

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)

1” Scenario

Visiting the homeless, underprivileged students and subdivided housing residents; developing countries

Students' response:

“I take pity on those I visited. I feel very content with my own life, and I am extremely grateful.”

Teachers can guide students to analyze their response as follows:

- (1) “I take pity on those I visited” is their observation.
- (2) “I feel very content with my own life, and I am extremely grateful.” is their sentiment.

1.1

Students' observations and feelings lack specificity. Teachers can prompt students for specific details and examples to help them organize their personal observations and experiences.

Teachers can follow up by asking: “In what aspects do you feel that they are pitiful? What are some aspects that have left a deep impression on you? Can you provide specific examples?”

Responses from students can be:

Family circumstances:

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| Family relationships | Single-parent household; parent working away from home; lack of a deep relationship with family members. |
| Living environment | Cramped; disorderly; poor hygiene; outdated facilities. |
| Financial situation | Inadequate income; insufficient meals. |

Learning aspects:

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| Learning environment | Poor school facilities. |
| Learning resources | Insufficient resources; lack of learning opportunities. |
| Personal development | Limited exposure; lack of job opportunities; lack of upward mobility opportunities. |

Teachers can further prompt students to investigate the underlying reasons behind the perception of the people they visited as “pitiful” with questions such as:

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| About the homeless | “Why do you think they are homeless and sleeping on the streets?” |
| About underprivileged students | “Why do you think students from disadvantaged backgrounds have poor academic performance or lack knowledge?” |
| About tenants of subdivided flats | “Why do you think people choose to rent and live in subdivided flats?” |
| About people in developing countries | “Why do you think people in developing countries live and study in such basic conditions?” |
| “Do you think they can do anything to improve their current situation or address the problems they face?” | |

Teachers can also guide students to analyze whether the underlying reasons are personal or social in nature, and whether they are immediate or long-term.

The underlying reasons behind these problems often stem from social factors or long-term accumulations of issues such as insufficient national resources, inadequate family resources, and personal circumstances. The beneficiaries are often in a passive position and lack assistance. Students who are grateful and content with their personal circumstances can develop empathy for disadvantaged communities and put themselves in others' shoes to understand their genuine difficulties and needs.

The most important thing is for teachers to guide students to transform “gratitude” into concrete and practical actions, to give back to their families/schools, to make good use of resources to improve themselves, and to provide assistance to others, making their families and learning environment better and bringing about positive changes in their lives.

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| “What do you think you can do more for your family?” | “How can you improve yourself?” |
| “What can you do to make your family better?” | “How can you lighten the burden of your family members?” |
| | “How can you express gratitude to your family?” |

Responses from students can be:

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| Family relationships | Spend more time with family and communicate with them; proactively reach out to relatives and elders; take care of younger siblings; improve one's temper. |
| Home environment | Take initiative in sharing household chores; maintain an organized living space; uphold cleanliness and hygiene. |
| Economic conditions | Develop a habit of saving; learn financial management and make good use of pocket money; avoid impulsive shopping. |

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| “How does gratitude change your attitude towards learning/school life?” | “How can you make good use of the learning resources?” |
| “What specific actions would you take to improve yourself?” | “How can you use the resources at hand to help others?” |

Responses from students can be:

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| Learning environment | Caring for school facilities; actively maintaining a clean school and classroom environment; willingly assisting teachers. |
| Learning resources | Actively engaging in learning activities; actively participating in volunteer services such as tutoring; donating old books and stationery. |
| Personal development | Making good use of online resources for learning; actively participating in internship programmes to gain understanding of different industry developments. |