

Expanded Imagination for Ethics Literacy Education

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Imagination is generally regarded as central to scientific and engineering research. Imaginative researchers cultivated through proper education are likely to prevail in their academic performance. On the other hand, ethics is seldom thought as an essential element of good research, perhaps except for the matter of research integrity and the need for public accountability of national funding.

I argue that this conceptual separation of imagination from ethics is inappropriate and even disastrous for scientific and technological research in the 21st century, especially in the context of East Asian countries including Taiwan and South Korea. In order to tackle a number of crucial issues related to scientific and technological developments in their societies, scientists and engineers in East Asian countries become more and more in need of what I call, ‘expanded imagination’, the enriched imagination with social and ethical awareness. I shall discuss why ‘expanded imagination’ is required and how the education for cultivating it is implemented in Korea, relying on teaching experience in my university. Then I shall suggest a few (hopefully helpful) implications for Taiwanese efforts in the direction. I will also mention some related issues regarding the final aim (and suitable contents) of liberal arts education, currently discussed in South Korea.