

A Place-Based And Action-Oriented Course To Cultivate The Environmental Citizen Leadership For The Youth In Taiwan

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Abstract

The environmental citizen is a key factor to promote a sustainable society. Because of the credentialism in the traditional Eastern society, young people are not familiar with the sustainable issues of the society. It is the last chance to encourage the youth to concern the society and empower them to make the world better in the period of higher education. But most courses of sustainable education focus more on the knowledge and less on the reflection of the sustainable issues of the whole society in Taiwan (Hsu, 2009).

The study reported a two-year development process and effect evaluation of a place-based and action-oriented course for the youth. The course based on IVAC mode and social learning is aimed to increase the environmental literacy and enhance the action skill of the youth. After two year development, the final four-stage course based on IVAC mode and social learning includes “issues investigation”, “vision sharing”, “action experience” and “reflection and celebration”. There are every 3-hours class in 16 weeks and 2 field trip of water and air issues. The pedagogy of the course are lecture, field trip, life storytelling, world cafe discussion and design think (future scenario). In sum, the place-based and action-oriented course could effectively improve the youth concerns and skill for a sustainable society in Taiwan. The implications of action-oriented course for the youth are in the report.

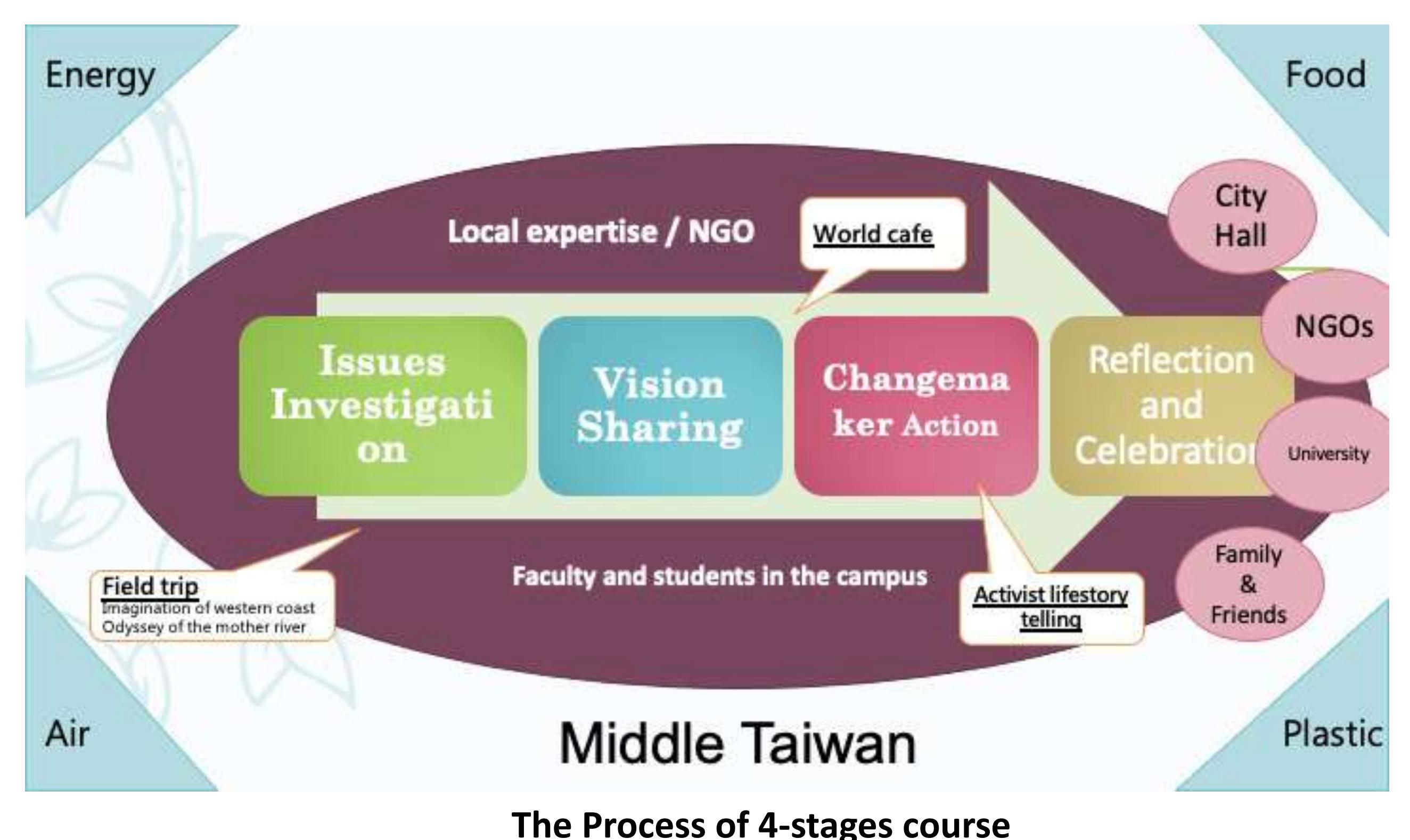
Description of the project

- Because of the credentialism in the traditional Eastern society, young people are not familiar with the sustainable issues of the society. Most ESD-related courses focus more on the knowledge and less on the reflection of the sustainable issues of the whole society in universities of Taiwan (Hsu, 2009).
- The study reported a two-year development process and effect evaluation of a place-based and action-oriented course for the youth. The course based on IVAC mode and social learning is aimed to increase the environmental literacy and enhance the action skill of the youth.



Materials and Methods

- The study used mixed-method to evaluate the effect of the course, which including questionnaire for environmental literacy(Zhu, 2015) and interview for students' action experience and social learning.
- After two year development, the final four-stage course based on IVAC mode and social learning includes “issues investigation”, “vision sharing”, “action experience” and “reflection and celebration”. There are every 3-hours class in 16 weeks and 2 field trip of water and air issues.
- The pedagogy of the course are lecture, field trip, life storytelling, world cafe discussion and design think (future scenario).



Results

- The participant of the first year course are 35 students. There are significant improvement in knowledge of issues, environmental responsibility, environmental hope, skill of issues investigation and evaluation, skill of public participation and environmental action in the independent groups , paired-sample t test.
- In the second year, 40 students have significant improvement in knowledge of issues, environmental responsibility, environmental sensitivity, skill of issues investigation and evaluation and skill of public participation in the ANCOVA test.
- For two-year observation and interview, the study found the process of action-reflection-modification-action on local sustainable issues, which includes air, energy, plastic reduce, animal welfare and food waste, could enhance young people's action skill as well as their concern of sustainable issues.

Conclusions

In sum, the place-based and action-oriented course could effectively improve the youth concerns and skill for a sustainable society in Taiwan. The implications of action-oriented course for the youth are the following:

- Students agreed that discussion skill in the course (e.g. world café) helped them so much through understanding the difference and concerns of different groups.
- Through social learning process of interacting with local people on sustainable issues, students feel they had more cohesion and were empowered to do more action.
- The teaching strategies of vision sharing and life story telling empower their environmental hope.