FUTURE PLAY WORKSHOP WITH USING A PATTERN LANGUAGE FOR NURTURING AN EXCITING LIFE: A FOCUS GROUP REPORT

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In this focus group, we conducted a workshop where participants experienced a novel method, enabling them to conceptualize how they can apply patterns from the Pattern Languages of practices tailored to their specific circumstances. In this workshop, each participant envisioned a future where they actively implement a particular pattern. By role-playing as their future selves in that scenario, participants simulated the application of "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life.".

Additional Key Words and Phrases: pattern language, workshop, life design, future immersion, exciting life

1. INTRODUCTION

Each pattern in a pattern language is written at a level of detail between the concrete and the abstract. When readers want to put these patterns into practice, they must customize the solution according to their unique situations. While this opportunity for creativity and individuality is one of the strengths of pattern languages, those unfamiliar with a pattern might find it difficult to grasp a concrete image of its implementation. Hence, Iba Laboratory has traditionally conducted dialogue workshops, allowing participants to build a tangible implementation image by hearing about others' experiences with patterns they have not yet encountered. This allows participants, even without personal experience with a pattern, to form a vivid understanding of its application by listening to multiple stories from familiar individuals. This approach has proven extremely effective, providing experiential insight to over 10,000 individuals.

Recently, Iba Laboratory has devised and started implementing a new kind of workshop, distinct from the dialogue-based ones – the "Future-Self Immersion Workshop." This workshop was first conducted in the focus group at the 30th Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs (PLoP 2023) and received positive responses from participants (Nitta et al., 2023). In this focus group, participants were divided into trios, with one person fully embodying their ideal future self while the other two acted as journalists, thoroughly inquiring about the protagonist's future accomplishments in the style of a hero interview. Participants rotated roles, ensuring everyone had the opportunity to be the protagonist.

The pattern language employed in this workshop is "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life." We crafted this set of patterns to guide individuals towards a more exciting life. Using this pattern language, participants immerse themselves in an ideal of their future, enact a scene of pattern practice, and undergo a simulated experience. What initially seems like a nonsensical narrative gradually gains an uncanny sense of reality, making the image of practicing the pattern more concrete.

2. WORKSHOP DISCRIPTION

For this workshop, we formed teams that conducted the exercises in either English or Japanese. Therefore, the workshop instructions and pattern materials were provided in both languages. First, we shared the overall flow with the workshop participants, then introduced "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life" which would be used in this workshop (figure 1 and 2). Next, we divided the participants into groups of three and had them move to any location they liked within the venue. Once divided into teams of three, two members take on the roles of journalists, and one is the interviewee (Figure 3). However, as this is a role-playing exercise, everyone eventually experiences being both an interviewee and a journalist.

Once everyone had been interviewed, each person carefully edited and drafted an article based on what their interviewee had talked about, taking responsibility for representing them accurately. After that, they took nice photos of each other that evoked the immersed future self, concluding the workshop. The next day, the workshop organizers edited the photos and articles into a magazine-style display (Figure 4 and 5).

The Future Play Workshop is conducted in the following steps:
1. Introduction to the workshop (10 min)
2. Introduction to "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life" (5 min)

3. Interview each other (10 mins × 3 people = 45 mins)
4. Take cool pictures of interviewees (10 min)
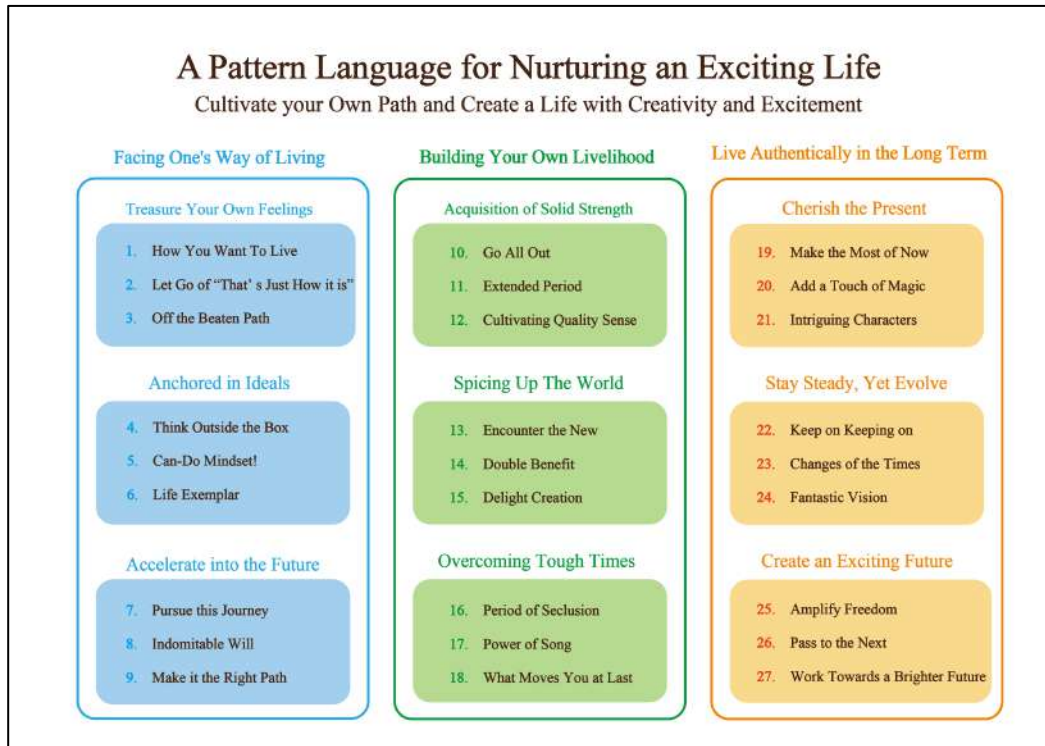5. Reflection and Discussion (15 min)

Figure 1: Overview of "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life" in English

Figure 2: Overview of "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life" in Japanese

Figure 3: Role-Playing as interviewer and interviewee in Teams of Three

Figure 4: Created Magazine-Style Articles

Figure 5: Display of the Articles

3. SURVEY RESULTS

Here, we introduce the survey results conducted after the workshop. Out of 29 participants, we received responses from 20. When asked, "Do you think participating in this workshop was worthwhile?," 95% respondents strongly agreed and agreed. Similarly, in response to the question, "Do you think participating in this workshop was fun?," all respondents strongly agreed and agree. Additionally, for the question "Did this workshop allow you to imagine your future?," 95% respondents strongly agreed and agreed. One participant commented, "Despite the limited time, it was a good opportunity to reflect on my values and future way of living."

While there were many positive comments, constructive feedback was also provided, such as: "Listening to the grand life plans of other participants made me feel like the walls within me were torn down!", "It was fascinating how I started to feel like I could do it as I kept talking. It was also fun to hear about the success stories of others."

On the other hand, we also received suggestions for improvement, such as: "Allowing a bit more time for thinking, like 5 minutes per interview time, might make it even better," "It would be beneficial to have a little more time to read through the patterns," and "I think it would be good to have a slightly larger time buffer for tasks like deciding roles and switching between interviewer, interviewee, and journalist roles." We will strive to incorporate the feedback received into the next workshop, making improvements to create an even better experience.

4. CONCLUSION

This report summarizes the focus group from the Future Play Workshop utilizing A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life that we conducted at the 10th Asian Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs, People, and Practices (AsianPLoP 2024). Workshop participants were able to imagine their future selves. By fully immersing as their future selves and being interviewed, with the interview expressed as an authentic article, attendees' ideal future images hidden inside them took concrete shape and came into awareness.

At the 30th Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs (PLoP 2023), we conducted the FUTURE-SELF IMMERSION WORKSHOP, a precursor to this workshop. The main difference from the previous workshop was the wider age range of participants, spanning from their 20s to their 70s. The utilized pattern language, "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life," primarily targets young people in their 20s who are struggling with their future. However, this workshop demonstrated that the pattern language is useful for people of all ages when contemplating their future selves.

The exhibited articles garnered significant attention not only from participants but also other conference attendees. Many participants carefully read each article, with some even documenting the experience by photographing the articles. Building on the positive response from participants at the PLoP 2023 Focus Group, we received further affirmative feedback from attendees. In addition to demonstrating the utility of "A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life," this workshop demonstrated a new, effective, and groundbreaking application of pattern languages, alongside the established dialogic workshop format.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCE

Nitta, R., Kanai, T., Ota, M., Adachi, S., and Iba, T., 2023, "Future-self Immersion Workshop with using A Pattern Language for Nurturing an Exciting Life" Focus Group Report, in *Proceedings of the 30th Conference on Pattern Languages of Programs (PLoP 2023)*.