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ECHOES *of* EXPRESSION

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

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,

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Pag-inggit, Pikit!

Huwag ka nang mainggit!

Ikabubuti mo kung hahayaan mo lang ang inggit na nararamdam na pangit.

Sa halip na mag-aksaya ng oras sa paghahambing ng sarili sa iba,
mas mainam na pagtuunan ang sarili mong pag-unlad at kaligayahan.

Huwag mo nang tingnan ang iba!

Ipikit mo na lang ang iyong mga mata sa tagumpay nila.

Hindi dahil sa ayaw mo silang magtagumpay, kundi para hindi ka mahulog sa
bitag ng kadiliman.

Sa ganitong paraan, mapoprotektahan mo ang iyong sarili mula sa negatibong
pakiramdam.

Pero, pipikit nalang ba talaga?

Hindi ba maaaring imulat ang mga mata at tanggapin ang katotohanan,

Na ika'y napag-iiwanan at ang iba'y nangunguna na.

Hindi naman ito karera, pero sadyang minsan mahuhuli na talaga.

Bakit di subukan na sa halip pumikit,

hamunin ang sarili na baka kung susubukan ay malayo pa ang mapupuntahan.

Ang inggit na nararamdaman ay gawing motibasyon,

Na sa halip na pumikit, subukan, at baka mahihigitan pa ang ibang tinitingnan.

Oo, ang inggit ay nakasasama,

at ang pinakamabisang paraan para labanan ito ay ipagwalang-bahala.

Pero, kung kaya mong hamunin ang iyong sarili,

Sa halip na mainggit, ba't di subukan at tanggapin ang magiging kahihinatnan.

Dahil maaari namang ang inggit na nararamdaman

Ay magiging motibasyon na magagawa mo rin ang nagagawa ng iba.

Sa hallip na pumikit, imulat!

Sa halip na negatibong nararamdaman, gawing positibo sa pakiramdam.

Sa halip na mainggit, maging masaya ka na lang sa iba.

Sa halip na may masabi ka pang masama, pumalapak ka nalang sa tagumpay nila.

Sa halip na tanungin mo ang kanilang kakayahan, ba't di mo subukan ang sariling
kakayahan.

At sa halip na mainggit, mamulat sa katotohanan at huwag pumikit!



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Voices in the Digital Storm

A tap, a swipe, the rant begins,
Unfiltered thoughts like sudden winds.
Pixels roar with anger, pain,
Echoed loud across the plain.

Caps lock on, the fury flies,
As strangers watch and criticize.
Truth and rumor twist and twine,
In tangled webs of angry lines.

Comments sting and tempers flare,
Behind each screen, a world laid bare.
Yet often lost is calm, respect,
Replaced by battles we'd regret.

A moment's vent, a heated post,
But who's the real one hurt the most?
The rants may scroll, then fade away
Yet scars online can, too, still stay.

In digital noise, can kindness rise?
Beyond the rants and shouting skies?
A softer voice that seeks to hear,
To bridge the gap, to calm the fear.

For words once thrown cannot rewind,
But wiser hearts may yet be kind.
Let's pause, reflect, then choose to share
A cause for peace in cyberspace air.



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Spilled Secrets on the E-Wall

Spilled on the wall, in public chase.
A private rift, a whispered plea,
Becomes a show for all to see.
The keyboard warriors, swift and sly,
Jump in to judge, or justify.
What once was mended, face to face,
Now hardens, frozen in this hostile place.

The mind takes strain, the spirit's frayed,
As public scrutiny played.
Embarrassment, a bitter sting,
When fragile feelings take to wing.
Reputations built, then quickly fall,
As screenshots linger, beyond recall.
A fleeting rage, a thoughtless post,
It can haunt a life, a future lost.

Yet, understanding lights the way,
To navigate this digital day.
With mindful fingers, words untold,
And settings guarded, brave and bold.
To learn the traps, the hidden cost,
Before the precious self is lost.
For platforms vast, and screens so bright,
Can share our joy, or steal our light.
It's in our hands, the choice we make,
The digital world, for goodness' sake.



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The Weight and the Wing

I have known the language of shadows,
their syllables heavy,
pressing into the marrow of my days.
The nights stretched long,
like a river with no shore,
and I adrift
wondered if light had forgotten my name.

Yet grief is a sculptor,
and pain, a chisel.
They hollowed me,
until I became a vessel
wide enough for dawn.

I rose not as fire
But as ember,
quiet, persistent,
refusing to die.

And from the ruin of my stumblings
grew wings I did not expect.
They were not gold,
not polished,
but feathered with scars,
each one a map of where I have been.

So I carry both weight and wing,
Both fracture and flight.
For struggle is the soil,
and triumph the bloom
and I am both,
rooted in sorrow,
reaching for the sky.



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The Hidden Grammar of Matter

Before the tongue had ever formed,
before the throat knew song adorned,
the universe in silence spoke,
through hydrogen's hush, through carbon's stroke.

In oxygen's syllables bright with flame,
it whispered truths no words could name.
Matter was speech before we wrote,
stars as quills, and space the note.

Atoms were letters, fierce and small,
etched by pressure, fire, and sprawl.
Gold was no trinket, but a burning desire,
forged in the breath of a sun's last fire.

Iron was binding, a bridge, a chord,
linking marrow to mountain, flesh to sword.
Water, the great conjunction so vast,
knits breath to soil, holds future to past.

What we call chemistry is only the rule,
a grammar of cosmos we teach in school.
But textbooks falter before the art,
for reactions are poems that leap from the heart.

Consider the beaker, cathedral of glass,
where futures form as the moments pass.
Copper weds oxygen, glowing green light,
and sulfur releases its underworld night.

Even the simplest reaction will teach:
two strangers unite, and life finds speech.
Yet matter is not only sealed in labs,
it shimmers in smoke, in the lightning's jabs.



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It glitters as stars, it hums in skin,
a language unspoken, a truth within.
It tells us: you are a phrase of star's
bones in calcium, heart in carbon bars.

Iron hymns burn red in veins,
your breath, punctuation across life's plains.
A hand you hold is a verb set free,
atoms in motion, a syntax of "we."

And love, what else could love become,
but chemistry's fire, electrons undone?
Two hearts seeking their balanced state,
completing a circuit the cosmos made.

Yet failure too is part of the line,
a silence, a fracture, still by design.
Even ash leaves whispers behind,
a fragment of meaning, a structure refined.

So follow the grammar of stone and spark,
read fire's verbs, and water's mark.
For every law was once a song,
the universe singing all along.

Not in words, but bonds and breaks,
in light that builds, in dark that shakes.
In stars unwinding, in atoms' spin,
the universe speaks, and we join in.

We are scribes of chemistry's scroll,
both fleeting echo and living whole.
Poem and particle, dust and flame,
born of the grammar we cannot name.

Together we write, together we blend,
a sentence eternal with no true end.



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The Periodic Symphony

In the beginning, before stars took flight,
The universe hummed in the velvet night.
A single vibration, a soft, secret chord,
Plucked by no hand, yet the cosmos adored.

From silence it stirred, the atoms awoke,
Hydrogen's breath was the first word it spoke.
A fire was kindled, a flicker, a flame,
And the first newborn star sang the universe's name.

It was not chaos, but music composed,
A staff of black night where the notes were all posed.
Matter was written in measures precise,
In chords of creation, in order, in ice.

Each element entered as instruments play:
Carbon the drum with its deep, steady sway,
Oxygen bright as a silver-toned flute,
Iron the brass with its echo resolute.

Gold was a harp string that shimmered with light,
Calling forth kingdoms from shadow to sight.
Together they rose in celestial accord,
Bonding in harmonies none could afford.

The chemist beheld this great table one day,
Not numbers or grids, but an orchestra's sway.
Each element waiting, each silent, each still,
Awaiting a conductor, a mind, and a will.

She lifted her beaker, a violin's bow,
And fire leapt upward, its song all aglow.
Powders like chord-lines dissolved into streams,
The air grew alive with her alchemical dreams.



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Hydrogen whispered of dawn's tender start,
Helium laughed with a child's bounding heart.
Lithium tapped on the bones of the flame,
While copper, deep cello, through blue fire came.

Each reaction, a phrase in the score she composed,
Each failure, a rest where her music reposed.
Explosions crescendoed, both peril and art,
For beauty and danger refuse to depart.

She wrote not with ink but with salt and with spark,
With burnings of metal, with ghosts from the dark.
Her colors bloomed brightly, sunset's red glow,
Spring's gentle green, and starlight's yellow.

For chemistry sings as an orchestra vast,
The hidden musician in blood, stone, and gas.
In iron of blood rings a solemn bell,
In oxygen's breath, life begins to dwell.

And under the earth, silicon keeps time,
A metronome steady, eternal, sublime.
What are we humans, if not living songs,
A fugue of our atoms where melody longs?

Our hearts are the timpani, steady, profound,
Our voices bear clarions where carbons resound.
Our eyes burn with sodium's shimmering suns
A chorus of starlight where all life is one.

The periodic symphony endlessly plays,
From galaxies vast to the smallness of days.
It echoes through atoms, through silence, through flame,
Forever repeating creation's refrain.

So lean in, and listen, and you may yet hear,
The symphony swelling, both distant and near.
A thousand instruments hushed, yet alive,
Awaiting our wonder to help them survive.



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Chemistry of Memory

In each small atom, a story lies,
from distant stars to earthly skies.
This hydrogen flame in a candle's light
once drifted through galaxies, burning bright.

And now it glows where my hand extends,
to you, whose absence no time amends.
I breathe, and wonder if lungs still know
the heavens where molecules learned to grow.

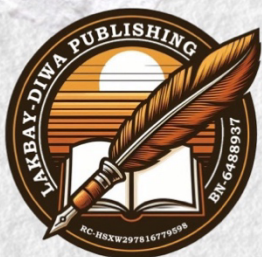
For memory is more than script or page,
or carvings endured by the march of age.
It hides in nerves, in the faintest spark,
a storm that gathers from light to dark.

A chemistry of ghosts in silence glide,
through synapse chambers where you still hide.
I think of you, and my body replies
with a cascade of fire the brain supplies:

Dopamine sings with its ardent delight,
oxytocin holds the heart too tight.
Adrenaline races in aching flame
love writes its law in joy and pain.

This body, a lab of relentless will,
performs its trials unbidden still.
Your laughter, like liquor, dissolves despair
and melts the metals too harsh to bear.

But absence settles, precipitate cold,
a weight in the beaker I cannot withhold.
Yet even loss, crystalline, sharp, and true,
is chemistry teaching its lessons through.



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I walk through streets beneath sodium glow,
where halos crowned your brow below.
The kitchen remembers each sugared flare,
the caramel smoke still lingers there.

Molecules conspired with tender grace
to trap your warmth in a time and place.
But memory shifts like water's gleam,
unstable, fluid, a restless stream.

You scatter within me, a prism of tears,
a spectrum refracted through changing years.
Yet sorrow transforms in its binding ring,
for chemistry's truth is transfiguring.

Coal under pressure to diamond beams,
ashes to earth sow fertile dreams.
Stars collapse, yet their remnants claim,
new worlds rekindled by bursts of flame.

So too does sorrow, reshaped, refined,
alter its structure within the mind.
It teaches the heart with the pain it lends
that bonds rearrange, though grief never ends.

I lift water to catch the sun,
hydrogen, oxygen, two bound as one.
Simple, familiar, yet infinite too,
just as I once was bound with you.

One day, these neurons will lose their flame,
proteins unravel, forgetting your name.
But molecules dreaming will not decay
they'll scatter through the soil in a softer way.

Teaching lilies the secret to bloom,
teaching starlight to pierce the gloom,
teaching the rain how gently it weeps
life's quiet lesson the cosmos keeps.

Perhaps, through some hidden grand design,
I'll trace your bond in a structure divine.
For matter remembers, though forms depart,
each atom still carries the pulse of a heart.

And maybe the silence of stars above
will show that all chemistry ends in love.



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Promosyong Walang Katuwang na Palakpak

Sa bawat hakbang ng tagumpay ni Lyna bilang guro sa unibersidad, laging si Nanay Juliana ang laman ng kanyang isip. Mula pa noong nagsimula siyang mag-aral ng masterado hanggang sa makamit niya ang doktorado, ang inspirasyon niya ay iisa lamang ang maiahon sa hirap ang kanyang ina at maipasyal ito sa mga lugar na minsan lang napapanood sa telebisyon. Madalas niyang ipangako sa sarili, “Kapag tumaas na ang sahod ko, si Nanay ang una kong isasama sa mga paglalakbay.”

Sa tuwing dumadalaw siya sa maliit na tindahan ng tabako ng kanilang ina, may dala siyang munting pasalubong tinapay, prutas, o minsan ay isang kahon ng gatas. Alam niyang hindi iyon kalakihan, subalit sapat na para makita ang ngiti ng ina. Kapalit ng mga mumunting alay na iyon ay pang-unawa at tiwala ng kanyang ina. “Tiis lang, anak,” sabi nito minsan. “Darating din ang araw ng ginhawa.” At mas lalong tumibay ang loob ni Lyna.

Makalipas ang ilang taon, dumating ang araw na matagal niyang inaasam. Na-promote siya bilang propesor at umangat ang kanyang sahod. Sa wakas, maaari na niyang tuparin ang matagal na niyang ipinangakong bakasyon kasama si Nanay. Sa isip niya’y nakikita na ang mga larawang magkasama sila sa Cebu, Maynila, at Baguio naglalakad, nagkukuwento at nagtatawanan.

Ngunit isang umaga, habang patungo siya sa paaralan, biglang tumunog ang kanyang cellphone. Nasa kabilang linya ang kanyang asawa, may tinig na nanginginig “Mahal... wala na si Nanay. Inatake siya sa puso. Tumawag ang kapatid mo.”

Nalaglag ang cellphone mula sa kanyang kamay. Nanghina ang kanyang tuhod, at ang mundo ay tila huminto. Ang pangarap na matagal niyang iningatan ay naglahong parang bula.

Pag-uwi niya sa kanilang lumang tahanan, sinalubong siya ng katahimikan at ng mabigat na hangin ng pagluluksa. Ang mga kapatid niya’y umiiyak sa gilid ng kabaong. Lumapit siya, hinaplos ang malamig na pisngi ng ina at pabulong na nagsalita “Nay... patawad. Hindi ko man lang naibalik ang lahat ng iyong sakripisyo. Salamat at paalam, Nay.”



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Habang nakaupo siya sa tabi ng kabaong, bumalik sa kanyang isipan ang lahat ang mga gabing nagtitinda ng tabako si Nanay para may pambili sila ng baon, ang mga umagang gumigising ito nang maaga upang ihanda ang kanyang uniporme, at ang mga gabing niyayakap siya kapag napapagod sa pag-aaral. Lahat ng iyon ay ginawa ng ina nang walang hinihinging kapalit.

Sa araw ng kanyang promosyon, nakatanggap siya ng maraming pagbati mula sa mga kasamahan. Ngunit sa kabila ng masigabong palakpakan, dama niyang kulang ang lahat. Wala ang pinakamahalagang tao na nais niyang karamay sa kanyang tagumpay.

Sa huli, natutunan ni Lyna na ang tunay na halaga ng promosyon ay hindi lamang ang dagdag sahod o titulo, kundi ang pagkakataong maibahagi ito sa mga mahal sa buhay. At sa kanyang puso, mananatiling buhay ang pangarap dahil kahit wala na si Nanay Juliana, ang kanyang mga aral at pagmamahal ang tunay na gantimpala na dadalhin niya habambuhay.



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Promise of Healing

Every day the sun rises,
Like the storm wave ashore arises.
“Don’t be afraid is what they whisper,
“Be brave and take the step towards wonders.”

I try every single day,
But why does the pain never fade?
Why do the hunting dreams creep?
Perilously wound my heart and brain.

I close my eyes and pray,
wishing to forget the pain.
But in every breath I take,
The killing ache remains.

As I walk through the darkness,
The hope inside my chest fades.
Due to wounds that tire my system,
Should I still fight and do my best?

For tomorrow, in every sunrise I vow,
As I peek at the rising waves
As I stare blankly at the silhouette of cries
A promise that healing will come somehow



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The Make-up Artist

Brushes in hand, poised like wands in flight
As she crafts new worlds in the silent dawn
Movement echoes as a sweep of blush, a careful line
Then a face reborn, so divine.

Her palette holds dreams
Soft whispered hues, muffled battle cries
Each stroke turns a loud yelp into a whisper
Conceiving a silent song among the crowd.

She sees beauty hidden deep within,
Eyes penetrate beyond the scars, beyond the skin
Through her hands, spirit can shine
In a canvas touched by magic lines.

Molding not to mask, but to reveal,
The hidden hopes, wounds will heal,
She paints with heart, with dreams, with art
Pouring his artistry, soul, and heart.



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Final Palette

A brush, a stroke, a fading light,
My dance of hues, now taking flight.
With trembling hand, yet steady soul,
My final masterpiece takes hold.

A blush of youth, a liner's wing,
This fragile spark to life I bring.
Each shade, each line, a whispered prayer,
Of dreams I've lived, and love laid bare.

Not just a mask, but fierce defiance,
My voice, my shield, my proud alliance.
A canvas where my truth held sway,
Painted in colors, bold and gay.

So paint your cheeks, define your eyes,
Wear your beauty, claim your skies.
For makeup is not crafted lies
It's art, it's strength, this is how I rise.



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Footstep of the World

Upon the earth, we softly tread,
Footsteps where the dreams are led.
A journey through both time and space,
Each step is a tale, a sacred place.

From mountain heights where eagles fly,
To the ocean's edge, where waves do sigh,
The world beneath our fleeting feet,
A patchwork vast, both wild and sweet.

The whispers rise from ancient trees,
The wind that dances on the seas,
The heartbeat strong of earth and sky,
In every step, a soft reply.

We wander paths our feet create,
Through joy, through loss, we trust our fate.
Our footprints mark the sands that shift,
A story told with every gift.

The world's footsteps are worn and deep,
By those who've loved and those who weep.
In laughter's light, in wisdom's glance,
The world moves forward with a dance.

From bustling street to quiet glen,
The footprint travels far, again.
It crosses borders, breaks through walls,
In every place, a story calls.

These footprints hold a steady sign,
With hope that burns so bright, divine.
Though roads may wind, both broad and long,
We walk as one, in unity strong.



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Each step is a chance to learn, to grow,
To light the fire and let it glow.
For in the humble trace we leave,
Lives the soul of what we believe.

From deserts dry to jungles green,
From histories lost, yet still unseen,
The footprints stretch through time's embrace,
Reflecting all of human grace.

So let each step fall soft and kind,
With respect for all that we may find.
With every step, a vow unspoken
To cherish earth, the path unbroken.



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The Path of Sustainable Tourism

In sunny isles of golden day,
Where winds do blow and waves do play,
Nature cradles jewels bright,
The beauty of the sea, the sky's delight.

But with each step, we leave our trace,
On forests deep and ocean's face.
The earth, it speaks in whispers low,
"Take care of me, let kindness grow."

Tourism, though a golden key,
That opens doors to all we see,
Can wound the earth if not embraced,
Handle with love, not in haste.

Palawan, bright with skies so pure,
Should never fall to greed's allure.
Banaue's terraces, ancient, grand,
Must echo with a guiding hand.

It's not enough to glance,
We must protect, we must advance.
Sustain the hands that tend the land,
And help the brave who take a stand.

Strengthen those who call it home,
Let not their peace be overthrown.
Honor culture, cherish past,
So future hearts may make it last.

Let eco-tourism light the way,
Where green and growth forever stay.
A mindful choice, a thoughtful heart,
Preserving beauty, doing our part.



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Through education, let it spread,
May kindness fill the path ahead.
For the sustainable tourism dream,
It is where both man and earth redeem.

So as you journey far and wide,
Remember this, with care inside:
The world we share, both near and far,
Can thrive if we protect who we are.



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Guardians of the Islands: A Call for Sustainable Tourism

In islands pure, where cultures gleam,
The Philippines welcomes every dream.
Tourism's pulse, the economy's heart,
Draws millions here, a vibrant art.

Yet voices rise with urgent plea,
For tourism, in a kind and sustainably.
Not just the earth we seek to guard,
But lives and culture are rich and hard.

From Palawan's enchanted shore,
To terraces that legends bore,
Our treasures vast, a precious hold,
Yet threatened now, their stories told.

Over-tourism's heavy hand,
Destruction scars this fragile land.
Boracay, once a haven bright,
Closed its doors to heal its plight.

Six months of care, the island sought,
Waste and growth problems were fought.
Though costs were felt in short-term pain,
Preserving beauty was the gain.

Sustain the earth, empower the folk,
Keep wealth within, and spread the hope.
Tourism fuels both jobs and pride,
But only when all are allied.

Support local hands, respect old ways,
Let culture thrive through all our days.
Siargao's balance shows the way,
Where growth and nature can both stay.



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Awareness grows in every heart,
Tourists, locals play their part.
Choose eco-stays, protect the wild,
Walk softly, like a mindful child.

Governments lead with plans and laws,
But shared responsibility draws
Communities, businesses, and guests,
To protect what we love best.

Sustainable tourism lights the way,
For futures bright as a new day
Where profits meet the earth's embrace,
And culture finds its rightful place.

The Philippines' true wealth, its voice,
Lies in its people, our shared choice.
Together, hand in hand we stand,
Guardians of this precious land.



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Sustaining the Soul of Philippine Tourism: Balancing Growth, Community, and Conservation

Philippine tourism plays a crucial role in driving the country's economy, with its pristine islands and vibrant culture drawing millions of visitors each year. As tourism continues to flourish, the call for responsible, sustainable practices grows louder. Sustainable tourism is not just about environmental conservation; it encompasses the welfare of local communities, the preservation of culture, and the creation of economic opportunities, while ensuring a healthy environment for future generations.

The Philippines is blessed with a wealth of natural wonders, from the enchanting islands of Palawan to the breathtaking Banaue Rice Terraces. These treasures, however, are increasingly at risk. Over-tourism has wreaked havoc on the environment, with habitats destroyed, pollution escalating, and delicate ecosystems suffering. Boracay Island serves as a stark example of why sustainable tourism is essential. In 2018, the government temporarily closed Boracay for six months to rehabilitate the island, which had been deemed a "cesspool" due to waste mismanagement and overdevelopment. During the closure, efforts focused on restoring the island's environmental health by enforcing regulations on waste management, water quality, and visitor capacity. While there were short-term economic consequences, it was clear that preserving the island's iconic beauty required urgent action.

Sustainable tourism is not only about minimizing environmental damage; it's about empowering local communities and ensuring that the economic benefits of tourism stay within them. Tourism has long been a key driver of economic growth in the Philippines, creating jobs and boosting local culture. However, for tourism to continue benefiting communities in the long term, it must be inclusive. Supporting local businesses, respecting indigenous cultures, and ensuring that tourism dollars remain in the community are essential practices. In Siargao, for example, ecotourism and community-based tourism have allowed local entrepreneurs to thrive while maintaining a balance between growth and environmental preservation.



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Education and awareness play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable tourism. Tourists and locals alike must understand the impact of their actions on the environment. Tourists should be encouraged to make responsible choices, such as selecting eco-friendly accommodations and participating in conservation efforts. At the same time, local businesses and governments must adopt sustainable practices, from reducing plastic pollution to investing in renewable energy.

The Philippine government has already taken steps to promote sustainable tourism, with initiatives like the Department of Tourism's National Ecotourism Strategy. However, the responsibility does not lie solely with the government. It requires the collective effort of communities, businesses, and tourists to preserve the country's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Sustainable tourism offers a path to a future where tourism remains profitable, supports local economies, and conserves the environment for generations to come. It is crucial to remember that the true wealth of the Philippines lies not only in its tourist destinations but in its people and the natural resources we are entrusted to protect. By working together, we can ensure that tourism continues to thrive while safeguarding the Philippines' beauty for future generations.



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School Administrator's Role in Shaping Educational Outcomes

A good principal is essential to the academic success of students, as they guide and enable staff to contribute effectively to the school system and create a healthy, high-functioning school culture. As leaders, principals are responsible for more than just running the school; they are visionaries, relationship builders, and culture setters. A school principal's influence extends beyond academic performance, impacting both the socialization of students and the job satisfaction of teachers, which ultimately affects the school's overall success.

One of the key responsibilities of a principal is communication, which is often underestimated. Open and honest communication fosters a learning environment built on trust, respect, and cooperation. As a principal, I emphasize the importance of effective communication with all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and staff. Regular interactions with teachers, whether through scheduled meetings or informal one-on-one check-ins, provide valuable insights into their needs, challenges, and achievements. This approach helps teachers feel supported, appreciated, and motivated, ultimately enhancing their teaching effectiveness. Communication ensures that we are on the same page, allowing us to exchange information and create an environment where everyone feels heard and respected.

Decision-making is another critical aspect of school leadership. School administrators must make thoughtful decisions daily, whether related to curriculum, discipline, or staffing, always keeping students' long-term educational goals in mind. Involving teachers and staff in decision-making leads to stronger, more informed choices. For instance, when we were developing a new instructional approach or evaluating a program, I sought input from teachers working directly with students. Their insights not only improved my understanding but also made them feel valued and invested in the school's success. When teachers are involved in decision-making, it fosters a sense of ownership and accountability for the school's outcomes.

Building a strong team is also crucial for effective school administration. A school is only as strong as its team, and it is essential for all members, staff, administrators, and teachers to work together toward a common goal. Team-building activities, personal development opportunities, and collaborative projects help create a positive school culture where everyone



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supports and encourages one another. Collaboration enables teachers and staff to share resources, exchange ideas, and learn from one another, resulting in a more creative and innovative environment. This collective approach ensures that best practices are shared and implemented across the school.

In conclusion, school administrators' primary focus is on shaping educational outcomes by utilizing tools such as effective communication, informed decision-making, and consensus-building. By promoting open dialogue, involving teachers in decision-making processes, and fostering a transparent and supportive team culture, principals can lay the foundation for a school environment that empowers educators. Empowered educators, in turn, enable students. When principals focus on these critical areas of leadership, they can enhance academic achievement and foster a healthy, thriving school environment where every student thrives.



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Guiding Excellence: How Supervision and Administration Shape Elementary School Success

In any elementary school, the bedrock of success is deeply rooted in the strength of its supervision and administration. These two critical elements are not isolated endeavors; instead, they work hand in hand to skillfully guide both faculty and students toward achieving academic excellence and fostering personal growth. Strong leadership, grounded in adequate supervision and sound administration, creates a positive environment that nurtures learning, supports holistic development, and encourages meaningful community engagement.

Adequate school supervision begins with the essential capacity to equip teachers with the necessary support and tools required to fulfill their classroom responsibilities successfully. Teachers are undeniably the heart and soul of any school, and classroom educators need far more than just curriculum guides; they require clear expectations, ongoing support, and constructive feedback to improve their teaching practices continually. This vital function of school supervision, supported by constructive feedback, team building activities, and ongoing professional development opportunities, is primarily carried out by school administrators, particularly the principal or other instructional leaders. Through consistent classroom observations and specialized coaching, supervisors also have the critical responsibility of ensuring that teachers feel confident, inspired, and prepared to serve the unique and diverse needs of their students.

Beyond the classroom walls, administration plays an equally crucial role in the overall success of the school, parallel in importance to the teachers' contributions. The successful administrator or principal is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations, efficiently stewarding resources, and creating a safe, positive, and inclusive environment where all staff members and students can work and learn effectively. They formulate and enforce policies that establish standards for behavior, clarify the curriculum's goals, and define teaching methodologies, thereby creating a context within which everyone understands what is expected. Administrators also ensure that the school functions smoothly and effectively, making necessary adjustments and troubleshooting challenges specific to their school community.



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An essential aspect of successful elementary school leadership extends well beyond the school's physical boundaries, including the schoolyard and the local community, by promoting a positive school culture through constructive interactions with students, staff, and the broader community. A truly successful elementary school features administrators who actively cultivate strong and cooperative relationships with parents, local organizations, and various other stakeholders. Open, transparent, and consistent communication between the school and the wider community fosters mutual trust and lays the foundation for the school's positive reputation. Principals who regularly interact with parents are more acutely aware of their children's needs and achievements. This connection fosters a shared sense of responsibility and pride in the school.

In summary, supervision and management form the essential foundation upon which any successful elementary school rests. Together, they cultivate a culture in which faculty members feel supported and nurtured, students receive attentive care and encouragement, and the entire school community collaborates as a unified entity in pursuit of shared educational goals and positive outcomes.



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Climb to Mt. Matunog

Rain turned the trail to mud,
my pack was heavy,
my steps are uncertain.

I slipped,
fell,

rose again.

The mountain tested me,
but I kept moving
and at the summit

I found the lesson:

You only see the beauty
if you endure the climb.



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The Light of Friendship

There was a season when my soul grew quiet,
and hope was as fragile as glass in my hands.

I had set my dreams adrift,
thinking they would never find the shore again.

And yet, you stood there.

No summons, no fanfare, just you,
a steady flame the night could not swallow.

When I could no longer pray for myself,
you prayed for me in secret.

When my voice faltered,
you spoke faith back into my bones,
You saw a small ember where I saw only ash,
and you breathed on it until it glowed.

You reminded me that strength doesn't vanish.
Sometimes, it only hides, waiting to be called.

Your friendship was never for show.
It bore the weight of storms without complaint.

No stage lights, no applause,
only the quiet truth of someone who stays.

Alhamdulillah for friends so rare,
whose loyalty speaks more loudly than words,
and whose kindness leaves a trail
that points the heart back to Him.



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Baho sa Asawa

Kung mangaon mi sa karenderya,
Kung unsa'y ako, mao pud daw iya.
Apan sa dihang mag-order ko'g ginata-ang nangka,
Masuko! "Nganong nangka man imong gikuha?"

Kung mag-order pud ta'g atoa,
Salad lang daw iya, diet man daw siya.
Apan sa dihang manglingkod nami'ng duha,
Mangilog! "Baylo ra gud ta. Naay salad o, kaona."

Kung mag-det-det pud mi'ng duha,
Sahay, 'di masabot, mura'g gidugo, perting agasa.
Kung pangutan-on bitaw nimo'g naunsa,
Mutubag! "OK ra."

Maong nag relax rapud ka, kabalaka, wa na tagda,
Kay OK radaw lage siya, wala'y problema.
Apan mag-bundak-bundak, haskang alingog-ngoga,
Maninghag! "Wa gyud ka kabalo? Naunsa naman ka?"

Wala bitaw gyud ko kabalo, ing-ani gyud ning mga asawa?
Everything man daw ko niya, pero nganong in-ana siya sa akoo?
Maygani buotan ta, dili ikabaylo sa bisan unsa.
Basta lagi! Unya lang ka, pun-on ta gyud ka's akong gugma.



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The Language of Work: Mathematics in Every Job

In every task that shapes our day,
Math quietly lights the hidden way.
From morning's first gentle ray,
Until the sun slips far away.

Builders rising tall and strong,
Count each beam to keep things long.
Angles, lengths, and spaces are true,
Math helps keep their dreams in view.

In crowded kitchens, chefs take their stand,
Measuring ingredients with a steady hand.
Fractions unite, and weights are precise,
Creating dishes that taste so nice.

In hospitals where hope is bright,
Math guides hands day and night.
Dosages, charts, and the vital signs,
Numbers guard these precious lives.

Farmers watch the changing skies,
Calculating as time flies.
Soil, seeds, and market trends,
The math is on their side to the bitter end.

Designers sketch with dreams and flair,
Shapes and lines float in midair.
Colors blend with thoughtful grace,
Math brings beauty into place.

Bankers counting coins and gold,
Predicting stories yet untold.
Interest, risk, with steady beats,
Math watches all our sheets.



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Pilots fly where clouds roam free,
Math takes them across the sky's great sea.
Speed and time, and distance chart,
Numbers keep it safe from the start.

At desks where data flows around,
Math quietly holds its ground.
Spreadsheets, codes, and stats that grow,
Unlock the secrets we all want to know.

Artists paint with a steady hand,
Math figures in their plan.
Symmetry, perspective's line,
Math helps make their work divine.

No matter what your trade might be,
Math is everywhere, invisible but crucial
Slicing through doubt and fear,
Making every step clearer.

It trains us to think and grow,
Solving puzzles as we go.
Opening doors, lighting ways,
Math powers all our busy days.

So here's to numbers, proud and true,
Our lowly friend in all we do.
With every job, big and small,
Math is the heartbeat, the core of all.



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Equations of Inspiration

In the quiet realm where numbers reside,
Exist a magic, a whisper, a truth to confide,
Equations, silent symphonies in form and space,
Hold secrets of the universe, a timeless grace.

They are more than symbols on a chart or page,
They are the language of wonder, the voice of the sage,
A dance of logic and dreams intertwined,
A bridge connecting the heart and mind.

Consider the humble yet profound $(1 + 1 = 2)$,
A simple truth that sparks a universe anew,
From unity, new worlds can unfold,
In the smallest sums, great stories are told.

Look at the straight line, $(y = mx + b)$,
A path of potential, where hopes can be free,
A metaphor for life's endless journey,
Where every step shapes destiny's story.

The irrational beauty of $(\sqrt{2})$,
Reminds us that not all truths are plain to see,
Some mysteries defy neat resolution,
Encouraging curiosity, fostering evolution.

Quadratic equations, with their roots and turns,
Show that even in chaos, a lesson burns,
That complexity can lead to clarity,
That perseverance nurtures ingenuity.
Infinite series stretch beyond the horizon,
Endless sequences where dreams are risin',
They teach patience, persistence, and trust,
That growth often begins in the endless dust.



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Calculus whispers of change and flow,
The dance of derivatives, the currents that go,
From moments fleeting to eternity,
In every change, find possibility.

Integrals, the sum of parts combined,
Reveal the whole, the interconnected mind,
That in unity, strength is born,
And from fragments, new worlds are drawn.

Equations of inspiration are not mere lines,
They are the heartbeat of creative minds,
A language of hope, a call to explore,
Opening doors to worlds and more.

They teach us that questions, though daunting and vast,
Are the keys to the future, the shadows cast,
That every problem holds a spark, a flame,
A chance to learn, to grow, to claim.

In their balance, in their harmony,
Lies a power to shape destiny,
A reminder that within every challenge,
Lies an opportunity to break the silence.

Mathematics is more than just a subject or tool,
It's the poetry of the cosmos, the mind's jewel,
A language of hope, of discovery, of grace,
Inviting us all to find our place.

So let us cherish these equations of light,
Guiding us through the darkest night,
For in their elegance, their truth, their art,
Lives the inspiration to ignite the heart.

In the dance of symbols, in their silent song,
We find the courage to belong,
To dream beyond what's plain to see,
The equations of inspiration set us free.



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The Real Tea On Hospitality

It is nice to work in hotels,
Almost like living in one,
Where faces from all nations pass,
And luxury greets the sun.

Prestigious chains, a shining name,
A glamour hard to miss,
Yet behind the glow and polished halls,
Lie trials deep as this.

The hours are so long,
Especially on holidays near,
Peak seasons press with heavy weight,
The pressure is always clear.

A single rest day, sometimes two,
But most will only gain one,
The pay depends on where you stand,
Big chains or budget-run.

Feet grow sore from endless work,
Standing all day through,
And if the team is far from kind,
The burden doubles, too.

But the hardest challenge of them all,
It is not the work alone,
It's guests who are treated with little care,
As if hearts were made of stone.



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Entitled voices, sharp demands,
Tantrums when denied,
Forgetting that staff are human too,
With dignity and pride.

Yet many still endure it all,
For salary or need,
While others leave to find a path
Where hearts and souls are freed.



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Chemical Engineers: Guardians of the Hidden Truth

In quiet labs where queries ignite,
Where crime and enigma dance in the night.
Keep your ears to the ground for the subtle signs,
Chemical engineers are the unsung heroes of the grind.

Not tied to roots or assembly line,
They follow the whispers in the fog and brine.
A broken mirror, a toxic sigh,
They flipped the pages of fate, oh my!

Among the peaks that rise like bread in the oven,
They catch the whispers of blood and soil, a tale woven.
A lone drop, a whisper of white,
Turns into the crux of justice's plight.

In the ash of fires, in blackened steel,
They ponder: what happened? What was real?
On combustion's journey, the fuel's final glow,
They follow each element, letting their names flow.

A toxin's path, a gas let loose,
The secrets of a crime are deduced.
With every atom playing its part,
They stitch together the whole heart.

They whip up the models, put them to the test,
With logic sharp and methods that are simply the best.
In the shadows, their labor's complete,
But justice gleams where the light and dark meet.

In the hush of their craft,
They take center stage, bold and daft.
Transforming uncertainty into rock-steady fact,
Guardians of authenticity, that's a matter of fact.



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Pag-ibig na Inukit

(Tula Alay Para Kay Tiyo Dongay)

Naalala ko noong una
Nang ako ay bata pa
Bukambibig ka ng aking ama
Bida ka palagi sa kanyang istorya

Panganay ka sa mga anak ni Pedro
Ang tawag sa iyo ay 'Mano'
Akala ko tuloy yan ang pangalan mo
Kaya tawag ko sa iyo ay 'Tiyo Mano'

Dahil wla pa akong alam, dala ng aking kamusmusan
Ang ginawa ng aking ama ay agad akong tinuruan
"Ang itawag mo sa kanya ay Tiyo Dongay"
Tiningnan kita at kumislap ang iyong matang mapupungay

Magkamukha kayo ng aking ama
Para kayong pinagbiyak na bunga
Parehong matatalino at may prinsipyo
Yan ang sikreto ng mga gwapo

Nang pumanaw ang aking ama
Nagpasalamat ako dahil dumating ka
Dala mo ang buong angkan
Naibsan ang aking kalungkutan

Sa tuwing namimiss ko ang aking ama
Naiisip ko na andyan ka
Masilayan lang ang iyong mukha
Dulot nito ay hanggang langit na ligaya

Totoong mahiwaga ang buhay ng tao
Dahil ang bukas ay di natin piho
Kaya dapat manalig lagi tayong
Tanging ang diyos siyang pag asa ng mundo

Masakit mang isipin
Pilit naming tanggapin
Sa pagtawag sa iyo ng Poong Maykapal
Pabaon nami'y pagmamahal



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Building a Sustainable Business: Entrepreneurship Education

Over the past decade, entrepreneurship has shifted from a focus solely on maximizing market profits to embracing a balance of economic, environmental, and social goals. Sustainable entrepreneurship requires businesses to innovate while maintaining responsible practices that ensure long-term success. This shift is particularly significant in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, where sustainability influences both the resilience of destinations and the quality of services provided.

Entrepreneurship education is crucial for preparing future leaders to establish businesses that generate economic value while minimizing environmental and social harm. Sustainability-oriented education equips students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for sustainable business planning, risk management, and ethical decision-making. Ivanov (2019) emphasizes the importance of incorporating sustainability into tourism curricula, enabling students to develop business plans that balance profitability with ecological and social benefits.

Experiential learning techniques, such as business simulations, case studies, and hands-on projects, play a crucial role in helping students apply sustainable principles in real-world scenarios. These methods foster problem-solving skills necessary to address challenges in sustainable business models. For example, students may develop eco-friendly tourism offerings or sustainable resource management strategies for the hospitality industry, illustrating that innovation can align with, rather than oppose, environmental considerations.

Entrepreneurship education also supports sustainability by encouraging intrapreneurship—initiatives within organizations that lead to sustainable innovations. Studies from Dubai demonstrate how such efforts lead to improved energy use, reduced waste, and enhanced branding benefits, ultimately increasing company loyalty. This combination of entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship enhances sustainability efforts and enables businesses to thrive in competitive markets (Kollinger et al., 2023).

As consumer demand for responsible tourism and sustainable products rises, businesses that adopt green practices gain a competitive advantage. Sustainability-focused entrepreneurship education addresses this trend by emphasizing waste



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reduction, ethical sourcing, and community engagement, all of which are increasingly important to both consumers and environmental regulations (Parmentola & Tatore, 2023). Initiatives like the Global Sustainable Tourism Council's training programs also help practitioners integrate sustainability into their practices, providing globally recognized tools for sustainable entrepreneurship.

Moreover, this educational approach fosters social inclusivity and community engagement, particularly in marginalized communities. Research on women entrepreneurs in rural tourism reveals that training in digital marketing and financial management fosters economic resilience and a positive social impact. These efforts highlight the interconnected roles of entrepreneurship, sustainability, and social responsibility in shaping future business leaders.

In conclusion, sustainable entrepreneurship education is key to developing leaders who can create innovative businesses that benefit the environment, economy, and society. By integrating sustainability principles into their curricula, universities can help shape the next generation of responsible entrepreneurs.

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The Pulse of Consumer Dreams

It's a whisper amidst the din, where the wide streets hum,
At the crossroads where hope and dreams gently become,
Beats the pulse in longing hearts,
For what's ahead, for the change to start.

A ray of hope in each hurried glance,
A whispered wish in every chance,
For something new, something bright,
A dream that dances, just out of sight.

In the market's heart, the rhythm flows,
A steady beat, as the pulse grows.
From bustling corners to quiet lanes,
The ache of need, the pull of chains.

It's in the touch of a velvet shoe,
The scent of a fragrance, fresh and true,
The lure of tech, which calls for more,
A glimpse of tomorrow, an open door.

But beyond the gleam, beyond the show,
Lies the truth for those who yearn to grow.
For it's not just things they long to hold,
But stories and memories, rich and bold.

Pulsing through the things they seek,
In every choice, in each word they speak.
Click by click, glance by glance, need by need they share,
A rhythm, a hum, filling the air.

For in the dance of consumer dreams,
Where every wish and yearning beams,
It's not the things that feed the soul,
But the promise of wholeness that makes them whole.



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So listen close, for its moving fast,
The pulse of tomorrow, of hope, of care.
A land of fancy, pleasure bright,
Led by the pulse, by the future's light.



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MSU: A Home Beyond Education

"Mindanao State University is not only where I earned my degrees, but it is also where I found my purpose, raised my family, and lived my life. MSU is, and will always be, my home beyond education."

When asked where I come from, I proudly say, *Mindanao State University*. For many, MSU is a premier institution of learning. For me, it is more than that; it is a sanctuary, a cradle of dreams, and the lamp that has guided me since childhood. It is not just a university, it is my home.

Childhood Memories in MSU

The walls of MSU shaped my earliest memories. Unlike most children, I did not just study in school; I lived inside one. My playground was its open grounds, where I ran, played, and absorbed the hum of campus life. It was within this nurturing environment that I first learned to read, to write, and to dream. My elementary and high school years were spent here, not only learning academics but also absorbing the values that MSU instills in all its children: resilience, discipline, and the quiet strength of belonging.

Student Years: A Lifelong Learner

As I grew older, MSU continued to open doors. I pursued a Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED), drawn to teaching as if it were destiny. The journey was not easy. Long nights and overwhelming challenges tested me, but each prepared me for something greater. I later completed my MA in Education and, with perseverance, earned my Ph.D. in Educational Management. During my dissertation defense, nerves almost overtook me, but I reminded myself that MSU raised me. Every teacher, every lesson, and every challenge led me to that moment. When I finally heard *"Congratulations, Doctor,"* I felt not only personal triumph but the presence of my university celebrating with me.

Returning as a Teacher

Life is a circle. And for me, the circle came full when I returned to my alma mater not as a student, but as a teacher. For 28 years, I have served at the MSU-Integrated Laboratory School (MSU-ILS), the same place where I finished my elementary and high school studies. My first day as a teacher was surreal, walking familiar halls with lesson plans instead of notebooks and sitting beside my former



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teachers as a colleague. In time, another circle completed itself when some of my own students returned as fellow educators. To teach alongside them is a joy beyond measure, a reminder that teaching plants seeds that bear fruit long after the lesson ends.

A Family's Legacy

MSU is not only my story, but it is also my family's story. My siblings earned their diplomas here, each of them carrying the pride of being MSUans. That legacy continued with my children.

One of the proudest moments of my life came in February 2024, when my eldest son marched across the stage to receive his degree in Accountancy. As I watched him in his toga, my heart swelled with gratitude. It was not only his victory, it was ours, as a family, and as part of the larger MSU community. The rest of my children continue their studies at MSU, keeping alive the bond that ties us to this university.

For us, MSU is not just a school. It is the foundation of our lives, the place where our stories begin, continue, and find meaning.

A Home Beyond Education

What makes MSU extraordinary is its heartbeat as both an academic institution and a residential community. It is not just a place of lectures and laboratories, but a place where people live, grow, and thrive together. Within its grounds, cultures meet, friendships flourish, and dreams take root.

As I look back on the decades I have spent at MSU, as a child, a student, a teacher, and a parent, gratitude wells up in me like a song. I am grateful for the challenges that sharpened me, the triumphs that strengthened me, and the community that embraced me as one of its own.

Indeed, Mindanao State University is a home beyond education. It is the soil where I was planted, the lamp that guided me through each season, and the embrace that welcomed both my beginnings and my triumphs. Wherever life may take me, I will always carry with pride the name of MSU, my alma mater, my workplace, my heritage, my home.



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Adapting School Leadership Styles to Address the Diverse Needs of Students and Teachers

In today's education system, schools are increasingly diverse, bringing together students and teachers from a wide range of cultural, socioeconomic, and personal backgrounds. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities, requiring school leaders to adjust their leadership styles to meet the unique needs of their school communities. This essay argues that adaptive leadership, which emphasizes inclusivity, transformational strategies, and participative decision-making, is crucial for creating equitable learning environments while enhancing teacher satisfaction and student success.

One of the key leadership styles that supports diversity in schools is inclusive leadership. Inclusive leaders prioritize equity and ensure that everyone, regardless of background, feels respected and valued. By actively promoting a culture of inclusion and making space for diverse voices in decision-making, these leaders create a sense of belonging for both teachers and students. Research has shown that schools led by inclusive leaders see higher levels of teacher satisfaction, motivation, and retention. Through open communication and fair participation, inclusive leaders help prevent feelings of marginalization and foster a school culture where differences are viewed as strengths, not obstacles.

Another leadership approach that effectively addresses diverse needs is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate teachers by creating a shared vision of academic excellence and personal growth for all students. These leaders encourage creativity, professional development, and continuous learning, tailoring their support to address the varied learning styles and challenges of students. By intellectually stimulating staff and offering personalized support, transformational leaders inspire teachers to adopt inclusive teaching methods that cater to the social and emotional needs of students. This style has been linked to improved teaching quality and enhanced student outcomes, particularly in schools with diverse student populations.

A participative leadership style also plays a vital role in responding to diversity. School leaders who engage teachers, students, and parents in decision-making create a collaborative environment that reflects the community's values and



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needs. This involvement helps build trust and mutual respect, allowing schools to address culturally specific issues and barriers to learning. Additionally, participative leadership encourages grassroots innovation, where the diverse perspectives of staff and students help shape policies and practices. The resulting solutions are more culturally relevant and better suited to the school's unique demographic.

To manage diversity effectively, school leadership must go beyond adapting styles. It requires cultural competence, emotional intelligence, and a deep commitment to equity. Leaders must be aware of their own biases and actively work to create policies and practices that dismantle systemic barriers. This includes offering professional development on cultural awareness, anti-bias education, and differentiated instruction. Furthermore, adaptive leaders must ensure that resources are distributed equitably, so that all students, especially those from marginalized groups, have access to the support, technology, and learning opportunities they need to succeed.

Leadership styles must also take into account the diverse needs of teachers. Inclusive and transformational leaders understand that teacher satisfaction is closely linked to how well leaders accommodate diverse teaching styles, cultural backgrounds, and professional needs. By fostering supportive environments through mentorship, collaboration, and recognizing individual contributions, leaders can reduce burnout and improve teacher retention.

In conclusion, adapting leadership styles to meet the diverse needs of students and teachers is essential for creating an equitable and effective educational environment. Inclusive, transformational, and participative leadership approaches work together to promote a culture of respect, collaboration, and continuous growth. Through culturally competent leadership that values diversity, schools can enhance the academic and social experiences of both students and teachers, leading to success in today's increasingly pluralistic society. This adaptive leadership model is not just preferable but necessary in today's complex educational landscape.



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Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Performance and Student Success in High School

Teaching quality is a primary factor for student achievement, and addressing it requires deliberate strategies that impact the quality of teaching, motivation, and school climate. With diverse students' needs and rigorous academic demands in schools, it is necessary to develop strategies that enhance teacher professional growth in schools and establish environments for maximizing students' academic achievement.

Creating a common instructional framework is a critical approach to enhancing the performance of teachers. This framework, based on the work of Robert Marzano or the district's appraisal systems, establishes a common language and clarifies what constitutes excellent teaching. When educators remain receptive to learning squads and reflection based upon these models, growth becomes continual, rather than episodic. Routine school leader visits and walk-throughs allow for timely, specific, and constructive feedback geared towards a teacher's strengths and areas needing improvement. This ongoing process of observation and feedback enhances teachers' confidence and sharpens their instructional skills.

Professional development is the key to preparing teachers with the latest and most effective instructional practices. Professional development in differentiated instruction, culturally responsive pedagogy, and creative practices enables teachers to cater to diverse student populations. Effective teachers are said to have strong mastery of the subject, be clear in teaching, and have the capacity to adapt the content to different learning styles. Promoting creativity and flexibility by the teachers improves student motivation and facilitates differentiated learning forms, which is crucial for mixed high school classes.

Healthy professional cultures are a significant factor in motivating and retaining teachers. Job satisfaction and burnout are countered by strategies that build a favorable school climate (including mentoring, common planning time, and recognition of teacher accomplishments). When educators are well-appreciated and supported, they will exert more effort in improving student performance. Leadership that supports collaboration and shared accountability fosters a shared vision and commitment to excellence.



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Teacher's ability and attitude with learner towards engagement and motivation give a direct input to the success of the learner. Active learning, goal setting, and prompt formative feedback as strategies do drive deeper learning and academic performance. When a tutor, guidance counselor, or teacher takes time from their day to aid a student in understanding a concept or a complicated lesson, the student makes progress. Strong communication and collaboration between schools and families also enable the monitoring of progress and facilitate collaborative problem-solving to address challenges.

School administrators also need to provide equitable access to resources, enabling all teachers to utilize the tools and technology necessary for effective teaching and learning. Eliminating resource imbalances and focusing on the unique needs of students further reinforces overall school performance.

In conclusion, improving the quality of high school teaching and learning depends on clear and coherent instructional guidelines with frequent individualized feedback; support for teachers to develop skills that meet the needs of diverse learners; positive school cultures that attract and retain quality teachers; active engagement and encouraged participation of students; and resource allocation that provides equity to high-need schools. Ultimately, strategic leadership that prioritizes these areas fosters an environment where hardworking teachers can grow professionally and students can reach their full potential both personally and academically.



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Mga Alaala Sa Aming Munting Tahanan

Sa pagsibol ng panahon,
Sa aming munting tahanan,
Binuo ng aming ama,
Samahan naming di malimot.

Parang kailan lang,
Sa loob at labas nito'y,
Laging nakaantabay,
Aming ilaw ng tahanan.

Mga munting bituin,
Saloobing kumikislap.
Sa mga sandaling,
Yakap nyo'y nariyan.

Mga patak ng pagsubok,
Inyong itinuro sa'min,
Na laging magpakatatag,
At manalig sa Maykapal.

Dumaan ang panibugho,
Winasak ang lungsod,
Sa ngayong sapalaran,
Aral nyo'y pinagyaan.



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The Canvas of Dreams: A Junket Through Education

In a world where ingenuity knows no limitations, education is the brush that colors the canvas of our dreams, vision, and ambition. Every stroke of wisdom, every hue of experience, and every texture of trial hones the masterpiece of our lives.

As we embark on this aesthetic junket, we're introduced to a range of colors, each of which corresponds to a course, subject, skill, or value. The vibrant crimson of Mathematics, the pacifying teal of literature, and the beaming yellow of science all blend to create a kaleidoscope of understanding and apprehension.

Yet education is not just about engrossing and accumulating information; it's about unmasking our own peculiar voice. Like a painter experimenting with a variety of strategies and techniques, we always make an effort, even though we fail most of the time, it doesn't hinder us from keeping moving and trying again. Turning failures into stepping stones to be courageous, stand firm, and learn again. With each brushstroke, we refine our artistry, and eventually, our masterpiece begins to take shape and acquire its own unique and incomparable form. When the junket is complete, our canvas becomes a magnificent masterpiece of our human life. It's a contemplation and collection of our desires, passions, values, and experiences. We've created something truly unique, a work of art that is handcrafted to perfection, designed to inspire and uplift individuals.

As we move forward and take a closer look at our masterpiece, we recognize that education has bestowed us more than just knowledge; it has granted us the tools to create and innovate, the wisdom to be decisive and significant, and a heart to be fair and square, for us to leave a long-lasting legacy. Little by little, we've become the artists of our own lives, and the canvas of our hopes and dreams is now a reality.

As we continue to splash the final palette of colors, our canvas transforms into a veranda of maturation. We showcase our achievements, setbacks, triumphs, and even our trials. Each portion represents an extraordinary yet fascinating story of perseverance, creativity, and resilience. We learn to accept and give value to the beauty of imperfections and the significance of constructive criticism. Once the journey is complete, our canvas becomes a masterpiece of our beautiful existence in this world.



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The plain and ordinary canvas has now transformed into a colorful, brilliant, and illuminating masterpiece, much like a simple dream that has become a reality. A reality that once was just an imagination and ambition is now a marvelous, wonderful, beautiful, and matchless creation of our own.

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Wisdom Home: Edifying Minds, Shaping Hearts, Changing Lives

The sun was starting to flash its bright smile, slowly lighting up as the world began to awake. I woke up and started doing some stretching as I heard the trees swaying in the wind. I ate my heavy breakfast and then began to walk to school.

As I walked around the school, I greeted every staff member and teacher I saw. Eventually, I reached the classroom and then put down my ponderous bag on my old chocolate-brown chair. The atmosphere was quiet and peaceful; it was only 6:30 in the morning, which was the primary reason why we were only three students present in the classroom. Soon, many students began entering the classroom, which made the ambiance more lively and bubbly. As more students entered the schoolroom, it started to be obnoxiously blasting. However, as soon as we heard a familiar footstep, in just a glimpse, all the standing and running around of the students turned to sitting down. The students who were yelling taped their mouths shut; it was all because our teacher had entered the room.

We all grabbed our books and began flipping through the pages that our teacher asked us to read. He was not a terror teacher, yet you would not want to get on his terrible side. One time, when we were not paying attention to the lesson, he stopped discussing. Then told us to get one whole sheet of paper. "Number your papers, from 1-100," he spoke in such an unruffled mode that it gave the chills to our spine. The teacher, who we thought was nice enough to joke around with us, suddenly became one of the teachers we were frightened of. None of us was able to answer that test. Afterward, he asked us why we could not answer the test. He gathered our papers and then spoke, "If you actually paid attention to the discussion instead of chattering with your seatmate, you would have passed this test."

We all sighed in assurance when he did not record the test, for we all apologized right after. The section known to be the wildest of all was finally tamed. Right after that, ironically, the wildest section was known to be the most disciplined section. Despite all that, we loved our teacher. Though he was strict, we actually learned things beyond academics because of him. Our whole perspective of the academy changed. We all once thought that school was just a place to study different academic tracks, but we were mistaken. It was not just a place to study; it was a place where we learn a variety of crucial and decisive things that will be subservient to our future.



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School is not only there to teach us to count in Mathematics, to explore Sciences, and to speak up our minds in English and other curricular activities; it is there to make us enjoy discovering diversity, help us develop our talents, follow our dreams and visions, and most importantly, school teaches us to be well-mannered and refined human beings.

School is more than a home; it is where we are all nurtured to be individuals who will someday be a catalyst for change in this failing society; it is where our minds were enlightened and edified, where our hearts were being shaped, and where our lives were changed to be a testimony and inspiration to everyone. A class home where our talents, knowledge, and wisdom were cultivated for us to be good citizens of our country.



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Sudoku

Nagmula nang ikaw ay makilala,
Nasa isip na kita sa tuwi-tuwina.
Ipikit ko man ang aking mga mata,
Larawan mo ang nakikita.

Naiisip kita araw at gabi,
Sa totoo lang, sa bawat sandal.
Hindi ka na nawala sa aking isipan,
Magmula ng ikaw ay maispatan.

Ituring man itong kasalanan,
Humihingi ako ng kapatawaran.
Sadyang kay hirap lang pigilan,
Itong sarili kong nagmahal nanaman.

Kapag kapiling ka, O anong ligaya,
Nararamdaman ang nakakabaliw na saya.
Kahit wala kang ginagawa o sinasabi,
Nagdudulot ka ng ngiti sa aking mga labi.

Kahit ano pa man ang sabihin ng mga tao,
Sabihin man nila na ako ay sira ulo.
Kasalanan ba ang magmahal,
Yan ang tanong ng isang hangal.

Ibang klase ang ating pagkakaunawan,
Sabihin man nilang ito'y kahibangan,
Ang masasabi ko lang,
"Wala kayong karapatan
Na ako ay paghusgahan".



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Langgao Elementary: A School of Dreams

At Langgao Elementary, I am working here,
A place where dreams unfold, and futures appear.
A school where I learn a lot, where growth is key,
Where every day is new, and possibilities are free.

With valuable colleagues by my side,
We work together, our hearts full of pride.
Sharing ideas, supporting each other's way,
Together we shape young minds, day by day.

Memorable experiences fill every year,
Moments of joy, laughter, and sometimes tears.
But through it all, we strive to make a change,
To help our students grow and reach their range.

The thoughtful parents, a treasure to behold,
Their love and support are a story to be told.
They partner with us, hand in hand,
To nurture and guide, our young learners stand.

Under our visionary principal's lead,
Langgao Elementary is a home of dreams indeed.
A place where young learners' aspirations take flight,
Where education and love shine with all their might.



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At the Edge of 2025

The year is twenty-twenty-five,
and everywhere the circuits thrive.
The city hums with silent cars,
their glowing eyes outshining stars.

We speak, and walls obey the sound,
lights awaken, doors unbound.
Our voices travel, swift and small,
yet echo loudly, reaching all.

A wrist can measure every beat,
and a watch reminds you when to repeat.
Hospitals lean on coded care,
machines that diagnose and repair.

The classroom, too, has found new wings.
Chalk erased by brighter things.
A teacher's face in pixels is shown,
yet students learn beyond their own.

The farmer lifts his eyes to the skies,
where drones map fields with measured eyes.
Each seed is tracked, each crop aligned,
a harvest shaped by coded mind.

And yet beneath this polished gleam,
lie cracks within the modern dream.
A frozen screen, a broken line,
can steal both order and design.

The net that binds both far and near
can spread deceit as much as cheer.
A lie can circle 'round the earth
before the truth can prove its worth.



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The child who learns through screens alone,
may lose the weight of paper known;
the smell of ink, the sound of page,
the quiet lessons are lost with age.

And what of us, when bots can write,
compose a song, or paint with light?
If every art is made by code,
what marks the human, what is owed?

So here we stand, mid-shift, mid-stride,
with tools that dazzle, yet divide.
The future glows with grand design,
but wisdom lags, a step behind.

Technology can build and show,
but not decide which way we'll go.
It cannot guide a heart that errs,
nor weigh the worth of what is fair.

In twenty-twenty-five, we see
how far we've come, how bound we'll be.
The question left for us to choose:
Not what we'll gain, but what we'll lose.



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From Bank to the Classroom: A Tale of Passion and Dedication

Life is often described as a journey filled with twists, turns, and unexpected opportunities. Sometimes, the most profound transformations come from daring to step out of familiar comfort zones and embracing new passions. This is the story of such a metamorphosis, a leap from the bustling corridors of banking to the inspiring halls of teaching.

During my tenure at the bank, I was initially assigned to the operations department, where I served as a clearing clerk. In this role, I was responsible for processing and reconciling financial transactions between banks, ensuring that all outgoing and incoming payments were accurately settled. My attention to detail and meticulous approach helped maintain the integrity of the bank's clearing processes, minimizing errors and discrepancies. In addition to my duties as a clearing clerk, when I relieved assignments, I also worked as a teller. This position involved directly assisting customers with their banking needs, including cash withdrawals, deposits, and servicing various account inquiries.

I developed strong customer service skills and maintained a professional and courteous attitude, ensuring clients had a positive experience while safeguarding the bank's cash handling standards. On occasion, I was assigned as a new accounts clerk, where I handled the opening and verification of new customer accounts. This role required thorough documentation review and adherence to compliance regulations to ensure all new accounts were set up correctly and securely. It also involved explaining banking products and services to new clients, helping them make informed decisions about their financial needs.

At times, I was assigned to a loan function. In this capacity, I managed the processing and documentation of loan applications, ensuring all requirements were met and that the approval process adhered to banking policies. I gained valuable insight into credit assessment and the approval cycle, contributing to the bank's core lending operations.

For years, the world of banking stood as a symbol of stability, prestige, and financial acumen. Amidst the clatter of keyboards, the rush of transactions, and the meticulous attention to numbers, I found a sense of purpose rooted in helping clients realize their financial dreams. However, beneath this veneer of success, a more profound longing lingered, one to make a more tangible and lasting impact on society through education.



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The decision to transition from banking to teaching was not made lightly. It involved meticulous introspection and a deep understanding of my core values. I realized that while banking offered material stability, teaching promised a legacy rooted in knowledge, empowerment, and nurturing minds. The desire to shape future generations and contribute to their growth became a guiding star, illuminating my path toward this new vocation.

Embracing my new path meant confronting my fears and equipping myself for a role where influence extends beyond numbers. I enrolled in a teaching certificate program, honed my pedagogical skills, and immersed myself in the philosophy of education. With each lesson I prepared and each classroom I entered, my commitment to fostering critical thinking and creativity among my students deepened. I discovered the art of storytelling, of transforming complex concepts, of tailoring my approach to meet diverse learning needs.

As I stepped into my classroom for the first time, I was struck by the palpable energy vibrating through the air. There were moments of chaos, laughter, and deep engagement, where students questioned, challenged, and inspired both themselves and one another. I learned that education is not merely about imparting knowledge but about nurturing curiosity and instilling discipline and values.

Embarking on this journey required courage, resilience, and dedication. The skills honed in banking, analytical thinking, discipline, and communication proved invaluable in the classroom. Yet, I also faced challenges: acquiring pedagogical knowledge, understanding diverse student needs, and adapting to a different rhythm of life. Each hurdle became a stepping stone, fueling my determination to grow both personally and professionally.

Reflecting on this, I recognize that it embodies a profound transformation defined by purpose and passion. The years I spent in the banking sector were a crucial phase of my life, providing me with the skills and stability necessary for the leap I took into education. Yet, it is in teaching that I found my true calling, a place where I can ignite potential, inspire curiosity, and affect genuine change.

This transition from banking to teaching encapsulates a journey driven by passion and dedication. It instilled in me a belief that career paths are not confined to a single narrative. Instead, they can spiral into new directions. It highlights the importance of following one's true calling despite obstacles and uncertainties. Indeed, it has not only allowed me to pursue a more fulfilling career but also reinforced the value of perseverance and adaptability in life's ever-changing landscape.

Education is not just a profession for me; it is a legacy I aspire to leave. The journey from the corporate world to the classroom has been a testament to the profound truth that life's most meaningful changes often lead us closer to our authentic selves.



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Water or Power: Which Is More Important?

It's hard to conceive of living in the modern world without the use of electricity. The hum of a screen, the buzz of machines, and the flash of city lights are all fixtures that we associate with "modern life." When we set aside the fiery sparks to examine them, another truth is undeniable: electricity powers our civilization, but water sustains our being. One powers our phones, the other our bodies. Between the two, water is clearly more essential. Electricity may add to the good life, but water is life.

Water has long been dubbed the "elixir of life," and for good reason. All life, from bacteria to humans, relies on it. We ourselves are about 60 percent water, and every heartbeat, each breath, everything we do on a cellular level is linked to water. The most crucial word in a sentence, without it, we cannot live even days, sometimes not hours. Beyond our bodies, water sustains agricultural fields of grain, fruit, and the livestock that feed billions. Food production wilts and human life withers in the absence of water. Clean water also serves as a protectant against disease; in its absence, disease outbreaks can ravage swaths of the population at miraculous speed. Put another way, we can't possibly exist without water (Human Necessity Foundation, 2025; WHO & UNICEF, 2025).

In contrast, electricity has a different story. You've read the latest headlines, but is there something more you could be doing to get a leg up on the news? For hundreds of years, humanity got along pretty well without it. Electricity is a modern victory and, since its advent, its discovery has disrupted society. It illuminates our nights, warms our homes, connects us across the globe, and even adds years to the human lifespan through medical technology. Electrical grids are the backbone of industry, of hospitals, of economies. Without the sun, there would be nothing but disorder and suffering, especially in crowded cities. But here's the thing: without electricity, life, particularly in advanced societies, would be inconvenient and infinitely more challenging to navigate, but without water, life wouldn't even exist in the first place.

This is realized in one's life. Living in a small town in the countryside, I personally witnessed both of those shortages. Power outages were common. During that time, we adjusted: We cooked on kerosene stoves, used landlines, and figured out unique strategies for survival. It was hard, but it was doable. But water shortages were another story. When pipes bled dry, it wasn't just an inconvenience; it was a crisis. Drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning all stopped. Survival itself was threatened. But that contrast singed me permanently, too: Life could be laid around electricity. Water could not.



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It's also important to consider the extent to which water and electricity are connected. Power plants rely on water to cool their operations; hydroelectric dams are water in motion. Meanwhile, water in its cleanest, most drinkable form also needs power to come to our homes. Both are intertwined in a network of interconnectedness, and both are indispensable to our contemporary civilization. But when it comes to a balance of survival, water is what electricity and everything else rest on. At last, where electricity embodies our modern era, water is life itself.

Technology can bring convenience, progress, and a lot of ease, but it will never replace one human need that is "water". Without it, no machine would whir, no crops would grow, no lungs would take breath. Power is electricity; survival is water. As we develop our societies of progress, we must remember that our hierarchy of needs still binds us, water is the true lifeblood of the Earth, and the commodity to which all others, even electricity, must bow.

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The Power and Responsibility of Electricity: Lessons from the Classroom and Beyond

As I spent countless hours in front of the TV, completely mesmerized by how, with just the flick of a switch, the world around me would come to life. The lights would turn on, and instantly, the whole room felt brighter, warmer, and more alive. I never gave much thought to how that invisible force, electricity, made all of this possible. It was something I just took for granted, as most kids do. But as I grew older, became an electricity teacher at Biliran Province State University, and really started to study this invisible force, my perspective changed. I began to see electricity as more than just a convenience; it's a powerful force, one that's full of incredible benefits but also comes with some serious challenges.

In my classroom, I often tell my students that electricity is the backbone of modern life. It's what keeps our lights on, powers our phones, and keeps our hospitals running. It connects us, keeps our cities alive, and is the engine behind nearly every part of our day-to-day lives. At the university, I've seen how critical electricity is to learning. Without it, research wouldn't be possible, online classes would be a no-go, and even something as simple as projecting a lesson would be impossible. From the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep, electricity quietly supports everything we do. It's the unseen hand that keeps our world turning smoothly.

But with all of its excellent benefits comes responsibility. I had a real eye-opening experience when the power went out in our area one day. It wasn't just the inconvenience of being in the dark or not being able to check my phone; it was a powerful reminder of how much we depend on electricity. Suddenly, everything came to a halt. Our routines, which we often take for granted, were disrupted entirely. That moment made me realize just how fragile our reliance on electricity is. It's easy to forget that everything we do, every task we complete, is powered by this unseen force. And when it's gone, we are faced with just how vulnerable we are.

As I've taught my students about the environmental impacts of electricity, I've seen growing concern. A lot of our electricity still comes from burning fossil fuels, and this has significant consequences for air pollution, climate change, and harm to our planet. Renewable energy is starting to gain more traction, but the reality is, many of our energy needs are still being met by non-renewable sources like coal and oil. This is one of the darker sides of electricity, one we often overlook as we go about enjoying its benefits. Through conversations with my students, I've realized that we need to rethink how we generate and use electricity if we genuinely want to protect our



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our planet for future generations.

Then, there's the way technology, fueled by electricity, has dramatically changed our lives. It's hard to imagine a world without the internet, social media, or smart devices. While these advancements have connected us in ways we never thought possible, they also come with their own set of challenges. The more we rely on screens, the less we engage with the world around us. I've noticed it in myself and in my students how hard it can be just to put down the phone, step away from the screen, and enjoy the moment. Technology has its benefits, but it has also created a culture of comparison and digital isolation. Electricity may bring us together, but it can also keep us apart in ways we don't often realize.

As an electricity teacher, my goal is to help my students understand not just the science behind electricity, but also the power and responsibility that come with it. It's not just about learning how circuits work or memorizing energy formulas. It's about understanding how electricity shapes our world and how we can use it wisely. Electricity has the potential to light up our lives, to drive progress, and to connect us in ways we never imagined. But it also comes with social, environmental, and personal consequences that we must address if we want to continue benefiting from it without causing harm.

In the end, it's all about balance. Electricity is a tool that can guide us to a brighter future, but also one that can create shadows if we misuse it. As we move forward, we need to think about how to harness electricity for the greater good while minimizing its adverse effects. It's not just about teaching the next generation of engineers and scientists the mechanics of electricity; it's about teaching them to be responsible stewards of this incredible power. To me, that's the actual value of understanding electricity.



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The Blackout Blues

The lights flicker, then fade to black,
A sudden hush, and all we lack
The buzz of life, the screen's soft glow,
All comfort lost in the midnight's woe.

The streets grow still, the air is cold,
A silent pause, new stories unfold.
No shows to stream, no calls to make,
Just shadows in the dark, for heaven's sake.

And then it starts a digital roar,
The rants fly fast, from every door.
"Where's the power?" the posts demand,
Blaming cooperatives, it's out of hand.

"Another blackout, not again!
How hard's the job to fix this strain?"
"Unreliable, it's clear to see,
I pay my bill, what's wrong with thee?"

Hashtags explode, the comments rise,
Anger flares beneath the skies.
"Fix it now!" they boldly shout,
But do they know what it's all about?
Workers toil through day and night,
In storm and heat, to set things right.
Yet from our cozy screens we gripe,
And fuel our rage with every type.

"Bring the power back!", the cries persist,
As fingers tap, too blind to list.
In all the silence, who will know,
The unseen work to make it glow?



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For when the lights flicker and fade,
We forget the effort that's made.
Behind the outage, there's more to see
It's not just "them," it's you and me.

So when the power's back and bright,
Remember the ones who fight the fight.
While we vent and voice our stress,
They're working hard, doing their best.



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When Lightning Dances

When lightning dances through the night,
It paints the sky with strokes of light,
A wild and swift electric show,
Where winds and shadows come and go.

It twists and turns with fiery grace,
A fleeting sprite in open space,
A dancer cloaked in silver flame,
Whose steps are never quite the same.

It leaps from clouds, a shining vein,
A flash that races with the rain,
A burst of power, fierce and free,
A glimpse of raw electricity.

Its rhythm breaks the silent dark,
A sudden spark, a glowing mark,
The sky becomes the dancer's stage,
A stormy song from age to age.

It calls the thunder's mighty roar,
A wild hymn that hearts adore,
A ballet fierce, with light so bold,
In every flicker, stories are told.
Beneath its steps, the earth will shake,
As nature's pulse begins to wake,
Yet in its blaze, a softer light
A fleeting beauty born of night.

When lightning dances, fierce and wild,
It stirs the soul like nature's child,
Unchained energy, raw and bright,
That splits the heavens with pure light.



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Its fleeting dance leaves whispers long,
In tales retold and thunder's song.
A force that none can tame or bind,
Yet felt in heart, earth, and mind.

So watch the dance when storms arise,
Those flashing steps across dark skies.
For in that dance, wild and vast,
It is nature's rhythm, fierce and fast.

When lightning dances bold and free,
It mirrors sparks inside of me
A flash of life that dares to gleam,
Forever part of an electric dream.



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Science at Four

MATERIALS abound, in every shape and form,
From metals to polymers, each one is a norm.
Conductors and insulators, they play their part,
In the world of science, it is a wondrous art.

LIVING THINGS thrive in every place,
From tiny microbes to humans, in every face.
Cells and systems work together as one,
Supporting life's web, beneath the sun.

FORCE AND MOTION, a dynamic pair,
Gravity's gentle pull, or a rocket's flair.
ENERGY's many forms, from kinetic to potential, too,
Transforming and transferring, in all that we do.

EARTH AND SPACE, a cosmic wonderland,
Planets and stars, shining with celestial hand,
The Earth's atmosphere, a delicate balance we strive,
To preserve and protect, for life to thrive.

Materials and living things, a fascinating place,
Force, motion, and energy, in a dynamic, interactive space,
Earth and space, a vast and endless sea,
In Grade 4 Science, we discover and learn with glee!



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Nang Minsang Sumuway Si Pia

Maalinsangan noon ang panahon. Isang maliit na isdang may kakaibang kulay ang mag-isang naglalaro sa may di-gaanong malalim na bahagi ng lawa ng Lanao. Siya si Pia, isang tilapia. Habang siya ay naglalaro, tila naririnig pa niya ang bilin ng kanyang nanay na si Miluntikan, “kung maglalaro ka, Pia, huwag kang lalayo.”

Palinga-linga si Pia. Naghahanap ng kakilala na maaari niyang makalaro. Sa kanyang dahan-dahang paglalangoy, nakita niya si Katu, isang isdang *katulong*. Matalik niyang kaibigan si Katu.

“Oy, Pia, narito ka pala,” puna ni Katung agad lumapit sa kaibigan.

“Katu, kumusta?” masayang bati nito sa kaibigan.

“Ay naku, heto... naghahanap ng kalaro. Nababagot na kasi ako sa bahay. Palaging wala sina ama at ina,” paliwanag ni Katu.

“Bakit? Saan ba sila pumupunta?” usisa ni Pia sa kaibigan.

“Ayon, dumalaw na naman sila sa isang kamag-anak na malubha raw ang karamdaman.”

“Bakit hindi ka sumama?”

“Bantayan ko na lamang daw ang aming bahay,” sagot ni Katu.

Nakatingin lamang si Pia sa kaibigan nang bigla siyang yayain nito.

“Ang mabuti pa ay samahan mo na lamang ako, Pia. Halika, may ipapakita ako sa iyo sa banda roon. Tiyak na magugustuhan mo!”

“Katu, ayokong pumunta sa banda roon. Kabilin-bilinan kasi ni ina na huwag akong lalayo.”

“Hindi naman tayo mapapalayo, saka hindi naman niya malalamang pupunta



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tayo roon. Sige na Pia, pumayag ka na..." pangungulit ni Katu sa kaibigan.

"Sige na nga! Pero, huwag tayong magtagal ha. Bumalik agad tayo," pakiusap ni Pia kay Katu.

"Iyon lang pala, e! Halika ka na!"

Agad na lumangoy ang magkaibigan patungo sa malalim na bahagi ng lawa. Namangha si Pia sa kanyang nakita. Bughaw na kulay ng tubig ang bumulaga sa kanyang paningin. Sa palibot nito ay manghang-mangha siya dahil sa luntiang kulay ng mga halaman. Iba't ibang yamang-tubig din ang kanyang nakita gaya ng *getik* o maliliit na kabibe, susô, hipon, bongkaong, kadurog, dalag, kasili, at iba pang mga kauri nito. Habang aliw na aliw si Pia sa panonood sa kawan ng tomaginting, na kilala sa tawag na *sireng*, nilalapitan siya ng iba pang maliliit na isda.

Nagkakasiyahan na sina Katu at Pia kasama ang mga bagong kakilala. Nawili pa silang lumangoy sa malalim na bahagi ng lawa. Naghahabulan at nagpaikot-ikot sa mga halamang kanilang nadadaan kaya hindi nila namalayan ang paparating na lantsa. Nabulabog sina Pia at ang iba pa. Hindi nila alam kung saan susuling. Bago pa man makakilos palayo ni Pia, nahagip siya ng elise ng lantsa. Tumilapon si Pia. Kitang-kita ni Katu ang nangyari sa kaibigan. Natakot at kinabahan siya para kay Pia.

"Pia! Pia! Gumising ka!" sigaw ni Katu, habol ang takot at pangamba. Umiiyak siya at sinubukang gisingin ang kaibigan. Agad siyang naramdaman ni Pia, ngunit tila wala na siyang lakas.

Habang ang dalawang isda ay natataranta, narinig ni Katu ang tinig ng ina ni Pia, si Miluntikan, mula sa malayo.

"Pia! Pia, anak! Nasaan ka na?"

"Narito po kami, Aling Miluntikan!" agad na tugon ni Katu.

Nataranta si Miluntikan nang makita ang kalagayan ng anak. Agad niya itong binuhat at inuwi sa kanilang bahay. Hindi naman matigil sa kaiiyak si Katu na nakasunod sa mag-ina. Sising-sisi ito sa kanyang pagyaya kay Pia sa lugar na iyon.

Pagkalapag kay Pia, agad pinuntahan ni Miluntikan si Inang Kasili, ang kanilang matandang manggagamot na nakatira sa isang maliit na yungib. Nang malaman ng manggagamot ang sadya ni Miluntikan, inihanda na nito ang mga kakailanganin. Agad silang umalis at tinungo ang bahay nina Miluntikan.



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Lumapit ang matanda kay Pia. Dinama ang noo nito at pinulsuhan. Ilang sandali pa ay bubulong-bulong na siya habang ipinapahid sa buong katawan ni Pia ang mga dahong dala-dala. Pagkaraan ng ilang minuto ay may nilagay ang matanda sa bibig ni Pia. Ilang sandali pa ay kumilos siya.

“Pia... Pia, anak...” mahinang tawag ni Miluntikan sa anak.

“Ina... Ina...” umiiyak na yumakap si Pia sa kanyang ina. “Patawad po... Patawad po, Ina... Hindi ko na po kayo susuwayin. Hindi na po ako kailanman lalayo sa ating bahay,” ang sunod-sunod na pagsusumamo ni Pia habang nakayakap sa kanyang ina na umiiyak na rin.

“Patawad po, Aling Miluntikan. Ako po ang may kasalanan kung bakit nagkaganyan si Pia. Ako po ang nagyaya sa kanyang maglaro sa malalim na bahaging iyon ng lawa...” napapahiyang paliwanag ni Katu.

“Hay nakul! Kayo talagang mga bata kayo. Kung hindi pa kayo mapapahamak ay hindi ninyo maiintindihan kung bakit may mga bagay kaming ipinagbabawal sa inyo. O ngayon, alam na ninyo kung bakit?”

“Opo,” sabay na sagot ng magkaibigan.

Pagkaraan ng ilang sandaling pangangaral sa dalawa, hindi na rin nagtagal pa ang matandang manggagamot. Matapos namang makausap ni Miluntikan sina Pia at Katu, nagpaalam na rin ang huli sa kanila.



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Sa Bayan ni Juan

Ang bayan kong sinilangan,
Sagana sa yaman at kalikasan.
Bayan na sagana sa talento,
Lalo ang mga nasa gobyerno.

Sa sobrang talino, nagawang manloko,
Sa mga pantaboy- bahang proyekto.
Proyekto sana na solusyon,
Bakit naging banta ng korapsyon?

Ang mga kalsada at tulay,
Bakit hindi na yaring matibay?
May mga dike at pader na itinayo,
Bakit bumabagsak tuwing bagyo?

Ang pondong dapat ay para sa proyekto,
Bakit napupunta sa bulsa ng mga iilang tao?
Sa konting patak ng ulan,
Nagdurusa ang buong bayan.

Mga namana at napundar na ari arian,
Ipapaanod nalang ba dahil sa kasakiman?
Ang proyektong para sa bayan,
Nakakalungkot, nagpapayaman sa iilan.

Ang kasakiman ay parang malaking baha,
Nilulunod ang pangarap ng mga dukha.
Ang mga ginawang proyekto ay sira,
Walang paki, basta bulsa ay sagana.

Bayan ni Juan, may pag-asa pa kaya?
Sa mga lagpas tao at bahay na baha?
Ang mga dike, tulay at kalsada, na sira sira,
Taumbayan, paano na kaya?



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Mag-isip, tayo ang solusyon,
Sa mga taong gumagawa ng kurapsyon.
Wag na bigyan ng pagkakataon, Na sa gobyerno magkaro'n ng koneksyon.

Tama na, sobra na,
Ibalik ang mga nakaw na pera.
Pera na hindi niyo pinaghirapan,
Dapat ibalik sa taumbayan.



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The Shape of Truth

In beams and bytes, in steel and stream,
Where engines hum and circuits gleam,
A quiet force begins to rise
The truth that lives in data's guise.

Not carved in stone, nor guessed in haste,
But drawn from numbers, cleanly traced,
The engineer with a sharpened mind
Seeks patterns others leave behind.

A scatterplot, a bell-shaped curve,
A line that bends with a subtle swerve
Each tells a tale, each holds a clue
Of what is false and what is true.

From tensile strength to rainfall rates,
From voltage drops to pressure gates,
Statistics guide the hand and eye
To build, to test, to quantify.

But more than math, it asks for grace
To doubt, to check, to not misplace
The weight of choices made in code,
The lives that pass along each road.

So let the data speak its part,
With an open mind and a steady heart,
For in this field where numbers reign,
We find the pulse of human gain.

In every chart, a question grows,
In every test, a truth that shows
And engineers, with care and skill,
Shape futures from the facts they distill.



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Blueprints of Thought

In Computer Engineering, we don't build with bricks; we create with logic. Beneath every processor, controller, and embedded device is a quiet architecture of decisions. These decisions aren't emotional or impulsive. They're binary: yes or no, one or zero. And yet, from these simple choices, entire systems come alive, systems that compute, respond, and adapt to their surroundings.

This is the world students enter when they begin their studies in digital design. It's not flashy at first. There are no glowing screens or dramatic breakthroughs: just truth tables, Boolean expressions, and circuit diagrams. But slowly, they begin to see the beauty in it, the way a few gates can shape a decision, the way a signal can ripple through a system and produce something meaningful.

Learning the language of logic is like learning to think in a new way. It's not just about memorizing symbols or solving equations. It's about understanding how machines interpret the world, how they process information, and how they make decisions based on rules we define. Students learn to design systems that add numbers, store data, and control processes. They begin to realize that behind every digital action, every click, every calculation is a carefully crafted structure of logic.

But digital design isn't just technical. It's deeply human. It asks us to be clear, intentional, and ethical. Engineers must think ahead: How will this system behave under stress? Will it scale? Is it safe? Is it fair? These aren't just engineering questions; they're moral ones. Because every circuit we design affects someone, somewhere. Every decision we make has consequences.

As students progress, they move from basic gates to more complex systems. They build counters, multiplexers, and memory units. They simulate timing diagrams and troubleshoot logic errors. They work with programmable devices and hardware description languages, learning to model and test their designs before implementation. It's a hands-on process, complete with trial and error, but also full of discovery.

And through it all, they begin to think differently. They learn to break problems into parts, to see patterns, and to anticipate outcomes. They learn to value simplicity not because it's easy, but because it's elegant. A well-designed circuit isn't



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just functional; it's graceful. It does what it needs to do without excess, without confusion.

There's also a quiet discipline in digital design. It doesn't reward shortcuts. It asks for patience, precision, and care. A misplaced wire, a forgotten condition, or a misinterpreted signal can all cause a system to fail. Students learn to double-check, document, and communicate clearly. They know that engineering isn't just about solving problems, it's about solving them responsibly.

What's remarkable is how these lessons extend beyond the lab. The mindset of digital design, structured thinking, ethical awareness, and attention to detail shapes how students approach other challenges. It teaches them to be thoughtful, not just in their code, but in their choices. It reminds them that clarity matters, that logic has limits, and that behind every system is a human need.

As technology continues to evolve, the foundations remain. Whether designing for embedded systems, smart devices, or artificial intelligence, the principles of digital design still apply. The tools may change, but the thinking stays the same. Engineers must still ask: What does this system do? Why does it matter? Who does it serve?

Ultimately, digital design is more than a subject; it's a way of seeing the world. It invites us to look beneath the surface, to understand how things work, and to shape how they could work better. It challenges us to be precise, but also to be imaginative. It reminds us that even the smallest decisions made in silence, in circuits, can have a lasting impact.

And for every student who learns to wire a circuit, to write a condition, to trace a signal, there's a moment of realization: *I built this. I made something think.* That moment is quiet, but powerful. It's the beginning of a more profound understanding not just of machines, but of ourselves.

In every diagram lies a decision. In every student, the potential to shape systems that serve, protect, and inspire. And in every act of design, a blueprint not just for machines, but for thoughtful engineering.



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Ang Dalawang Landas ng Pagkalkula

Sa mundo ng numero, mayroong dalawang daan
Ang isa'y makabago, ang isa'y kinagisnan
Ginamit ang AI, sagot ay agad nakamtan
Ngunit ano ang dulot nito, sa puso't isipan?

Manu-manong pagkalkula, hindi madaling makasungkit
Ngunit sa tamang sagot, tuwa'y abot hanggang langit
Ang bawat hakbang, daan tungo sa pag-unawa
Sa likod ng numero, may mga kwentong dala.

Ang AI, mabilis nga, ngunit may panganib
Tayo'y umasa na lamang, hindi na mag-iisip
Ang utak ay magiging tamad, mahirap nang gumana
Pagkat lahat ng sagot, sa AI na nakukuha.

Manu-manong pagkalkula, ito man ay pagpapagal
Ngunit sa ating isip, ito'y nagpapatibay
Ang lohika'y lumalawak, maging ang kritikal na pag-iisip
Sa bawat problemang nalutas, isipa'y nagiging matalas.

Kaya't timbangin natin, ang bawat landas
AI ay maaring gamitin, ngunit huwag magpaaalipin
Ang manu-manong pagkalkula, huwag itakwil
Pagkat sa hira ng nito, may ginhawang katapat.



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Ang mga Alaala sa Harap ng Makina

Sa tuwing naiisip ni Luna ang kanyang ina, ang unang pumapasok sa kanyang isipan ay ang makinang panahi. Maaaring isa lamang itong simpleng kagamitan para sa iba, isang gamit upang pagtaguin ang tela, ngunit para sa kanya, dala nito ang napakaraming alaala. Ang makinang iyon ay hindi lamang instrumento ng kabuhayan kundi sagisag ng lakas, katatagan, pagkamalikhain, at higit sa lahat, ng walang kapantay na pagmamahal ng kanyang ina sa kanilang pamilya.

Bata pa lamang si Luna, madalas na niyang nakikita ang kanyang ina na nakaupo sa harap ng makina. Ang mga kamay nito'y marahang humahagod sa tela, tila may himig ng tiyaga at galing. Karaniwang umuupo si Luna sa tabi nito, nakatukod ang baba sa kanyang mga kamay, habang pinagmamasdan kung paanong ang simpleng piraso ng tela ay nagiging isang obra. Mananahi ang kanyang ina. Gumagawa ito ng bestida, palda, uniporme at maging costume para sa kanilang kapitbahay at mga kakilala. Mula sa mga simpleng kasuotan hanggang sa mga damit para sa espesyal na okasyon, lahat ay ginagampanan nito nang buong puso.

Lubos na hinahangaan ni Luna ang paraan ng kanyang ina sa pagtatrabaho; seryoso, pulido, at puno ng dedikasyon. Kahit bakas ang pagod sa mukha, hindi ito kailanman nagmadali o nagreklamo. Sa bawat tahi at tupi, dama ang pusong ibinubuhos nito. Minsan, habang nakaupo si Luna sa tabi, pinagmamasdan niya ang banayad na liwanag ng lampara na tumatama sa mukha ng kanyang ina, at pinangarap niyang mamana man lang ang katatagan at kahusayan nito.

Isa sa mga hindi niya malilimutang alaala ay noong nasa ikaanim na baitang siya at napiling kinatawan ng kanilang klase sa United Nations program. Ang bansang kanyang irerepresenta ay Sweden. Ilang linggo bago ang programa, nag-alala siya kung ano ang isusuot, ngunit tiniyak ng kanyang ina na siya'y may kakatwang bihis. Buong gabi itong nagpagod upang matapos ang isang magandang bestida, may palamuting naaangkop sa bansang kanyang ihaharap. Nang isinuot niya ito sa araw ng programa, hindi lamang ganda ng kasuotan ang nagbigay lakas ng loob sa kanya kundi ang diwa ng sakripisyo at pagmamahal ng kanyang ina na nakatahi sa bawat hibla ng tela.

Hindi lamang sa mga programa naipadama ng kanyang ina ang pagmamahal nito. Simula elementarya hanggang kolehiyo, pati na sa unang taon niya bilang guro, ang mga unipormeng suot ni Luna ay mula sa malikhain at mapagkalingang mga kamay nito. Ang bawat kasuotan ay hindi lamang praktikal na gamit kundi simbolo ng mga bagong simula, hinulma at isinulsi ng parehong mga kamay na nag-aruga sa kanya mula pagkabata. Namangha siya kung paanong nakayang pagsabayin ng kanyang ina ang pagiging mananahi, asawa, at ina nang walang reklamo. Lahat ito ay ginampanan ng kanyang ina nang may tahimik na dignidad.



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Mula rito natutunan ni Luna ang tunay na kahulugan ng katatagan. Hindi ito kailangang maingay o ipagmalaki; ito ay nakikita sa araw-araw na pasensya, sakripisyo, at malasakit. Dahil dito, natuto siyang pahalagahan ang lahat ng bagay na ginagawa ng kanyang ina, maliit man ito o malaki.

Lumipas ang panahon at nagkatotoo ang kanyang pangarap. Naging guro siya, nakapagturo pa sa ibang bansa, nakasalamuha ng iba't ibang lahi at kultura at sa bawat hamon na kanyang hinarap, bitbit niya ang mga aral ng kanyang ina: tibay ng loob, sipag, at pag-asa. Ngunit hindi naging madali ang lahat. Habang tinutupad niya ang kanyang mga pangarap para sa sarili at sa kanyang pamilya, dumating ang isa sa pinakamabigat na pagsubok, ang pagkawala ng kanyang ina. Hindi na niya muling nasilayan ang ina na nakaupo sa harap ng makinang panahi, ni narinig ang ritmong tunog ng karayom sa kanilang tahanan. Ang mga kamay na dati'y tila gumagawa ng mahika ay tuluyan nang nagpahinga. Ang tanging naiwan na lamang ay katahimikan. Isang katahimikang nakabibingi.

Ang kalungkutan ay parang alon, minsan ay biglaan itong humahampas, minsan ay banayad, ngunit palaging naroroon. Sa bawat espesyal na okasyon, kaarawan, Pasko, at pagtitipon ng pamilya, lalo niyang nararamdaman ang pagkawala ng kanyang ina. Lagi niyang naiisip na marahil nariyan lamang ito, nakamasid mula sa malayo at patuloy na nagbabantay sa kanila. Sa kabila ng sakit, natutunan ni Luna na ang tunay na pamana ng kanyang ina ay hindi lamang ang mga damit na kanyang tinahi o ang makinang naiwan sa kanilang tahanan. Ang pinakamahalagang iniwan nito ay ang mga aral: ang dignidad ng paggawa, ang halaga ng pasensya at dedikasyon, at ang walang hanggang pagmamahal sa pamilya.

Ang makinang panahi na dati'y simbolo lamang ng kabuhayan ay naging sagisag ng lahat ng iyon. Sa tuwing natatanaw niya ito, muli niyang nararamdaman ang presensya ng kanyang ina, matatag, mapagmahal, at walang kapantay. Sa puso ni Luna, mananatili itong himig na hindi kailanman mawawala, tulad ng awit ng isang ina na magpakailanman ay magsisilbing gabay sa kanyang buhay



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Between Hope and Hurdles: The ARAL Program in Public Schools

The ARAL Program (National Learning Recovery Program), initiated by the Department of Education (DepEd), was a response to the significant learning losses caused by the pandemic. Fundamentally, the effort aims to deliver targeted literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills interventions, especially to learners in public schools, who were the most severely impacted by the extended school closures. The program's vision is also commendable; it understands that education encompasses not only covering lessons missed but also instilling confidence, re-establishing learning habits, and ensuring that no child is left behind.

However, even with good intentions, one still wonders whether the DepEd and public schools are well prepared to execute the program successfully. Teachers, being the core of learning, must contend with the fact that they already have heavy workloads. Bringing in more remediation sessions without adequate training, resources, and support would only deplete them, rather than empowering them. The lack of classroom teaching materials and learning spaces continues to plague many schools, and the systematic implementation of ARAL is a daunting task.

The other issue of grave concern is that of equity. Without proper planning, the ARAL Program can lead to disparities among learners. In cities with easy access to technology and community resources, implementing technology can be done with greater ease than in remote or low-funded schools. The program may not achieve the inclusive purpose without considering these inequalities, and learners who are the most vulnerable will still be disadvantaged.

The communities and parents should also be involved meaningfully. Recovery of learning cannot work alone in schools; instead, it requires a shared responsibility. Nevertheless, a high number of families, especially from low-income groups, are unaware of the program's purposes or are unable to support their children after school. The need to fill this gap thus requires effective communication and the involvement of grassroots organizations.

The ARAL Program is dedicated to the promising future of Filipino learners, and this future cannot be perceived without a clear vision. It must be based on preparation, including sufficient funding, teacher assistance, appropriate monitoring, and a realistic implementation rate. Visitors to the ground should hear the voices of teachers, parents, and learners to refine the program based on actual needs rather than policies.



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Ultimately, it takes the reforms a long time to work, not when they are initiated, but when they are practiced, when all children feel their effect, when all teachers feel encouraged, and when all communities feel the reform. The ARAL Program can be a turning point in Philippine education, provided that preparation is followed by ambition. It is a promise that, to this day, remains inspiring, yet it remains unfulfilled.

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Corruption: The Death Knell of Public Education

Education is often regarded as the cornerstone of a nation's development. Schools are where young people acquire knowledge, skills, and values that help them create a better future, both individually and for their communities. For students in public schools, education is not just a right, but a lifeline, particularly for those who are poor and marginalized. However, once corruption infiltrates the education sector, the learning prospect is compromised. Corruption is not only a waste, but it also denies children opportunities as well as undermines the very system that is supposed to support them.

Abuse of funds is one of the most evident impacts of corruption on education in society. Funds intended for use in school buildings, classrooms, and other educational purposes are frequently misused to generate profits. The outcome is packed and broken classes, broken facilities, and students sharing old and inadequate textbooks. The children of public schools are affected the most as they are already economically challenged. They are disadvantaged in attending the same school and getting equal opportunities; instead, they must cope with the paucity of resources, which further creates a disparity between them and their counterparts in private institutions.

Quality of teaching is also jeopardized by corruption. In others, there is the aspect of politics and personal relations, which play a role in appointing teachers based on their merit. In cases where favors or bribes are applied in hiring and promotions, some qualified educators are overlooked. This not only reduces the quality of teaching but also discourages those teachers who work hard to know that their efforts are forgotten. Students, on the other hand, are deprived of the mentoring and motivation that committed teachers would have provided.

Corruption also undermines the promotion of fairness and trust. The principle of equal opportunity is compromised when bribes or personal connections enable one to influence grades, scholarships, or admissions. Students who attend public schools and work hard can become demoralized as they realize that success does not come easily. This fosters a culture in which the vice of dishonesty appears to be justified, and the virtues of honesty and hard work are not valued. Over time, this undermines the youth's belief in education and society.

The long-term results are even worse. A lack of education can hinder students' development into adults who may struggle to compete in the workforce. The quality of education provided to people is undermined by corruption, which restricts social mobility and perpetuates the poverty spiral, binding families together. Worst still, it teaches the next generation that dishonesty is typical and, therefore, leads to further corruption in other sectors of society. Corruption in education has consequently not been a problem limited to schools, but rather a national issue that has jeopardized social and economic development.



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Corruption in education is a pressing need that must be addressed. Openness in fund usage, equal employment opportunities, and good community engagement are key measures. Parents, teachers, and local leaders must collaborate to ensure that resources are allocated fairly in classes and that educational opportunities are based on merit, not influence. Most importantly, the youth should be made to understand that integrity is essential - that studying is not merely about academic knowledge, but also about instilling values that will one day shape their future in the country.

To sum up, corruption is the disease at the core of public education, as it robs those who can least afford to lose. The implications of poor facilities, demotivated instructors, unfair chances, and disillusioned students are felt most acutely by students in public schools, whose future depends on the school providing them with better opportunities. Fighting corruption is not only about preserving resources, but also about preserving the hopes and dreams of millions of children. By protecting education, we are safeguarding the nation's future.

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Heart's Echo

A whispered wish in night's soft hush,
Then you emerged, a golden spark.
The world ablaze with love's soft blush,
A joy that pierced the endless dark.

But shadows crept, a sudden squall,
Confined, we yearned for skies of blue.
Your gentle smile, embracing all,
A love reflected, pure and true.

Too soon you soared, a dream adrift,
A star that faded into mist.
Now tears still fall for gifts we lift,
And lost too swiftly from our tryst.

Though you're not here, your love abides,
An echo in the heart's deep keep.
Through gentle tears and sunlit tides,
We feel your presence in our sleep.



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Reframing Academic Excellence: Targeting Its Core

Academic excellence has long stood as the cornerstone of educational aspirations. In pursuit of this ideal, a surge of programs and reforms has been introduced across educational systems. However, these initiatives, though well-intentioned, often lead to confusion and disorientation among educators and learners. The frequent shifts in curriculum and the proliferation of new programs contribute to heightened stress levels, undermining the very goal they aim to achieve (Asio & Bayucca, 2021; Cohen & Brown, 2021).

The Department of Education's rapid implementation of reforms, such as the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum, exemplifies this trend. While designed to address learning gaps and promote foundational competencies, its rollout has posed significant challenges. Teachers and school heads report difficulties in adapting to new content, managing resource constraints, and maintaining student performance amid these changes (Saro et al., 2024; Enarcisa, 2025). These stressors not only affect professional efficacy but also compromise the emotional and psychological well-being of educators and students alike (Albrecht & Sagers, 2020; Blake, Quinn, & Bucheli, 2021).

This raises critical questions: When will excellence be achieved? How will it come to life? Can teachers and learners go with the flow, or do they have the agency to deviate from the current?

Rather than fixating on programmatic accomplishments, the educational system must refocus on its core, winning the hearts of teachers and learners. Emotional engagement, empathy, and a sense of belonging are foundational to meaningful learning experiences. Neglecting the emotional toll of abrupt reforms risks alienating those at the heart of education (Castro, Kelly, & Shih, 2010).

To address these challenges, educational leaders must invest in strategies that build resilience. This includes providing adequate resources, fostering peer support networks, and implementing continuous professional development tailored to the evolving demands of teaching (Beltman, Mansfield, & Price, 2011; D'Addiego & Best, 2023). Creating a nurturing and adaptive environment allows educators to thrive rather than merely survive systemic changes.

Moreover, involving teachers and learners in the design and implementation of reforms ensures that policies are grounded in lived realities. Participatory approaches not only enhance buy-in but also reduce resistance and stress (Brown & Weber, 2022). When the voices of those most affected are heard and valued, academic excellence becomes a shared journey rather than a top-down mandate.



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Embracing Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): Cultivating the Heart of Learning

“Teaching is the work of the heart,” as many say, a sentiment that captures the essence of education beyond mere instruction. Education is not solely about guiding children to achieve their dreams or preparing them to succeed in a competitive world. It transcends innate intelligence, early academic excellence, or the accumulation of high grades and exceptional talents. Proper education is found in transformation. It is when simplicity is brought to life through perseverance, passion, and purpose.

Education becomes meaningful when a seemingly ordinary individual learns to strive, to be shaped by the diverse paths of success that life offers, and to pursue dreams despite adversity. It is in this journey that the heart of education is revealed: the stirring of determination, the ignition of passion, and the unwavering commitment to finish the race of victory.

This perspective aligns with the holistic view of education advocated by Noddings (2012), who emphasizes the importance of care ethics in teaching and learning. She argues that education should nurture not only cognitive development but also emotional and moral growth. Similarly, Biesta (2015) argues that education must move beyond its instrumental focus on achievement and instead foster subjectification, enabling learners to become responsible and engaged individuals.

However, modern educational systems often prioritize measurable outcomes, such as standardized test scores and academic rankings, which can marginalize the emotional and motivational dimensions of learning (Sahlberg, 2016). This narrow focus risks overlooking the transformative power of education to inspire resilience and self-actualization.

To address this imbalance, schools should integrate socio-emotional learning (SEL) into their curricula. SEL promotes self-awareness, empathy, and emotional regulation. These skills are essential for personal growth and lifelong success (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2020). Research indicates that SEL not only enhances academic performance but also improves students’ ability to cope with challenges and build meaningful relationships (Durlak et al., 2011).

By embedding SEL into teaching practices, educators can cultivate environments where students feel valued, supported, and motivated to pursue their goals. This approach reaffirms that education is not just about intellect. It is about heart, character, and the courage to persevere.



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The Counselor's Role in Education

When people discuss education, they often focus on grades, test scores, or diplomas. These are important, but they do not tell the whole story. In my work as a counselor and teacher, education is also about guiding young people to understand themselves, manage their emotions, and develop healthy relationships with others. This is where the counselor's role becomes essential. We stand beside teachers, not to duplicate their work, but to add a dimension that sees the student as a whole person.

For me, it often begins with listening. Students walk into school carrying more than notebooks. Some bear the weight of family struggles, others have questions about their identity, and many worry about the future. When a student enters the guidance office and dares to share even a small part of their story, I am reminded that listening is never a simple task. It is an act of trust. To be present without judgment is sometimes exactly what a student needs to take the next step.

There are times when my role calls me to be an advocate. I remember quiet students who were easily overlooked, and others who acted out and were quickly judged. Part of my responsibility is to ensure their voices are heard, whether that means speaking with teachers, reaching out to parents, or connecting them with relevant resources. Advocacy does not mean offering special treatment, but rather reminding the school that all learners have a right to attention and fair treatment.

Another aspect that counselors contribute to is not overlooking career guidance. I encounter students who feel pressured into making decisions before they truly understand themselves, and those who believe they have no options. I do not have to make decisions on their behalf, but rather help them see their strengths, possibilities, and develop confidence in their own choices. It is satisfying to see a student in a state of confusion transition to one of clarity as they approach the next step with intent.

Mental and emotional health is also under the counselor. Student life involves stress, conflict, and change, which can have negative impacts on learning and well-being if not managed effectively. I have shared heartaches with students, some feeling confused, and some just needed to know that they were not alone. In some cases, I will be able to assist directly, while at other times, I will refer them to other professionals. All that is needed is for them to understand that there is a haven where dignity and confidentiality are respected.

It must be that we pull together in all this. I have also been working with teachers who observe a shift in a student's behavior, as well as parents who struggle to read or comprehend their child. By working together as a team, we offer solutions that are even better than those that each of us would have provided individually. There is also the question of preventive programs, such as seminars, guidance classes, and group activities, that instill in students life skills before the problems become more severe.



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At its core, it is both practical and profound in its role for the counselor. Utilitarianism is the reason it deals with the study and choice, as well as problem-solving habits. Wide-spreading in that it reaches identity, strength, and hope. Without counselors, education stands a risk of being of the academic type. In the case of counselors, this makes things balanced because students do not only prepare to pass an exam, but also prepare to face life.



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Education as a Lifelong Journey

When I think about education, I no longer picture only classrooms, chalkboards, or graduation ceremonies. It is something that follows a person through every season of life. For me, the idea of lifelong education is not abstract. It is personal. It is present in the choices I make as a counselor, as a teacher, and as a learner myself.

My own journey began in a simple rural school where resources were scarce. Back then, education meant memorizing lessons, answering quizzes, and hoping for good grades. Yet, outside the classroom, I was already learning important lessons from my family, from work, and from struggles that no textbook explained. Looking back, I realize that those experiences were also part of my education. They shaped how I see resilience, responsibility, and empathy.

As an adult, I continue to discover that learning never really stops. Each student I meet teaches me something. One shows me what courage looks like when facing family problems. Another reveals how determination can rise from poverty. Sometimes I prepare lessons for class, only to find that my students' questions push me to study more deeply. They remind me that education is a dialogue, not a one-way transfer of knowledge.

I also see lifelong education in my own professional growth. Being a counselor in the Philippines means facing heavy workloads, limited resources, and changing expectations. To serve effectively, I cannot rely only on what I learned years ago in university. I must keep attending seminars, reading research, and reflecting on my practice. This continuing education is not for prestige but for relevance. Each time I update my skills, I become better equipped to guide the young people who trust me.

Education as a lifelong journey also means learning outside formal institutions. I know that when I read a book, reflect on a difficult day, or listen to the wisdom of elders, even mistakes become teachers. A failed project reminds me to plan more carefully. A conflict challenges me to practice patience. These lessons may not appear on a transcript, but they shape my character and influence how I live.

I often tell my students that graduation is not the end of education; it's just the beginning. It is a milestone, yes, but not a finish line. The real test is how they continue to grow when no teacher is checking their notebooks. Will they keep reading? Will they reflect on their choices? Will they learn from failure? These are the habits that matter for a lifetime.

The beauty of lifelong education lies in its capacity to carry hope. It says that no one is ever finished. A struggling child can improve. An adult who feels stuck can change direction. Even older people can continue to grow in wisdom. This belief comforts me as a counselor because it means that every person I meet still has room for growth, regardless of their age or circumstances.



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For me, education is not just a philosophy, but a lifelong journey. It is a way of living. It challenges me to remain curious, humble, and open. It reminds me that I am a learner as much as I am a teacher. And it assures me that every day, whether inside the guidance office or outside in the world, there is always something new to discover.



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The Silent Cry

He sits in the back row,
eyes tracing the floor.
His smile is practiced,
his silence is too loud.

I ask, Are you alright?
He answers with a shrug.
Words escape him,
however, the weight does not.

Homework is untouched,
not from laziness
but from battles
no one else can see.

Teachers mark the grade,
peers mark the absence,
yet no one marks
the ache he hides.

I sit closer,
offering space,
a chance for truth
to find its voice.

Not all pain shouts.
Some fold themselves neatly
into silence,
waiting to be found.



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Between Sessions

When the door closes,
their stories linger.
I hear them in the chair,
feel them in the air.

A girl afraid to go home,
her notebook trembling.
A boy with fists
that soften into tears.

Mothers ask for strength,
fathers for patience.
Students ask only
to be understood.

I breathe in quietly,
steady my heart.
Guidance is heavy,
but silence is heavier.

Notes fill the pages,
but not the whole truth.
What heals is presence,
not paper alone.

So I wait for the knock,
again and again.
Each story reshapes me,
each ending is still open.



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Building Strong Institutions: Public Administration in the Philippines' Journey to Sustainable Development

As a profession and practice, public administration has been evolving steadily, and its journey to the Philippines demonstrates how institutions and policies have changed to meet the needs of society and adjust to global goals, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The academic discipline emerged in the late nineteenth century with Woodrow Wilson's 1887 essay, "The Study of Administration," which emphasized the importance of efficiency, neutrality, and the separation of politics and administration. However, the field's roots can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as China, Egypt, and Rome, where bureaucracies developed to collect taxes, regulate trade, and maintain social order.

Early twentieth-century concepts, such as Max Weber's bureaucratic theory and Frederick Taylor's scientific management, reaffirmed the need for rules, merit-based hiring, and hierarchy in effective administration, influencing the later worldwide structure of public institutions. However, after World War II, the rigidity of bureaucracy was attacked, and human relations and behavioral perspectives arose. Elton Mayo and Herbert Simon, for example, emphasized organizational behavior, motivation, and decision-making as crucial aspects of administration. When decolonization swept through Asia and Africa in the mid-20th century, the Development Administration model became the dominant paradigm, focusing on modernizing and establishing institutions in newly independent countries. The following decades saw the introduction of New Public Management (NPM), which emphasized efficiency, privatization, and results-based management. Additionally, the concept of governance broadened the scope of administration to include networks of government, private sector actors, and civil society.

The Philippines, whose history of public administration is entwined with colonial legacies and democratic struggles, was significantly impacted by these international trends. A hierarchical and exclusive bureaucracy was established during Spanish rule (1565–1898) as a result of a centralized government that was strongly influenced by the Catholic Church, in which native Filipinos had little say. The foundation for Philippine bureaucracy was laid during the American colonial era (1898–1946), when meritocracy, decentralization, civil service legislation, and public education were implemented.

Following independence in 1946, the University of the Philippines established the National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG) to professionalize the field. Development Administration models guided the establishment of institutions, economic planning, and modernization efforts. However, as infrastructure development and economic initiatives grew, the Marcos administration (1972–1986) distorted public administration into an instrument of authoritarianism, consolidating power, and encouraging corruption and cronyism. Democracy was restored during the People Power Revolution in 1986, and public administration underwent a significant transformation as decentralization and participatory governance emerged as key reform planks.



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While oversight organizations like the Commission on Audit (COA), Office of the Ombudsman, and Civil Service Commission (CSC) were strengthened to guarantee accountability and transparency, the 1991 Local Government Code decentralized powers to local government units (LGUs), allowing communities to make decisions about resource management, service delivery, and participation in decision-making. The Philippines' public administration has embraced global NPM and governance trends over the past few decades, such as digitization, citizen participation, public-private partnerships, and anti-corruption measures.

In line with SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, its evolution demonstrates that public administration is not merely the study of bureaucracy, but also the establishment of institutions capable of delivering justice, promoting inclusivity, and building resilience. Because it reflects the core values of democratic governance, building institutions, upholding the rule of law, and guaranteeing accountability, this SDG is central to Philippine public administration. Measures to promote open, responsive, and efficient institutions include the Freedom of Information (FOI) program, judicial modernization, and reforms to police and other law enforcement agencies. Since poverty reduction, health system improvements, educational access, and climate action cannot continue without strong institutions, SDG 16 paves the way for achieving other SDGs.

By facilitating the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), which provides conditional cash transfers to low-income families, for instance, public administration supports SDG 1: No Poverty. However, the program's success depends on efficient targeting, monitoring, and auditing, all of which are facilitated by robust administrative systems that align with SDG 16. The Universal Health Care Law and the COVID-19 pandemic response also support SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being; however, they rely on institutional cooperation between the Department of Health (DOH), PhilHealth, LGUs, and civil society. Bureaucratic processes at the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) ensure inclusive access, teacher deployment, and curriculum development in support of SDG 4: Quality Education. However, they rely on institutions' capacity to allocate them equitably and truthfully. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) implement livelihood and employment projects under SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, focusing on institutional settings that uphold labor rights and promote fair economic activity. Because of the Philippines' frequent natural disasters and fast urbanization, public administration plays a significant role in achieving SDGs 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and 13: Climate Action. Organizations such as the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) and the Climate Change Commission oversee climate adaptation and disaster response initiatives; however, their effectiveness depends on the strength and coordination of these institutions.

Since public administration serves as the foundation for all other goals, the Philippine experience thus demonstrates that, despite intersecting with many SDGs, it is more inclined toward SDG 16. Sustainable development is facilitated by strong institutions that make sure resources are used effectively, corruption is prevented, public opinions are heard, and services are provided equitably. This alignment with SDG 16 is demonstrated by the Philippines' ongoing changes in digital governance, anti-corruption initiatives, and participatory budgeting. Thus, a continuous process of institutional building can be observed in the evolution of public administration in the Philippines, which began with the colonial bureaucracy and progressed to authoritarian abuse, and ultimately to democratic, participatory, and accountable governance. It demonstrates that ensuring justice, transparency, and access, all of which have an impact on other aspects of sustainable development, is more important than managing bureaucrats and procedures.



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An Ode to Mathematics

In algebra's realm, variables roam
Solving for x, the unknown's home
Equations unfold, like a mysterious tale
Unlocking secrets, as the numbers prevail

Trigonometry's waves, in circular motion, sway
Angles and triangles, in a mathematical way
Sines, cosines, and tangents in harmony entwine
Unraveling mysteries of the cosmic design

Geometry's shapes, in space and time, reside
Points, lines, and planes, side by side
Angles and theorems, in perfect harmony
Building bridges to infinity

Calculus's lens, on change and motion, focuses
limits and derivatives, the unknown discloses
integrals and rates, in dynamic flow
unveiling the beauty, as the math grows



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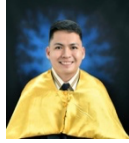
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From Badge to Blackboard: A Journey of Service

A tap, a swipe, a disappearing dream,
From handcuffed hope to a brighter gleam.
Pixels whisper lessons learned,
A beacon of light when the future turned.

Caps off, but passion was still strong,
A new cohort of teachers will right the wrong.
Truth and justice reign supreme,
In the college building, endless minds will dream.

The badge once descended with pride,
A chalkboard replaced with no boat ride.
One moment of choice paved my way,
But who was beneath the day?

The siren fades, the echoes remain,
But with presence comes the will that sustains.
In words that teach, in hearts that bond,
My calling to serve continues to respond.

A measured voice builds a bridge of pain,
Between the sun and the rain.
While last year's lessons won't come alive,
From wiser hearts, new fire will ignite.

Service is accurate, straight, and clear,
One roar at a time, I ease fears.
A badge to blackboard- both unite in the way,
Both serve the world's guiding light every day.



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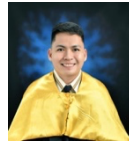
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The Breathtaking Gift of Life

The day began with the sun just peeking through the clouds as Ronaldo set out on his routine journey to work. The streets were bare, the wind brushed against his face, when out of nowhere a dog ran into the street.

"Not now!" Ronaldo said to himself, swerving to miss it.

The motorcycle slid on the ground. Tires squealed. He fell off the ground. It hurt to lift himself off the pavement.

Gripping his left arm, Ronaldo moaned, "Ahh... my shoulder."

The street was empty. There was no one. Gritting his teeth, Ronaldo managed to pull himself back on the motorcycle, and in pain, he said it to himself, "Just... make it to Jaro. No stopping now."

After what seemed an age, Ronaldo arrived at the police station. An officer intervened.

"Sir! What happened?"

"Accident... my shoulder," Ronaldo gasped weakly.

The officer immediately called for help. Soon, Ronaldo was on their way to St. Paul's Hospital.

A few hours later, Ronaldo lay in the stark white of the hospital's empty room after surgery, exhausted. His cousin, Ann, sat next to him, monitoring him nervously.

"Why do you think these things keep happening to you?" she asked quietly. "Four accidents. You must be used to it by now?"

Ronaldo gave a slight smile. "Maybe life's reminding me of something...something I keep forgetting."

Ann shook her head. A tear rolled down her cheek. "And what might that be?"

"That living is a gift," he said. "Whenever I wake up, whenever I hear someone laugh, even the pain... it means I'm still here. I forgot how to be thankful for that."

They were quiet for a moment. The heart monitor kept beeping steadily in the background.

"At this moment, you sound different," Ann said.

"Because everything feels different," Ronaldo said. "I look at people differently now...their lives, their problems, their joy... It's all the more important. Even the little things feel bigger, as though the smaller things seemed more meaningful than I previously thought."

Ann squeezed Ronaldo's hand slightly. "So what will you do?"

Ronaldo turned towards the window and looked out at the sunset as it disappeared. "Thank God for today. Value every breath. Live as if every moment really matters."

A soft smile touched Ann's lips. "There is a saying," she reminded him. "Life is not about the number of breaths we take, but rather the moments that take our breath away."

Ronaldo closed his eyes and said softly, "That's it. And this... this is one of those moments."



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Elevating Standards: A Deep Dive into Environmental Compliance

In the depths where waters flow and skies embrace,
We cherish the world, our sacred space.
With wisdom and nurture, we rise to defend,
To mend and protect, our efforts won't end.

Compliance charts a steady course,
A promise to use a kinder force.
To care for the rivers, air, and trees,
With wisdom floating gently in the breeze.

Each standard set is a guiding light,
Reminds us of our noble fight.
Caretakers of the earth and tide,
United in our duty, side by side.

With careful strides and open palms,
We celebrate existence, weaving psalms.
Healing wounds, restoring grace,
And soaring beyond the huge embrace.

Audits, laws, and hearts unite,
Restraining greed and careless plight.
They forge a future pure and clear,
Where justice flourishes, drawing near.

Let us plunge into the depths and reach new heights,
Elevating our identity with all our might.
For within compliance, a glimmer of hope shines,
Creating a greener world where safety aligns.



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Unlocking Opportunities: Nanotechnology for a Sustainable Future

In a world too tiny for our eyes to see,
A universe full of mystery.
Nanotechnology softly speaks, vibrant and clear,
Unlocking dreams with rays of light, so near.

From atoms shaped with tender loving care,
New futures blossom in the open air.
They whip up solutions, sturdy and neat,
To mend the earth and make our lives sweet.

In solar cells, the sunlight shines bright,
They power our dreams, a true delight.
Cleaner water and skies so clear,
These tiny wonders bring us cheer.

They make steel stronger, they restore the land,
They place tomorrow in our hands.
With every bond, a golden opportunity is made for us,
To patch up the world, our past has deceived us.

With steadfast thoughts and brave desires,
They weave together knowledge and fire.
A leafy way, a melody bright,
To lift the weak and bring them light.

Unlocking paths both vast and bright,
Nanotech weaves a world of light.
Sustainable dreams take flight anew,
A luminous dawn awaits, crafted just for you.



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A Digital Lifeline: Why IT Competence Matters for Students with Special Needs in the 21st Century

Information Technology (IT) literacy is now crucial for special-needs students in the digital age. IT literacy is the competence developed for utilizing various technologies, including email, smartphones, and online learning systems, to solve problems and accomplish tasks, resulting in increased student engagement in education and improved social inclusion (21K School, 2025). IT literacy is particularly important for students with disabilities, as it enables them to access educational materials and social opportunities that might have been previously inaccessible.

Assistive technology is fundamental in this sense, as it supplies specialized resources (e.g., screen readers, speech-to-text technology, adapted keyboards) to support the ability of children with disabilities to access digital information (Recite Me, 2025). These tools have capabilities that not only engage students in developing academic skills but also introduce them to the world of digital society, thereby closing the gap between students with and without disabilities (Utah Permian Basin University, 2025). Research has pointed out that there is considerable evidence supporting the use of assistive technology in promoting independence, positively impacting academic performance, and boosting self-confidence among learners with disabilities (Shinohara & Wobbrock, 2016; Mehrjou, 2023).

Furthermore, IT competence is not only a matter of utilizing technology in the most basic sense; it also entails acquiring general life skills such as time management, communication, and problem-solving, which are essential for educational achievements as well as future employment of students (Atlantis Press, 2023). Assistive technology can enhance these skills by personalizing instruction and delivering targeted assistance, which in turn may help alleviate learning difficulties and increase academic engagement (21K School, 2025; PubMed, 2021).

However, there are significant obstacles to overcome to make students with special needs IT literate. Several studies have identified common issues, including the absence of adapted assistive devices, a lack of resources in schools, teachers lacking knowledge of assistive technology, and inadequate professional development (Copley & Ziviani, 2004; ERIC, 2024). In the Philippines, budgetary restraints, technological issues, and the immediate readiness of teachers were identified as the primary barriers to implementing special education (Luz et al., 2021). Assistive technologies cannot be leveraged for students if they do not help, which can, in turn, inhibit teacher and student skills development.

In addition, cognitive, sensory, or physical disabilities can also interfere with the successful application of aids, necessitating ongoing support and customized solutions for these individuals (PubMed, 2021; Inclusive Education Initiative, 2024). Opportunities to use assistive technology are inconsistent worldwide, and many students with disabilities are unable to maximize the potential of such devices. For their effects to be maximized, assistive



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technologies should be strategically introduced in classes, accompanied by continuous teacher training and institutional support (ESADE Research, 2024).

Last but not least, empowering students with special needs with IT literacy is a prerequisite for their participation in the "information society." With fair access to assistive technology and extensive teacher training, these students can overcome obstacles, engaging as active producers and designers in the digital space. Such inclusion is beneficial not only for their academic success but also for their social integration and ability to fully participate in society today (Recite Me, 2025; 21K School, 2025).

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