

---

# How to become an internationally recognized, multi-awarded student

**Just keep Facebook-ing. Works during quarantine. Definitely not clickbait!**

International art recognition, winning countless design contests, and actual career development. Those are the milestones I have achieved in the span of 1 year.

**INSERT PIC Collage symph, simala, stat, radaza**

I might have to brag to get my point across. Please note: comparison and self-pity are natural side effects upon feasting your eyes on my accomplishments. I know how I sound like somebody who could really use a sucker punch right now but hey, at least you are now in my shoes a few years ago (P.S They don't smell). 'Cause back then, I was a person fueled by jealousy and zeal. But I guess I'll be leaving this story for another article. You guys will be fine with a cliffhanger for now.

## Thanks for the success, Facebook, Inc.

Let's set the clock to spin backwards one year ago. 2020 B.C. Perfect!

### **Simala Sanctuary de Cebu**

I was doom scrolling on Facebook like everybody else at that point of time. Then, blam! Shoved to my face was news of Overwatch, my favourite shooter game, hosting an in-game map concept art competition open to South East Asia. The reward? A Nintendo Switch. So like every other gamer-artist-hopefuls, I ignored it. Because all I was and am capable of are a few crooked stick men. Then, on the day of the deadline, I realized I was capable of Photo Manipulation (or in common terms, Photoshop-ing). So I spent 6 hours on the night before the deadline to whip up something decent for an in-game map. I had to iterate three times! First, I tried using the modern SM Seaside, then I used my photos from Korea to piece together a decent view. But no, my face was in it. So I would cringe all the time in further refinement. Until I finally decided on Simala because nothing culturally screams Philippines like this historically and sacred church. It was a pressuring, but therapeutic night. Fast forward a few months of campaigning for votes, I bagged 6th on the skill-based rating, and 3rd on the vote-based rating. A nice feat on its own, but did I mention I got tons of media exposure as well?

## INSERT VIDEOS OF INTERVIEW AND FB / NEWS FEATURES

“But Carl, weren’t you gonna teach our readers on how to become a multi-awarded student?”

Well, yes. But how was I supposed to make myself credible? Alright, time for the meat. Remember how I said how it was a pressure but therapeutic night. Well, that’s the crucial point: I was having fun! And, no. Before you argue how fun should be stress-free, tell me what made your favourite games fun. It was the challenge, right?

And that right there, ladies, gentlemen, and STECians is how we should do our “passion hunting”. We should constantly keep on exploring and see if we find fun in the process of doing it. Although I used that contest to prove my point, art actually is just a hobby for me. **I still can’t draw.** My genuine passion lies in creating solutions. Cue, my next story on how my app concept, Stat—Your Virtual Clinic was created.

### **Stat—Your Virtual Clinic**

I had just finished my gaming session for the day when a friend reminisced via Facebook Messenger. Upon further communication, I found out about the sad situation my friend, unable to go out for medical treatment because of multiple unforeseen circumstances. That flicked the switch on my head: “Why don’t I bring the hospital to my friend?”. There also happened to be another competition that appeared itself unto me during my Facebook doom scrolling session on the San Francisco Design University’s search for a relevant app concept in response to COVID-19. And so, with the help of my girlfriend, I discovered almost everything about Telemedicine. So I used my trusty Ice Bear drawing pad (yes, that Ice bear from We Bare Bears™) and sketched out the layout of my envisioned app.

### **Get pictures?**

After 2 weeks of tireless designing and user feedback. I finally submitted my entry.

### **APP PREVIEW SHOTS**

And another 2 weeks later, I wake up to the winner's announcement with our names in first place. We got 20,000.00 PHP (*I’m proud to announce this since this amount is already depleted—it has become my*

*new internals for my Gaming PC!)*

## MY GAMING PC FROM NOTION

Soon after that I was then privately messaged by Albert Padin himself of [Sympy.co](https://sympy.co), a company and a person I've always ogled my eyes on (no homo) every time I go to a Google Convention because he speaks so well. He offered me an internship. Presumably because I let him try the app concept out and asked for feedback.

So, what did we learn after reading through the 2 success stories? It's one simple thing actually: **always doom scroll on Facebook.**

— Carl 2021

## Jokes aside, here's the actual how-to section and the very reason you read this article

DISCLAIMER: I extracted these recommendations from my personal experiences. Wisdom, if you may. I would like to point out this is not a one-size-fit-all solution to capable of catering to every unique individual.

**Social Media is a gold mine for opportunities.**

*Teach* the Social Media platform of your choice to feed you contests. Company-hosted, government-hosted, be it from big names, or starting Facebook pages. You are the one who makes the final call. The algorithm or the logic behind them is to show them **what they think** is something you'd be interested in. You can do so by interacting contest-related posts in the form of liking, commenting, clicking the links, and sharing.

**Always try out new things.**

Don't let lack of experience stop you. Stat was actually my first attempt in UI, UX, & App design. Simala Sanctuary de Cebu was my amongst my baby steps, specifically, it was my second photo manipulation piece. Yet God has graciously given me the gift of victory.

**The internet is your best friend.**

Google, google, google! People say the internet is full of resources, but they do almost always just leave it there. *Now what?* Ranging from online courses to short how-tos. The internet is filled with information to the brim! There is no shame in looking up tutorials and simple Google searches like "how to hack". What you're doing is still learning. Just don't get this stuck in this thing called *tutorial hell*. Where we eternally choose to follow along tutorials forever and getting the fundamentals

learned never.

### **Get involved and/or get into a commitment**

Think you're decent at graphic design? Use your skills for the greater good. An example of this is to volunteer to be in charge of the graphics for an initiative. This is speaking from [experience](#). With this, you will be forced to hone your craft even when you do not feel like it because a certain community needs your output. Resulting into a meaningful use of your time (and extra smiles for the people you have helped).

### **Do not fear failure and embarrassment**

Let's use the scenario of online classes. You think you've got the right answer, but turns out you were wrong, then you're going to think about it when you sleep and fear how this loss of confidence will block you from potential success for a significant chunk of your life. Instead of moping around, think about it this way:

- Will this matter to me 10 seconds from now?
- How about 10 minutes from now?
- Will this still affect me 10 days from now?
- 10 months from now?
- **10 years** from now?

You will then be able to stand up and say, **“this doesn't matter at all!”** and then place your spare thinking times into things that actually matter. Note that you can also use this technique as your metric for risk-taking.

### **Have fun!**

Honestly, this tip is so cliché, you'd roll your eyes over it. But aren't there times where you lose yourselves doing a certain something? That's the magical moment. That's where Disney Princesses start to sing and eventually, animals around you will too.

## **Finally, identify your passion.**

I know, I know, it's one of those things that are really easy to say, but also really hard to do. “What do I even know what I'm good at”, “I'm actually interested in a lot of things, so how do I sift through them all”. You might think you sound really hopeless and pathetic, but let me tell you that is actually very normal and is part one of two phases in our professional lives.

1. Saying yes to almost everything or having multiple interests with equal levels of passion. This part is the exploratory stage. The learning and growing stage. Once we

- finally recognize the fun, when we're finally fulfilling a task that does not feel like a task, we go to the next...
2. Saying no to almost everything. This is when we develop deep expertise, spend half your life solving problems relevant, and focusing ourselves to one field.

You've spent a handful of your time reading this. Wow. But just like after every effortful activity. Don't forget to rest and de-stress. Because at the end of the day, we are still just humans after all. With human lives, human needs, and human desires. As for me, that's gaming. Now excuse me, as I continue to click all the heads that come unto my cursor.

BONUS: An achievement tracker is not only a great way to boost your self-esteem, it is also a necessary step to prepare you for your future career and college. Check [mine](#) out if you're interested in its anatomy. Good luck!

[View original.](#)

Exported from [Medium](#) on October 31, 2025.