

# Making Psychology Positive and Popular

Martin Seligman, the founding father of positive psychology, in his 1999 inaugural speech as the President of American Psychology Association, called on his colleagues all over the world to make psychology positive as well as popular for the general public. And this is exactly what Dr Xiaodong Yue has done for the past 22 years while serving the SS Department.

## Making Psychology Positive

To make psychology positive, Dr Yue has studied how creativity, humour, optimism, and the like contributes to one's subjective happiness and social well-being. He has developed an impressive track record of publications in both English and Chinese. Dr Yue pioneered cultural studies of the perception of creativity and creative persons in Chinese society and proposed meritorious evaluation bias theory to account for the Chinese lack of respect for ordinary creativity. This theory neatly explains why the Chinese prefer meritorious salience over aesthetic salience when they perceive the utility of creativity and creative individuals in Chinese society. In his later studies, Dr Yue also found a positive association between creativity, humour and subjective happiness among young Chinese people in Hong Kong and mainland Chinese cities.

To apply his empirical findings to educational practices, Dr Yue designed and supervised the implementation of the Creative and Positive Mind Project in several cities in China. These projects have sought to enhance secondary school students' mind and heart for creativity in school learning and positivity for self functioning. For example, the Linzi Creative and Happy Education Project was created for the Department of Education, Linzi County, Shandong province (山東省臨淄市) in 2015–2018. Sixty local secondary school teachers were selected to participate in this project, and approximately 3,000 students benefitted from it. In view of its accomplishments, Dr Yue was awarded the Outstanding Service Award by the Linzi Government of Shandong Province in 2018.



**Dr Yue Xiaodong**

*Associate Professor  
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### What is positive psychology?

**Positive psychology** seeks to encourage acceptance of one's past, excitement and optimism about one's future experiences, and a sense of contentment and well-being in the present. Related concepts are happiness, well-being, quality of life, contentment, and meaningful life.

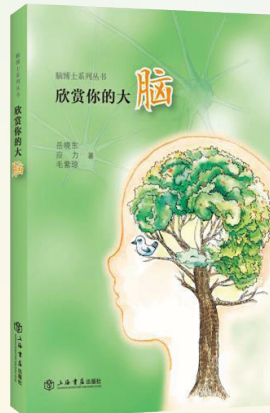
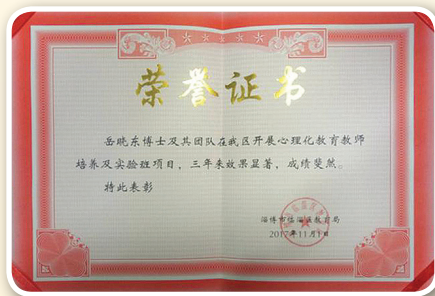
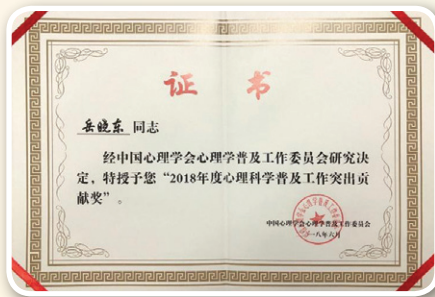
### What is popular psychology?

**Popular psychology** seeks to encourage psychologists to publicise their empirical and experimental findings via various media, such as books, novels, media, movies, TV shows, etc. It attempts to promote social well-being, quality of life, and meaningfulness in life.

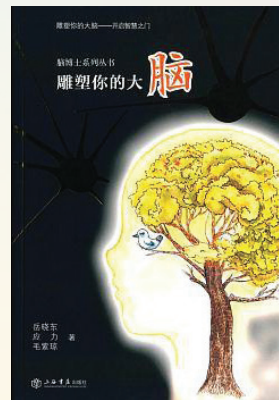
## Making Psychology Popular

To help implement the above projects, Dr Yue wrote a number of books in Chinese which were published by the Shanghai People's Press, such as *Appreciating Your Brain* 《欣赏你的大脑》, *Sculpturing Your Brain* 《雕塑你的大脑》, and *Dr Brain Teaches You How to be Successful Parents* 《脑博士教你如何做家长：走进多元智能》. Dr Yue has also published several best-selling books in China, such as *Feeling on Top of the World* 《登天的感觉》. He is also frequently invited to explain psychology to the general public on various media platforms. In recognition of his commitment and continued services to the promotion of psychology in China, Dr Yue was awarded the Outstanding Service Award by the Division of Promotion of Psychology of the Chinese Association of Psychology (中國心理學會心理學普及委員會頒發) in 2017 and the Life-Long Achievement Award by the Happy China Committee (幸福中國全國委員會頒發) in 2016. Dr Yue has been nominated as one of the top 50 most influential psychologists in China by Psychology One, a leading psychology web company, because of his positive psychology accomplishments.

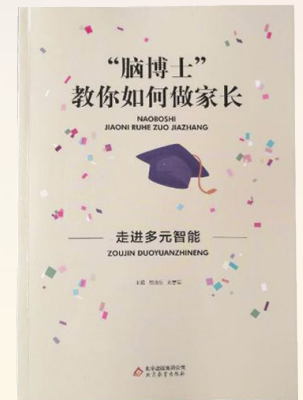
Looking over his accomplishments and awards, Dr Yue modestly remarked that he felt very proud of his efforts in making psychology both positive and popular in China and Hong Kong. This should have been the mission of psychology as a discipline to the general public.



*Appreciating Your Brain* (2015)  
欣赏你的大脑



*Sculpturing Your Brain* (2017)  
雕塑你的大脑



*Dr. Brain Teaches You How to be Successful Parents* (2019)  
脑博士教你如何做家长



CCTV's featuring of Dr Xiaodong Yue's relief for student victims in the 5.12 Earthquake in 2008 in Sichuan province (5.12 汶川大地震). 2008.



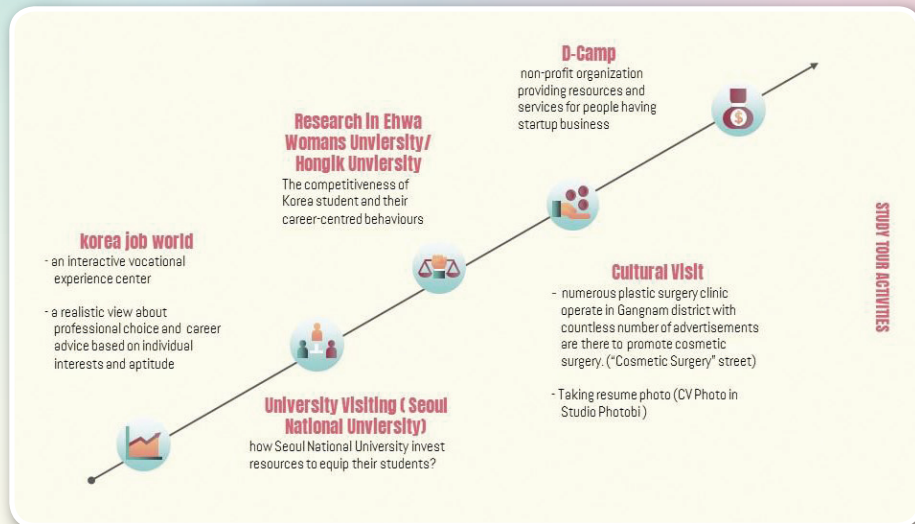
Dr. Yue appearing on CCTV's Psychological Talk (心理访谈) for helping with autistic children

## Study Tour in Summer 2019

### A study on how to increase youth competitiveness in employment between South Korea and Hong Kong: A reflective approach

The Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences promotes discovery-based learning in undergraduate studies. With students' self-initiative ideas, 20 students reached out to South Korea to study on how to increase youth competitiveness in employment compared with Hong Kong from June 10–16, 2019. The study tour was funded by the Career and Leadership Fund, Student Development Service (CLF, SDS) of the University.

A variety of visits and sharing activities had been arranged, such as visits to Ehwa Women University, Hongik University, and Seoul National University, NGOs, a career-related exhibition hall, and cultural visits. Students researched youth employment by collecting information from people in Seoul, and then reflected on what they had gained in each debriefing session.



Campus tour at Seoul National University by a student ambassador.



Local students sharing at Korea University.



Our students undertaking a research study at Hongik University.

Self-motivated learning is one of the strengths of our students. Highlights to facilitate mutual understanding included a campus tour at Seoul National University and one sharing session with local students at Korea University. Our students proactively interacted with their Korean counterparts during the campus tour and investigated how they prepared for graduation.

When our students undertook a research study outside Hong Kong, they learnt how to introduce themselves and present their purpose of inviting people to participate in the study, as well as analyse the collected data for the report.



*The general manager of D.CAMP delivers a welcoming speech and introduction to their NGO to our students.*



*An interactive sharing session is held with the General Manager of D.CAMP*

A visit to DCAMP, an NGO which provided resources and services for start-up businesses, made the study tour more fruitful. It was established by twenty banks in Korea for the Bank Foundation for Young Entrepreneurs (aka Dream Bank). Their general manager showed his warm hospitality and introduced the company. A start-up founder from Hong Kong who had successfully applied for their support was also invited to share the successful story with us.

After returning to Hong Kong, three sessions of career talks were provided to participants to align with the aims of the study tour. Students could increase their competitiveness by learning how to improve their CVs and interviewing skills. We are grateful to gain the unconditional support of our alumni, Mr. Lee Chin Hei, CLAP, HKCS, in offering our students a precious learning opportunity. The study tour ended with all participants being well prepared for future career exploration.



*A post-activity sharing about working experience in Korea is given by our guest speaker, who is Korean-Chinese mixed-race.*

*An Interviewing Skill Workshop is provided by HKFYG after the study tour.*



*Mr. Lee Chin Hei, an alumnus who is working as a social worker in CV360, HKCS, offers our students a workshop for CV writing skills.*

## Sociology Internship

The Sociology students have experienced a very meaningful time in Taiwan this summer acting as student interns at TAEDP (台灣廢除死刑聯盟). Through TAEDP, we have been lucky to meet many local Taiwanese through visiting different associations and attending different meetings and events. During our six weeks in Taiwan, one of our tasks was to help students who have been sentenced to the death penalty. We needed to attend a number of meetings to discuss how to help the 'students' when they need to go to court.

Due to the emerging Hong Kong unrest, we also had a chance to discuss with the problem with local Taiwanese and participate in different 'Support Hong Kong' events. We have learnt a lot from the diverse voices we heard from these discussions and events. We also had a chance to hold a talk for parents and children in TAEDP on the situation in Hong Kong. This experience was unforgettable!

For our internship project, we were required to write a story for a number of 'students'. To achieve this task, we needed to visit Taichung Detention Centre and meet them face to face. We cherish this experience most deeply. We would probably not have had such an opportunity if we had served the internship in Hong Kong or elsewhere in the world. We finally managed to finish writing the stories with the assistance offered by the colleagues at TAEDP.

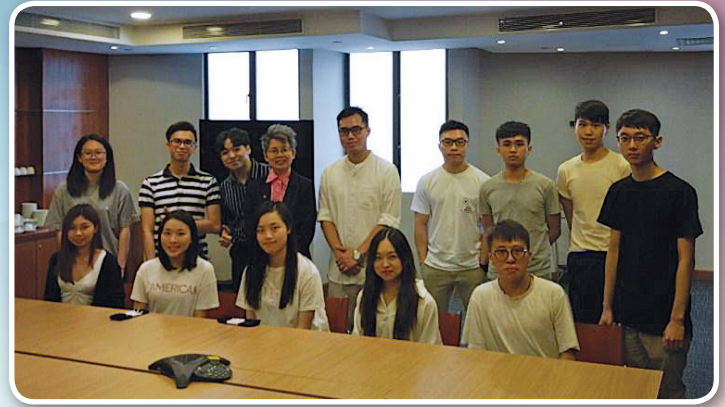
Although we did face some difficulties during the internship, we consider it a very meaningful learning experience that will have a positive impact on our lives. We are very grateful for the internship, and confident that other Criminology and Sociology students will have even more beneficial internship experiences next year in Taiwan.



## Criminology Internship

The criminology summer internship, under the now-consolidated criminology and sociology undergraduate program, has been in place for many years and has been well-received by the students. This year, 13 criminology students participated in a six-week summer internship in Singapore (i.e., early June to mid-July 2019). They were assigned to five social service agencies servicing different populations (e.g., children, youth, and the elderly). As is our usual practice, the first week was the orientation week for students to settle in and get accustomed to life in Singapore. During this week, students visited a number of places where they could learn more about Singapore and its criminal justice system, such as the National Museum of Singapore, the Civil Defense Heritage Gallery, and the High Court of the Republic of Singapore. Coincidentally,

students also get to experience the atmosphere of celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri (marking the end of Ramadan fasting) during their first week in Singapore. This is certainly an eye-opener for the students. Students begin their internship placement in the second week, when orientations by different agencies are conducted. Throughout their five weeks of internship, students were assigned to different duties with the purpose of providing them with more learning opportunities. Overall, students enjoyed their stay in Singapore and appreciated this internship experience.



## Psychology Internship

The psychology summer internship has been in place since 2008 and has been well-received both by our students and their on-site supervisors. This summer, seven psychology students participated in a six-week summer internship in Beijing and Nanjing respectively (early June to mid-July 2019). In Beijing, four students were assigned to work at the Institute of Psychology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (neuro-imaging studies), and one student was assigned to work at the Department of Psychology of Peking University (neuro-imaging studies). In Nanjing, two students were assigned to work at the Student Counseling and Department Center of Nanjing University (student self-development). For both internships, the first week was the orientation week for students to settle in and get accustomed to life in Beijing and Nanjing. Over the remaining weeks, students visited quite a number of places where they could learn more about Chinese culture, Chinese history, and local lifestyles, such as Tian-An-Men Square, the Summer Palace,





the 789 art gallery, the Presidential Palace, the Nanjing Massacre Museum, and the like. Student interns in Beijing and Nanjing also attended quite a few seminars organised by their respective working units. As such, students all enjoyed their stay in Beijing and Nanjing very much and appreciated this internship experience.

## Ph.D. Alumni Conference in Social and Behavioural Sciences, 2019

On 13 June 2019, nearly 20 SS Ph.D. alumni returned to the City U to attend the first Ph.D. Alumni Conference in Social and Behavioural Sciences. A key objective of the conference was to celebrate and consolidate the multi-disciplinary features of Ph.D. education that SS has offered in the past few decades. It also aimed to reinforce the ties of SS's social scientific community across academic fields, geographic regions, and cohorts. In this one-day conference, our returning Ph.D. alumni shared with us their most recent research findings in one or more of the five academic domains: counselling, criminology, psychology, social work and sociology. We also took the opportunity to establish the Ph.D. Alumni Association. Dr Jacky Cheung was elected to be the first chairman of the Ph.D. Alumni Association.



# Academic Exchange with Universities in the Belt and Road Countries

The Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences has been developing collaborations with the universities in the Belt and Road countries. In June 2019, Dr Anna Choi led a group of students to Vienna for an international education internship titled 'To the Birthplace of Psychoanalysis and Logotherapy with the Moscow Institute of Psychoanalysis'. This internship programme included various seminars on intriguing topics such as contemporary psychoanalysis, teaching contemporary methods of psychotherapy, evaluation of group psychotherapy, and history of psychoanalysis in contemporary cinema. The participants learned more about contemporary psychoanalysis and logotherapy and established a stronger academic collaboration with the faculty members at the Moscow Institute of Psychoanalysis.

## ***New Undergraduate Admission Model***

The Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences has adopted a department-based admission model for a number of years. JUPAS applicants would be admitted to the department without declaring a major. By the end of the first year, students would be assigned into a major (i.e., criminology and sociology, psychology, or social work) based on their interest, academic performance, and the set quotas of the majors.

Starting in 2020, a hybrid admission model will be used. JUPAS applicants will be admitted to the department either through the department-based or major-based admission route. In the department-based admission route, students will be admitted to the department with no declared major and have a free choice of major at the end of the first year. In the major-based admission route, students will get into a major directly. This new admission model aims to satisfy the needs of different students, whether they are more determined about what they want to study or need more time to explore and develop their interests.



**Dr Ben Li**

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