

Report on 「#有你聽我故事」：

A Metacognitive Social Media Campaign For Undergraduate Students



Wu Yee Sun College, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

GEYS4010D: College Senior Seminar

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December 14, 2024

I. Introduction

This is a report on 「#有你聽我故事」, a social media campaign that aims to promote metacognition among undergraduate students through storytelling. The idea of this campaign stems from my identity as an educator who advocates personal growth among teenagers. While self-awareness is often regarded as a building block of self-growth, it is observed that not a lot of teenagers are cognitively engaging in the process of self-awareness per se, resulting in an inefficiency in maximising the potential for self-growth as they fail to identify and acknowledge feelings incurred from previous schemas. Supported by the metacognitive theory, this campaign can bolster undergraduate students' resilience and empowerment in two ways, namely (a) *affirming one's narrative identity* and (b) *getting closure*. Details of the campaign's rationale and operation will be outlined in this report, supplemented by a prototyping method that tests for the validity of the aforementioned expected outcomes.

II. Background

Over the past four years, I have participated in an extensive range of service-learning programmes. These instances, such as initiating a HKDSE mock examination for F.6 students and participating in the LEAD programme¹ as the leader of team South Africa, have shaped my role as an education advocate; because I feel very strongly about my role in witnessing and promoting growth among teenagers, including not only young kids, but also myself and peers. As a pre-service teacher, it is easy for me to see that many secondary school students are struggling with their personal relationships, academics, and life planning. Whenever I had spoken of these observations as a guest speaker in the past, be it on podcast² or radio broadcast³, I would receive a significant amount of resemblance shown by other undergraduate students. Under this line of thought, I argue that everyone can respond to the concerns of secondary school students through storytelling as a self-reflection exercise (just like what I did), especially undergraduate students since they have just graduated from secondary school. While the immediate response from secondary school students remains unknown, it is contended that storytelling has immense potential in prompting both further reflection and discussion.

¹ The Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD) programme is organised by the Office of Student Affairs, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. It offers outbound service-learning opportunities for CUHK students with the educational ethos of social responsibility, cultural appreciation, and global citizenship (OSA, 2024, February 7).

² The More I Fail As a Leader, The More I Grow Up (2024, September 15), in *Ordinary Teachers and Students* <https://open.spotify.com/episode/7h1SAU1NA0wFOItJkxoc1B?si=a47eb311f23e4794>

³ In RTHK R5's 「教學有心人」 (2023, April 17).

<https://podcast.rthk.hk/podcast/item.php?pid=356&year=2023&lang=zh-CN>

In light of this, semi-structured interviews were arranged with four undergraduate students to qualitatively identify and analyse their pain points. There were two rounds to each interview. In the first round, interviewees were asked to reflect on their secondary school life using the critical incident approach. Then, in the second round, interviewees were prompted to give any piece of advice to secondary school students nowadays and explain why they found it important. Correlation between some interviewees' schemas and the pieces of advice they gave were analysed in the following table:

Pseudonyms	Past schema(s)	Piece(s) of advice	Correlation
HL	“My parents wanted me to become a doctor or a professor... I was depressed, I felt like studying for them. I would have picked a programme that I liked.” (08:13)	“DSE is just a small part of life. Even if you screw it up, you will still have a lot of career pathways. What matters is the knowledge you have.” (26:25)	HL lingered with her parents' expectations, and studied something she would not have picked with her grades. It is now her belief that knowledge is what truly matters, not the expectations.
RH	“Having repeated, I have developed a negative character. This character has stayed since then... but if I hadn't repeat, I wouldn't have been a person looking for goals.” (24:55)	"You've got to believe that you're heading to the right direction, even when it doesn't seem to be." (31:43)	She has carried her unresolved emotions stemmed from repeating all the way to university. While she hated her repeat, she now recognises benefits of her repeat.

All interviewees made remarks based on what they were not able to achieve during their secondary school life. Now, it can be observed that they are trying to construct a narrative identity in the interviews, thereby validating their beliefs through communicating values with their stories, which evidently carried a sense a regret. The interviews show that this sense of regret is often overlooked, and thus unresolved. Without being cognitively aware of these thoughts, personal growth would then be hindered. Therefore, it can be construed that some

undergraduate students have failed to identify and acknowledge feelings based on past schemas. This introduces the objective of the campaign, which is to promote metacognition through storytelling.

III. Metacognition

Metacognition refers to a higher-order cognitive process that involves self-awareness, self-monitoring, and self-regulation (Schunk, 2008; Zimmerman & Moylan, 2009). It distinguishes itself from cognition as a practice that "thinks about thinking", through which whether a cognitive goal has been met is evaluated (Flavell, 1987; Livingston, 2003). For example, in our context, HL felt lost in her studies, so a possible metacognitive strategy she could have employed might be asking herself what and/or whom she was studying for as an evaluation. Metacognitive processes usually happen when cognitions fail to make sense, as the learner attempts to rectify the impasse (Roberts & Erdos, 1993). This aligns with the above interviews.

Metacognition is gaining traction in recent years. For instance, *How We Feel*, an app developed by Professor Marc Brackett from the Yale Child Study Centre and his colleagues from the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence, won the 2022 App Store Awards for cultural impact. Its rationale is to help users identify emotions they experience daily by accurately recording and describing them; and treating them as coordinates that navigate users through their daily lives. However, the attention towards metacognition in Hong Kong is barely even noticed. A lack thereof is prominent on mainstream social media platforms, as most of the content are created and branded based on entertainment principles, rather than an in-depth interaction between any two or more people. Under this sense, hardly can metacognition be intrigued. Therefore, this project aims to provide an interaction-based platform for metacognition to take place, filling a service gap that even the app has failed to address.

IV. Operation

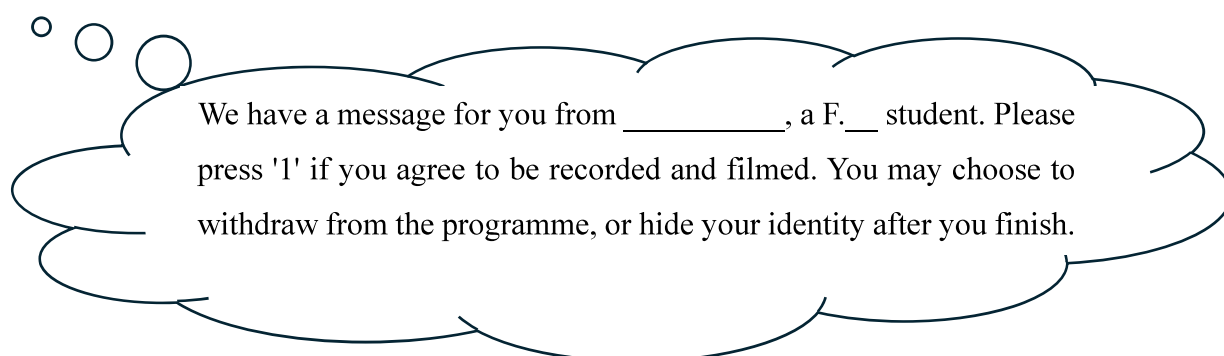
In this section, details of the operation of the proposed social media campaign 「#有你聽我故事」 will be outlined. As the campaign is interaction-based, concerns from secondary school students will have to be gathered first. It is hoped that their voices can elicit a response from undergraduate students by recalling their past schemas as they relate to their concerns. A template is provided as a reference.

Hi,

Recently, I feel _____ about...

What would you do if you were me? / What advice would you give me? Why? Thank you!

These concerns are pre-recorded and transmitted through a handset of a telephone when an undergraduate student picks it up. The undergraduate will then respond, and the response will be automatically recorded on the handset. Apart from voice recording, the entire process will be filmed from a distance, so prior approval must be obtained. It can be achieved by the following way:



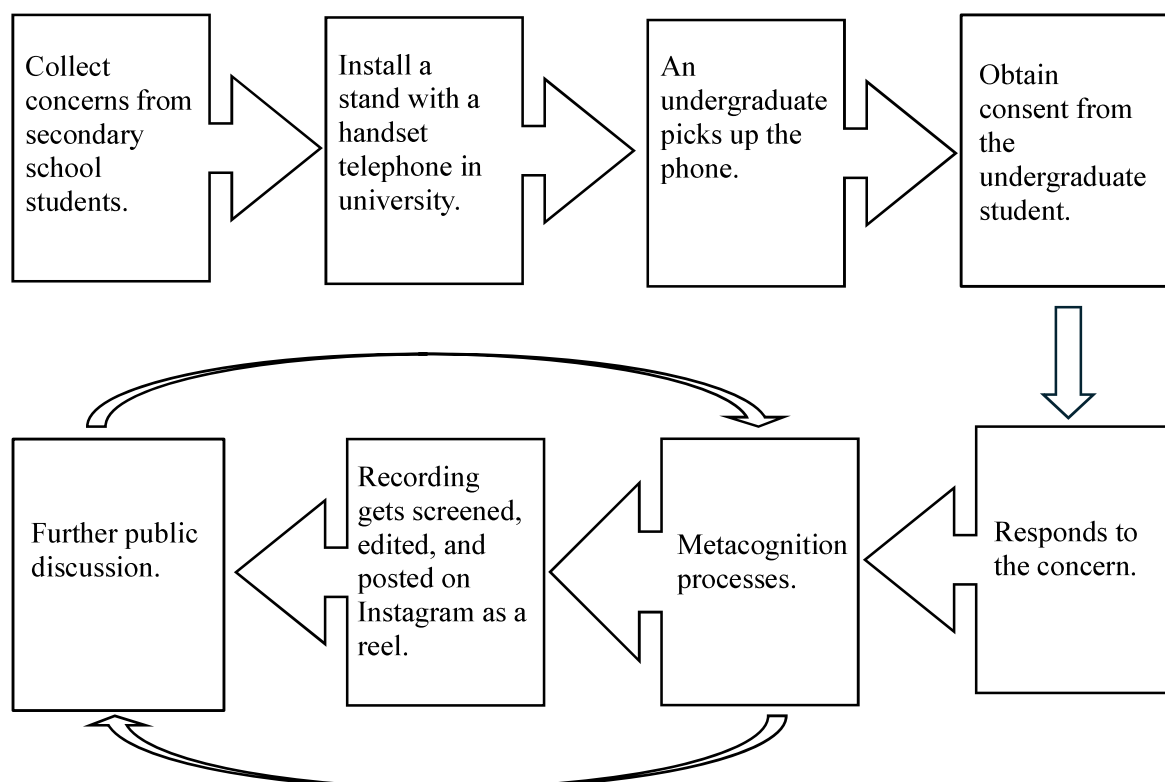
The recording (both audio and visual) obtained will be screened based on whether metacognition can be achieved. This will ensure a certain level of quality. Criteria may include:

- participant attempts to make sense of feelings; or
- participant reasonably evaluates the situation; or
- participant tries to provoke thought; or
- participant employs any other metacognitive strategies.

Selected footage from the recordings will be edited and posted on Instagram as a reel (a short video lasting around 1 minute). Once posted on the Internet, further discussion by the public will have a potential to draw out repeated cycles of metacognition processes as the storyteller (the undergraduate) revisit and reevaluate these materials.

The benefits of this campaign can be manifested through two different aspects, namely (a) *affirming one's narrative identity* and (b) *getting closure*. Storytelling is an integral element in narrative therapy, which was coined and largely explored by Michael White and David Epston (1989). Stories are powerful subconscious tools that help us make sense of ourselves and the world we live in. By telling stories, we create a narrative identity that drives the construction of self externally, because any cognitive dissonance (inconsistency between true self and narrative identity) will force our behaviour to alter until it matches with the ideal construct of self. In addition, when we reflect upon past schemas, we often encounter unresolved emotions that have lingered with us for prolonged periods of time. By retrospectively speaking of our experience, one may identify possible biases or misconceptions that could have been avoided or taken differently. In these metacognition processes, we get closure to these unresolved emotions by directly confronting them. This creates a mirroring effect: the advice you give to others is usually the advice you need to take yourself.

The aforementioned ideas in this section are summarised as follows:



V. Prototyping

Although street interviews are quite common in Hong Kong, the paradigm shift from entertainment to storytelling and reflection is rather novel, especially when portrayed on social media. Under this sense, the receptiveness of the project by potential participants shall be tested with the following questions:

1. Can undergraduate students relate to the concerns of secondary school students?
2. Can undergraduate students provide a response that shows evidence of metacognition?
3. How many undergraduate students are willing to pick up the phone?
4. How many undergraduate students are willing to be recorded and filmed?
5. Do the Instagram reels draw public discussion?

In light of this, the project can roll out initially as a by-invitation pop-up activity in campus. An Instagram account will be created to introduce metacognition concepts. With the belief that these followers are, at the very least, interested by the idea of metacognition, we can survey them regarding their interest to participate, thereby obtaining a rough number of potential participants. Then, these followers will be invited to participate in the project and contribute to the development of it by joining post-event focus group discussions. This way, qualitative feedback on their perceptions of the campaign can be gathered. In addition, their thoughts on storytelling, metacognition, and the potential impact of the campaign can also be understood. For example, do the concerns collected need to be more context-specific? What can be done to create a safe space for storytelling? They are certainly resources to be utilised for making modifications to the project.

VI. Conclusion

The 「#有你聽我故事」 campaign represents a promising opportunity to foster metacognition among undergraduate students through the power of storytelling. Currently, the concept of metacognition is highly underrepresented in Hong Kong, which highlights a great potential of this project in terms of creating a dynamic and interactive space for public discussions around metacognition on social media. The personal growth cultivated by the participants can be embodied as an affirmation to one's narrative identity or receiving closure for unresolved emotions. This self-empowerment is expected to be shared with a wider audience with social media outreach. However, implementing this project will not be without challenges. It is particularly important to ensure comfort and a sense of safety during storytelling, because

sharing personal narratives requires a lot of vulnerability and courage. Great sensitivity and care in handling recorded materials is hereby ensured. All in all, by fostering an environment of openness and reflection, it is expected that the project can harness the power of storytelling to inspire transformative change in the lives of undergraduate students.

VII. References

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Appendix

Personally, I really enjoyed applying the design-thinking framework in this course. I am a person who has a lot of weird ideas in mind, but I sometimes struggle to consolidate them in an orderly and structured manner. The design-thinking framework has allowed me to stray not far away from the targeted beneficiaries. After all, the whole idea was developed based on this framework, and I am very proud of this project, for it could represent who I am as a pre-service teacher and a mindful person who loves listening and talking about stories. Of course, it is definitely not easy to stick with a framework strictly, but I argue that a framework can provide a practical component to fantasies, turning them into magic. This is by far, one of the most flexible courses I've had in CUHK, and it's so fun to squeeze all that brain juice!