I am not good in drawing nor painting. But recognizing my limitations in drawing, I also ventured into watercolor and gouache painting. My favorite subjects are seascapes, flowers, trees, and natural landscapes. These artistic pursuits—calligraphy, hand lettering, and watercolor—formed a comprehensive therapeutic cycle that addressed my anxiety and depression. Although many concerned individuals advise me to seek professional medical advice, I tried this first, and it works well.

The Online Community: Appreciation and Validation

One of the crucial moments in my healing journey came when I decided to share my work on social media. At first I tried Facebook and Instagram, but I felt sad. Little appreciation and engagement. My cousin advises me to try TikTok, and surprisingly, it booms!

This decision to share my so-called 'art' required courage with a little "bahala na" mindset. I did not ask my friends to like or share my videos. I was still in the essence of doubting my worth as an artist, seeking authentic admiration from strangers who would judge my work without knowing my story or my pain. The first name of my Tiktok account used to be "The Trying Hard Artist". The word trying hard has also negative meaning to me. But I also welcome the positive side. To protect my privacy while still seeking validation, I shared only my hands in the videos, maintaining anonymity while allowing my so-called 'art' to speak for itself.

The TikTok community response exceeded my modest expectations. My first few videos garnered fifty views, then hundreds, eventually reaching hundred thousands. As I write this essay, I have more than 50 videos with more than 10,000 views! Maybe so for some, it is not a big deal, but to me it is a small victory.

I still remember when I was in Grade 5, our teacher would require us to design our notebooks. It was fun for me. And now, I began creating notebook designs and tutorial content, and the positive

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reactions from viewers provided validation that had eluded me since childhood. Viewers began requesting personalized calligraphy pieces featuring their names and sweet messages for their loved ones, and initially, I honored these requests with enthusiasm and enormous passion. Their reactions, comments, and appreciation boost my confidence. There was a time I spent my weekend doing my followers' requests. It is somehow tiring but satisfying. However, my inbox was filled with requests, as demand increased, my teaching responsibilities made it impossible to fulfill every request, a limitation that itself taught me about boundaries and self-care.

The Fulfillment of What Used to Be Impossible Dreams

I kept on smiling as I look at my desk today, crowded with premium art and calligraphy supplies, pieces of notebooks, watercolor pads, completed artworks, and ongoing so-called 'art projects', I experience a truly sense of fulfillment.

The childhood dream of having not just adequate but extensive artistic materials realized when I turned thirty-five. Age that some may considered old. This realization carries a particular lesson: age did not diminish the validity of my dreams, nor did the winding path to achieving them. Nonetheless, the delayed gratification and the context of struggle made my achievement more meaningful.

The therapeutic benefits of this artistic journey extended beyond my mere escape. Day by day, a new horizon came out. I considered it as a new hope. Calligraphy and hand lettering demand focused attention, steady hands, and patience, qualities that anxiety and depression may actively weaken. I am disappointed at first, looking at my art as a piece of crap or like a child art. My everyday practice gives me the lesson to trust the process. By practicing these arts, I was simultaneously practicing emotional regulation, mindfulness, and self-compassion. Each stroke of my premium pens became a meditation, a symbol of my strength. Each completed piece is a small victory over my anxiety.

Present Reality and a Mother's Future Hope

As I write this, my son is receiving treatment at a rehabilitation center somewhere in Cavite, addressing the gaming addiction and some behavioral issues that almost destroyed our mental health. Remembering these moments made me cry. His recovery continues to be uncertain, a process beyond my direct control. But I am optimistic and I have to be. This reality once would have paralyzed me with anxiety, but my artistic practice has taught me to tolerate uncertainty. I need to find meaning in the present instead of dwelling on the sadness of the past.

The tools and techniques of calligraphy, the careful selection of tools, its preparation, the deliberate execution, the acceptance of imperfection, and the willingness to begin again when a stroke goes wrong—have become metaphors for navigating life itself. Truly, patience is a virtue. These lessons, learned through countless hours of practice during my darkest days, have equipped me with resilience I did not know I possessed.

Things to Ponder

The storm is already calm. My journey through calligraphy and hand lettering during a period of extreme mental distress illustrates several key principles. First is the importance of reconnecting with childhood passions. Second, creative practice can be therapeutic potential to stay focused. Third is the validation that comes from my friends, online community and its appreciation and recognition. Lastly,

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there is always hope. There is always possibility of transformation and miracle even in the midst of ongoing crisis. Truly, "may himala" in this digital age. Clinical literature well-documents the therapeutic value of art, yet lived experience adds a dimension to research findings that numbers and statistics cannot.

Let me remind again that there is no substitute for professional help and intervention. This story does not present art as an instant remedy for mental health challenges. Rather, it demonstrates how creative expression can serve as a complementary therapeutic tool, providing both distraction from immediate suffering and a pathway toward rebuilding a positive sense of self. From a mother's view in her darkest times, watching her son facing game addiction while battling her own anxiety and suicidal thoughts, calligraphy became more than an escape nor hobby—it became a reason to live, to continue the passion, a source of joy in a landscape of sorrow, and ultimately, a path back to myself.

The healing strokes of calligraphy did not instantly solve the crisis that triggered my battle against depression and anxiety. My will gave me the strength to survive it. In learning to create art and beauty with my own hands, I rediscovered my own worth. That is truly magical! And in sharing with others, I found family, community, purpose, and hope. These gifts, I now understand, were what I needed most—and what art, in its quiet wisdom, provided exactly when I needed them.

Author's Note

This essay represents a personal experience of mental health struggles and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts should seek immediate professional help through mental health services, crisis and emergency hotlines.

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What the Silence Remembers

In the middle of all this silence,
between the sadness and the stillness,
something stays
memories I didn't ask for,
but they come back anyway.
I try not to think of them,
but they ask to be remembered.

They remind me:
there's still something left,
a feeling that didn't leave
even when I tried
so hard
to forget.

It's not easy
to let go of the things
that once made me laugh so loud,
smile so wide.
Even now,
those moments stay
the joy,
the noise,
the warmth
of when everything felt right.

But life happened.
Things changed.
And what was once bright
slowly slipped away.
Not because it was time,
but because we couldn't stop it.

And now,
I'm left with what's still here
not the people,
not the place,
but the echoes.
The memories.
The proof
that it mattered.

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Silent Screams of the Innocent
#fa8100

In the deepest wild in the forsaken land,
A caged bird ready to be free and become wild.
Its blood and strength soaked-wasted in the native hands,
In the eyes of saint-like, ungrateful, unprincipled termites.

A bird whose set to soar high and claim its freedom,
but chained by the ambitions of the flesh-eating parasites.
The bird is willing to speak but a fist of colony in his mouth,
threats of the unethical and unbothered devil-alike.

Insect's fangs so thick, sharp, and hard,
It never misses to penetrate and killed its prey on the spot.
Spit of venom from its foul, carnivorous mouth,
Can snatch, still, the life from the flock of birds; death will take its part.

False and turmoil stories is what they prophesized
They send these creatures as decoy in the quick sand,
as these winged-animals try to flap and move their feet on the ground,
It's life being drag in the pit of death and beyond.

Now they pin their blames to all innocent ones,
put the weight in the shoulders of the unapologetic one,
so heavy it may cause and take a life.
Is this how the birds are paid for the labor they had?

These flock are tired in flapping their wings so hard,
the dreams to be free and feel the breeze of the sky,
a vision of peace, freedom, and array of clouds
Birds who hope for a sweet tomorrow when sunrise flourish in the sky.

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The Compass of the Smallest Stars

The ward is hushed, a canvas soft and bright, where little worries magnify the light.

You walk the halls where futures bloom and wait, A silent sentinel at childhood's gate.

No common script defines the care you give, for every whisper holds a chance to live.

You read the clues the brave small face can't tell, The fever's climb, the cough within the swell.

A dose of science, charted to the clock, A needle swift, a comforting, quick shock. But far beyond the IV line's straight track, you give the courage that won't let them look back.

The stethoscope is a bridge across the fear, to listen past the sob, and know what's near.

You are the translator of the baby's cry, the friend who teaches tiny hands to try.

From holding hands through shadows in the night, to celebrating milestones, pure and bright. You chart a life where two worlds intertwine: The rigorous schema and the bright design of a child's own spirit, fearless and unbound, where healing is a laughter, newly found.

The greatest measure on your tireless round, Is not the pressure or the number sound, But the flicker back within a tired eye. A moment shared beneath a clear, blue sky.

For in your hands, the most vulnerable trust is placed, and in your heart, the future is embraced. You mend the body, yes, but more profound, you sow the seeds of hope upon this ground.

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The Architect of the First Breath

The air is charged with waiting, hope, and need, a sacred pause where generations seed.
You stand beside the threshold of the known, guiding the mother to the strength she's grown.

The monitor hums a quiet, steady beat, tracking the pulse of tiny, restless feet.
You are the anchor in the sudden storm, keeping the vessel steady, safe, and warm.

From early counsel to the final, mighty push, you are the witness in the anxious hush.
You read the subtle curve upon the trace, and know the language written on her face.

It's not just charting vital signs with grace, but finding courage in a tired embrace.
The whispered worries, doubts she can't confess, you hold them gently in your kind address.

Then comes the moment, beautiful and stark, the primal cry that leaves its instant mark.
You place the baby on the mother's breast, where two souls meet in perfect, sudden rest.

You teach the nurture, calm the frantic fright, from the first latch to the dawn's uncertain light.
The maternal heart, forever changed and new, relies completely on the wisdom found in you.

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The Keeper of the Secret Smile

#fa8100

The world shrinks down to beds that feel too vast, where superheroes heal and shadows pass
You enter not just with a chart and pen, but as an ally, trusted by all children.

Your uniform conceals the magic trick you own: A steady hand for fears that must be overthrown.
You transform the treatment room, sterile and white, into a fortress shielded from the night

The medication cup is not just a dose, it's a "potion" fought by tiny, wrinkled noses
The blood pressure cuff, a dragon you must tame, you learn the language of each playful game

You gauge the pain not just by face scale, but by the color of a story, getting pale
You know the difference between a simple whine, and the deep silence that reveals a troubled sign

For when a little body fights so hard, it's your compassion that becomes the vanguard
You tend the wound, the fracture, and the fright, and promise teddy bears that it will be alright

You are the first to cheer a wobbly stand, the first to clap the tiny, healing hand.
A Pediatric Nurse, you walk the finest line, Between the science and a future that will shine

Your legacy is in the giggles that resume, the conquering of sorrow, worry, and the gloom
A master of both medicine and gentle art, you mend the body while you guard the innocent heart.

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Development Communication as a Catalyst for Sustainable Social Change

Development communication's foremost aim is to aid international development and enhance world-wide communication to the maximum. The basic assumption of development communication is that people have very good ideas about what they need to do in order to achieve their personal goals and to build their own futures. The participation of community members is at the heart of development communication. Community members are empowered to come up with the best solutions to the problems in their specific communities through the support of development communication. So, the communication involved in development is not merely seen as a transaction but is also viewed as a means of changing society with respect to sustainability, a powerful one at that. Development communication can be executed in many situations, however, the main goal remains the same; to enable societies to respond to the impact of globalization and to keep their cultural identity alive by using the local knowledge/practices.

The future of society is influenced by the communication in development that is considered a crucial factor. It is not only a source of information but also a means of participation. The application of participatory and communication strategies that are sensitive to the local culture and take into account the social aspect of the regions, is being considered as a tool for change that is slowly bridging the gap between the local people and the development projects. These strategies are, in turn, giving more power to the communities. Communication in development allows for the individuals to express their needs, wants, and problems. This raises the issue of the importance of the inclusiveness of development projects that are customized to the requirements of the local people.

The marginalized populations can also be reached via development communications, who are usually ignored in the development dialogue. Through participation-based means such as social media, community radios, etc., development communication can play a role in bringing up and recognizing those voices. When people are made aware of problems, they will be more accountable. Apart from this, it creates ownership among the concerned community members and all this ultimately contributes towards sustainability.

According to some critics, power imbalances in the community may be overlooked by development communicator by focusing on the idea of participation and thus lead to tokenism. If development communication considers local situations, it can bring about transformational and sustainable results when equity and inclusion perspective is used.

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Nevertheless, it is usually the other way round as it does not follow this proof. You can communicate properly with various areas of development with the help of this. In the end, it empowers and promotes whole. This is an essential aspect of Sustainable Development (SD) activities.

Communication about development faces many challenges. The key challenge is cultural diversity. Other challenges include technology and social class. The game has been designed in a way with an aim to not just help the makers and markers but also the hurdles. Sensitivity and adaptability to the greatest challenge which is cultural diversity are the two most important characteristics of communications strategies. Creating messages only for one cultural audience can cause confusion. As a result, it is mandatory that the communicators interactively approach the local communities and create the messages that will be of cultural impact together with them.

Communication development is affected by the different technology that is in use. In some regions, these electronic means of communication have become a basic necessity while others are still depending on traditional methods. In order to bridge this gap, we need funding to enhance our digital system. Additionally, you will encounter various classes of people in terms of their economic status. In the areas where basic needs are not fulfilled, the communication regarding the development objective will not be of much importance. Hence, they should make sure that the development communication is aligned with the local communities' urgent priorities.

To sum up, development communication is a powerful instrument that facilitates and disseminates knowledge in a manner conducive to socio-economic development. When proponents of implementing development communication correctly empower the greater majority, development communicators must provide a meaningful construct that creates a link between the silent majority and lawmakers. Development communication relies upon a blend of people/human resources and technological resources connected through the media as the primary development communications tool for promoting a sustained approach to policy development. Due to this interchange of media, there exists a major connection between media and justice through communication as a fundamental means for achieving justice. As a result, since our world is continuously changing, development communications practices must evolve into a more dynamic and effective means to address the rapidly changing and increasingly complex needs of our societies.

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English: A Bridge Between Cultures Worldwide

There is no dispute that the English language is now the preferred language for diplomats to use when negotiating at any level. Because of this fact, it has allowed countries that previously were unable to communicate to work together on a variety of different levels. In addition to the United Nations and NATO, there are numerous other organizations that use English as a means to express their unique characteristics, while at the same time collaborating on issues of a policy or humanitarian nature; therefore, demonstrating the critical importance of the English language in facilitating the cooperation between countries on an international level.

English is the primary language used for international business-to-business communication. English has become a common language for companies and markets in multiple countries; therefore, business transactions can be simplified, even if they occur between individuals and organizations in two or more geographic locations and cultural backgrounds. The use of English has also contributed to the rapid growth of the technology sector, as many of the major sources of scientific research and technological advancement, including scientific publications, conferences and collaborative projects, are written and presented in English.

Movies and literature are significant mediums engaged to share cultures between countries, and English is definitely one of the largest cultural exchange languages. At present, it still is the dominant means of film and literature communication across the globe. The worldwide impacts of Hollywood and English Literature have made it possible for people of different backgrounds to not only get to the same stories and themes but also to contribute to the culture of the world. The great amount of content made in English-speaking countries has assisted in the process of cultural understanding; hence, the world gets united through this understanding.

Music and educational systems have played an important role in facilitating intercultural exchanges. Music has been widely disseminated around the globe and will continue to be, as well as providing opportunities for individuals from diverse cultures to participate in the same music but in different languages, creating a shared musical experience that was not possible prior to the removal of language barriers between cultures. The development of bilingual (often in English) educational programs provides individuals from

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many regions around the globe with the opportunity to communicate and exchange ideas, resulting in greater cultural empathy and greater acceptance of the concept of global citizenship.

The English language serves as the primary mode of communication in higher education and plays a fundamental role in this globalized world. Most of the top universities and research organizations in the world use English as their language of academic communication, so those who pursue higher education abroad need to have competency in English to succeed. In addition to providing students and scholars with access to the majority of scholarly publications, conferences, and other networking opportunities, the use of English allows learners to participate in international dialogues and discussions. Moreover, a large number of online platforms that provide MOOC education and digital libraries use English as the main language, which not only makes the educational opportunities bigger but also the continuing professional and personal development easier through the global access these platforms offer.

The English language is the most powerful one in the world so far, particularly in the fields of diplomacy, business, culture, education, and technology. It is the main medium of their international relations, inter-industry cooperation, scholarly communications, and human interactions through exchanging of ideas among various cultures. In this sense, English is not only performing its basic function of being a means of communication but it is actually, the global bridge that connects the world, the cooperation that it supports, the opportunities that it expands and the understanding that it promotes in a fast-globalizing society.

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Phonology and Racial Identity in Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise"

In the poem "Still I Rise", Maya Angelou uses phonological patterning-through rhythm, repetition, and musical sound devices-not simply as an aesthetic feature but rather as a dynamic vehicle through which Black racial identity can be asserted. Written as a declaration of Black people's competency for self-worth against historical oppression, the poem mingles rhetoric with oral resonance to press the question of dignity and resistance. Through its repetitive sounds and rhythmic flow, Angelou converts the poetic voice into an instrument for self-valuation and empowerment; that is, she reclaims language as one tool of freedom and cultural pride (Angelou, 1978; Braxton, 1989).

The poem has remarkable patterns of rhythm and sound. Angelou reflects African American oral traditions by crafting her verses to resemble song, chant, and natural speech. The repeated refrain, "I rise," is a declaration of tenacity as well as a phonological anchor. The voiced sibilant /z/ in "rise" and the soft diphthong /aɪ/ in "I" combine to produce a smooth, upward sound that mimics the act of rising (Walker, 2004). This repetition creates a melodic motif that becomes more powerful with each repetition. The poem's message of resiliency is emphasized by the interaction of rhyme and rhythm; the speaker's rising voice uses sound to represent tenacity and survival.

Angelou also expresses grace and defiance through rhyme, alliteration, and stress patterns. She carefully controls rhythm and internal rhyme in phrases like "Because I walk like I've got oil wells / Pumping in my living room." Walk, oil, wells, pump, and room are the stressed syllables that produce a powerful beat that conveys assurance and confidence. The poem becomes a performance of power and identity thanks to this deliberate rhythmic structure. Furthermore, lines like "Shoulders falling down like teardrops" soften the tone by repeating the /s/ and /ʃ/ sounds, briefly introducing vulnerability before returning to the poem's triumphant refrain. The emotional depth of Black womanhood is captured by the harmony of strength and softness—tender yet uncompromising (Collins, 2000).

The poem's community element is further emphasized by its phonological layering. Angelou's rhythmic patterns, which are evocative of African American spirituals and gospel music, situate her voice within a shared cultural and historical soundscape. Because the poem is oral, readers can hear a chorus in the repeated "I rise." This rhythmic inclusion turns

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Angelou's personal proclamation into a collective statement of racial pride and resiliency (Christian, 1985). Her voice echoes the experiences of those who persevered and endured, carrying ancestral memory. Thus, phonology serves as a communal act of linguistic and cultural freedom rather than merely decoration, serving as a bridge between personal experience and shared identity.

Additionally, the tone and sound contrast between the speaker's self-affirmation and the imagined voices of oppressors heightens the sense of racial tension and resistance. The harsh sounds in "bitter" and "twisted" evoke aggression and distortion, symbolizing the violence of racial misrepresentation, when Angelou writes, "You may write me down in history / With your bitter, twisted lies." The refrain "I rise," on the other hand, flows with grace and strength, producing a triumphant counter-melody (Neal, 2005). The contrast between the oppressor's resentment and the speaker's poetic assertion effectively conveys resistance and reclamation. Angelou uses sound to change language from a tool of oppression to one of self-definition.

Lastly, "Still I Rise" shows how language, sound, and identity work together to promote empowerment. In addition to being stylistic elements, Angelou's decisions regarding rhythm, rhyme, repetition, and sound symbolism are essential to the poem's message of Black pride and human dignity. The line "I rise" serves as both a linguistic refrain and an ideological statement, transforming the poem into an auditory and vocal uprising. Phonology becomes a song and a weapon in Angelou's hands, capturing the resilient spirit of a people who turn silence into speech and suffering into poetry. Readers are reminded by Angelou's voice, which is based on linguistic artistry and cultural identity, that speaking one's truth is liberating in and of itself.

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The Foundational Role of Emergent Literacy: A Reflection on Practice

Emergent literacy is crucial as it has a profound impact on a child's early development. It is a foundational phase where children develop pre-reading and pre-writing skills even before formal schooling. This perspective supports the notion that teachers are central to early literacy development, primarily through creating a supportive environment, ensuring meaningful exposure to print, and fostering an atmosphere conducive to language exploration.

The concept of environmental print, as highlighted by Goodman (1997), is particularly useful as it demonstrates to children the ubiquity and communicative function of print in their everyday lives. This understanding serves as a reminder to be more deliberate about creating a literacy-rich classroom environment. This includes adding more labeled materials, increasing opportunities for shared reading and writing, and encouraging meaningful conversations.

I have come to appreciate the value of small, everyday assessments that illustrate how children naturally progress toward becoming readers and writers. Instead of conceptualizing literacy as a mere set of skills, I now view it as a construct that develops through relationships, curiosity, and shared experiences. This perspective has allowed me to focus on how pupils begin to understand and use language, print, and symbols even before formal reading instruction.

Even during playtime, I observed the growth of literacy, which reinforced the principle that learning often occurs in natural, playful contexts. Children learn best when they feel safe, supported, and excited to explore language. Recognizing a letter, telling a story, or pretending to read are the building blocks of future reading and writing. For instance, during snack time, I observed several pupils examining the labels on their food. One pupil pointed to the word “Bread Pan,” he recognized the word because he had seen it several times. I am delighted to see that literacy grows when pupils explore, talk and ask questions.

Now, my professional goal is to provide pupils with more opportunities to interact with books, print, and writing tools, enabling them to build continued confidence and joy in their literacy journey.

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Becoming Who I Am: A Heart Full of Determination

Life, to me, has always resembled a flowing river unceasing, resilient, and brave. Through storms, heavy currents, sharp rocks, and muddy waters, the river continues to move forward. It does not surrender, because it believes in its purpose. In many ways, my life has followed the same path.

I grew up in a simple family that struggled daily. I still remember going to elementary school with no allowance, and eating rice with salt or soy sauce because those were the only things we could afford. But even in those moments of hardship, I never allowed poverty to dictate who I could become. Instead, I used it as fuel, a reminder of why I needed to keep going. With faith and perseverance, I finished elementary school.

High school brought its own challenges. Money was always short, and to have a small allowance for school, my family and I worked in the garden during weekends. It was exhausting, but it strengthened my spirit. Despite many obstacles and moments of doubt, I pressed on and completed high school another victory that proved that determination is stronger than circumstances.

After graduating, I left home and tried my luck elsewhere. Questions filled my mind: Can I continue to college? Will I have enough money for tuition and boarding? Am I capable of doing this on my own?
I had no one to depend on but myself. Yet, I told myself, Bahala na. Follow your heart. Trust the process. And so, I pursued college with everything I had. The journey was difficult filled with sacrifices, long nights, and moments of uncertainty but my desire to succeed was greater. By God's grace, I finished my degree in Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, a milestone I once only dreamed of.

I thought life would become easier after graduation, but reality proved otherwise. Finding a stable job was harder than I expected. Still, I did not give up. I accepted different jobs whether in private institutions, government offices, or anywhere I could earn enough to survive. Even when the salary was small, I embraced the work wholeheartedly. It was not about the amount it was about building myself, step by step.

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Along the way, I heard discouraging words from others. Some comments were painful, meant to bring me down or make me doubt my worth. But I reminded myself that everyone has their own struggles, and I should not let negativity block my path. I chose courage over fear, and faith over doubt.

Life has presented me with many challenges like financial problems, family issues, responsibilities in the community. Yet through all of these, I held onto one truth: God is always with me. His guidance and strength are what helped me survive every storm and rise after every fall.

Today, I continue to move forward with the same determination that carried me through the toughest parts of my life. I listen to what my heart whispers. I keep going even when the road gets rough. I refuse to surrender, because quitting means losing the dreams, I fought so hard for.

I am who I am today because I chose to be strong. Like a river, I keep flowing sometimes quietly, sometimes with force but always with purpose. My journey is far from perfect, but it is filled with courage, resilience, and unshakable faith.

This is my story.
This is my heart full of determination.
This is who I am becoming stronger, braver, and more hopeful with each passing day.

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Weaving Filipino Activism Through Storytelling

There are stories that steal our hearts in the thrilling joy of falling in love. Other stories drown us in heartbreaking tragedies, and there are stories that reveal the truth that cries for change.

This is something I started to learn at a young age. It has felt as if Filipinos seemed to have been acting out the same script that was handed to us without a choice. We were greeted by the same unchanging headlines day after day. Indigenous groups fought back to protect their lands from mining companies, only to be harassed by the police. Political dynasties created new waves of drama as they twisted the truth to save their shot at the next election. Worst of all are the stories of fathers driven to steal food just to feed their families. This news drained all our hope even in the midst of our deep-rooted culture of resiliency. However, behind these, I see hope and comfort in the attempts by Filipino writers to heal us through the power of stories.

Nowadays, Filipino authors are putting up their pens in good faith. They don't simply give voice to injustice or record it but are also trying to mend the very fiber of the Filipino spirit. This is the power of silent revolt, which lies hidden in the plots of stories, the force that altered our once fate of being slaves. Despite constantly facing the raging storms of political threats that try to silence their freedom of speech, they still continue to raise their voices. Through their stories, we are allowed to connect our painful stories and craft what we call a national and collective trauma. But stories aren't enough to change the tradition of corruption. Yet, they remain important, like water seeping into our societal awareness and building our sense of morality.

I believe that this process does not start with some utopian political theory. It starts with an experience that we are all familiar with: a personal loss. It is the tormenting grief that dies with a person we love, the memories that remain in our hearts, and the pain carried by our grieving soul. This suffocating grief that we all understand is the inspiration for the story Lumbay ng Dila (Sorrow of the Tongue) by Genevieve Asenjo. She uses the world of the Hiligaynon language and its native land. When the bulldozers are threatening the mountains in her story, it is not just a matter of environmental crisis. It also brings the painful experience of the shattering of identities that we treasure. It is not just our territory that we can claim as our property, but it's a special place that we call home. Through these stories, we readers can

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see a land struggle around the world and relate to the universal fear of the loss of one's roots and identity.

From the ancestral land, this literary activism moves to a place and territory even closer to home: our own bodies. We are all living in a body that was judged, celebrated, or even commodified in some way. As Merlinda Bobis portrays it in her stories, the body of a Filipino woman is also a living monument to bigger histories. In the example, she mentions that a scar on the hand of a mother tells about the colonial trade routes. Indeed, our body is the first place to which we expose ourselves to the world's pressures. So, it's just right that it is also the first place where we regain our freedom. Tying the dots of injustices to our own personal experiences, she gives a language that helps us to understand the intense role politics plays in our lives.

In an era where the world is filled with distorted truths, knowledge is survival. One of the novels of Lualhati Bautista, Gapo, perfectly mirrors the reality of our situation. The title refers to the city of Olongapo; the novel makes us see how the ordinary lives of Filipinos are greatly affected by the government and even foreign authority. We come to realize that intersectionality represents our reality and our shared experiences. We observe how poverty is greatly influenced by a person's gender, and how one's idealism is conditioned by their status.

Old textbooks are not the only place of neocolonialism. It shapes our struggles today. This is very clear when we see the rapidly growing numbers of Filipino children surviving in broken homes. We find it in so many Filipino dreams made into commodities. This is a bitter truth, that we are all nothing but fragments of a narrative that we can't quite understand. This is why Filipinos should be provoked to make a new narrative untouched by the chaos on our news feed. What matters now is for us to make sure that we will all be messengers of these stories.

Remember that these storytellers do not come up with easy solutions. They're not telling us that literature can act as a magical cure to the rotten system overnight. But they keep reminding us that the Filipinos are more than capable of weaving the story we want. We can make intertwined stories that can tell our mutual experiences, based on the secret tales of our diaries. Messages of hope and courage are echoed within stories by storytellers. They burn our conscience, even lighting the darkest corners of the room. This reveals the different faces of struggles and pains that bring us all together.

Still, we know that even stories can only achieve so much. The change that we have been dreaming of remains in the very hands of Filipinos. We have to live within the power we have, starting with picking up books, discovering stories, finding the truth between the lines. For it is we Filipinos, and only Filipinos, that can weave the future we want and deserve. This is not only for us, but also in the interest of the coming generations, so that they may carry our flags with sincere loyalty and devotion. It is the true stories that allowed our ancestors to change the history of their time. And together as one Filipino, we can also rewrite our stories.

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Community Health Nursing: An Experience Never Forgotten

Community Health Nursing, a duty we'll never forget,
A journey of service, with lessons firmly set.
First exposure in the community, faces from all walks of life,
Meeting joys and struggles, resilience and strife.

From database gathering to assessments with care,
Blood pressure, urine tests, wound dressings to bear.
Height and weight measured, each task a new test,
Though hard at the start, fulfillment feels best.

Under the sun, student nurses walk on,
Seeking households to visit from dusk until dawn.
Some doors stay closed, yet others invite,
Welcoming smiles make the burden feel light.

Interviews unfold with compassion and grace,
Assessing the body, the home, and the space.
Rodents and mosquitos, hazards to fight,
Teaching prevention to keep health in sight.

Habits of sleeping, of eating, of play,
Guided by standards to live the right way.
Though challenges rise, the memory is set,
Community Health Nursing, we'll never forget.

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Nursing Research: A Journey of Growth, Courage and Cheer!

I started as a student, research I did despise,
But as a course requirement, I had to realize.
In the classroom, our teacher guided each part,
Teaching the basics, igniting a start.

From knowing what research is, its types and its ways,
To writing introductions that brighten the days.
Reviewing the literature, methods to prepare,
Proposal approved new burdens to bear.

Sleepless nights followed, deadlines to meet,
Missing occasions, yet refusing defeat.
But once the defense was finally done,
True happiness bloomed, fulfillment was won.

As graduates, nurses with futures ahead,
Postgraduate dreams in our hearts are spread.
Master's or doctorate, the cycle repeats,
Research returns, with new goals to meet.

Though once avoided, now cherished with pride,
Nursing Research walks with us side by side.
A subject of struggle, yet love it became,
An enduring journey, with honor and name.

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From Novice to Expert: A Voyage towards Mastery

A fresh graduate, a newly registered nurse,
At the starting line, unsure which path to traverse.
After the board exam, joy and excitement abound,
But once the thrill fades, new questions resound.

"What's next? Where to apply? How do I begin?"
Anxiety grows when no mentor steps in.
Days pass in doubt, yet courage takes hold,
An application submitted, a new story unfolds.

Hired at last, but new worries arise,
"Can I be a good nurse? Will I meet the ties?
Can I deliver the care, fulfill what's expected?
Will colleagues accept me, will I be respected?"

These questions linger, but eagerness shines,
Through learning and practice, confidence aligns.
A novice nurse grows with each passing day,
Experience and training light up the way.

Being a novice is no cause for shame,
It's a vital phase in the nursing game.
For learning brings wisdom, and wisdom will show,
That novices blossom, and experts will grow.

In time we master the art of our field,
With wisdom, knowledge and skill, our future is sealed.
From novice to expert, the journey is clear,
A path of growth, courage, and cheer
and a voyage towards mastery is here.

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From Hospital to Classroom: A Path of Triumph

I began as a volunteer nurse, then served as staff in a busy ward,
Caring for patients each day, fulfilling the noble call of God.
Yet deep within, a dream remained, a passion I could not suppress
Since childhood, I longed to teach, to guide, to inspire, to bless.

So, I chose a different path, applied to be an instructor true,
Carrying the nursing profession still, but with a broader view.
No longer at the bedside most of the time, yet my mission stays,
For I teach my students how to care, to serve in the best of ways.

The joy of being both nurse and teacher is beyond compare,
Two professions intertwined, a fulfillment rare.
Though hardships come, tasks, deadlines, and sleepless nights,
Still happiness conquers, fueled by passion's light.

Preparing lessons, guiding research, leading extension and accreditation,
Balancing duties with dedication and determination.
Time management becomes the key, to perform and to endure,
For teaching remains the priority, steadfast and pure.

Even when weary, the tasks must be done,
For success is not instant, it's a journey hard-won.
To love the work, to embrace each test,
It is to walk the path of growth, and give our best.

From hospital to classroom, the pathway unfolds,
A story of triumph, where each dream takes hold
For in nursing and teaching, fulfillment we find,
A legacy of service, both heart and mind.

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Patience, Determination, and Love for Nursing: The Key to Success

You may wonder how some students succeed,
Though their intelligence seems not to lead.
The answer lies in patience each day,
Attending classes, learning the way.

Patience to listen, to write, to prepare,
To join activities, to show they care.
No one will fail who attends with zeal,
On duty, in practice, their growth is real.

Scores may be low, yet dreams still ignite,
With persistence and courage, they win the fight.
For nothing's impossible when one believes,
Through effort and prayer, success one achieves.

Guided by faith, with study and grace,
Nursing becomes a fulfilling place.
When love for the calling shines from within,
True success is certain, the journey begins.

"No one left behind" is a phrase we all know,
In nursing, we guide so all may grow.
Yet only the deserving, steadfast and true,
Become real nurses, with hearts that renew.

Challenges rise, but passion remains,
Love for nursing conquers the pains.
Through patience and strength, the path is laid,
And in the end, a nurse is made.

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ADVANCES IN CULINARY EQUIPMENT AND THEIR EFFECT ON FOOD PREPARATION

Innovative in cooking has dramatically changed the way we prepare food, putting more value on efficiency, convenience and environmentalism in our kitchens. Today's kitchen gadgets are a razor sharp intersection of art and science, making the daily grind enjoyable and food preservation fun. This essay will show that the most recent innovations of equipment enhance food preparation to help everyone from chefs to hungry diners.

One major step forward is the introduction of smart features into kitchen appliances. Smart ovens refrigerators, and cooking gadgets that have IOT cloud capabilities for remote control and monitoring. Cooking times, temperatures and settings can be programmed by chefs on their smartphones for precision and ease of use. The technology reduces mistakes, and boosts productivity so chefs can focus on creation over micromanagement. The capacity to program machines with a fixed set of recipes is also democratizing cooking in the best way possible: empowering people to eat gourmet-caliber meals from their own kitchens.

Energy saving is a significant trend within equipment in the kitchen. New appliances are built to be highly energy efficient while still keeping performance 100%. Induction cooktops, for instance, heat food more quickly and generate less waste energy than standard gas tops. Energy-star appliances refrigerators and dishwashing systems also cut utility bills and the carbon footprints of kitchens. These advances help promote sustainable food prep by reducing waste while maintaining quality.

In addition, the modular design of multi-purpose kitchen gadgets provides unprecedented versatility. Rational ovens, multi-function food processors and small, space-saving equipment permit kitchens to move with the times when it comes to menus and ingredients. This flexibility enhances work flow and productivity in the commercial as well as residential kitchen. There are also automatons and robotics, like automated prep systems and AI cooking assistants, which further reduce the number of hands on deck and guarantee consistency.

After all, improvements in kitchen gadgets lead to a more efficient long-term and a more creative way of prepping their food. Smart tech, energy-efficient designs and flexible cooking appliances allow chefs to produce memorable food more efficiently. Adopting these new technologies will not only improve cooking but also pave the way for a future of sustainable, high quality food production. For anyone serious about dominating in the kitchen now and beyond 2025 an upgrade of cooking gadgets is a priority.

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FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN CULINARY TECHNOLOGY

Today, as we stand at the crossroads of culinary innovation and sustainable food production, we face both a challenge and an opportunity—one that has profound implications for the future of our food systems and our planet. With a growing global population and increasing environmental pressures, it is imperative that we rethink how we produce and consume food. Culinary innovation offers a powerful path forward, blending creativity in our kitchens with sustainable practices that protect our environment and nourish our communities.

The transformation is driven by sustainable food production methods. Precision agriculture, vertical farming and urban farming are transforming how we produce food by maximizing water usage and minimizing land degradation. These practices allow us to localize fresh ingredients and minimize the carbon footprint of standard supply chains. Furthermore, new protein alternatives, including plant-based and cultured meats (which replicate the texture and taste of conventional meat without requiring animal flesh), are changing consumer tastes while drastically reducing the environmental impact associated with traditional livestock production, a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

But there is more to innovation in the culinary world than growing ingredients. It gives us a taste of what we can learn from zero-waste cooking and smarter preservation. By thinking of food scraps as broths, sauces and compost rather than garbage we do not only reduce organic waste but also complete the cycle in our production of food. Traditional methods like fermentation and pickling are being remixed for flavor and longevity, both in factories with the scale to tame food waste lost through production as on kitchen counters.

These advances also force us to ask questions about social and commercial sustainability. Helping smallholder farmers, developing local food systems and generating jobs in new food technologies are tangible benefits that contribute to an inclusive economy and a resilient community. Culinary innovation dovetails perfectly with the international Sustainable Development Goals for health, food security, and protecting the planet.

At its core, the pairing of culinary ingenuity and sustainable food production is not a trend but a necessary dedication to the creation of a resilient, equitable food future. As pioneers and power brokers, we have the opportunity to promote food systems that soup up taste buds without wrecking the world. Together, let's welcome this journey of discovery and keep innovating with a purpose, so that the food we eat today nourishes a thriving, sustainable world for generations to come.

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THE CULINARY SYMPHONY

In the kitchen's heart, a symphony stirs,
With sizzle and whisper as morning occurs.
Pots and pans beat a steady, sweet song,
A melody rich, hearty, and strong.

The chopping knife twirls in elegant time,
Dicing and slicing a rhythmic rhyme.
Spices like notes in the fragrant air,
Blend bold harmonies crafted with care.

Steam rises softly, a crescendo in flight,
Mixing aromas so graceful and light.
The chef is a maestro with passion and grace,
Shaping each flavor, setting the pace.

From simmer to sear, the orchestra plays,
A chorus of tastes in a wondrous array.
Honey's sweet whisper, bitter's bright call,
Umami's deep echo, enchanting them all.

Fresh-picked herbs and vegetables green,
Add crisp, vibrant colors to the cuisine.
Each ingredient plays a fine, magic part—
Together they sing from the kitchen's heart.

Whisk and stir with a guiding hand,
Crafting the music by careful plan.
Soft flames whisper, bold fires roar,
Each simmer a song, a taste to adore.

In every bite lives a story untold,
Of cultures and memories, timeless and bold.

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The palate awakes, the senses unite,
In this culinary symphony's light.

A feast for the body, but soul it feeds,
Where science and art meet in good deeds.
The kitchen's alive with warmth and light,
An orchestra playing from morning to night.

So listen close as each meal comes alive,
A symphony rich where taste buds thrive.
The Culinary Symphony, endless and bright,
An opus of flavor, pure delight.

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The Vital Role of Drawing in Aviation Precision

The aviation industry used draft sketching and drawing of aircraft to obtain an initial structure for designs and prototypes that actually flew. For example, the Wright brothers sketched every part of their airplanes so that their creation would work. Due to advancements in aviation technology, drawing techniques changed. Artists and engineers moved from sketches to computer-aided design (CAD) models. The aircraft designs that resulted from this evolution became more accurate and effective. Digital platforms capable of aircraft design and complex development. This is similar to software simulations.

When designing an aircraft, accurate schematics are very important because that results in a very sophisticated machine. When a drawing is precise, everything fits, and works. Misfits due to design inaccuracies result in design failure. When programs have more advanced functions a designer can, through the drawing, simulate or change what is needed. It will help you streamline design workflows. Moreover, it will also help collaborate with cross-functional teams for the development project.

The integrity of the aircraft structure depends on drawings that detail all parts of the structure. A review of visual documentation can reveal potential safety problems early in the design process. These illustrations form a good baseline for auditing and inspecting per aviation regulatory requirement. A detailed drawing can reveal errors in the design that might not have been immediately obvious. The design is modified for enhanced safety reliability. This also ensures compliance with worldwide safety standards and instills greater trust and assurance in aviation safety.

Creating accurate aviation drawings calls for a special talent for balancing technical skill with creative thinking. Aviation draftsman course provides training for manual and computer drawing. Regular safety checks are required to keep the aircraft airworthy. Aviation companies and teaching organizations provide specialized programs to develop skills of candidates. The field is ever-changing. It is important to regularly update the skills of an individual and staying up-to-date with the latest software tools and design techniques is essential for continued proficiency and accuracy of aviation drawings as per industry requirements.

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The Future in Our Languages: The Conversation of Food Innovation and Human Connection in Literature

Tasting anything fresh has a certain intimacy. Even though the tongue is tiny and delicate, it serves as a platform for the combination of memory and imagination. Writers were already tasting the future even before scientific labs created meat without the need for animals or kitchens operated with silent, automated assurance. They tasted it using the ancient instruments of metaphor, memory, amazement, and uneasiness rather than sensors or steel instruments. More than any other medium, literature has continuously investigated the boundaries of emerging technologies. Furthermore, when it discusses food, it goes beyond mere survival; it also explores desire, a sense of belonging, and the strong bonds that bind people together. The neutral terms efficiency, automation, innovation, and sustainability are often used to introduce food technology, but the literature won't allow them to stand alone. The soup is rarely the focus of a writer's vision of a kitchen with robots stirring soup. It is about the silent disappearance of a mother's humming or the lost custom of using a wooden spoon to taste broth. Stories help us remember the little, personal gestures that transform ingredients into caring things that technology cannot capture. In literature, food is typically presented in an untidy manner. Rather, it brings the same emotional chaos as actual meals.

Technological food feels sterile: nutrient bars devoid of aroma, pills taken carelessly, and meals selected by procedures that claim to know the consumer better than the consumer does. In these settings, characters frequently discover themselves plagued by appetites unrelated to hunger. The recollection of hand-pulled noodles haunts them. The air is filled with the crackle of a fire beneath a pot. There is a feeling of warmth when you sit at a table close to someone. Literature uses these appetites to question what we lose when meals transform into transactions. However, authors are not always gloomy. Many literary figures portray food technology as a silent miracle. Despite a failing climate, a grandmother in a drought-stricken area continues a family recipe by growing herbs under a bright hydroponic lamp. For the first time, a child with mobility issues is cooking with a smart spoon. An AI chef assists a bereaved character in making a father's favorite stew, not flawlessly, but with enough tenderness. These scenes express a cautious hope that innovation, instead of weakening human connection, could sustain or even restore it. Technology is a friend in these situations rather than an interruption. Literature better captures the weight of taste than any scientific research.

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The layout of memory that arrives with every bite is something that writers plan. Machines can fake a dish's flavor, but not the cook or the kitchen where it was first eaten. This gap is the subject of many stories. In one advanced fantasy, a character tastes a shiny, perfectly balanced beauty that is entirely artificial. She does, however, miss the sun-warmed, bruised peaches her grandfather used to provide her when he visited in the summer. The machine cannot create a season, a person, or a moment, yet it can make beauty. Literature asserts that taste is not merely chemical but also emotional and historical. Writers also raise uncomfortable questions of trust. With the increasing manufacturing of food, who is responsible for its production? A hand-grown tomato or a smuggled spice carries the excitement of resistance, and the dinner table turns into a site of silent insurrection. These stories serve as a reminder that food has always been a radical issue, highlighting the close link between control and eating. There are accounts of another form of resistance, one that is softer, calmer, and based on connections rather than disobedience. Writers demonstrate characters' rescue agency and the preservation of their legacy by combining the ancient and the new.

A granddaughter fills a printed dough sheet with the family's customary herb mixture. To free up their hands for conversation, a group assembles around an automatic oven. These stories suggest that innovation does not alter tradition but rather introduces a new element that requires careful consideration. In reality, technological development often happens so fast that people don't really notice their loss until it's permanent. However, in a tale, the author can stop just before a character bite. This gap becomes an opportunity for self-examination: What does this new cuisine reveal about our developing personalities? Which early customs will suffer? When we cook and share food differently, how will our relationships change? That may be why the conversation between literary and food innovation feels vital. It asks who we will be when we eat it, not just what people will eat in the future. Do most people still gather for meals? The flavors continue to be passed along in the same manner as stories? Is the tongue capable of distinguishing between familiarity and unfamiliarity, as well as between sweetness and bitterness?

Food in the future will be different from what the past has prepared us for. Population demands, climate pressures, and technological innovation guarantee all of that. However, literature encourages us to preserve the aspects of eating that are most important: the calm solace of being served by someone who cares, the conversations that continue long after dishes are cleared, and the way cooking becomes a language across generations. "The future on our tongues" transcends mere slogans. It serves as a reminder that any change in our eating habits also affects how we relate to the outside world, to one another, and to ourselves. Even the most futuristic meal will still be consumed by a human being with a past, a community, and a hunger that transcends food. Still, literature encourages us to see that future with interest rather than fear. If innovation can satiate this appetite, the future will taste new and be incredibly, uniquely human.

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CALCULUS OF VARIATIONS IN AVIATION

For the improvement of a flight path and design of an aircraft, the calculus of variation is an appropriate technique for solving such problems. This discipline aims to achieve results that lower or raise some value of interest (i.e. drag, fuel, travel time, etc.) in order to enhance operational performance, efficiency and reliability. According to Boyd (1963), variational principles can be used in optimal trajectory consideration in Flight Mechanics theoretical studies.

Trajectory optimization is one of the important areas of aviation applications in the calculus of variations. Aerospace Engineers use principles of trajectory optimization to compute a certain flight path maximum range, which is the most fuel-efficient, and thus cost-effective. According to Bryson (2018), in essence, these principles have also been articulated and continue to serve as the foundations of optimal control theory (OCT) in the guidance, navigation, and control field of aerospace systems. The efficiency and effectiveness of operational processes used in the civil and military aviation have been maximized.

Aerodynamic design also employs variational methods. When engineers apply these techniques, the shapes of the aircraft in the form of wings and fuselage are optimal, which gives minimum aerodynamic drag as well as stable and robust flying conditions. Theoretical developments in flight mechanics show that the optimal flight path and aerodynamic performance are closely related, thereby reinforcing the usefulness of calculus-based optimization in aircraft design (Boyd, 1963). The methods used are particularly important for complex technological airspeeds and flight conditions because small changes in the design can lead to large gains.

Variational methods have many benefits, but applying them in practice is difficult. It is not possible to solve many optimization problems directly in a closed form (analytically). To address complex optimization problems, the steepest descent method has received increasing attention. Such problems include those that are higher in dimensions and dynamics (Bouza et. al, 2021). The increasing complexity of technological advancement like that of aviation necessitates ongoing effort to adequately satisfy the current needs of the aviation industry.

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With advancements in computing power and new high-tech methods for achieving optimization of flying vehicles, the use of calculus of variations is becoming more widely utilized in the aviation industry. Due to the developments that have taken place in the optimal control framework (Bryson, 2018), engineers in today's world have the ability to solve increasingly complex problems when provided with accurately defined problems. The collective methods for optimizing aircraft reveal the importance of variational principles in Aerospace Engineering.

The calculus of variations remains a fundamental part of aviation science and education. Optimizing the flight path of an aircraft improves its efficiency, reduces fuel consumption, and leads to more sustainable aviation practices. Theoretical and engineering advances are enhanced by the use of variational methods within aerospace technology. Theoretical concepts of interest to engineers will continue to play an important role in the future development of aircraft and spaceships as advancements are made in technology. (Pérez, 2023)

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Bridging Theory and Practice: Teaching Science in an Aviation Education Context

Teaching science at an aviation institution offered a different perspective on how to integrate theoretical knowledge into practical application. Within this dynamic environment, the challenge was not only in simply imparting technical details but also in developing deep-seated understanding beyond the conventional boundaries of the classroom. The task at hand lay in seamlessly melding scientific principles with the operational realities faced by the students of aviation. Core in this was the navigating ability of the complex interplay between theory and practice, a necessary competence for aspiring aviation professionals. The learning and practice involved critical analysis of scientific phenomena, fostering an attitude capable of handling the uncertainties of aviation requirements.

Further, this environment challenged the use of innovative approaches in education, prompting the lecturers to use different approaches tailored towards accommodating different styles of learning, thus improving cognitive participation. The fusion of practical components and scientific rigor in the course of studying enriched the students' understanding of the issues, closing the gap between knowledge attainment and the practical implementation of the knowledge in the aerospace environment. Finally, the goal was the development of the capability of the students to apply scientific knowledge in practical aerospace problems, preparing them for the challenging environment of the aerospace industry.

The study of science in the context of aviation offers a distinct opportunity for education that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of instruction. Such a setting provides the opportunity for the direct application of scientific principles, offering students the capacity to understand complex scientific concepts based on concrete examples. The instruction of science within the context of an aviation school requires, therefore, more than the basic knowledge of the principles. There has to be emphasis, too, on where these principles exist within the context of aviation. For example, when discussing the Bernoulli principle, a basic principle of flight, the concept can be easily related to the lifting force of an airplane wing by the class. The integration of the theory with a real-life application places a significant value on a detail-oriented problem solution, an important attribute within the aviation industry.

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In fact, the science teaching process presented here debunks the myth that scientific knowledge and technical know-how are two separate things. By meshing concepts such as physics with the practices of aviation, students are able to understand the connection between scientific theory and technical application. This completes not only the learning process when preparing students for the technical field of aviation but also instills the respect that science deserves when applied to modern technology.

Beyond the classroom, the aviation science instructor's role is much more than teaching; it's about mentorship-both a challenge and an opportunity for personal growth. One could argue that the mentorship aspect enhances the student learning experience while providing an avenue for the instructor to develop personally and professionally. Aviation educators, as mentors, need to develop the ability of critical thinking and problem-solving among the students, which is crucial for their future career in aeronautics. The instructors not only have to teach this but also should be able to demonstrate how it is done to further enhance their own learning and competence.

However, the problem of this mentorship position is not insubstantial. The instructors will be dealing with a differing student body and modifying sophisticated scientific principles for their differing levels of understanding. This poses a flexible mode of instruction, which could present an initial problem of complexity but ultimately develops the versatility and innovational potential of the instructors. In addition, the problem of molding the future aviators holds the problem of instilling an ethical and safety-minded philosophy, which is crucial for the profession of aviation. In the process of responding to these issues, the instructor also encounters a great deal of personal change. The instructor improves his/her communication skills, increases empathy, and instills a renewed enthusiasm in learning and teaching individual students. Therefore, even though the process of mentoring remains a very challenging task, the end result of the process of mentoring also creates a cycle of change and development in respect of the student and the instructor.

From my perspective as a science instructor in an aviation-based educational institution, the science component of aviation education holds substantial value for both academic development and industry practice. Engaging students in the application of scientific principles within aviation contexts strengthens their conceptual understanding and enhances their competence in applying theory to real-world situations. These experiences not only deepen students' aviation education but also empower them as members of the next generation of pilots and engineers. By means of high-quality science-based instruction future aviation professionals build careers grounded in science. In the end, strong science foundation enables students to acquire technical skills that encourage innovation and help maintain the highest safety standards through effective and robust aviation education in the aviation industry.

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Umpteen Hours

Naging Bisyo ang babae, kaya titi'y tumigas

Jona Cordero

Mukha siyang mapang-akit ang dating kahit simple lang ang kilos. Ang hapit na puting tshirt ay malinaw na bumabakat sa hubog ng dibdib at baywang kaya napapansin agad ang kurba ng kanyang katawan. Ang maikling shorts naman ay nagpapakita ng balakang at hita dagdag ang sensual na dating. Ang maamong mukha niya ay kontrang -kontra sa malandi at confident na aura ng suot niya hindi lantaran pero nakakaakit at nakakapukaw ng tingin.

Engr. Roger Arpa

May matipunong pangangatawan at malinaw na well-defined ang mga kalamnan lalo na sa dibdib, balikat, braso at tiyan. Mayroon siyang maikling itim na buhok maayos ang gupit at kalma pero kumpiyansang ekspresyon ng mukha. At mukha siyang maalaga sa katawan at aktibong nag-eehersisyo.

Verna Coronacion Arpa

Ang kanyang buhok ay maitim mukhang natural at bahagyang nakabagsak sa gilid ng mukha. Ang hugis ng kanyang mukha ay bilugan na lalong pang nagbibigay ng soft at youthful na itsura. Simple lang ang kanyang ayos walang halatang mabigat na make-up kaya lalong lumalabas ang kanyang natural na ganda.

Si Jona ay anak ng isang fish vendor at ang ina naman niya ay mananahi. Dahil sa pagsusumikap ay nakapagtapos siya ng high school at nakapag trabaho siya bilang isang pokpok sa isang bar.

Sino ba namang hot na babae tulad ko ang mapapagod sa atensiyong binibigay sa kanya ng mga kalalakihan sa tuwing sumasayaw siya sa entablado ng bar. Sinong napakagandang babae tulad ko ang magsasawa sa papuri ng mga gwapo at matchong lalaki.

Construction Firm

Sa pinagtratrabahohan ni roger na firm ay nakikinig siya sa usapan ng mga manyakis niyang mga ka opisina may mga asawa at anak na ang mga ito at may pinag uusapan silang babae si jona. Tinignan naman ni Roger ang pinag uusapan ng mga ka opisina sa kanyang facebook account. *Sabi ni roger sa isip niya putang ina argh argh nagiginig siya sa libog. Gusto niyang madilaan*

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ang mga labi ni jona. Malasahan ang laway nito at maipasok ang dila nito sa bibig ni jona. Pero may asawa at dalawang anak na siya. *Sabi ni roger sa mga kaopisina kayo talaga puro nalang kayo kalibogan.* Hindi naman sumagot ang mga ito. At tumawa nalang.

Bar o Night House
Sa bar na pinagtratarbahohan ni jona ay nagtitingin siya ng mga potensiyal costumer sa comment section ng kanyang video. Sa tabi ni jona ay abala si Ernesto (isang bakla) sa pag mamake-up sa isang pok pok. Sabi nito sa babae *alam mo swerte na kung makatikim ako ng lalaki. Deadma na kung libre o may bayad basta maka raos lang.* deadma naman ang babaeng pokpok.

Kinabukasan sa Parlor ng baklang si Ernesto

Ay dumating si Verna ang asawa ni Roger. Mag papamake up ito para sa Anniversary nila ni Roger at may date sila mamayang gabi.

Pinaupo naman ng pok pok na si Jona si Verna sa sofa. Matapos make upan ang isang pokpok ay minakeupan na si verna. Masaya naman si Ernesto at Jona sa kinalabasan ng Trabaho niya.

Wika ni Jona: *napaka galing mo talaga mamang Ernesto.* Sagot naman ni Ernesto dito: *hindi naman sanayan lang.* at napatili ang baklang si Ernesto kasabay si jona.

Kinagabihan
Ay nag-date ang mag – asawa. Masaya silang kumain at namasyal sa mall. At binalikan ang kanilang pangako noong kinasal sila.

Makalipas ang dalawang linggo matapos ang anniversary nila ni verna. Habang nagfafacebook si roger sa opisina ay may dumaang na photo mula kay jona. Naka bikini lang ito at may make-up. May caption ang photo na. ready na para sa sayaw ko mamaya. Matagal itong tinititigan ni roger at sarap na sarap siya kay jona.

Pagka – umaga ay tumungo si Verna sa parlor ni Ernesto. Naabotan niya rito si Ernesto at Jona. Mga bagong ligo. Nag palinis ng Kuko si Verna at matapos ito ay tinanong niya si Ernesto kung may kilala siyang pweding mag linis ng bahay. Wika ni Ernesto *ito si Jona. Isang linggo na yang walang kita.* Sagot naman ni Verna *ahh ganun ba. Sige.* At pumayag naman si jona at binayaran siya ni verna ng 2500 pesos. Maganda ang pagkakalinis ni jona sa malaking bahay ni verna. At sabi ni verna siya nalang lagi ang kukunin para maglinis.

Matapos mag palinis ay pumasok na si verna sa opisina. Si verna ay abala sa pakikipag usap sa asawa niyang si Roger sa messenger. Sinabi pa ni Roger na siya lang daw ang mahal nito at wala ng iba. Sa facebook naman ni roger tumambad ang live video ni jona naliligo ito gamit ang kulay at amoy rosas na habon. Pinanuod ito ni roger hanggang sa matapos at nag init siya. Pero hindi niya ito chinat.

Itutuloy…

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Improving English Communication Skills for Hospitality Management: A Cross-Level Instructional Concern

Communicative proficiency, especially in English, remains an ongoing obstacle for many learners in the Philippines. English teachers in public Secondary Schools repeatedly see that many students find it challenging to convey their ideas properly, participate in academic conversations, and carry out communicative tasks confidently. However, according to Cruz, J.A. G. (2025), on Internship Experience and Career Aspirations of Fresh Graduates from the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) Program, indicates that these challenges persist for some learners as they transition from secondary to higher education. Even after entering higher education, many students continue to struggle with both oral and written communication in professional contexts.

Within secondary education, one of the most evident reasons for students' ineffectiveness in communication skills is their lack of exposure to English outside of the classroom. The majority of students who attend secondary school come from language communities where their mother tongue (Cebuano or Filipino) is the predominant language. Thus, in their interactions and communications with others, whether face-to-face or via electronic media such as the internet or text messaging, only their mother tongue or Filipino is typically used. Therefore, students rarely see or interact with English as a language for real-world communication, except when being instructed at school.

Consequently, many learners view English as overwhelming; as a result, they are less likely to take part in conversations, communicate without preparation, or contribute to discussions beyond memorized responses. As a result of fear of making mistakes, being criticized by peers, or being misunderstood, some students have additional anxiety about learning and speaking English than about taking risks with the language to teach it more naturally.

However, although many students understand basic grammatical rules and vocabulary, this understanding does not necessarily help them develop their ability to use a language for communication. The difference between what a person knows about a language (linguistic knowledge) and how well they can apply that understanding (using the language in practice or application) becomes much clearer when students need to engage in critical thinking: synthesizing information, building thoughts together (creating arguments), or

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writing responses to open-ended questions. As a result, students will have difficulty performing at their best in reading comprehension, writing, and oral presentations. These limitations will hamper their ability to succeed in high school and college, as they will not be ready for the more complex uses of language required in the upper years of secondary school and at university.

The experience in hospitality management as a teacher is similar to that of many other students. Students in the hospitality and tourism industries must communicate well in English; therefore, students preparing to work in hotels, restaurants, and other types of tourism must have the ability to communicate professionally and courteously with guests, coworkers, and supervisors, and many of these individuals will come from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Despite many students attending college and demonstrating anxiety when using English during classroom activities such as role-playing, interviews, demonstrations, and customer service role-playing, their confidence levels may be diminished by their experience during the on-the-job training (OJT) portion of a course. Many of these students encounter difficulty describing menu items, guiding guests to their seats, answering guest questions and comments, and articulating their opinions during evaluations and employment applications.

These similar patterns demonstrate that ineffective verbal skills do exist, especially when insufficient assistance is provided to address poor language skills at the initial learning level. The development of a person's ability to communicate is a lifelong process; therefore, when an individual has deficits in this area, those deficits will persist into adulthood after transitioning from a high school learning environment to college and, thereafter, to the workforce. The degree of evidence of someone's ability to communicate increases with each level of academic success. Once an individual has been evaluated at the tertiary level, expectations for effective communication have significantly increased, while their language skills may remain inadequate.

Numerous systemic factors contribute to this enduring dilemma. However, one critical factor is the insufficient incorporation of authentic language usage in the secondary and tertiary school environments. As such, in numerous classrooms, language is treated more like a subject to be learned and mastered rather than a tool to foster effective interaction.

The evolution of digital communication has also influenced how students use language, creating new patterns in their language use. Students use texts and emails that are rife with abbreviations, emojis, and slang; therefore, they are not exposed to as much formal/academic English as they would be in other contexts. Students' knowledge of digital tools benefits them in many ways, but limits their ability to formulate complete sentences, construct logical arguments, and communicate professionally. When students move on to fields of work such as Hospitality, it will be incumbent upon them to promptly answer questions and provide clear, professional responses.

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At the Tertiary Level, Instruction should continue to focus on real-world examples of Business Communication in Hospitality Management Programs. Simulations of actual hotel front desk transactions, Restaurant Service encounters, Housekeeping Briefings, and Guest Complaints will allow students opportunities to practice their English in realistic environments.

This experience not only reinforces technical vocabulary but also builds skills in soft areas such as courtesy, active listening, situational awareness, and professional tone. Integrating competencies for effective communication across all areas of study, not just the language disciplines, helps prepare students for professional work following graduation.

Schools can offer professional development opportunities focused on strategies for teaching communicative language proficiency and learner-centered pedagogies. Finally, parents encourage students' use, development, and enhancement of their skills by providing opportunities to read, view educational television programs, and practice speaking English at home.

The ongoing inability of students to communicate effectively in both secondary and tertiary settings underscores the need for a comprehensive, collaborative, ongoing approach to language acquisition and development. Educators recognize the importance of preparing learners not only for academic success and graduation but also for the communicative situations they will face in the workplace.

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R.E.A.D.: Sustaining Literature in the Age of Digital Distraction

Growing up in the Cordillera, I often saw the dap-ay as more than a circle of stones. Up until now, it plays central in a community, where elders and young ones gathered at the end of the day, warming themselves by the fire and exchange stories about the past and talk about the present. Children listen quietly, learning not from books, but from the voices of those who came before them. In more traditional times, this was where the elderly would educate the children with stories about their own heroes and ancestors.

Moments spend surrounding the Dap-ay have produced literatures such as short stories, folktales and riddles. These literatures developed the mental abilities and creative imagination of the elders were passed on from one generation to another generation. They were published for the learning and enjoyment of the children. The so called batang 90s and generation X somehow have enjoyed reading literary books. They proudly share the stories about Tiririt, Henny Penny, Minda and Linda and Pugad Lawin which they claim that such amazing literary memories is the result of spending time in reading.

In my ten years of teaching high school students, reading problems became noticeable, and my biggest realization, at least for me, is the need to correct and improve the reading habits of my students. But classrooms these days cannot compete with distractions caused by gadgets. Students are more drawn to videos and visuals with sounds, than into sitting down to read for more than a few minutes. As a result, I notice that many students falter when it comes to reading. They often feel uneasy, or show no interest. Even though they try to finish, it is hard for them to truly understand the material. Furthermore, the 2018 PISA findings, which placed Filipino learners at the bottom in reading literacy did not surprise me. At that time, I was already seeing similar results among English students who took PHIL-IRI exams (OECD,2019; OECD,2023).

This decline in reading skills is not just a national issue. It is also a personal one that teachers like me face every single day inside the classroom. As an English teacher in a public school, I witness how reading habits have drastically changed. There are times when my students read a passage smoothly, but when I ask, “What does it mean?” or “What do you think happens afterward?”, the room becomes silent or that they become uncertain. They can summarize a story, but explaining why events happened or what comes next is often difficult for them.

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While this situation is concerning, I still find hope when I see genuine interest among students, especially when sparks of curiosity, imagination, and empathy are tapped. As educators, parents, and members of a reading community, it is our shared responsibility to nurture these sparks and help them grow into lifelong flames of literacy.

To respond to this challenge, I hold on to one simple yet powerful acronym that guides my personal and professional advocacy: R.E.A.D. — Reclaim, Engage, Appreciate, and Dedicate.

R — Reclaim the Love for Reading

Reclaiming reading means restoring its rightful place in our lives, not as an academic requirement, but as a meaningful part of being human. Literature should not feel like an obligation but an opportunity: to pause, to feel, and to understand.

In my English class, we revisit timeless Filipino stories like The Centipede or Footnote to Youth. I encourage my students to look beyond the plot and connect the story to their own experiences. We ask: What would you have done differently if you were the character? What lesson does this story hold for your generation? These discussions transform reading into reflection, making it personal and alive.

Reclaiming the love for reading also means creating spaces in the classroom where books are accessible, dedicating time during homeroom periods, and encouraging storytelling after recess. I applaud the city government of Baguio and the Baguio City Library who started a reading corner at Burnham Park. This encourages everyone to engage again to reading.

E — Engage Learners through Meaningful and Modern Ways

Digital technology can be a partner of literacy. It is often blamed for the decline in reading, but I believe it can be used creatively and purposefully.

In the school, my students use digital tools to breathe life into literature. They design visual-text posters for key passages, record monologues from a character's point of view, or create short "book reels" that summarize literary themes. The Department of Education (DepEd) challenges the teachers to be innovators in teaching reading.

While I use technological tools like TV, laptop, and even cellphones for e-books/articles as alternatives to support reading comprehension, I am also mindful not to replace the basic reading and understanding that comes from the printed texts. It bridges the gap between traditional literature and 21st century learners, transforming the classroom into a space where reading becomes dynamic, collaborative and relevant.

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Beyond the classroom, I also bring this engagement home. My husband and I make it a point to read with our children. We visit bookstores and libraries together, allowing them to choose their books, sometimes comics, sometimes novels, sometimes poetry. We ask them to share what they've read during family time. Their eyes light up when they talk about a story's twist or a poem's rhythm. In those moments, I am reminded that reading is not taught, it is shared.

A — Appreciate the Power of Literature in Real Life

Reading literature is more than learning words, it is learning life. It may sound a cliché but it is true that every story offers readers a window to the world and a mirror to the soul.
In class, when my students read about characters who face loss, courage, or injustice, I see them begin to empathize. They realize that the struggles of literary characters reflect the real emotions and dilemmas they face. A story about friendship teaches loyalty. A novel about resilience teaches perseverance. Literature connects them to human experiences beyond their own, helping them understand and manage their own emotions.
This appreciation also has a social impact. When we read about inequality, corruption, or environmental neglect, students begin to form opinions and take stands. Reading becomes a quiet form of civic education, training young minds to analyze, question, and act with compassion.

With growing discussions on mental health awareness, I see literature as therapy. It provides comfort, clarity, and connection. Through poetry, stories, and drama, readers learn to articulate feelings that are otherwise difficult to express. Literature helps heal and humanize.

D — Dedicate Time and Effort to Build a Reading Culture

Sustaining the love for literature requires dedication, steady, intentional, and shared. Teachers must lead the way. When students see us carrying books, reading aloud with enthusiasm, or protecting time for silent reading, they realize that reading is not just for school, it is a way of life.

In the school, we have started small reading initiatives during English Month and National Reading Month, such as "Drop Everything and Read" or DEAR, and classroom "Reading Corners." But these should not end after celebrations. The challenge is to make reading part of the school's culture year-round.

I also believe that parents play a crucial role. In my own home, we limit gadget time and schedule "reading hours." Even ten minutes before bedtime can make a difference. Modeling the behavior is more powerful than a hundred reminders. Children mirror what they see, when they see us read, they will follow.

The statistics on literacy may seem discouraging, but they are not final. Every teacher who reads a story aloud, every parent who opens a book beside a child, every student who

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chooses to finish a chapter instead of scrolling endlessly, all of them are quiet victories for literacy.

When we Reclaim, Engage, Appreciate, and Dedicate, we do more than teach reading, we nurture thinkers, dreamers, and doers. In this digital age, the child who learns to read deeply is not being left behind.

Like the Dap-ay that symbolizes unity and storytelling let us work together to motivate our children to reading and let them explore the wonders of literature.

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Where My Story Meets Theirs: A Mother's Heart in Contemporary Literature

When I enrolled in this subject, I did not realize how meaningful it would become. I expected to read narratives that had little connection to the day-to-day struggles of parenting, employment, and education. Rather than separating me from my own experiences, it has given me a new perspective, allowing me to listen to contemporary voices that speak to my lived reality: the unsaid exhaustion of caregiving, the silent fears that come with responsibility, the need for identity, and the little victories that keep me going. Through these stories, I came to see that literature is a continuous dialogue that reflects the challenges and aspirations of ordinary people like myself rather than a relic from the past.

The dedication to authenticity in modern literature is what gives it its potency. Interactions with this subject and subsequent encounter with theorists such as Terry Eagleton, Linda Hutcheon, and Francois Lyotard support my impression that this literature is characterized by realism, fragmented narratives, and, as Lyotard further adds, "a plurality of viewpoints" that allow authors to explore the unvarnished realities of everyday life. Modern tales illustrate emotional complexity and imperfection, in contrast to classic narratives that occasionally idealize people. They depict people who falter, doubt, mourn, struggle, and persevere. I found myself pausing frequently while reading these stories, particularly when a sentence or scenario reflected feelings I silently harbor as a mother and student. The line separating personal reality from fiction vanished in those moments.

The anecdotes found in Arteks of Lakandula struck a deep chord with me. The majority of the stories are about people who struggle to find their identity and honor their roots while forging their own path, which mirrors the issues I deal with. Like them, I have expectations. Some of which are expressed, and many of which are not. Strength does not always shout; sometimes it is peaceful and steady. It urges me to keep going even when life feels unfathomably heavy. This delicate yet tenacious courage served as a reminder. The hidden work, the juggling of responsibilities, and the unwavering belief that every sacrifice creates a brighter future for our children are all reflected in this quiet perseverance.

In many ways, modern literature became a mirror that helped me understand my own sacrifices more deeply. Being a mother while trying to succeed in my career and responsibilities at home requires a kind of strength that often goes unnoticed. This struggle is clearly reflected in Maya, the mother in Lualhati Bautista's Desire, who carries the weight of

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family duties while trying to hold on to her sense of self. Like her, I do my best each day to balance my dreams with my family's needs.

From an academic perspective, this is precisely what makes popular and current literature relevant and essential: it democratizes narrative. It elevates the voices of marginalized populations, women, laborers, young people, and minorities whose stories were previously ignored in traditional literature. Struggles with or issues around gender roles, mental health, poverty, migration, and cultural identity are just a few of the societal realities that these contemporary pieces force readers to face.

By doing so, they foster empathy and deepen our comprehension of the human experience. As I read, I noticed myself becoming gentler and more patient not only with others, but also with myself. This subject gave me a rare chance to reconnect with my own heart. In the daily rush of caring for my family, it is easy to forget that mothers also have feelings, dreams, and fears of their own. Through literature, I found a quiet space where I could slow down, breathe, and listen to the emotions I often set aside. The stories reminded me that I am more than my duties at home. I am a woman still learning, still doubting, and still holding on to my own dreams. Ultimately, Contemporary Literature became a friend during a difficult time in my life rather than just an academic necessity. It made me realize how important it is to share my experience as a mother, student, and woman working to improve. I found strength in other people's voices. I gained empathy from their hardships. I also learnt to cherish my own stories as well as theirs. I knew that I was also a part of the colorful tapestry of modern life living, suffering, developing, and yet learning to create my own story through the interaction between their words and my reality.

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RIZALISM: The Quiet Fire

He did not carry a sword.
He carried a pen
a symbol of peaceful reform
in an age ruled by force.

José Rizal walked softly through history,
yet his ideas unsettled an empire.
Through essays, novels, and letters,
he revealed the illnesses of society
abuse of power, blind faith, and learned helplessness.
He wrote not to destroy Spain,
but to awaken the Filipino mind.

Rizalism was never intended as hero worship.
It is a philosophy
rooted in reason, human dignity,
and moral courage.
It teaches that freedom begins with education,
that national identity grows through self-knowledge,
and that reform is born of critical thinking.

In *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*,
Rizal held a mirror before society.
The friar, the official, the indio, the ilustrado
all were reflected truthfully.
Rizalism, therefore, demands
that Filipinos confront social realities
rather than escape them.

To love the country, Rizal believed,
is not to praise it blindly
but to serve it honestly.

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Rizalism insists that patriotism
is expressed through civic responsibility,
ethical leadership, and social justice.
It rejects violence not out of fear,
but out of faith in enlightenment.

When he faced death,
Rizal chose martyrdom over silence.
His execution transformed reformist thought
into revolutionary consciousness.
Yet Rizalism endures as a reminder
that lasting change must be guided
by intellect and conscience.

Today, Rizalism lives
in classrooms where history is questioned,
in citizens who refuse corruption,
and in youth who believe that the nation
can be improved not merely endured.
It asks every Filipino not to die for the country,
but to live for it with integrity.

Rizal is history.
Rizalism is responsibility.

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Life and Literature Intertwined: Echoes of The Glass Castle

Reading Jeannette Walls' memoir, The Glass Castle made me realize how literature can give voice to the silent battles many of us carry inside. As I reached the final page, the vivid scenes of poverty, family chaos, and resilience echoed deeply with my own memories. Although our lives are different in many ways, her story and my personal journey both reveal how survival shapes our understanding of life.

Looking back, I see parts of myself reflected in Walls' experiences. Even if our paths unfolded separately, we shared the same struggle to endure difficult circumstances. When my mother left us on the first day of my third year in high school, I felt the same sense of abandonment that Walls often describes when her parents failed to provide stability. As the firstborn of six children, I carried responsibilities far beyond my age just as she and her siblings learned to take care of themselves long before they should have needed to.

Yet in the midst of hardship, I discovered strength. Walls narrates how she searched for scraps and improvised ways to survive while living through parental neglect. In my own case, I was fortunate to grow up in the countryside, where fresh vegetables were always available despite our lack of money. Her reminder resonates with me: "I want to let the world know that no one had a perfect life, that even the people who seemed to have it all had their secrets." Her words make me realize that hardship is universal, even if it appears in different forms.

Education became a turning point for both of us. Walls eventually pursued journalism, using education as her way out of a difficult childhood. For me, returning to school through scholarships at Mountain Province State University opened a door I once believed was closed forever. Even though nearly five years had passed since I finished high school and many of my batchmates had already graduated; that moment marked a new beginning in my life.
Loss also shaped the direction of my journey. Walls' grief over her father's death mirrors the pain I felt when my own father passed away in 2023. While her loss brought sorrow, mine taught me about grace and the reality that nothing in life is permanent.

In the end, reflecting on my story through the lens of The Glass Castle allows me to see how literature mirrors real life. I have learned that poverty does not define a person; rather, it is determination that builds one's future. Both Walls' journey and mine show that even when families fall apart and poverty weighs heavily on our shoulders, hope can rise again, and dreams can still be pursued. As Walls' mother once said, "Life is a drama full of tragedy and comedy. You should learn to enjoy the comic episodes a little more." I agree with this because in a world where change is the only constant, nothing remains the same forever.

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From Peaks to Purpose

Born among the mountains high,
Where winds were harsh, and paths were dry.
A father lost, a journey torn,
Yet from these trials, resilience was born.

Books became a guiding light,
Through humble homes and endless nights.
A path once veered, now clearly shown,
A nurse, a leader, fully grown.

Across the world, in halls of care,
Research, teaching, wisdom to share.
From rural roots to global stage,
A life of service, bright and brave.

Mountains tested, yet could not bind,
A heart determined, a gifted mind.
Through every challenge, dream, and strife,
He carved a path, a lasting life.

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Where Healing Meets Learning

In halls where future nurses grew,
I stood with courage, steady, and true
When March brought silence to every street,
And fear made shadows at our feet.

A dean, a guardian of minds,
Of futures, fragile, undefined;
I held their hopes with careful hands,
As chaos swept across the lands.

But August called me to a place
Where chalk met masks on every face;
A rural district, far and wide,
Where mountains watched from either side.

The children waited, hearts unsure,
For learning's light to still endure;
And teachers worn by sleepless nights
Still fought for every child's right.

No stethoscope upon my chest,
Yet still I offered what I knew best
The nurse in me, though out of sight,
Guided every choice made in the night.

For healing lives in many forms,
In lessons taught, in shelters warm;
In guiding hands, in voices kind,
In hopes revived, in hearts aligned.

Two callings woven into one,
Two journeys shared beneath one sun
Where healing meets the will to teach,
Service finds its widest reach.

And though my path has changed its view,
The spirit of a nurse stays true
For once, you learn to care and lead,
You carry it in every deed.

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Nang Dahil Sa'yo

Wala talaga akong alam sa Bandang Cup of Joe noong una;
Hanggang sa dumating ka at ipinaalam mo na.
Awiting Multo ipinarinig mo't ipinaliwanag pa;
Hanggang sa paulit-ulit kong pinakinggan kasabay ng masa.

Akala ko hanggang doon lang ang pagkagiliw ko sa kanila,
Hanggang sa sinabihan mo akong pag-aralan ko sila.
Noong una'y konsepto ng multo lang ng kanilang kanta;
Pinaabot mo pa sa konsepto ng pag-ibig ng mga awitin ng kanilang banda.

Wala akong choice kundi alamin ang iba pa nilang natatanging awitin.
Dinalumat ko't natuklasan ko'y malalalim ang mga hugot nila kung iisipin.
Mga tema at mensahe'y kaugnay sa personal na danas ng kabataan;
Kabataang maramdamin, inaawitan ng bandang tagalarawan ng karanasan.

Salamat prof. sa pag-share mo sa'kin sa pagiging fan sa grupo.
Na-LSS na ako sa mga awiting Multo, Estranghero't Misteryoso.
Unti-unti akong naaadik sa mga kanta ng bandang akin nang iniidolo.
Sana'y ma-meet ko balang araw ang mga kinilala kong dakilang musikero.

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Beyond Distance and Difficulty: A Shared Struggle Behind a Lifesaving Blood Program

In the mountainous communities of Northern Luzon, where narrow roads cut across steep terrain and some barangays remain hours away from the nearest hospital, access to blood has long depended on collective effort.

Long before structured systems existed, blood donation was already being initiated by communities themselves, with Rural Health Units (RHUs), barangay leaders, and volunteers stepping forward whenever a patient was in need.

These early efforts often unfolded under pressure. Families search for immediate donors, RHU staff worked beyond capacity, and blood shortages remained a recurring risk. It was within this reality that the Blood Bank Unit of Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital (LHMRH), working closely with RHUs and communities, began strengthening what grassroots initiatives had already built.

Strengthening What Communities Began

Instead of replacing community-led efforts, the LHMRH Blood Bank Unit focused on its reinforcement. Through close coordination with RHUs, municipal health officers, and barangay health workers, blood donation gradually transitioned from a reactive replenishment system into a voluntary community-based program. RHUs played major role in this shift, mobilizing donors, coordinating venues, conducting initial health screening, and serving as the bridge between the hospital and the community. With technical guidance and logistical support from LHMRH, bloodletting activities became more organized, and embedded into local health calendars.

Over time, partnerships were formalized, but the heart of the program remained the same: “communities in the lead, with RHUs at the forefront.”

The Weight of Distance, Shared by Many

Geography has been one and for some, still the program’s greatest challenges. Blood donation sites in barangays such as Mabalite in Tadian, Laylaya and Tamboan in Besao, Tubo in Abra, and Gueday in Besao require long travel hours and, at times, walking across impassable terrain. In places like Nacagang in Sagada, reaching venues means navigating steep stairways and uneven paths.

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Leaving early, returning late, adjusting schedules, and preparing venues ahead of time, with these challenges, many activities succeed because community partners are already waiting, ready, and committed.

In several municipalities, RHUs have also conducted basic medical consultations, particularly for elders and children, reflecting a holistic, people-centered approach where blood donation becomes part of broader community care.

A Tradition of Gratitude During Blood Donors Month

LHMRH has organized a meaningful program of appreciation. For the past three years, in celebration of Blood Donors Month, the hospital has formally recognized its blood donation partners, including RHUs, LGUs, barangay leaders, hospitals, uniformed services, and community volunteers.

These gatherings are not centered on accolades, but on gratitude, acknowledging the shared responsibility of sustaining the blood supply. RHUs, in particular, are recognized for their consistent frontline leadership in mobilizing donors and sustaining local blood programs. This annual practice has strengthened relationships, renewed commitment, and reinforced the message that blood donation is a collective, community-driven effort.

Consistency Built Through Local Ownership

From 2024 to 2025, 92 mobile blood donation drives were conducted through thecoordinated of LHMRH, RHUs, LGUs, and barangay leaders, resulting in 2,817 blood units collected. During the same period, 4,480 blood units were utilized for patient care, many sourced directly from these community-based activities, thus, the impact of this program is very evident.

Municipalities such as Sagada, Besao, and Tadian of Mountain Province now sustain regular blood donation drives largely through RHU leadership, with LHMRH providing technical and laboratory support, even in barangay levels, Bontoc, Sabangan and Bauko of Mountain Province are now starting to pave their way for the sustained blood donation activities.

In areas like Cervantes, and Quirino, Ilocos Sur; Tubo, Abra; and Barlig, Mountain Province's annual or bi-annual bloodletting activities have become part of routine health programming.

The mobile blood donation program also reached other geographically challenging areas, including Buguias, Benguet and Tinoc, Ifugao, bringing lifesaving services closer to communities that rarely have access to regular blood donation activities. These successful bloodletting missions were made possible through strong inter-agency collaboration and community solidarity.

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The Philippine Army remained a steadfast partner, providing not only donors but also logistical and manpower support that ensured the smooth conduct of each activity. Equally instrumental were various people's organizations and youth groups, including KALIPI Besao, SKMF Mankayan, Sagada Federation of BHW and SKMF Besao, whose active organizing and mobilization efforts significantly contributed to the turnout and success of the blood drives.

Mankayan, Benguet made very significant appearance as our partners for more than 2 years now, aside from municipal bloodletting activities, we have been reaching their local communities.

This consistency has significantly reduced delays in transfusion, eased the burden on families, and improved emergency preparedness, especially in geographically isolated communities.

Stories Shared, Participation Sustained

The journey of the blood program is regularly documented through the LHMRH Blood Bank Facebook page, where RHUs, barangay partners, donors, and volunteers are consistently acknowledged. Posts focus on community effort rather than institutional achievement, strengthening local advocacy for voluntary blood donation and encouraging wider participation.

Carried by Many Hands

The success of the LHMRH blood donation program is not the work of a single unit or institution. It is the result of sustained collaboration, between hospital staff, RHUs, barangay leaders, volunteers, and donors, who share the same struggles against distance, limited resources, and difficult terrain.

Beyond hospital walls and far from easy roads, this blood program continues because communities choose to participate, RHUs choose to lead, and partnerships choose to endure. Together, they ensure that when blood is needed most, help is already within reach.

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Rejected but Redirected: A Teacher's Journey of Faith

2017, a year of hope. An answered prayer from above.

A man who grew up in a small town in the province passed his Licensure Examination for Teachers. While waiting for the result of the board examination, he tried his luck applying in different industries, call centers, factories, even as a bagger in a mall but unfortunately, he was never hired.

Then he prayed. He said: "Lord, what is my purpose? Show me the right direction and the pathway I should take."

Another day passed, and he received a call for a final job interview at one of the fast-food chains in town. While waiting for the interview, the man prayed again: "Lord, what is my purpose? Show me the right way and the correct pathway for my life."

Then a call from an unknown number came. He thought it was the final interview, but it was his older sibling. The phone rang, and his sibling shouted: "You passed the Board Exam!"

At that moment, the story of a passionate teacher began. Truly, the Lord is always listening to our prayers.

Ten years later, that man from an unknown small town became a multi-awarded Science Teacher and was recognized multiple times as Outstanding Teacher of the Year.
A declaration of faith and trust in the Lord!

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Between Politics and Pavements: The Civil Engineer's Battle for Integrity

Civil engineers work often at the confluence of political choices and the building of physical structures. Although their fundamental objective as an organization is to create safe, resilient, and efficient infrastructure that promotes the quality of life of people living in its region, the political realities it faces can tangle even well-intentioned work. Institutional problems such as corruption, favoritism, irregular funding and the changing whims of politicians present significant obstacles over which engineers have to find a way. In various parts of the world, this permanent tug-of-war between political forces and engineering principles has in fact become the very identity of the profession.

The most endemic is political interference. People in power will choose to support infrastructure for purposes of political conspicuousness rather than meet pressing social needs. High-profile projects can push aside important but less glamorous ones, distorting priorities and frustrating long-term planning. This pressure is one that all civil engineers must learn to be in tune with, and stand strong for evidenced based decision making. Their professional responsibility is to uphold the benefit of the public, not carry out political orders.

The second major problem is budget juggling. Funding for infrastructure could be late, rerouted to unrelated items or less than what's needed to do a project safely. These financial discrepancies require engineers to change their designs, slow down construction stages and sometimes put essential elements on the back-burner. To do that, the next generation of engineering students needs to be skilled in complex cost management, value engineering and strategic planning. These capabilities make it possible for future infrastructure to be viable and safe in regions with economic instability.

Third, the issues of system often produce moral dilemmas. Engineers will come under pressure to pass substandard materials, ignore defective work or certify standards as safe which have not yet completely been complied with. Such are the moments that challenge an engineer's ethics, professionalism and dedication to public safety. Students should therefore be trained to never compromise on ethical standards, even if doing the right thing conflicts with powerful forces or endangers their career.

Communication also turns out to be a crucial skill in political climates. Engineers must be able to effectively convey technical requirements to policymakers, community leaders,

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stakeholders, and the public. When the engineers can make people aware of what may happen with design changes, funding slowdowns or policy decisions in language that is understandable to the community, it will be possible for them to get their needed infrastructure supported.

At the end of the day, the war between politics and pavements is about toughness, principle and leadership. And it forces civil engineers to present not just as technicians, but also as people with moral courage and strategic communication. By the time our students graduate, they will need to be prepared for these political pressures, to work in a politically turbulent environment with concurrently shifting financial sands and ethical challenges as engineering professionals who must operate within complex systems while ever working for the public good.

With the right mindset and tools at their disposal, civil engineers can honor their most important mission: to build infrastructure that prioritizes community service, saves lives and promotes the long-term stability of society, no matter what political weather may rage.

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BUILDING THROUGH RED TAPE: PREPARING ENGINEERS TO NAVIGATE BUREAUCRATIC BARRIERS

Civil engineers often work in a system that is inefficient, slow and bogged down by bureaucratic process. Even the most urgently required infrastructure projects can be held up by interminable paperwork, political sign-offs, conflicting rules and bureaucratic wrangles. These are not isolated instances, they signal norms of professional life. For this, engineering education needs to go beyond teaching technical skills and train students how to effectively stand up for what is just within imperfect, sometimes inefficient institutional setups.

The first part of this preparation is to assist students in planning for bureaucratic obstacles which they are bound to encounter. A strong understanding of project permitting processes, environmental compliance, procurement laws, and government audit methodologies are all necessary. When engineers get an understanding of these processes, they can be more strategic in designing for them, understanding what kind of blockers might arise and try to avoid delays.

Institutional challenges often require creative thinking and the ability to work well with various actors. Engineers might instead need to meet with government officials, work around contractors, address community worries or juggle priorities. People who express themselves well, are flexible in their thinking and build good relationships stand a greater chance of keeping momentum going in projects and holding the public's trust.

Patience, combined with an inexorable will to work is another quality that makes you successful. Bureaucracies can be slow-moving beasts, and progress can seem excruciatingly gradual. Civil engineers need to understand about being professional due even delays. Educators can encourage this by helping young minds to build resiliency, and emotional intelligence by promoting healthy expectations based on reality. Such attributes are able to assist future engineers in feeling motivated and ethical in uncongenial working environments.

Lastly, engineering students should come to realize the crucial significance of documentation. Good reporting, clear records and uniform methods act as a buffer against bureaucratic entanglement. If project decisions are legally challenged, however, well-structured documents that record the decision-making process can protect engineers from litigation, help secure funding approval and prevent the cancellation of a project. The success of a project often rests as much on its paperwork as its design.

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Training civil engineers to navigate bureaucracy simply means that some amount of necessary infrastructure can still get built, and not only safely or ethically, but also efficiently, despite the imperfections of institutions. Educating the next generation of engineers to be able to see problems before they arise, communicate rather than silent retreats, continue dotting ethical lines and record actions in real-time enables them to contribute in a meaningful way even toward broken systems. Their ability to be flexible and professional becomes crucial to turning adversity into a means of advancement.

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ENGINEERING INTEGRITY: THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST GOVERNMENT MISMANAGEMENT

Mismanagement by the government continues to provide one of the biggest impediments and long-lasting pains in infrastructure implementation. Projects drag to a halt as agencies lurch forward without coordination, budgets bloat into the stratosphere well past original projections, and structural quality not-at-all coincidentally declines when shortcuts are used instead of professional order. The value of civil engineers becomes even more essential in such places. They have to create and construct, and then ascend above the systemic failings of them to guard resolute over the common good. At these times, engineering integrity comes to matter, not simply because it is useful, but because there is no alternative.

Engineering honesty starts with honest technical reporting. Measurement of each step, reality-based analysis, realistic schedule and transparent cost play the backbone for project management ethics. When you adulterate any of these with, in most cases politics, occasionally financial considerations, you compromise safety and trust. So civil engineering students need to learn to respect accuracy and the truth, even if under pressure sincerely to tweak the figures or soft-pedal uncomfortable truths. Precision isn't just a technical matter; it's a moral one.

Another key component of integrity is the steadfast refusal to play lose with safety. At various points in their careers, engineers will be tempted to use materials at a discount, accept substandard inspections or forgo them entirely, and lower design standards as cost-cutting measures. "These may seem like small decisions to make, but they can result in terrible outcomes. The next generation of engineers needs to know it may be, to paraphrase the Prime Minister, an engineer that saves your life. Football stadiums or otherwise, safety must never take a back seat to cheapness or political convenience.

Integrity also requires accountability. Engineering must stand up and be accountable for its actions; leave a clear, open trail. Intelligent, open communication with stakeholders, from government officials to local residents, fosters trust and prevents potential problems or bad news from being hidden. Responsibility turns the engineers from uninvolved participants to the warriors of ethics, preventing deviation and corruption.

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The education is the key point to this cultivation of integrity. The ethics in engineering should not be taken as an option but to be integrated into the whole course and curriculum. Case studies of professional debacles, examinations of failures resulting from corruption and the opportunity to learn from seasoned (and principled) veterans can help students come to grips with the real-life implications of moral tarnishing. Through these lectures, students also begin to realize that ethical engineering is not an abstraction: It has real consequences for individual lives, communities and entire regions.

In places where mismanagement is jeopardizing the public well-being, civil engineers are forced to be the last line of defense. Their trust is the fundamental requirement for safe, sustainable and reliable infrastructure. "As engineers, when we do our job properly and do it ethically we're not just keeping the bridge from falling down or changing motor oil; we are maintaining and even enhancing the function of civil society.

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FUTURE-PROOFING THE NATION: THE CIVIL ENGINEER'S MISSION BEYOND POOR PLANNING

Lack of planning is still one of the leading contributors to infrastructure bottlenecks everywhere. Government departments are beset by short term political forces, out of date planning systems and lack of foresight. Infrastructure systems are consequently unable to keep up with ever-expanding populations, increasing climate challenges and the constantly evolving nature of technology. These long term weaknesses result in vulnerabilities that the civil engineers of tomorrow will need to manage. It is therefore important for us to have students who are not just technical but with the right culture and mindset of leading the future of this country.

First of all, civil engineering students have to be educated regarding the long term horizon. It's not just understanding engineering philosophy or principles, it's the ability to predict population, urban sprawl and to look at environmental and climate risk. They need to be able to not just think in myopic project terms but design infrastructure that can change over decades as conditions and society do. We need engineers with the vision of future systems who can ensure that they are not only working today, but also robust and relevant in the distant future.

Likewise the integration of data-based planning aspects into engineering education is critical. Cutting-edge methodologies, including GIS, computer simulations and predictive modelling are indispensable in contemporary infrastructure development. Develop the skills overall for civil engineers who could minimize planning mistakes, allocate resources better and improve how accurately they forecast and make decisions.

Cross disciplinary knowledge is also essential to address planning gaps. But many infrastructure breakdowns are the result of a lack of coordination among engineering, urban planning, environmental science and public policy. When such fields work in isolation, vital perspectives are missed and planning becomes disjointed. Civil engineering students who gain interdisciplinary understanding may be instrumental in addressing these gaps, and thereby provide integrated, holistic solutions based on both technical as well as environmental and societal aspects. This process results in government strategies with more 'bite' and development impacts that are likely to be longer lasting.

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Additionally, the next generation of engineers needs to grow up knowing how to speak up for climate-responsive resilient infrastructure. As engineers, in a world increasingly rife for natural disasters due to the climate changes, we need to advocate for our communities the development and integration of flood proof drainage systems, earthquake proof structures, design using materials that adapt with the new weather patterns of locations and sound constructions ensuring longevity. Their professional voice matters, and by exerting pressure for resilience and long-term durability, decision makers can be more likely to direct investment where it really matters – toward investments that reduce risk rather than meeting short-term needs.

Armed with information, creativity and a powerful moral compass, civil engineering students are poised to remediate the bad decisions that have plagued and weakened our public infrastructure for decades. They are the key to turning reactive systems into proactive ones, outdated strategies into solutions of the future and national planning from short-term solution to long-term vision.

It is by the leadership and knowledge of a new generation of engineers that our country will grow not stronger, but truly ready to meet the challenges required in a complicated world.

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WHEN NATIONS CRUMBLE, ENGINEERS RISE: REBUILDING HOPE THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

The strength and stability of a country is not just measured by its economy or the strength of its institutions but also by the quality of infrastructure they build. Where roads and bridges literally crumble, where floods become routine and infrastructure vital to public people's lives is allowed to deteriorate few would deny that they are more than simple problems of ageing or decay: rather this transformation signals crisis on a systemic level. Failures on this order jeopardize economic productivity, undermine public safety, and shake the nation's confidence. At this pivotal juncture, the new civil engineers become more than just technical specialists; they become key leaders engaged in rebuilding the commonwealth.

Today's engineers face the heavy burden of decades of deferred maintenance, rocky fiscal policies and expansions without any cohesive plan. It's not just about coming up with new infrastructure that they're held responsible for, they also have to fix the old systems, solve longstanding issues and redesign previous standards. Fortunately, the state-of-the-art engineering tools like SHM systems, digital twin technology and advanced composite material help civil infrastructure professionals to assess, diagnose and repair the infrastructure much more precisely and quickly than ever before. These advances form the pillars for a more nuanced, smarter public works.

But reviving a nation requires more than technical expertise. Civil engineers have to be more receptive to the wider field of public decision-making. They should participate in policy talks, long-range planning projects, budgeting discussions and infrastructure priority efforts. When engineers share their skills to inform policy, governments have the technical knowledge that can help develop more informed and sustainable strategies. Open procurement practices, planning guided by evidence, and investment focused on the long term all become much more achievable with engineers at the wheel of national development.

Sustainability is also a key aspect of new infrastructure. Climate change is making storms more extreme, expanding the reach of heat extremes and introducing new levels of environmental uncertainty. The answer is for civil engineers to design infrastructure that isn't just functional but climate-proof. Highways that withstand floods and buildings that save energy, waterways with tamed erosion and facilities that are disaster ready, these things aren't optional; they're basic conditions of national survival, imminent if not already here. But by designing resilience into every project, engineers help make sure the nation's infrastructure stays strong for generations to come.

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This transformation imposes on educational institutions a tremendous responsibility. Engineering programs have to teach leadership, innovation and ethics to their students." Future engineers ought to understand that re-constructing a country can only be done with more than technical knowledge, it calls for a strong compass of moral values and vision as well as a hard-core dedication to serve the public interest. They need to understand that every building they design has an impact on communities, families and the direction of national development itself.

In the modern era, civil engineers are therefore not just builders, they are nation-makers. As the face of the infrastructure crisis, they are instrumental in stabilizing communities, driving economic growth and renewing hope. Their work sets the physical and moral underpinnings for a stronger, more secure and more resilient republic.

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WHEN POLICY FAILS, BRIDGES FALL: WHY ENGINEERS MUST BECOME GUARDIANS OF GOVERNANCE

Every bridge that crumbles, every neighborhood that floods, every public structure that fails has a bigger story to tell, one that is about much more than steel, concrete and design mistakes. These calamities lay bare not just technical weaknesses, but structural failures in policy and governance. When regulations are antiquated or budgets misallocated or oversight irregular, infrastructure is exposed long before the first visible crack appears. This powerlessness is a sobering realization for civil engineering students: technical mastery, although necessary, does not go far enough. Knowing your way around the policy landscape is also crucial.

Contemporary engineering students should understand that things fall because buildings and other structures collapse for reasons that go beyond a simple miscalculation or bad drawing. They may fail simply because reasonable safety standards were selectively followed, or inspectors rushed or skimped on their work or money was repeatedly cut for maintenance in order to direct it elsewhere. Policies, and the way they are applied, influence the performance as surely as any design decision. So engineers need to recognize when policies are inadequate and when they threaten public well-being.

To close this gap, students need to be exposed to the intersection of engineering practice and public governance. By learning how to build understanding of building codes, environmental laws and zoning ordinances, procurement regulations and disaster risk management frameworks as available instruments, would be engineers learn to anticipate weaknesses in the system. More critically, it provides them with the information needed to push for better policies, more responsible regulation, and better governed practice. Engineers with fluency in governance becomes increasingly active players rather than sequestered audience to a safer fated built environment.

One other important takeaway is the benefit of proactive thinking. Engineers need to develop a reflex for challenging assumptions, assessing long-term risks and speaking up when procedures seem unsafe or inadequate. So many failures of infrastructure come not from action but inaction, moments when professionals sensed something gone wrong but stayed silent because of pressure, hierarchy or institutional culture. Civil engineering students need to be educated in order to speak

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responsibly and to have the courage of their personal conviction, even when they're challenging those who occupy positions of authority or power.

Furthermore, the importance of maintenance and lifecycle management has to be taught in engineering curricula. Not a few policy failures occur not in the construction but in the subsequent disuse of structures, when inspection schedules aren't met and maintenance budgets are postponed. If we teach students that infrastructure need to be taken care of year in and year out, they invest in systems that are robust, elastic and ready for the inevitable march of time.

When policy fails, bridges fall, but when civil engineers comprehend governance, fight for better systems and play by rules rooted in the common good, they can serve as primary defenders of the public's safety. Knowledge and integrity serve as a guarding shield to ward off disasters before they ever happen, and strengthen the fabric of communities. It is thus that civil engineers do more than lay down buildings, they defend the very life of society as a whole!

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Where Ethics Begin: How the Classroom Becomes the Frontline Against Corruption

Corruption continues to be one of the most serious constraints on infrastructure development globally. It undermines public confidence, undermines structural safety and redirects billions of dollars in public money from vital resources. Its impact is not just financial, but deeply human: in collapsed bridges, dangerous buildings and communities that were left vulnerable thanks to shoddy construction. As long as such hurdles remain, an important movement is fermenting within the engineering community: ethical engineering. And critically, the battle against corruption does not start at construction sites; it starts in schools. Significant educational reform is necessary to develop engineers who have the integrity to in fact "do what is right."

Anti-corruption can only be effectively countered if civil engineering programs make ethics center of their courses. Ethics cannot be approached as an optional or ancillary concern, but should really form part of subject matter from structural analysis to construction documents. In the real-world, there are innumerable infrastructure projects that have failed due to corruption and students must be confronted with these examples as case studies so they may understand what it means when humans make completely un-ethical decisions. When they hear about how one questionable material spec or one fudged report can mean the difference between life and death, then ethics goes from being a theory in the abstract to something very concrete that applies to their lives and their futures.

Educational reform also needs to put a strong emphasis on the training in technologies which enhance transparency. Digital monitoring systems, automated procurement tools, documentation mechanisms built on blockchain and real-time project tracking platforms are already in use for engineers today. The perversion, fraud and hidden decision-making are much reduced in these novelties. For inspiring future engineers, institutions support and enable them to employ these technologies so that they can have effective tools at their fingertips for implementing accountability in the field.

Educational environment must be fostered in which honesty, skepticism and moral questioning are not just celebrated but rewarded. Students need to know that

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when they ask questions, question arbitrary decisions or challenge practices that seem dubious, they are backed. When higher education institutions create a culture where integrity is heralded, not punished, students take the behaviors learned with them long after snuffing out the candles.

We all know that the trend of ethical engineering is not a temporary one, it's inevitable and absolutely essential in establishing the work culture for engineers. Because of design and intentionality, civil engineering students are not just trained in technical skills necessary to construct infrastructure, they are morally formed to defend the common good. Through integrating integrity within their work, they contribute to build not only stronger structures but a more open, responsible and reliable society.

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Reinforcing A Nation's Foundations: How Students Are Leading the Renewal of Government

Every nation has deep foundations; deeper than the concrete of its bridges, or steel in its towers. It rests on ideas, on innovation and on the readiness of its people to envision better ways of doing things. But in a lot of places, public infrastructure and government operations are slower to adapt than the private sector. Antiquated processes, sluggish bureaucracies, and mindless red-tape often slow the pace of progress and undermine the very systems that were put in place to protect our communities. However, in the times, amid all these crisis and turmoil, one category is found to have had power like none else: students. Equipped with new skills, a different outlook and the spirit to make an impact, they can strengthen the nation's bedrock by driving innovation in government.

This story starts in classrooms and university research laboratories, where young people's introduction to mapping increasingly comes with lessons in cutting-edge surveying technologies, AI-driven analysis and seamless data visualization. They learn to view issues in a different light, not as blockades but as gates through which they will be prompted to try fresh paths. Unlike legacy government systems that have been in place for decades and may be dependent on outdated methodologies, students are not crushed by a sense of "the way things have always been." In this way imagination becomes an energy capable of contesting fixed and corrupt norms.

Government institutions often struggle with dated planning systems and conservative tendencies in development. Students can bring in new ways of thinking, however. Think of a city planning office where young engineers pitch modular housing to alleviate overcrowding, or where environmental scientists build predictive flood-mapping models so communities can prepare for the effects of climate change. Their ideas frequently come at the juncture between creativity and practicality, skills that government institutions are desperate for.

But creativity is about more than just the technical. Students can be agents for change through policy talks and community conversations, local government planning sessions. Even now, many new leaders participate in youth councils and research forums or belong to civic organizations, where they contribute knowledge that some seasoned officials do not have. Their participation provides a link between

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science and decision-making so that policies are not only the reflection of political programs, but also of scientific knowledge and prospective vision.

Another significant role student has played with great distinction has been in the area of transparency and good governance. Having grown up in a digital age, their knowledge of devices that track, monitor and pass information on instantaneously is innate. When embedded in public applications, for example, in infrastructure dashboards or open-procurement platforms, these tools can help combat corruption and promote greater accountability and trustworthiness of the government. And the more students lead these innovations, the more they reshape not just systems but also the very culture of governance.

Eventually, shoring up the country's foundations will take more than materials and budgets; it will take people who are willing to rethink, redesign and rebuild systems from scratch. Students possess that power. Through innovation, sound values and an unwavering focus on service to the public, they can help lead the transformation that is required for government institutions to emerge from this crisis into a greater, smarter and more resilient future.

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Sustainable Futures on Corrupt Ground: The Civil Engineer's Fight for Integrity

The future of national infrastructure needs to be both sustainable and resilient, and sensitive to its environmental impacts. These are no longer the alternative realities they are urgent necessities in a world accelerating under climate change and with wobbling environments. But many countries are still stuck in an unpleasant present dominated by corruption, waste and weak governance. It's also a tough and profoundly important challenge for tomorrow's civil engineers to refuse to perpetuate systems that are unsustainable, even how we work within them.

The initial challenge is the struggle for enabling sustainable designs in midst of systemic resistance. In the corrupt countries' decision makers will aggressively tend to go for lower cost, lower quality materials and quick-fixes which collapse decades before they should. These sorts of shortcuts, of course, fly in the face of sustainability. Engineering students need to become able energize those approaches in favor of long-term resilience, rather than short-term cost savings. Climate-resilient materials, renewables technologies, and green engineering practices must be non-negotiable attributes of their designs. Even when those decisions are more costly, students should also be ready to argue that they're necessary to save communities and ecologies.

The second to protect sustainability actions from graft. Environmental protective projects – including flood control works, water treatment facilities and alternative energy projects – are especially susceptible to mismanagement and fund raids. To do so, engineering students must be educated not just in technical design but also in finance to at least a basic or auditing level and basics on very transparent documentation. Knowing how to keep track of resources, budget responsibly and maintain clear records makes sustainable ventures hardy against exploitation for future engineers.

Third, engineers of the future will need to develop personal resilience not only in their work but also in themselves. One needs to have guts, patience and strong will power while functioning in a corrupt-conditioned society. Students should be prepared to dig in their heels when somebody tries to use price-driven compromise as a battering ram against safety or sustainability. They need to know how to cover wrongs responsibly; safeguard their work from being abused; and make choices

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based upon power that are nonetheless grounded in moral, ethical and true strength.

Moreover, future engineers must realize that they are also educators and advocates. Sustainable development relies on widespread community support, and informed citizens are powerful partners in countering corruption. When communities are consulted by engineers about the goals of projects and their possible environmental effects, the people who live in those areas take ownership in protecting these projects for many years. Transparency and community participation are a powerful means to greatly reduce the possibility of corrupt practices and help projects stay within the realm of public interest.

But ultimately, there is nothing green to grow on corrupt ground. Yet the civil engineers of tomorrow have a rare chance to break this cycle. It is integrity, innovation, and unwavering advocacy that allow them to build not just resilient infrastructure but a more ethical and responsible society. Their labor will decide whether those that come after them inherit systems weakened by corruption, or are strengthened by vision, responsibility and hope.

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Detours and Deadlines: How Public-Sector Chaos Builds Better Engineers

Problems with government are typically nothing more than irritating stumbling blocks projects that can take years to complete, budgets that never seem to balance, stacks of paper that multiply like bunnies overnight and decisions based on politics rather than sense. But for students of civil engineering, these same headaches can also turn into surprise teachers. They are the lessons no textbook could contain. This new sort of engineer is made not in the classroom, but through recognizing how technical knowledge must coexist with and survive and thrive amidst the sloppy, unpredictable reality that is working for the people.

For a lot of students, the initial lesson is a frustration in disguise. There they might watch a government project grind to a halt just when it seemed finally ready to get going, or see rules change without warning because a new official arrived or something else abruptly became the most important thing. These moments are discouraging at first. But gradually students start to see what lessons are really being taught by these challenges: resilience. They learn that in real engineering the kind that makes a difference to communities' things almost never happen on a nice, neatly-stroked timeline. They develop patience, adaptability and the ability to think strategically. And they learn to not see obstacles as dead ends, but instead detours that involve creativity and calm.

While they pay increasing attention to the way public projects progress, students also gain an introduction to the world of policymaking that quietly determines each bridge, road or flood system long before anyone sets pen to paper for a first sketch. They learn how funding gets approved, how regulations are drafted and how political agendas shape engineering choices. The more they look, the more they realize that infrastructure does not just consist of concrete; it consists of decisions. And the people most likely to comprehend these far-reaching decisions are the very ones who can press for safer standards, tougher regulations and wiser long-range planning.

An entirely different sort of lesson can be found in government boondoggles, a question of moral philosophies. When they see that corruption, incompetence or poor supervision can cost lives, students start to appreciate the responsibility of their future profession. They understand that engineering is not just mathematics and

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materials, it's about honesty, integrity, and trust. These experiences are healthy reminders to my students that a good engineer is first and foremost talented in their honesty versus code.

And in this melting pot of challenges, innovation start to take root. Students see old systems or slow processes and naturally think about how things could be better. They start to envision digital tracking tools, try out sustainable materials, develop modular units or work on organization and project management. The point is that solutions for broken systems can emerge from anywhere, even in the classroom.

Hence, it is the problems of government that become the crucible in which the new engineer is formed. Such students, in short, learn how to think compassionately, act ethically and adapt fearlessly. They don't run from adversity; they roll with it.

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Educating the Nation's Builders: The New Mission of Civil Engineering in An Era of Crisis

Infrastructure systems are far more than physical flows of roads, bridges and drain lines, rather they represent an imprint of a nation's identity and soul. But in many places, planning is inadequate, corruption remains high, assets are aging and environmental vulnerability increasing. These challenges underline an urgent need for a change in both the practice and education of civil engineering. Students of engineering need to be so much more than technically proficient if society is to advance; they need a vision, a moral compass, and the ability to lead in the pursuit of positive change.

The biggest drive is taking place within the curriculum. Conventional factor on analysis of structure and material science-oriented engineering education program should be modified incorporating more global issues and future challenges. Sustainability, climate resilience, digital technologies, disaster risk management and engineering ethics courses should not be offered as separate modules but should be woven into the curriculum. Such fields prepare students to design infrastructure that is not just functional, but also ecologically sound, long-lasting and adaptable to future uncertainties.

When students work firsthand on local problems in the field, through community-based projects or via government internships they come to truly appreciate how deep the complexities of infrastructure development run. They see for themselves the fallout caused by bad maintenance, poor planning and political interference. Such experiences stimulate thinking, foster empathy, and give students the power to devise solutions that are pragmatic in context, rather than theoretical.

It provides future engineers with leadership training, which is equally important. Civil engineers frequently collaborate with government officials, contractors, environmentalists and community groups. To negotiate these conversations well, students need to know how to make ideas clear, work together across different areas of expertise and advocate for such sustainable evidence-based decisions. When engineers can articulate the long-term effects of these decisions, they have a stronger voice in molding public policy and steering infrastructure systems toward resilience and equity.

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Above all, education in civil engineering must foster a deep sense of service to society. "Students need to understand when they go out in the workplace, particularly now if they're doing a lab or wet-lab research, that their work has the potential to save millions of people or kill millions," he said. Because whether designing flood management systems or building bridges or planning transportation networks, engineers are tasked with the prioritization of public safety, environmental stewardship and ethical responsibility. Taking human responsibility for their actions, turns engineering away from a profession grounded in technique into a moral mission.

As always, however, the plans for change do not start in government offices or construction projects but rather in the classroom. By teaching civil engineering students how to consider ethical implications, how to think critically; by encouraging them to become bold innovators and skilled collaborators, then the profession has a chance of producing professionals who have the tools required for successful transformation of outdated infrastructure systems. By their leadership and example, a future that's more sustainable and safer can become not only possible. Can become inevitable.

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Concrete Change: The Mindset That Will Rebuild Tomorrow's Infrastructure

Concrete buildings are conspicuous trophies of a nation's engineering prowess. They represent power, solidity and development. But the most tangible quality of them is in not only their physical strength, but the attitude they were built with. The problems with government infrastructure in many places are not that engineers don't have the solutions to technical challenges, but that outdated modes of thinking shape planning, decision-making and resource allocation. If real and enduring change is to be achieved the next generation of civil engineers must have a mindset that belongs in the 21st century, not one developed in centuries past which will only now lead them to change the future course from inside.

Certainly, one of the most important contemporary mentalities is sustainability. Traditional infrastructure solutions have often been short-sighted, focusing on designs that are cheaper and faster to construct but which manifest inadequate performance or premature degradation. Modern engineering, however, requires a change toward sustainable, climate-adaptive and lifecycle-oriented design. It involves looking at environmental impacts, reintroducing renewable materials and thinking ahead to how buildings will perform in ever more uncertain climatic conditions. Students in civil engineering who have been exposed to sustainable principles will be effectively able to counsel government and legislative bodies on sound environmentally-friendly choices that support both current and future generations.

Another paradigm, vital for the metamorphosis of public infrastructure, is innovation. Many times, governments are encumbered by lumbering bureaucratic processes that slow the process of adopting new technologies. However, advanced engineering tools like smart sensors for real-time structural monitoring; AI to predict maintenance and repair; and 3D modeling for better visualization can dramatically improve safety, precision, and efficiency. By advocating on behalf of these same technologies, and suggesting their real-world effectiveness, the engineers can affect a change in policy course, so that government agencies operate with even more modern resources than were available when agencies depend on cumbersome methods.

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The disposition towards collaboration must also define tomorrow's civil engineers. If we are to build infrastructure wisely, it should involve more than mere lip service between urban planners and architects on the one hand, environmental experts and lawmakers on the other. Engineers who need the underlying importance of interdisciplinary communication can close the distance from the technical needs to human requirements. This mutually beneficial approach to build with creates structures that can withstand stiff hikes, but also speak socially, are culturally appropriate and line up with communities' interests.

Most of all, integrity has to stay at the heart of an engineer's way of thinking. Corruption, graft and project mismanagement are still undermining the quality of infrastructure in most places. Responsible engineers underpinned by transparency, fairness and accountability could challenge such damaging behaviors and begin to restore public confidence in government-commissioned infrastructure. Their integrity shows that infrastructure isn't just constructed but is built right.

And, finally, "concrete change" goes well beyond the physical strength of buildings. It's a change of mindset, one that embraces sustainability, innovation, collaboration and integrity. Adopting these new ways of thinking will enable the next generation of civil engineers not just to rebuild the infrastructure, but also and perhaps more importantly to build a rebuilt governance system, planning process and public trust. In the process, they contribute to a culture founded not just on firm ground, but also upon its forward-looking values.

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The Role of English Communication in Contemporary Education

Students' English proficiency is essential for their success academically. English not only assists students in understanding their courses but also has an impact on how they communicate with others, make friends, and learn globally. In an article published by The British Council (2025), the authors state that in the years ahead, English will evolve further into a practical life skill and increase rather than restrict the student's ability to find both opportunities and learning and engagement options. This has become a growing demand of modern societies which consider the ability to speak and produce written English effectively as necessary to be able to participate within the international academic and professional environments.

In most schools, English serves the dual purpose of a subject and a medium of instruction in other academic subjects. For this reason, professionals have to be aware of how students develop language for communication and for cognitively demanding academic purposes. Cummins (2000) makes a distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, which are used in everyday interactions, and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, where students learn academic content. The distinction should enable the teacher to prepare lessons in such a way that the linguistic and cognitive skills are developed in a progressive manner, making students ready for more advanced learning.

In this regard, the reasons for English communication are closely tied to the kinds of competencies required by 21st-century learners. At present, the competencies the OECD identified as relevant for education and work are communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. Given that English is a global lingua franca, it increases the possibilities of gaining entry to international knowledge systems and helps students develop such competencies by introducing them to different perspectives and sources of information.

This heightened role of English within education does, however, point to concerns pertaining to linguistic equity. According to UNESCO (2015), quality education should contribute to universal understanding but should also be tied to local language and culture. UNESCO has also stated that learning in local mother-tongue is a key element for quality learning. Some students may see their English as some good, but it is not intended to replace or undermine students' linguistic identity. Balanced language policies allow learners to flourish with their cultural connections intact.

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Teachers help students learn useful skills, including writing and communicating in English. As Richards and Schmidt have noted, communicative approaches emphasize interaction, task meaningfulness and learner involvement. When teachers create environments where students are encouraged to express their ideas and collaborate with others, they become more confident and possess valid communicative competence.

Consequently, English is an education that provides students with considerable power in language and cognition to belong to a more globalized world. Balanced policies coupled with supportive teaching make learning of English and related experiences for the students as a bridge to new knowledge, connectivity and lifelong learning.

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In 2023, UNESCO noted that education in local mother-tongue is vital for quality learning. Some student teacher may think their English is good, it is not to replace or undermine students' linguistic identity. Balanced language policies allow learners to flourish. Academically intact with their cultural moorings.

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The Endless Pursuit of Wisdom: Understanding the Philosophy of Education

The philosophy of education is the search for wisdom. Education is a process of change in man's individual life. Education is continuous. It is an advance in degrees of enlightenment toward the refinement, improvements, or development of the individual. The natural tendency of man is to acquire education. It is necessary in order to supply potential desires and needs in man. It is necessary for the continuity and fruitful life of things. With man, there is an insatiable desire to know the things around him. The desire is not only in one direction but there is a desire for something constantly and that is the place in which education fits into each effort of man to educate himself into a universal being.

The education shall enable all people to have the opportunities offered by the world. Education shall make the world available to individuals in its different aspects of physical, mental, social and spiritual, transformation. Education is all embraced. Education shall pave way for intellectual and spiritual goals in life. Education is a process of development; it is a lifelong development. The education shall be for all by precept and example. Education may be had in a direct, an indirect or informal way. Education shall ever be in process. Education shall touch the man on each of his sides; the physical side, the mental, the emotional, the social side, etc.

Education is not education for some, but it is a thing that ought to be had by everyone, old and young, in directly or indirectly obtaining; and that it should pertain to the totality of an individual, in making him not only physically fit and intellectually, but morally as well. Education is life. Education grows. It is that which is needed to give directions in life. It is everywhere; there is no stopping of it. And that which makes education a part of the existence of man is that education is a life journey and also life.

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Why English Matters Today?

In the modern world, being proficient in English is no longer merely a need for higher studies, but it is a means through which people can create internationally identifiable careers and thus have entry into the new opportunities of the world for academic and professional experiences. Besides, it is the international language that integrates the world in the fields of science, business and trade, international relations, and advanced technologies. It, therefore, becomes of prime importance for educational institutions and teachers to make a conscious search for effective teaching methodology and to prepare the student with necessary skills to compete in the international market.

The dominance of English as the language of higher education and on most educational materials is very well established. Most academic journals, scholarly articles and databases are written and published in English and therefore, if English is spoken and understood, the student can access a much greater amount of collective global knowledge in the fields of science and culture than a student who cannot speak or understand English. For this reason, access to scientific and professional information is critical to a learner's educational success in a higher education setting. Therefore, if higher education institutions provide English as a second language programs to students at an early age, they enable students to access an abundance of knowledge and to eventually produce an informed and innovative society.

The ability to speak English can greatly improve your ability to find a job: Most multinational companies and NGOs require proficiency in English before they will hire you. This is because most companies today have offices all over the world and would therefore want to hire staff that can communicate with co-workers from different cultures and countries. On the other hand, students taking classes in English have an edge over other students in many studies, including IT, healthcare, engineering, and business. Aside from these, it is also undeniable that knowing English provides other practical and cultural benefits. In the increasingly expanding global market of today, where various cultures interact, the ability to correspond with all these cultures is becoming an increasingly significant potential asset. By having knowledge of and proficiency in the English language, students have a better opportunity to take part in the affairs of the global community by learning many different

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perspectives and also make friends or acquaintances with other types of people from all over the world. In so doing, the teaching of English promotes the development of future generations who are culturally sensitive and empathetic toward others-two attributes that are desirable when creating and maintaining a world of peace, equity, and environmental stability.

In general, the modern system of education relies on the English language heavily. With English, the students can access information from any part of the world. In addition, this helps the students to develop good job portfolios and, at the same time, communicate effectively with other cultures. English should be included in the curriculum of every school as it provides pathways to successful careers in a continuously changing society. When enough resources are channeled into lessons and programs concerning English, society benefits in its entirety-not only educationally through its individual students but economically too, through the rise of independent citizens with opportunities that enable each and every one of them to actively contribute toward social development and growth of a healthier global economy.

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Pangarap na Binuo ng Inyong Buwis

Ano ba ang mga sagabal?
Sa ngayon dapat ang pitaka mo ay makapal,
Ang mga bilihin ang mamahal.
Sana lahat ng nagsusumikap ay yumaman,
Ayaw natin sa gahaman,
Lahat ng mabuti sana ay mabiyayaan,
Aangat sana ang inyong mga kapalaran.

Marami sa inyo ang pagod na,
Alam namin ang sakripisyo nyo ay sobra na,
Tuloy lang sa pangarap kahit tila pagod na.
Nawa'y samahan ka ng lakas sa araw-araw na laban,
Gabayan ka sa lahat ng pakikipagsapalaran.

Isang mithiin ang sinisikap tuparin,
Sa kabila ng mga gastusin at bayarin,
Kung inyong mamarapatin,
Okay lang ba na ako ay may sambitin?

Laking pagpapasalamat namin sa inyo,
Ang mga dakila naming kapwa Pilipino,
Regalo namin sa inyo ang akdang ito.
Nakakapag-aral kami dahil sa inyong mga buwis,
Gamit ang mga pera, kasama dugo at pawis.

Biyaya ang libreng pag-aaral,
Aabutin ang pangarap ng may dangal,
Yakap para sa lahat ng nagpapaaral,
Alay namin ang pagiging mabuting mag-aaral,
Nawa'y maramdaman ninyo ang aming pasasalamat at pagmamahal.

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Unspoken Battles in the World of Reading

Beyond the four corners of the classroom, there are children whose voices remain unheard and undefended, not because they refuse to speak, but because their reading difficulties quietly hold them back. While some students race through pages with confidence, others sit silently, wrestling with letters that seem to twist, blur, and resist meaning.

These are the silent strugglers among learners, whose challenges are often hidden behind polite smiles, lowered gazes, or memorized coping mechanisms. Reading is more than just decoding letters on each page; it is a gateway to understanding the real world. Yet for many children, this gateway feels like a locked door.

The world is full of unending stories to tell, but the words that they don't want. They may know the alphabet but stumble when blending sounds. They may read words aloud but fail to grasp their meaning. Others simply avoid reading altogether, fearing embarrassment and judgment, because they rarely complain. Teachers and parents sometimes assume everything is fine. But silence doesn't mean mastery. In fact, silence is often the first signal of struggle. Inside the classroom, these children navigate their day with quiet anxiety. During reading activities, they may pretend to search for a pencil, flip pages without reading, and wait for classmates to answer first. They become experts at hiding. For them, every reading task is a test of survival, an emotional battle as much as an academic one.

Those are the reasons behind these struggles. Some children lack early exposure to books and storytelling. Others face learning difficulties such as dyslexia, which requires targeted support. Many learners also grapple with limited vocabulary, weak comprehension skills, and poor phonemic awareness. And in some cases, emotional factors, such as low confidence, fear of failure, and past negative experiences, can intensify their reading challenges.

The consequences ripple across their academic journey. Children who struggle to read often feel disconnected from lessons, discouraged by low scores, and hesitant to participate. Over time, they may withdraw from learning altogether, believing that school is not a place where they can succeed. Yet silent struggles do not mean hopeless struggles. With compassionate intervention, students can bloom into confident readers.

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Teachers play a vital role by creating safe, inclusive classrooms where mistakes are seen as part of learning. Small-group instruction, scaffolded tasks, multisensory strategies, and individualized reading plans can make a remarkable difference. Equally important is building a supportive environment, one that encourages students to ask questions, take risks, and celebrate small victories. Parents, too, serve as powerful partners. Reading at home, offering encouraging feedback, and providing access to books develop a child's comfort and curiosity with printed text. When families and schools work together, struggling readers feel valued and understood.

Most importantly, educators must listen not only to words spoken but to the silence students try to fill with brave smiles. In that silence lie their fears, frustrations, and dreams of becoming better readers. Behind every hesitant voice is a child waiting to be heard. Behind every struggle is potential waiting to unfold. Understanding these silent battles is the first step in helping our students discover that reading is not an intimidating mountain, but a pathway filled with possibilities. And sometimes, all it takes to unlock a struggling reader's confidence is a teacher who cares enough to listen to the silence, to the effort, and to the child behind the struggle.

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PIGHATI NI FUR MOMMY

Sa tuwing kayo'y aking naaalala
Di mapigilan ni mommy na maluha,
Kay rami-rami, kayo pa ang nawala?
Doble ang sakit na aking nadarama.

Mga baby ko, talagang miss ko na kayo
Nasaan kayo? Pawiin ang lungkot ko.
Nais kong maramdaman ang cuddle ninyo,
Sino na ang katabi sa pagtulog ko?

Batid ko kung nasaan man kayo ngayon
Masaya na kayo kasama ng Poon.
Ganoon man, haharapin ko ang hamon,
Tanggapin ang sakit 'yan ang aking tugon.

Paalam sa titig ninyong makahulugan
Paging pasaway lagi na may ka kyutan
Kulitan ninyo'y di ko malilimutan,
Lalo na't laging unahan sa kainan.

Mananatili kayo sa aking puso
Pagkat bahagi na kayo ng buhay ko,
Kayo ang bumuo ng pagkatao ko
Kaya't salamat sa pagmamahal ninyo.

(Ang tulang ito'y alay ko sa mga alaga kong
pusa at aso na pumanaw na)

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Sapantahan

Pinili ni Ina
ang landas na hindi ko pinili.

Sabi niya, para sa akin,
para sa ikabubuti.

Pero
puso ko'y hindi tinanong,
damdamin ko'y hindi pinakinggan.

Luha ang naging wika ko,
paghiyaw ang naging musika,
at katahimikan
ang naging bilangguan.

Sa una, banayad ang agos,
tila payapa ang simoy.
Ngunit sa dulo,
ang pag-unawa'y naglaho,
ang unos ay dumating.
At doon ko natutunan:

Ang pag-ibig na pinilit
hindi namumunga.
Ang bulaklak na pinilit mamukadkad
siya ring unang nalalanta.

Ako, bilang ipinagkasundo sa kasal,
kahit hindi nagmamahal,
samahan man ng dasal
at kahit anong sapal,
kung walang pag-ibig,
nagkakahiwalay rin,
gaya ng sa akin.

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PAGKAKAIT

Ang mundo ay isang biyayang puno ng hiwaga
Sa pag-ikot ng mundo
Sa kanyang walang walang katapusang sayaw sa kalawakan
Kasabay nitong umiindak ang buhay

Isang masalimuot ngunit kamangha-manghang himig ng pag-asa
Sa mundong ibabaw kung saan may mga taong
Hindi ka itinuturing na kapantay bilang tao
Tila ba tinitingnan kang mababa

Hindi ka pinapanigan
Hinahanapan ng pagkakamali't pagkukulang
Mga taong akala mo'y iyong masasandalan
Sila pala'y iyong katunggali

Ang masaklapa'y tinuturing kang hindi kapamilya
Kundi kaagaw sa tagumpay
Sinisira ang iyong imahe
Tinitingnan kang mali

Ang hindi pagkakapantay-pantay sa lipunan
Kung saan ang makapangyarihan
Sinasadyang minamaliit
Pinapahirapan ang mahihina

Pagkakait sa katarungan
Nakakalungkot, nakapanlulumo at nakakadismaya
Bakit nga ba? May mga taong ganyan
Binababa ang dangal
Hindi iniisip ang kahihinatnat sa hinaharap

Sa laban at agos ng buhay
May panginoong ALLAH
Kailanma'y hindi kumukurap
Di nagsasawang magbigay liwanag, Alhamdulillah.

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The Final Lecture

Professor Alvaro Cruz stood at the doorway of his classroom, the same room he had taught in for thirty-five years. The wooden desks were etched with the memories of generations, and the windows rattled with every warm breeze just as they always had. Tomorrow would mark his retirement, and today was his final lecture.

His students sat waiting, expecting another lesson on revolutions and republics. But Professor Cruz did not open his worn textbook. Instead, he placed it gently on the table and smiled.

"Today," he began, "I won't talk about heroes or battles. I want to tell you something different… something I learned over a lifetime of studying the past."

The room fell silent.

"When I was young," he continued, "I believed history was only about dates and victories. But after decades of teaching, I realized something more: history is about people who tried, failed, stood again, loved, fought, hoped and kept moving. Just like all of you."

The students leaned in. This was not the professor they were used to hearing.

"I am retiring," he said softly, "not because I am tired of teaching, but because it is time for new voices—your voices—to continue the story."

A quiet sadness settled in the room, mingled with pride.

He looked around one last time at the faces before him, feeling a warmth rise in his chest. He had spent his life shaping minds, inspiring questions, and reminding young people that the past was a guide, not a cage.

When the bell rang, the class rose to their feet and applauded. The sound was loud, sincere, and trembling with emotion.

Professor Cruz picked up his old textbook.

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It no longer felt heavy.

"For the last time," he whispered, "class dismissed."

And as he stepped into the hallway, he knew that although he was leaving the classroom behind, the lessons he had planted would continue quietly, steadily, like history itself long after he was gone.

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Begin Before the Silence Claims the Day

The sun awakens, warm and bright
yet still you wonder, *Should I start?*
By noon, your doubts hold just as tight,
still whispering softly in your heart.
And when the evening shadows fall,
you find you never moved at all.
For every hour lost to fear
makes dreams grow faint, then disappear.

We bloom only when we begin;
we fade when trembling thoughts rush in.
Stand still too long, and life moves past,
its moments fragile, fleeting, fast.
So gather strength from where you are,
your quiet longing, your hidden scar.
Rise now don't sit and fall apart,
don't drown inside *When should I start?*

Keep moving, even when it aches,
for time runs on and never breaks.
It will not wait for grief or doubt,
nor pause until you figure out
the perfect way, the flawless part,
you simply need to make a start.
Begin before your fear grows loud
and steals the hope you once allowed.

Look forward now see what unfolds:
the dreams your trembling hands will hold,
the gentle blessings born from pain,
the quiet victories you will gain.
Every effort, every tear,
becomes a step that brought you here.
And one day soon, you'll look behind
and see the strength you dared to find.

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Time speaks softly but it's true:
it offers chances, not a few.
But once passed by, they fade like rain
that never touches earth again.
Today is yours, your heart, your chance,
your moment to rebuild, advance.
So do not wait, nor drift, nor sway
begin before the silence claims the day.

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The Colors That Endure

The broken bits of crayons, dull and small,
Lay silent once, but now they shine for all.
From scattered hues that time had cast away,
New light emerged, a brighter, kinder day.

With patient hands and warmth to guide the flame,
Each color melted, yet remained the same.
Though broken once, their beauty reappears,
A blend of joy, of hope, of dreams, of tears.

So too are we, though different in our ways,
Each soul a shade that lights another's days.
When joined as one, our colors intertwine,
And in our unity, all hues align.

See crimson's glow of passion, love, and might,
Yet temper it, for anger dims its light.
While azure whispers calm, serene, and deep,
A vow of peace our restless hearts shall keep.

Bright yellow laughs with joy and childlike grace,
Though sorrow hides behind its shining face.
And green renews, where faith and growth reside,
Where hope and peace in gentle hearts abide.

Pure white reflects the soul's unsullied part,
Of innocence and truth within the heart.
And brown, the tone of earth and humble hand,
Speaks steadfast care that time shall not disband.

Majestic purple dreams in mystic hue,
Where wisdom stirs and visions still pursue.
While orange burns with courage, joy, and cheer,
It fuels the heart when weary days draw near.

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In black, both strength and silence intertwine,
A mark of power, grace, and grand design.
Though death may wear its somber, quiet shade,
New life through darkened paths is often made.

Thus every hue, though broken, bruised, or torn,
Becomes more bright through trials it has borne.
For in each soul, the light of love is pure,
The colors blend and ever shall endure.

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Thirteen Lights of Our Year

When New Year breaks its whispered dawn,
our hopes rise gently, soft yet strong.
We greet the months with open hands,
trusting the days to meet our plans,
believing love will lead us on.

The early year brings tender cheer,
new blessings circling ever near.
And in the hush of morning's grace,
we long to share a peaceful space
a quiet warmth that draws us close,
the kind of calm a family knows.

Each child once waited for a day
where joy would bloom along the way.
How vivid still those memories are
a mother's touch, our guiding star.
She cooked with love, not wealth or pride,
yet every meal was sanctified.

Around the table, stories spilled,
our hearts so open, laughter filled
the corners where our youth still plays,
in echoes bright from bygone days.
No tale was lost, no voice unheard
each spoken truth, each trembling word,
held gently by the ones who stayed
to listen when the world felt frayed.

Eleven days belonged to us,
and two to you, our treasures trussed
in simple gifts and little joys,
quiet gestures, subtle poise.
You made our birthdays sweet and clear,

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small miracles from year to year
moments shaped by hands that knew
how love need not be grand to be true.

Thirteen bright lights in every year
drew all of us to gather near.
Through every sorrow, every tear,
those celebrations held us tight
soft lanterns glowing in the night.

And though the years have drifted far,
their warmth remains our guiding star.
For in each laugh we once held dear,
we find the courage to persevere.
In those remembered days of cheer,
your love still wipes away our fear
a tender flame that won't depart,
forever lit within the heart.

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CHALK, ECHOES, AND THE LANGUAGE WE TEACH

In the classroom,
language is more than grammar and sound,
it is the way a thought takes shape
in another person's mind.

Every question is a key.
Every answer,
a door swinging open.

The chalk moves across the board
like a slow river,
leaving white traces
that dissolve into memory.

We speak,
and the air carries our voices
into the quiet spaces
where students keep their questions.

Over time,
words settle like dust on sunlight,
and when the moment is right,
they rise again,
spoken in someone else's voice,
finding a life far beyond the walls
where they were first heard.

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GRAMMAR OF THE HEART

Love speaks in more than words.
It lives in the pauses,
in the unhurried glances,
in the way a name sounds softer
when spoken by the right voice.

A single word
stay, home, again
can hold an entire history,
a lifetime of meaning
pressed between syllables.

Sometimes love is loud,
spilling into the open
like a story that can't be kept in.
Other times,
it is the quiet footnote,
the whispered line
that changes the whole page.

And when the language fails,
love still finds a way,
through touch,
through presence,
through the spaces where silence
becomes its own kind of sentence.

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Language: The Light That Guides Learning

The Quiet Spark
In the stillness of thought,
ideas flicker like stars before dawn,
small lights growing into constellations
that guide us through the unknown.

Intelligence lives in questions,
in the courage to doubt,
in the patience to listen for answers
the world whispers only to the curious.

It shapes patterns from chaos,
finds symmetry in shadows,
and turns mistakes into stepping stones
for the next great leap forward.

It is not the loudest voice in the room,
but the steady flame
that burns long after the noise fades,
illuminating paths no one else has seen.

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Love in the Language Classroom

Love begins quietly,
not with thunder,
but with the way someone's presence
makes the air feel lighter.

It grows in the small things:
a glance held a second too long,
a laugh that fits perfectly in your ears,
the comfort of silence
that asks for nothing in return.

It is not only found in grand gestures,
but in the steady choosing,
day after day,
to see and be seen.

In love,
time moves differently,
moments stretch like soft light at dusk,
and the world feels gentler,
as if unseen hands
are holding it together
just for you.

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The Garden of Language Learning

In the halls where young minds bloom,
questions spark like morning light.
Books unfold their secret worlds,
and every page becomes a map
to lands the heart has never seen.

Chalk dust drifts like quiet snow,
marking trails of thought and wonder.
The hum of voices weaves a tapestry
of dreams too wide for walls to hold,
each one reaching toward the sun.

Through patience, guidance, and small acts of care,
teachers sow seeds in unseen soil.
Years will pass before the blossoms come,
but the roots run deep,
anchoring futures we cannot yet imagine.

In this realm, learning is more than knowing;
it is becoming,
a steady shaping of the soul
by the gentle, persistent rain
of wisdom and hope.

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Ikaw na Nga

Umibig at nasaktan nang ilang ulit
Pinilit bumangon sa damdaming napakasakit
Naghanap ng kalinga, at ikaw nga ang nakita
Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!

Sa mga pagkakataong nakikilala ka
Masasabi kong ikaw ay sadyang iba
Ligaya'y natagpuan sa piling mo aking sinta
Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!

Sa umpisa palang may pagsubok na,
Marahil sadyang gan'to talaga,
Pag-uugali ng bawat tao ay iba-iba
Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!

Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!
Ang hinihintay kong pagsinta
Sa bawat saglit ay palagi kang alaala
Hinahangad na parati kang makasama

Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!
Ang nagbibigay ng ligaya't pag-asa
Sa mga hamon araw-araw ikaw ang kaagapay
Hanggang sa pagpikit ng mga mata pag-ibig mo ang gabay

Ikaw na nga! Ikaw na!
Ang inaasam na habambuhay makasama
Tuparin ang mga pangarap nating dal'wa
At paglingkuran hanggang huling hininga
Ikaw na nga, pag-ibig na walang kapara.

Dedicated to: Claudine P. Bautista, RN

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Learning Both Ends

Another day portraying the educator's role,
Reunited nurse-instructors toward one goal.
In the context of academe
Achievement is the main aim.

Synchronous sessions are preferred,
Online classes are accepted.
Not a single topic is missed,
In a regular day without rest.

A lot of students to assess,
Recruiting knowledge they possess.
A point in every test,
Surviving is the quest.

Adaptation to each clinical exposure
Nursing supervision is given without rigor.
Integrating theory and clinical competency
Empowering students with proficiency.

Learning has to be discerned,
In some aspects, this is a concern…
Lifelong understanding comes with no end…
Yearning for knowledge is both a teacher and a student strain…

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Passion in Practice

Just as the day has started,
Overwhelming need of complexity of knowledge is sorted.
Varied diseases and disorders existed,
Yielding to each intervention is twisted

Different medical-surgical nursing books are enlisted,
Intensity of comprehension is definitely obligated.
As God's creation is highly appreciated,
Strengthening nursing care is apprehended.

Associating diagnosis, laboratory findings and medications are studied,
Nursing care plans are instigated.
Instead, nursing roles are updated,
Life is precious and deserves to be respected.

Responsibility is enacted,
Never taken for granted.
Management of care is guided,
Nursing outcome is illuminated.

Phenomena in nursing health care are not to be disregarded
Despite its intricacy, responsibility is demanded.
Nightingale is forever acknowledged,
Science in nursing is to care for those in need.

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The Unexplained Known

At the course of time, an academic semester will end,
Let it be not too late to mend.
In the midst of uncertainties
Series of assessment results are about to be told…

On top of this medical-surgical nursing subject,
Never should it be taken for granted.
Recall on previous lessons is demanded,
Access to resources is unlimited.

Youthful demands are set aside,
Mindset and focus are prioritized.
Understanding is essential,
Nurturing each potential.

Drastic change on study habits is felt,
Sometimes reading is loved instead of hate.
As always, the teacher tries to consider,
Notwithstanding the complacency of the learners.

In the context of disease process and nursing care,
Everything is a lot to bear.
Let the question be asked, what comes next?
Reassuring self all will be at peace.

Now a teacher can only hope…
Many students will make it through…
As this subject will make a mark,
Never will it be again, an unexplained known…

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Ako Ang Langit

(Hango sa Tula ni Alejandro G. Abadilla na "Ako ang Daigdig)

Ako
Ang langit
Ako
Ang ilaw

Ako
Ang langit
Ang ilaw
Ang ilaw
Ng langit

Ako
Ang totoong ako
Ang liwanag ng buhay
Ang ilaw ng langit

Ako
Ang langit ng ilaw
Ako
Ang ilaw ng langit

Ako ang malayang ako
Totoo sa sarili
Sa aking ilaw
Ng langit

Ako
Ang ilaw
Sa langit

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Ako
Ang ilaw
Ng langit
Ako

Ako
Ang totoong
Ako

Ako
Ang gabay
Ng buhay
Ako
Ang gabay
Na walang katapusan

Ako
Ang totoo
Ang gabay
Ang liwanag

Totoo
Gabay
Liwanag
Ilaw
Ako

Ako
Ang langit
Sa ilaw

Ako
Ang ilaw
Ang langit
Ako
Ang ilaw
Langit
Ilaw
Ako

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Between Applause and Lullabies

Once, there was a woman
whose dreams were stitched
into rising titles and respected names.
She learned to measure her worth
by applause, by recognition,
by how loudly the world said you matter.

The world taught her to want more,
more success, more proof,
more signs that she was becoming someone.
Then motherhood arrived,
shaping, steadfast, selfless.
And quietly, it renamed her dreams.

One morning, she woke up
and the ladder no longer called her name.
Instead, there was laughter
echoing down the hallway,
bare feet racing across cold floors,
a small voice calling mommy,
for her, and only her.

As if the universe narrowed its focus and decided
she was enough.
She traded uninterrupted sleep
for lullabies and bedtime stories,
opportunities for play,
and meetings for moments
that would never come again.

Slowly, the golden curtain of chances closed.
The world stopped clapping.

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But a tiny hand reached for hers,
holding on as if she was
the safest place that exists.

Yes, some days are heavy.
She is exhausted in ways
no title could ever explain.
Yet her heart, oh, her heart,
learns a deeper kind of fullness,
the kind that aches
because it matters.

And somewhere between the mess
and the missed chances,
she realizes
this is the dream she once asked for,
the prayer her weary heart cried for.

Because in the end,
it was never about success.
It was never about career.
It was always about time.

Time to be present.
Time to love without condition.
Time to witness firsts and lasts.
Time to become
the best mother she vowed to offer
for her one and only daughter.

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Math Made Simple: A Transformative Journey

Why is mathematics often perceived as a difficult subject by students? As a math instructor for years, from my perspective, many views it as a series of complex problems and abstract concepts that are challenging to comprehend. With this view, one of the most common obstacles is overcoming the preconceived notion that math is inherently difficult. When I first began teaching mathematics, I quickly realized that many students viewed it as a tough subject. They often entered the classroom with apprehension, convinced that math was a subject beyond their grasp. What is the telltale sign of students with math anxiety? The most common sign is students avoiding eye contact. Students are hesitant to take part and reluctant to tackle problems independently when asked. Experiences had conditioned them to fear failure in math. This realization motivated me to create a learning environment where students felt safe to explore and make mistakes.

To address this challenge, as an instructor for so many years, building a strong foundation is the initial step. Math is like building a house; without a solid foundation, the structure cannot stand. I focused on ensuring my students understood basic arithmetic and key concepts thoroughly before moving on to a more advanced topic. Mathematics is cumulative; each new concept builds upon the previous one. As such, ensuring that students have a solid grasp of fundamental principles is crucial. Regular practice and revisiting these fundamentals help students gain confidence in their abilities.

To make math engaging, I incorporated a variety of teaching methods. Visual aids, such as graphs and diagrams, help students grasp abstract ideas. I used interactive tools and technology to create dynamic lessons that captured their interest. The most effective way is to relate math to real-world applications. This illustrates the relevance of mathematics, helping students see the practical value of what they are learning.

Recognizing that each student learns differently is very important. I tailor my approach to meet my students' needs. This might involve offering additional support to students who struggle or providing enrichment activities for those who excel. Personalized feedback and encouragement can significantly boost a student's confidence and motivation.

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It is a rewarding feeling for a math instructor like me to witness students who once dreaded math like the subject. Students approach math with curiosity and enthusiasm. While many students are still shielding themselves from math, I believe that with the right teaching approach, math can be made easy. By focusing on foundational skills, employing engaging teaching methods, encouraging a growth mindset, and personalizing learning experiences, a math instructor like me can transform students' attitudes towards math. Ultimately, effective teaching by employing the right methods can help students who once shied away from math overcome their fears and achieve in math and beyond.

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HIBLA NG KAPALARAN

Sariwa sa isipan mga bagay na nalimutan,
tulad ng isang hula na nalaho sa kawalan,
Saan nga ba ako patungo? Sino nga ba ako?
may puwang ba ang paglalakbay sa buhay na ito?

Lagi na lang may digmaan sa gitna ng isipan,
sarili at sa mga hindi nalalamang kalaban,
walang kasiguraduhan din ang pagkapanalo
Paano nalang ba kung katuturan ay maglaho?

May direksiyon pa ba ang kumpas na dala-dala?
o naglalakay lang ba ang mga paang nawawala?
nalalapit na ang hibla ng kapalaran,
Makakaya pa bang punan hibla ng kapalaran?

Sa alon ng hangin na lang ako'y magpapalunod,
hayaang tangayin ang lahat ng sakit at pagod,
upang sa kahuli-huliha'y walang pagsisisi,
at samga yamaong dalumatay di mawawaksi.

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LGBTQIA+

Sa kabilang mundo ng mga tao
may ibang kasarian ang natagpo,
hindi hayop kundi tao rin sila
na dapat respetuhin at igalang.

Mga taong mapanglait
nawa'y maingat sa iyong sinabi,
hindi nila tanggap ang LGBTQIa+1 sa lipunan,
sapagkat ito'y salot at makasalanan.

Dapat ba ang lalake at babae ang respetuhin?
marahil sila ay kakaiba
kailangan rin nila tratuhin ng tama,
dahil hangarin nilang mabuhay na mapayapa.

LGBTQIA+, sila ay nagbibigay kulay sa lipunan
kung saan ang bawat titik ay,
kumakatawan sa kagandhana ng pagkakaiba-iba,
Isang komunidad na nararapat ipagdiwang at iangat
para sa kanilang katapangan sa pagiging tototo sa kanilang sarili.

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OMG! utot ni Kuya Driver

Papunta ako sa Cebu City, kung saan ako nag-aaral. Mula sa aming bayan ng Naval, sumakay ako ng isang bus kasama ang ilang kapwa estudyante. Habang umaandar ang biyahe, bigla na lamang kumalat ang isang hindi maipaliwanag na amoy—isang amoy na tila kayang patumbahin kahit ang pinakamatatag na ilong.

“Hoy! Ano ba namang amoy ’yan? Nakakamatay naman!” reklamo ng isang estudyante habang nakakunot ang ilong na tila isang galit na leon. “Ikaw ba ’yan, kuya driver?” tanong ng isang babae sa lalaking katabi niya, kumikislap ang mga mata sa paghihinala. “Hindi po, ate. Hindi po,” sagot ng lalaki sa gilid, bakas sa kanyang mukha ang kawalang-malay.

Ilang sandali pa, biglang may isang malakas na utot ang umalingawngaw.

“Prrrrrrooottt!”

Parang bomba ang sumabog sa loob ng sasakyan. Agad na umikot ang amoy sa buong bus, dahilan upang magsimulang magtinginan ang mga estudyante sa isa’t isa. Ang aming mga mukha ay puno ng pagtataka—at hindi mapigilang pagtawa.

“Ang lakas nun, kuya! Parang may laman ’yong utot na ’yon!” sigaw ng lalaking nasa gilid habang malakas na tumatawa, nanginginig ang tiyan sa sobrang aliw. Nagtawanan na rin ang lahat; ang aming mga boses ay nagsanib sa isang masayang simponya ng halakhakan.

“Hoy, kuya driver! Ano bang kinain mo kagabi? Bakit ang baho sobra ng utot mo?” sigaw ng isang estudyante, puno ng biro at kutyosidad ang tinig.

“Hala kayo! Wala naman akong inutot!” sabay tawa ng driver, kumikislap ang mga mata sa pagkukunwari. Muling umalingawngaw ang tawanan sa loob ng bus.

“Kuya driver, parang hindi ka naman nahiya na umutot ka sa harap ng mga estudyante!” sigaw pa ng isa, halatang aliw na aliw sa nangyari.

“Eh ano ba kayo? Normal lang ’yan! Masama ba ang umutot?” sagot ng driver habang nakangiti, waring wala ni katiting na hiya sa kanyang ginawa.

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Nang kami'y bumaba, biglang sumigaw ang isang lalaki, "Kuya, punta ka muna sa CR!" sabay tawa. "Baka mamaya, sumabog ka pa sa loob ng bus!"

Muli kaming nagtawanan, at ang aming mga puso ay napuno ng saya. Ang araw na iyon ay naging isang karanasang hindi ko kailanman malilimutan—isang araw na hitik sa tawanan, katuwaan, at mga alaalang mananatili sa isip at puso.

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SIMULA NG AKING TAGUMPAY

Lumaki akong nangangarap na makaahon sa hirap. Bata pa lamang ako'y hinahangaan ko na ang mga seaman, simbolo ng pag-asa at pag-angat ng buhay. Sa kabila ng kahirapan, nagsikap akong mag-aral habang tumutulong sa pamilya sa pamamagitan ng iba't ibang trabaho.

Isang araw, habang nasa dalampasigan, may lumubog na bangka. Walang pag-aatubili, iniligtas ko ang mga pasahero. Sa huli, nailigtas ko silang lahat, ngunit kapalit nito ang malubhang pinsala sa aking paa, isang sugat na tuluyang pumutol sa pangarap kong maging seaman.

Nalugmok ako. Nawalan ng direksiyon, nalayo sa pag-aaral, at nalulong sa bisyo. Dumating pa ang panahong iniwan kami ng aking ama at lalo kaming naghirap. Akala ko'y doon na nagwakas ang aking paglalakbay.

Ngunit isang matandang pilay ang nagpaalala sa akin: "Hindi hadlang ang kapansanan sa taong may dahilan para mabuhay." Mula noon, natutunan kong magsimula muli. Bumalik ako sa pag-aaral, nagsikap bilang iskolar, at tinahak ang kursong edukasyon.

Ngayon, isa na akong guro. Hindi man natupad ang una kong pangarap, natagpuan ko ang mas mahalaga ang maging inspirasyon sa mga batang tulad kong minsang nawalan ng pag-asa. Natutunan kong ang tunay na tagumpay ay hindi nasusukat sa yaman, kundi sa dami ng pusong iyong napalakas. Ang sugat sa aking paa ay nanatili, ngunit ito ang naging paalala na minsan, ang ating kahinaan ang nagiging daan sa ating pinakamalaking lakas.

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THE NURSE'S UNSEEN NOVELTY

She strides the halls with laughter bright,
breaking the silence of the early light.
Coffee stains her scrubs from long, toxic shifts,
no cape adorning, but steady gifts.

She draws a breath as needles near,
steadying hands that tremble with care.
Learning each bandage's gentle pull,
quiet fears in brave eyes full.
A family's grief she softly weaves,
folds it smooth, no crease she leaves.

Even machines soften in her presence,
turning beeps to soothing essence.
She senses weariness in silences deep,
reads pain from looks that don't speak.
Beside them still as darkness grows,
waiting for dawn's warmest glows.

Her work whispers, calm and true,
small rituals helping others through.
Knowing names before charts unfurl,
soft songs to lighten a weary world.
Placing blooms where shadows pressed,
turning cold to warm caressed.

She carries farewells like a silent hymn,
small steps sparking lights within.
Calming storms with gentle tone,
leading lost souls toward the known.
Her care fills spaces no bandage mends,
between strangers and cherished friends,

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between silence and truth, between ends and starts,
mending the cracks in breaking hearts.

Each time she tends with tender hand,
she leaves behind an unspoken stand.
True wonders lie not in grandeur planned,
but kindness held in a steady hand,
seeing someone fully with heart aligned,
with mercy, attention, a gentle mind.

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"Where the Roads Lead, We Follow"

In streets that are still asleep to the first light of the sun,
A nurse comes right out.
Nothing but the shining halls,
nothing to sew on a curtained snowy bed.

Where the freeways bend, and it's all highways advised,
Her work begins
She goes knocking where few think to call her name,
But slips softly in, ne'er courting Fame.

With printouts of bars and gentleness in her voice,
She repairs a town, one heartbeat at a time, and one home.
She hears tales the city forgets,
Of mothers thinking, of debts unpaid,

Of fevers that rise when don't come.
She responds to every sorrow without becoming numb.
Below the nipa roof or by the market square,
She conducts classes on handwashing, vaccines and care.

With laughter plays a child, with tender mien Pleads with the old.
With heat hotter than her bag can hold.
Her clinic is wherever somebody stands,
A field, a barangay hall, Two waiting hands.

Her charts may chart the guide her, but by heart she knows
It is with trust that healing starts.
She walks home in the twilight, tired but alive,
Unbeknownst to them, she was helping a village prosper.

There were no medals, no spotlight, no loud crowd cheers,
All of that is just the unassuming spoil of a life lived

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She Offers Steady Care to the Soul Wrapped in Twilight

I once cared for a patient carved out of grief,
the winds of a terrible world
disturbing the lamps flickering in her eyes.
She bore the bruises of a night
when a gang stole her tranquility
and left her voice trembling.
In the silence of her room, I felt the weight
she could not speak,
as I stood beside the agony
that threatened to devour her whole.

She sought me out the following day,
gentle steps, hesitant hope,
because once, in her deepest breaking,
when she could not pray for herself,
I had prayed for her.
She held onto that small offering
as though it were a thread of daybreak
in a sky refusing light.

And in her trembling hands,
I saw faith slowly returning,
a belief not in miracles,
but in the simple truth
that someone would walk with her through the hurt.
She looked at me as one looks at a shoreline while drowning,
trusting I would help her reach the sand.
After our long conversation, she sighed,
a breath carrying years of fear,
a soft surrender into relief.
For the first time, she lifted her face toward herself,
seeing not the brokenness,
but the quiet courage rising within.

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That day, she chose to continue,
to fight, to heal, to live.

Four years passed like seasons turning.
And when we met again,
her smile was no longer fragile,
It was a sunrise.
She told me she had walked beyond the shadows,
beyond the nightmares,
beyond the harm carved into her body and spirit.
“I am a victor,” she said,
claiming not just survival,
but a stronger, brighter version of herself,
a woman who stepped out of twilight
and into her own dawn.

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A Nurse Formed by Providence

I never dreamed of being a nurse,
the path was not my choosing,
but when the chance appeared,
I held it tightly,
for I had no means to carry myself through school
except to walk the road that opened before me.
I stepped into nursing not out of desire,
but out of need,
a reluctant seed planted in hard soil.

Yet those who lifted me,
those who paid the price for my future,
were nurses,
gentle hands, brave hearts, quiet servants.
Watching them, I felt a spark
where reluctance once lived.
Their dedication wove itself into me,
their example becoming a lantern
guiding my hesitant steps.

And I remembered what truly shaped me,
the nights my siblings cried from hunger,
my mother worn and grieving,
our father gone and the house emptied of everything but hope.
It was then I learned to care,
to feed, to watch over, to comfort.
Helping others became a small salvation,
a truth I saw echoed in the nurses who inspired me:
serving others is its own deep, quiet satisfaction.

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So I grew into nursing,
slowly, steadily,
until one day I realized
I loved the calling I once feared.
Blood no longer frightened me,
and lifeless bodies no longer stole my strength;
compassion had made me braver.
The heart's purpose
outshone the fears of the flesh.

By God's providence,
I reached the finish line,
graduating, passing the boards,
carrying in my spirit the echo
of every kindness given to me.
Now I stand in service,
offering the same grace
that once brought me through.
I help because I was helped,
I give because I was carried,
I live to serve
because God sent people
to serve me first.

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Diving into the Future of Computer Technology

We are constantly evolving, and looking toward the future of computer science and technology. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and quantum computing have been unveiled in the computer technology age, showing their boundless possibilities. It is this transformation in the mechanistic relationships of man and machine, that is universally important to all human endeavors.

Artificial intelligence, being the most impressive aspect of computer science, has the ability to revolutionize various sectors such as finance, medical services, production, telecommunications, and transportation. With the ability of the machine to analyze massive amounts of data and determine what the patterns are, or predict the trends, the knowledge could significantly support the ability of humans to make better decisions, and ultimately maximize productivity in the related industries. The continuing evolution of man led through machine intelligence, leads it to evolve to be still more intelligent and take an important part in all that man does, from the self-operating machine to the humanoid robot.

The future of computing is also influenced by machine learning. By performing explicit programming, learning from data, and emphasizing its effectiveness, this opens the door to new levels of predictive modeling and data analysis. Machine learning stems from areas such as natural language processing and image recognition, and today has made inroads and is being used in almost every area conceivable. We can look forward to seeing many applications in the fields of health care, finance, and even cyber security.

Another competitive area of development in computer science is in quantum computing. Instead of using bits, the classical explanation is that quantum computers use quantum bits, or qubits, to hold and process information, which can exist in many states simultaneously. Thus, quantum computers can solve many, many complex problems much faster than classical computers. Quantum computing is now evolving, with a rapid advance toward an advanced state. In a few years, we will have many breakthroughs with this new technology.

The future of computers will not only depend on technological advances but also on social and ethical issues. Since computers are developing rapidly to be more

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powerful and more intelligent, the issues of privacy, security, and accountability have become extremely important. It must also be our advocacy that the gain of the developments be available to all so that they are used for the greater good of our society. It is well to have the cooperation and combined efforts of researchers, makers of policies and industrialists to see that the developments of technological improvements are beneficial and are handled responsibly.

In view of the development of artificial intelligence in combination with machines of learning and computers of a quantum character, technologies are expected to be developed that will change the phase of life with those who will experience its results. The future of computers will be what it is presented to be, when we have responsible and ethical regulations which lead us to the proper realization of a sincere cooperation in fulfilling our moral obligation.

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Bridging Cultures, Building Futures: The Transformative Potential of Faculty Exchange in Hospitality Education

I had the opportunity to participate in the Faculty Exchange Program at Tra Vinh University in Vietnam. It was among the top three achievements in my career as an Associate Professor in the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) program. Our instructional competencies and teaching strategies were a privilege to teach in Vietnam, especially in discussing Filipino culture, though I struggled because they did not understand English. Anyway, Filipinos are known for hospitality, such as a warm welcome to guests, compassion, and service excellence. In this exchange, I gained insights that greatly helped our institution, my professional growth, and my students.

The hospitality environment in Vietnam, its customer service behavior and culinary identity, community tourism, and local markets, gave me technical skills along with cultural reflections, values, and a national identity. This perspective fueled my determination to incorporate a broader cultural base into teaching BSHM, with a stronger sense of authenticity and global competitiveness, and to incorporate cultural reflections, values, and national identity.

The representation of the BSHM program internationally has put Palompon Institute of Technology-Tabango Campus on the international stage of hospitality education. We are proud that our program has improved teachers' practices and has trained our students in skills for their future on-the-job training, locally and internationally. Moreover, in this step, we can build strong potential partners and stakeholders in the tourism industry.

As I am back at our respective institution, Vietnam's warm hospitality in customer service broadened my perspective and helped me improve our program. We deliberated on ways to extend our BSHM curriculum. In fact, we have a Project Promotion Department, and we discussed Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). It focused on experiential learning, engaged community learning, and culturally based service models. This project may help ensure students receive an education grounded in the hospitality opportunities the world offers.

The faculty exchange was highly impactful to me personally as an educator and for my role in hospitality. Teaching BSHM-related concepts in a foreign setting required cultural sensitivity, clarity, and adaptability. I know that communication is

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one of our barriers in teaching there. However, I had to deliver the full context of the practical expression I would consider, and I had to decide how to communicate the practical expression of hospitality relevant to a Filipino context, based on references to hotels, restaurants, and tourism settings I might work in, ensuring the delivery would resonate with Vietnamese students.

The experience was also an opportunity for me to reflect on my own practices in an educational setting. I noticed how the Vietnamese educators embedded local culture into accompaniment and theorized hospitality, while incorporating experiential simulations and a mix of pre-service knowledge of both traditional and modernized service. Their commitment to preserving cultural identity in tourism and hospitality instruction inspired me to reflect on how I could further enrich my own strategies.

The experience also boosted my confidence when I was selected to represent the BSHM program at the global level. It legitimized the work I am doing as an educator in hospitality and affirmed its value in a global context beyond the classroom and the Philippines. It further reignited a pursuit of continued development, an involvement in research on hospitality and culture, and a commitment to staying open to opportunities to work in hospitality internationally.

When we unveiled our two traditional dances and highlighted the cultural contexts of the Philippines and Vietnam, I felt proud! We enjoyed tasting street foods, delicacies, drinks, and soups as part of their local market culture. These experiences reinforced me to explore the cultures of other countries and to love our own. Our program needs to go beyond and reflect a commitment to a cultural perspective and global competitors in the hospitality industry.

The most rewarding outcome of this exchange is the positive effect it has on my students. As future hospitality professionals, they benefit immensely from the global insights I gained. Their understanding of hospitality expanded from a local to a multicultural perspective, helping them appreciate the field's dynamic, international nature.

Through classroom discussions, I introduce global hospitality practices, service philosophies, and cultural examples from Vietnam and other Southeast Asian contexts. I told them that, as part of hospitality management, they need to learn languages such as Japanese, English, and Vietnamese so they can interact with and adapt to people from other countries. I explained to them that hospitality is not just a profession, but also a way to connect nations and cultures.

My enhanced pedagogical practices, integrating real-world case scenarios, cross-cultural comparisons, and global service expectations, increased lesson engagement and relevance for students. Emphasizing the importance of courtesy, respect, and teamwork in service encounters based on my experience in Qatar at a five-star hotel. This faculty exchange encouraged many of my students to think bigger. Some students demonstrated interest in studying abroad, getting international internships,

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or participating in exchanges. They understood that hospitality could be a gateway to global opportunities and that, with the right competencies and an open mindset, they could succeed anywhere in the world. My role, fueled by my exchange experience, is to provide them with the confidence and competence to pursue global opportunities.

The Faculty Exchange Program at Tra Vinh University was not just an overseas assignment; it was a transformative experience that continues to shape my teaching and the BSHM program in which I work. For our institution, it reinforced global partnerships and enhanced credibility with our hospitality programs. For me, as a hospitality educator, it shifted my teaching philosophy, enhanced my teaching techniques, and reaffirmed my commitment to educating globally competent, culturally anchored students. For my learners in the BSHM program, the exchange experience broadened their global awareness, enriched their cultural understanding, and inspired a deeper motivation to pursue academic growth.

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Pribado: Breaking Cultural Taboos in Child Protection

Tony Fowler released her song "Pribado" featuring Tito Vince and Papi Galang on October 31, 2025. The song serves as a reminder for the parents to teach their children about their body parts and to make it clear that no one should touch them in an unsafe manner. It emphasizes that private parts must be protected and that no one should touch them without permission. Furthermore, it teaches children to say "no" when someone violates their boundaries and encourages them to tell their parents or guardians if anyone attempts to touch them inappropriately.

The chorus of the song reminds children:

"Mali 'yan, h'wag mo 'kong hawakan, isusumbong kita kay nanay at kay tatay. Pribadong parte ng katawan, iniingatan."

Translated, it means: "That's wrong, don't touch me; I'll tell mommy and daddy. Private parts of the body must be protected."

Instead of avoiding the topic, Tony Fowler takes the courage to address the sensitive and serious issue: child sexual abuse and the importance of open communication. This clear and straightforward message about consent makes "Pribado" not just for entertainment, but also a valuable educational tool for families, teachers, and even child- welfare advocates.

The significance of this song becomes even more relevant when viewed alongside actual data. According to the Baguio City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), from January to June 2025, there were 83 child abuse cases, 52 were female while 21 were male. Among these were 33 cases of incest rape, 13 cases of act of lasciviousness, and 7 sexual molestation. These statistics reveal an alarming situation that needs everyone's attention. Therefore, teaching children how to protect themselves and where to seek help become crucial.

In the Cordillera region, discussing private parts is often considered uncomfortable. Parents or guardians commonly use euphemisms such as "bird" referring to male private part and "flower" for the female private part. While these terms are culturally familiar, they may cause confusions to the children and prevent them from fully understanding what is safe and what is not.

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This is where “Pribado” becomes especially relevant because it addresses these cultural gaps by using clear and direct language. The song introduces the correct anatomical terms and equip them with knowledge about their own bodies and personal boundaries. By doing so, it empowers children to recognize unsafe behavior and protect themselves when someone violates their boundaries. Parents or guardians can use the song as a simple and powerful tool to help their children understand consent, safety and how to respond in potentially risky situations.

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Sa Aking Munting Prinsesa

Apat na taong gulang ka pa lang,
pero anak, para ka nang buong mundo ko.
Alam mo ba, noong dumating ka,
ang dami nating pinagdaanan.
Nagka-COVID ako noon,
kaya lumabas ka nang mas maaga
at ang liit-liit mo,
parang natatakot pa ang buhay na humawak sa'yo.
Pero kahit gano'n, ang lakas mo.
At ngayon, sa bawat halakhak mo,
parang sumisikat ang araw,
kahit minsan ang bigat-bigat ng araw ko.

Naalala ko pa talaga
ang unang beses kitang binuhat.
Ang gaan mo, ang liit mo,
at kinabahan ako na baka hindi ko magawa nang tama.
Pero nang nakita ko ang mga kamay mo,
maliit pero ang higpit mong kumapit,
parang sinabi mong,
"Mama, kaya natin 'to."
At doon ko naramdaman, sapat na.
Sapat na ang pagmamahal mo
para mapuno ang buong puso ko.

Ikaw ang kalaro ko,
ang katabi ko kapag gabi,
at oo, dahilan ka rin kung bakit
madalas akong kulang sa tulog.
Pero anak, kahit gano'n,
sa'yo ko natutunan
na may pag-ibig palang hindi nauubos,
hindi napapagod,
pag-ibig na lumalalim araw-araw.

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Habang lumalaki ka,
gusto kong ako ang kasama mo,
sa unang hakbang,
sa unang pagkadapa,
sa unang luha na 'di mo maipaliwanag.
Ako ang unang tatakbo sa'yo,
ang unang sasalo,
at ang unang magsasabi,
"Kaya mo 'yan, anak."
Dahil kapag malakas ka,
mas nagiging malakas ako.

Kaya tandaan mo, munting prinsesa:
habang buhay kitang mamahalin.
Ikaw ang sagot sa mga dasal ko,
ang regalong hindi ko hiningi
pero ibinigay sa tamang panahon.
Sa bawat yakap at bawat ngiti mo,
ipapaalala ko palagi...
ikaw ang isa at natatanging anak ko.
At oo, anak...
ikaw ang himala ng buhay ko.

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Upuan

Marahil marami pang nagtatanong na mga Pilipino kong bakit hindi pa rin tumataas ang ekonomiya ng aking inang bayan. Kong bakit hanggang ngayon mahirap pa rin ang karamihan na sambayanang Pilipino. Isa rin ako sa mga taong ganito ang katanungan sa akin isipan. Marami mga katanungan sa aking isipan na hindi pa rin masagot nang nakakarami. Hindi nga ba sa kadahilanan ng sa isang “Upuan”? O mas marami pang upuan. Isang uri ng bagay na hindi nakakapagsalita,Ngunit maraming kuwento ang kanyang nasasaksihan na hindi kayang ipahiwatig sa mga mamamayang Pilipino.

Sa bawat tahanan, opisina o maging sa malalaking kompanya ay itinuturing ang upuan ay isang simbolo lamang na kagamitan. Na ginagamit lang kapag kinakailangan ng isang tao kapag uupo o magpapahinga kapag pagod. Ngunit ang aking upuan na sinasabi ay hindi tipikal na upuan lamang. Kundi isang malaking suliranin na hindi matahimik ang sambayanang Pilipino ng dahil sa nakaupo sa isang upuan na kailan man hindi mabago at walang pagbabago.

Tandaan natin na ang upuan ay sumisimbolo sa ating pagkatao. Sa bawat upuan mayroon kuwento at karanasan na tinataglay. Sa bawat paggalaw ng upuan mayroon kuwento na susunod. Gaya ngayon na kinakaharap ng sambayanang Pilipino. Bawat umaga at gabi ay iba ang kuwento. Ang ipinapahatid ng mga makabagong gamit ng generesyon Z ay Magulo, Maingay at hindi matahimik na sigawan sa kalye. Na may bitbit na banner na naka-custom ng isang kilalang tao. Iilan lamang ito sa mga ginagawa ng sambayan upang mabago ang takbo ng kanilang tinatahak ngayon.

Hanggang kailan ba magigising ang iba? Hanggang kailan ba aasa ang lahat na parang nakatiwangwang lamang. Kapag dumating ba sa malaking karahasan? Gaya ng nagyayari sa bansang Nepal? O sa mga kapatid natin sa Indonesia na marami ng mga mamamayan nila na dumahas ng karahasan sa kanilang gobyerno. Sa bawat pagtakbo ng panahon ay kinakalawang rin ang bakal na nakakabit sa upuan. Maging ang mga tela nito ay naging luma at punit-punit na ito. Mga parte ng kanyang kahoy ay nagagasgas sa kadahilanan na naging luma na ito.

Ngunit ito ay nagpapakita ng palatandaan na bawat panahon ay naiiba ang nakaupo. Pero bakit ang upuan na aking sinasabi ay hindi lamang naiba ang

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kanyang itsura o hugis nito? Hindi ba nangangahulugan na walang naiambag o pagbabago? Hindi ba ang upuan ay maaring maging simbolo ng pag-asa? Para bigyan ng serbisyo ang mga taong naghihintay at gawing pahingahan para pagmumuni-munihan?

Kaya sa susunod na pipili tayo nang uupo sa ating inang bayan ay kilatisin ninyo mo na ang uupo. Tingnan mo ang mga bakas ng nakaraan na dala nito. Kung gaano karami ang mga bakas ang kanyang dalang pagbabago sa lahat. Wag natin hayaan na manatili ang mga manlililang o mapasamantalang nilalang. Upang ipako ang kanilang mga tungkulin sa inang bayan. Lagi natin isipin na dapat ang nakaupo ay isang simpleng piraso ng kasangkapan sa unang tingin, tila walang buhay at walang kuwento ang isang upuan, ngunit kung susuriin nang mas malalim, ito ay isang saksi sa libu-libong karanasan sa hindi maisigaw.