BlendedLearning@EdUHK - Stories from the Frontline

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ABSTRACT

In a HKIEd GE course on Cross-Cultural Psychology, 60 students in 16 groups created a 5- to 8-minute video analyzing a popular Chinese film with psychology theories. These films were uploaded on Google Drive and then linked to on a collective blog organized by the teacher. Students in Canada, also taking a course in Cross-Cultural Psychology, were invited to watch and comment on the videos for extra credit. Though the assignment required HKIEd students to use new, sophisticated technology, the quality of the 16 assignments, insights gained on both sides as shown in the 540+ student comments, in-class discussion of the videos, and motivation of students were all unexpectedly good.

BACKGROUND: OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY TECHNOLOGIES

In previous years, students of this Cross-Cultural Psychology course had completed an in-class presentation as a final assignment. Students worked in groups to analyze a Chinese film or TV show in terms of whether or not it reflected theories about Chinese psychology that had been learned in class. Although creating and watching the presentations provided a nice opportunity to review and apply what had been learned in class, **increasing class sizes made it logistically difficult** to have all groups do an in-class presentation. Additionally, the **stressful in-class presentation format** seemed to exacerbate interpersonal difficulties; groups often had unexpected technical difficulties with showing clips from films, leading to crises during the presentation; etc. A new assignment or format seemed needed.
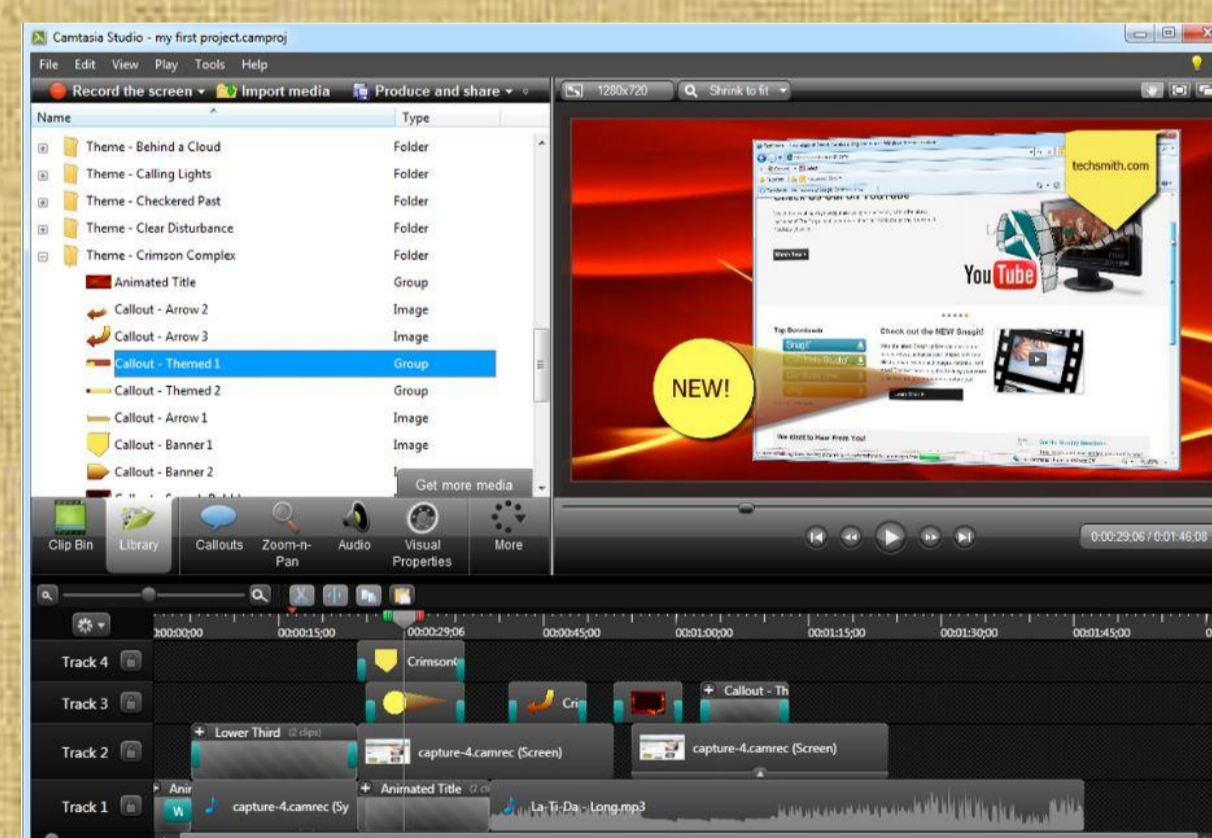
As a frequent user of the screen-capture and video-editing software **Camtasia Studio**, I decided to ask students to use it to prepare a professional-looking video of their presentation instead of doing it in-person. But how to make this "extra" requirement **feel necessary and authentic to students**? I realized that **such videos could be shared across the globe by posting them online**; an activity that would be strongly related to the cross-cultural topic and CILOs of the course. A past colleague at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, Canada) was happy to involve his Cultural Psychology students, and the idea took flight.

PEDAGOGICAL ADVANTAGES
of the new online format

The new online format of the assignment provided students with the opportunity to:
- Share Chinese culture with "foreigners," increasing the sense of real-life impact of the assignment, including motivation to make sure "foreigners" understood Chinese culture accurately.
- Positively engage in meaningful, online cross-cultural interaction.
- Experience the struggle and joy of learning how to use new software to create beautiful products; an important skill for future life in the "digital age!"
- Experience how the internet creates opportunities to connect with people from other countries / cultures.
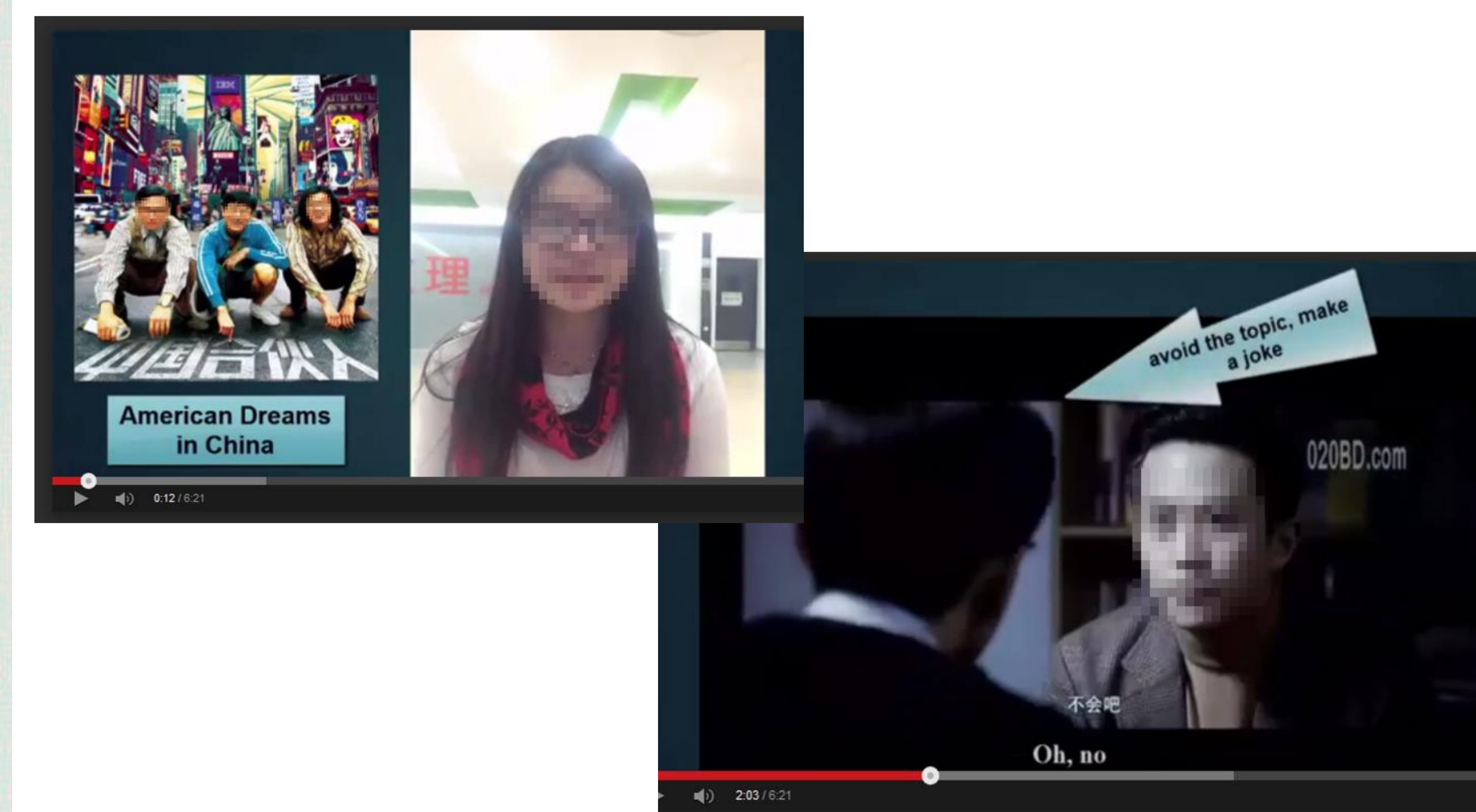
EXAMPLES OF BLENDED LEARNING
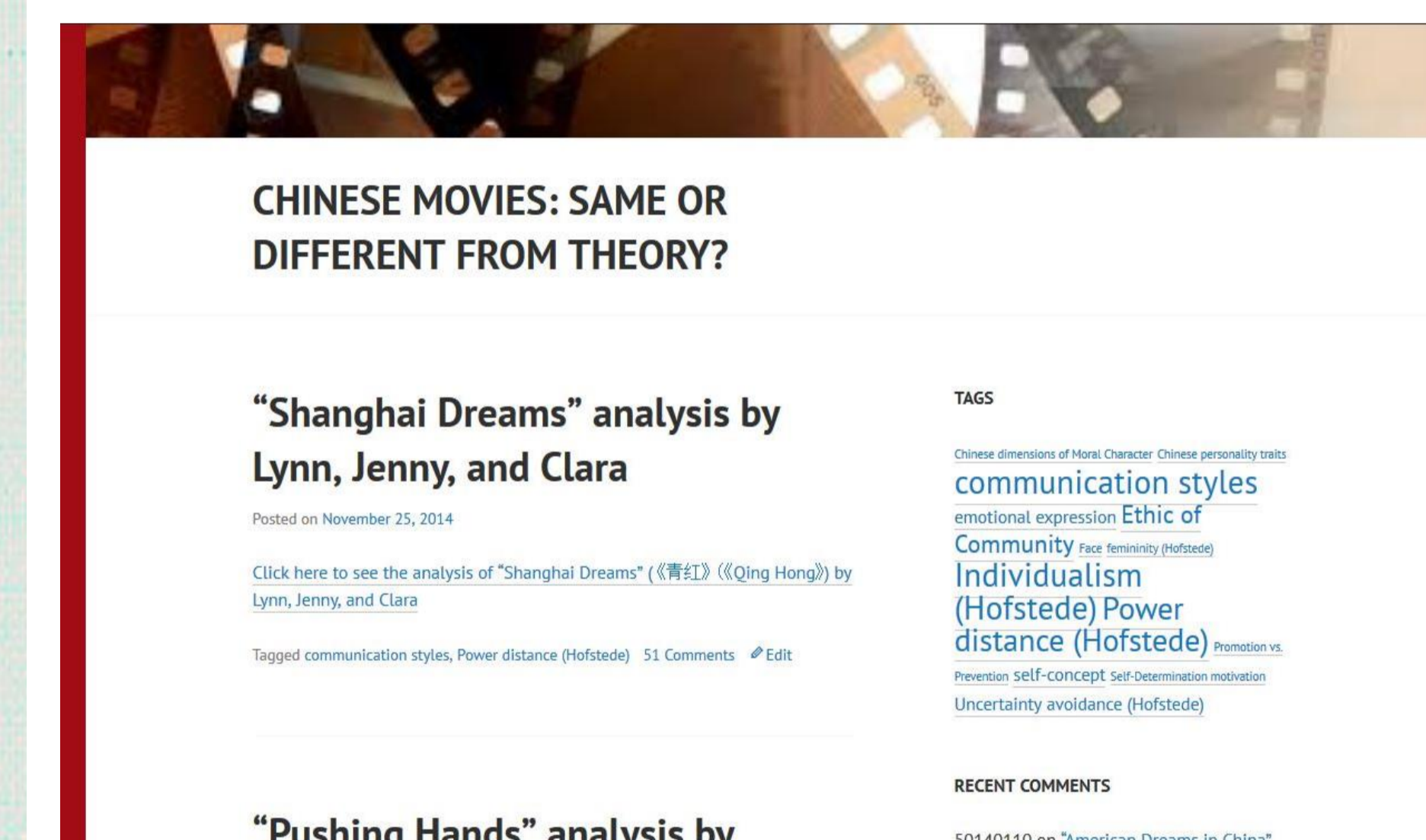
The blog format allowed me to "tag" the films by which theories were used, increasing their educational value.
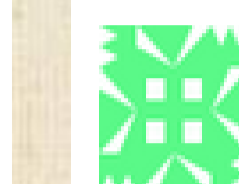
Students effectively used various software options to create beautiful films, and had fun while doing it
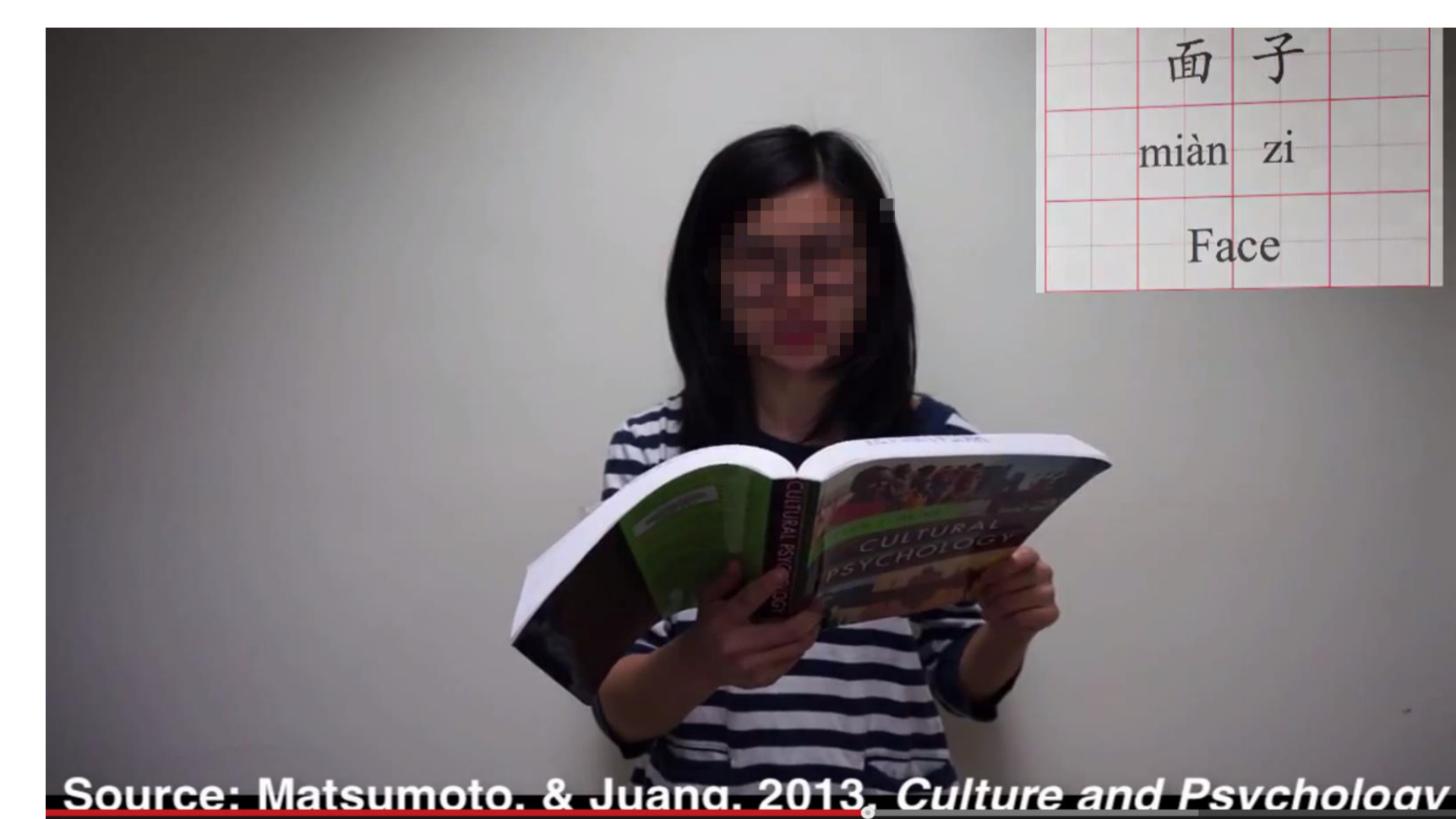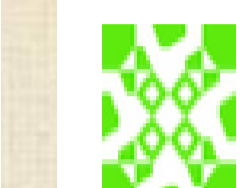
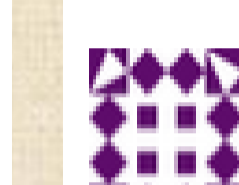Source: Matsumoto. & Juang. 2013. *Culture and Psychology*

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES: 540+ comments

Ava says:
November 30, 2014 at 9:52 pm Edit
It's really cool how you folks managed to link these topics of expression, immigration and harmony that you learned in lectures to a popular movie. I believe the ideas that you are discussing just goes to show how important cultural psychology is and how based on where these interactions take place we can judge them differently.

Rosalyn says:
December 1, 2014 at 10:14 am Edit
Thank you for your comment! We also enjoyed all your positive comments here. It is extraordinary to have such a chance to really communicate what we have learned with the students in another country~

YU YUJIA (Shirley) says:
December 4, 2014 at 8:18 am Edit
Thanks for your comments. I agree with your opinion very much. This video showed a lot Chinese traditional culture. We are glad to share with you. Wish you know more about Chinese culture through our introduction and love Chinese culture.

Jaekyung says:
November 28, 2014 at 7:33 am Edit
It was interesting to see that in this video, it clearly illustrates that there are a lot of variation within the culture. Even in highly collectivistic culture depicted in this video, some may show different expressing styles. Thanks for sharing the video.

The Canadian students were instructed to leave 4 comments on 4 films, and to send the links to the comments to their course tutors for credit. **The comments were uniformly polite and encouraging,** and generally showed not only that the Canadian students had enjoyed watching the film analysis, but that they had *thought* about it as well.

As a pedagogical goal of the course is to help students see the powerful effect of culture, but *also* to be keep aware of individual differences and how cultures change over time, I **was particularly happy to see that many of the Canadian's comments mentioned that HKIEd students' videos emphasized variation rather than general sociotypes.**

In the last class session, the students and I enjoyed a relaxed "movie night," viewing and discussing a selection of the best student videos. The video format sparked questions and discussion in a way in-class presentations never had!

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- Google Drive was successfully used to host the student films, but it took time to learn how to adjust the settings so that the films were viewable by all, but not downloadable.
- Because clips from copyrighted movies were used as evidence, the final product could not be posted on YouTube.
- Because the blog used (WordPress.com) was not connected with student emails, students did not receive notification when there were comments or replies to comments.
- Internet Explorer could not be used to read the blog.