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Design Thinking - A Perspective of San Go D

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The Chairperson Mrs. Sunita Kohli, Director Professor Vinod Singh, the faculty, staff and students of SPA Bhopal and all ladies and gentlemen, I wish to join all of you in congratulating the graduating students of SPA. I also wish to congratulate the teachers and the parents of students. We wish to thank you for the bringing up the students as fine graduates.

While congratulating the graduating students today, I also would like to welcome them to a new era, a new school, a new education called Life Long Learning or LLE in short. Welcome to this new era where the whole world is your school. There are no class rooms. There are no boundaries. There are no formal examinations. There is no curriculum. Still this learning environment is going to stay with you as a shadow for your entire life. If you want to be a smart student of this LLE program, you have to acquire life skills, you have to acquire knowledge that will be useful and you have to develop a thinking mind. With these three tools in your kitty, you will be able to navigate your life. Launching you on your professional career is the outcome of your formal education which you have concluded today with a degree. Travelling the professional and

personal journey from now onwards with these three tools in your kitty will be the aim of lifelong learning.

Fortunately, the formal education starts with lots of creativity and innovation. Recall your days in kindergarten or elementary school. The learning was fun and play. Slowly and slowly, the learning became the drudgery. When you come to college, the fun part is reduced and the boring part becomes more. In fact, they say that we have the left side of brain and the right side of brain. The right side is creative, imaginative and is able to do contemplation. This part of the brain is hardly developed in the formal education in schools and colleges. I do feel that design thinking requires the right side of the brain. The left side of the brain is more analytical and hence is developed through our formal education. What is more important is the balanced development of the brain. There is one thing that we learn from Mother Nature - balance. All natural things are in balance. This balance is the key element of life. It is also true that those who have developed a balance brain with both right and left parts will lead a successful and happy life.

The simple model of skill acquisition is to focus on the five sense organs of the body - eyes, ears, tongue, nose and touch. One should learn through sharp observations using eyes. One should be able to hear the right words and the right tune with our ears. After listening and comprehending well, one should be able to speak clearly with few words. One should be able to work with his or her hands. This skill set is one of the most important skills in the lifelong learning school. In order to navigate the journey of life, one should be able sense moment. Finally, in order to be sensitive to fellow human beings, one should be able to understand the feelings of others through touch sense. In other words, if one is able to sharpen all the

sense organs and process the signals that we all continuously receive from these sensors, it will be a true education.

The signal processing is done by the mind using the left and the right sides of the brain. The mind generates the output signal after due processing which results in our actions. The processor, namely the mind, should be calm, should be noise-free, should be able to compare the signal with the knowledge base of mind, should be able to do the analytical as well as creative data processing and come up with a decision. In short, the mind should be a good designer!

So, the question that I wish to raise today is: What is design thinking?

I believe that all design thinking involves the creative thinking. However, all creative thinking is not the design thinking. So, there is some common intersection between the design thinking and the creative thinking. There are some unique features as well. Design thinking is focused on the creative exploration of solutions of a specific need, a specific problem. Creative thinking may not explore the solutions to a problem. Design thinking involves conversion of the ideas into the artefacts. In other words, the realization aspect of an idea is an integral part of design thinking. Since these artefacts are physical in nature, one needs to have the capability of analysis in design thinking. So, besides creativity, one needs to have the capability of analysis and realization in design thinking.

Lateral learning from different other branches of knowledge are very important in design thinking. The aspect of psychology is a dominant part of mind thinking. So, a good background of how a creation is perceived by users in a psychological manner is very important for a designer. Please remember the psychological make-up is based on cultural background as well.

In short, the aspects such as form, shape, color and many other attributes which affect the aesthetics of a design are indeed based on the psychological aspect. The sociological aspects of a design are also very relevant. A design is placed in a society and hence the social norms and social rules indeed determine the acceptability of a design. The economics of a design is equally important. Many designers do not consider such an aspect while creating a prototype. However, when a design is adapted for large scale consumption or manufacture, the economic aspects are indeed very dominant. Finally, I do wish to emphasize that the philosophical aspects of design are the most pervasive attributes. These may not be explicit in the foreground but are very much present all around in a design. Hence, a designer is ultimately a philosopher. One can see the history and see that all great architects and designers like Leonardo de Vinci were ultimately the philosophers.

Design thinking also requires a very good exposure to arts. The chemistry of color is well understood when one does lot of painting. The question of balance and grace is well understood when one learns different forms of dance. The flow, the coordination, the frequency of a design can be appreciated if one has an exposure to music. A design work is a group activity and the work in theatre provides good exposure to the group culture. Design is so visual that photography and films are windows through which one can understand these aspects of design. Finally, the different forms of literature such as novels, poetry, stories and plays are all manifestations of creative mind. All these forms are creations of designers.

In short, the design thinking is a mind-set and not a process. All the activities are pursued to create a positive mind-set. This is a lifelong journey. It eventually develops into a habit. A creative mind-set is the greatest gift for a human being. I do feel that

creative thinking germinates as an outcome of transitions. The transition is a very important phenomenon that provides the birth or death of creations. Birth and death are the transitions of life. Day and night are transitions of Mother Nature. All cycles or cyclic processes involve transitions. New ideas germinate at the time transitions and they die also as transitions. Hence, I do recommend that observe, understand, learn from and absorb the moments of transitions. This is what design thinking is all about.

I call it Design Innovation Learning or DIL for short. Welcome to this lifelong learning school of DIL. In this school, you are the student, you are the teacher, you decide the curriculum, and you judge the performance.

I wish to thank the Director and the Chairperson of SPA today for inviting me to this function. I also wish to once again congratulate all the graduating students and wish them a very successful professional life and a very happy personal life.

JAI HIND!