Creating a Better Future: Implications from Futures Imagination Education in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

As the world is changing and transforming at a fast pace, students today are expected to face more challenges in the future. For example, they need to prepare for jobs that do not yet exist; use technologies that haven't been invented yet, or even solve problems that have not been discovered yet (Gunderson, Jones, & Scanland, 2004). The current study proposed that futures imagination is the key to better prepare students to face unknown challenges.

This article introduces the development process and results of Futures Imagination Education (FIE) program in compulsory education in Taiwan. Since 2011, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan started promoting the Futures Imagination Education (FIE) program in all levels of education through different action plans for 4 consecutive years. The current study examined the "Grades 1-9 Action Plan" and its teacher education workshops throughout this period. The Grades 1-9 Action Plan was implemented in the compulsory education.

The subjects of this study are teachers who participated in the Action Plan; they learned how to implement futures imaginative approach in their classrooms. Through their cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection from 2011 to 2015, they reported their findings through written reports, and then we collected their results through interviews and surveys.

The results showed that students' show higher learning interests, and will have a more in-depth view of the future, which is expected to prepare students to adapt to their futures, and this contributes to their wellbeing.

Keywords: Futures imagination, creativity, futures, imagination, student wellbeing.

Overview of the FIE Program

Action Research Cycle and Participants

	Period	Number of Participants	Content
Cycle 1	August, 2009-July, 2011	9 professors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Literature review- Develop course outline- Guidelines for teaching futures imagination- Courses in universities
Cycle 2	August, 2011-January, 2012	25 schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trial in compulsory education
1 st workshop	January, 2012	180 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Four-stage model of futures imagination education
Cycle 3	February, 2012-July, 2012	133 schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Modifying the model of futures imagination education
2 nd workshop	July, 2012	214 participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Revision to 3-stage model

Action Research Cycle and ipants

Stages	Contents		
	Probable	Possible	Preferable
Imagining	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Predict the future with current situations- Trend analysis- One future- Present → future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Romanticist imagination- Utopian- Many futures- Present → futures/ Futures → present	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rational imagination- Value choosing- Personal preferred future- Future → present
Nurturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reforming and combining past experiences- Initiating creative ideas- Problem-solving abilities- The link between futures imagination and creativity- Outlining future images, envisioning future problems		
Transforming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Transforming imagination and creativity into innovation- Taking action- Transforming the present is the link to the future		

Conclusions and Recommendations

The FIE is a reorientation process that redirects students to create a possible better future, bringing a positive attitude to face the future, and enables or empowers the younger generation to adapt to the changing futures.

The implications are two fold:.

1. Encouraging teachers to implement Futures Imagination into their curriculum can enrich their teaching resources.
2. Preliminary findings support the notion that Futures Imagination in Education and students' learning interests are significantly related.

With the best use of the skills and tools of teaching futures imagination would, in the end, lead to a better wellbeing and better future for our next generation.