

## **CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE MIND TOWARDS EXCELLENCE**

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Excellence is about how we contribute to others. What goes around, comes around. But what's that supposed to mean? Let me tell you a story... There was a carpenter who was very good at his work. The man delivered his best and dedicated his entire life to his profession and the services provided to his employer. Having reached old age, he went to his employer to inform him about his intention to retire from service but the employer did not appreciate losing a dedicated worker. Since the carpenter had grown old and wanted to be relieved, the employer gave him his final assignment of constructing a house. However, the carpenter accepted the assignment unwillingly and did his work without any interest for months yet somehow completed his final assignment. And then the carpenter went to his employer and told him about the completion of the construction. The employer then asked the carpenter to come the next day, as that would be his final working day. The next day, the employer gave the carpenter the keys to the newly constructed house as a gift for his retirement and thanked him for his long service of dedication and excellence. The carpenter was surprised as he had not realized that the house he had made without any interest actually belonged to him and regretted not maintaining enthusiasm and excellence during the construction. If he only had he maintained excellence toward the end of his career, he would have ended up with a better home. Ladies and gentlemen, what I am trying to say is that if you deliver something good, you get back good things in return. If you deliver something poorly, you get back bad things in return. And that is the moral of the story...what goes around, comes back to us.

Excellence is about striving to be better, with an eye to delivering quality products and services. People are not born with excellence for we cultivate it over a long period of time through hard work, experiences, and knowledge that we gain throughout the process of

learning. It emerges from continuous improvement over the years and is a corollary of performance and passion.

Creativity and innovation are at the spirit of excellence. Innovation can be broadly thought of as new knowledge and ideas, new ways of looking at things, new methods and procedures, or products that have value. It contains the idea of output, of actually producing or doing something differently, making something happen, or implementing something new. It almost always involves hard work; persistence and perseverance are necessary as many good ideas never get followed through and developed. Creativity, on the other hand, is an active process necessarily involved in innovation and is a learning habit that requires skill as well as a specific understanding of the contexts in which creativity is being applied. Moreover, creative process is at the heart of innovation.

Being creative and innovative is not so much about revolutionary ideas or new inventions that change the world because it is about individual growth that is achieved through small insights. Creativity and innovation are primary to all disciplines and an important part of the learning process, forming an important dimension of learning how to learn. Being creative requires reflection, encourages engagement, and develops confidence and responsibility. The ability and inclination to be creative is essential to living a successful and fulfilled life, and it is valued in higher education and the professional workplace. Furthermore, learning involves challenging, refining, and improving understanding by being made to think hard. Sometimes, to understand new concepts and broaden perspectives, our approaches to thinking need to be creative, imaginative, and lateral or incorporating new ways of looking at things, as well as linear or using existing patterns of thought.

I strongly believe that we are all born with a creative instinct and that all people have creative potential within themselves. When we were young, we naturally engage in play – a

state when the imagination is used to try out situations and possibilities. A piece of paper becomes an airplane, pieces of bricks become a tower, a toy comes alive. As young children mature and move through their academic careers, creativity can be stifled as an unintended consequence of other pressures. Learners can become afraid of making mistakes if they only receive recognition for giving an answer that the teacher is looking for rather than valid authentic thinking and ideas. The culture of “one right answer” stops learners from being willing to make mistakes for they quickly learn to guess what answer the teacher has in their minds and there goes the thought; “many of us have been taught that the best ideas are in someone else’s head.”

Today, there is a temptation to simply try to get through the changes unscathed, to focus on the data, and get the best possible place in league tables. However, this short-term outlook is a wall that blocks genuine improvement as each action becomes a response to the latest crisis or government diktat in our country. What is needed instead is a culture of excellence that permeates every classroom, department, school, or university; a focus not on simply getting the best grades, but on getting the best quality education and creating a lifelong passion for learning. And with that, I believe that West Visayas State University, a hub in the development and enhancement of creative works and discovery of innovative ideas, and continually produce quality, research, and service-oriented professionals soar greater heights and continue to develop life-long learners empowered to generate knowledge and technology and transform communities as agents of change.

Indeed, we cannot think creatively unless we have the knowledge with which to think creatively because creativity represents a balance between knowledge and freeing oneself of that knowledge. Let us keep soaring greater heights by nurturing world-class excellence through creativity and innovation. Basta Taga-West, padayon sa pagiging the Best!