

Promotion of family life quality amongst adolescents: The Project P.A.T.H.S. in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Adolescence is a period during which adolescents and their parents have to re-define the ways of interaction and resolution of parent-adolescent conflicts. As such, how to help adolescents learn the ways to interact with the parents in a healthy manner is an important question to be considered. Adopting a positive youth development perspective, it is argued that promotion of psychosocial competencies of adolescents can help adolescents to develop better emotional and social competencies, which would eventually promote family cohesion and harmony. In this paper, several units in the Project P.A.T.H.S. with reference to bonding and resilience are outlined to illustrate how positive youth development programs may help to promote family quality of life amongst families with adolescent children.

Keywords: Positive youth development, bonding, resilience, family cohesion

Introduction

Adolescence is a transition stage full of challenges. During this critical period, different risk factors, such as undesirable peer influence and low self-efficacy, lead to poor adolescent development. At the same time, different protective factors, such as support from family as well as significant carers, school, and peers, can help adolescents to build up their competences and character strengths. Among these protective factors, family serves as one vital factor for adolescent development, especially a family with good family relationship and a high level of functioning (1).

Family functioning refers to “the quality of family life at systemic and dyadic levels and concerns wellness, competence, strengths, and weaknesses of a family” (2). A high level of mutuality of the family, good conflict management within the family, and

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good communication are three main dimensions of family functioning (3). A well-functioned family can always promote the well-being for family members. For example, high quality of parent-child communication can prevent children from engaging in different risk behaviors, and it also benefits their psychological health (4, 5). In fact, a positive parent-child relationship does not only promote adolescent development (6), but also benefit the functioning of the whole family. If both parents and the child are satisfied with their relationship, this would help to promote mutuality of the family as well as to minimize the negative consequences generated from parent-adolescent conflicts.

Theoretically, bonding and mutual trust between parents and children are generated from a good parent-child relationship (7, 8). Bonding is the "attachment behavior held to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave" (9). It refers to the emotional attachment between an individual and others, such as parents, siblings, schoolmates, peers, and teachers. There is a large body of literature supporting the notion that family bonding can benefit self-esteem, problem solving skills and other competencies in children and adolescents (7, 10). Family bonding can also nurture children and adolescent resilience and help seeking practice. Resilience is an important character for individuals to adapt to challenging events in a healthy way and bounce back from difficulties (11). Nurturing resilience is one of the major tasks during adolescence (12). Research showed that bonding contributes to the enhancement of resilience among the youths (13-15). Moreover, building up a healthy help-seeking style can prevent adolescents from using inappropriate ways to tackle their problems. Different researchers argued that family bonding can facilitate adolescents to have appropriate help-seeking practice (16, 17).

However, as the society changes and evolves, there are more and more obstacles to the development of family bonding and parent-child relationships. For example, parents' long working hours and stressful work life are some factors which impede the parent-child relationship, especially in Hong Kong (18-20). Most Hong Kong parents are burdened by unreasonable long working-hours, and it is not easy for them to spend time to communicate

with their children or provide advice. Therefore, misunderstandings within the family and parent-adolescent conflicts are likely to occur. Furthermore, it may also affect the help-seeking practice of adolescents as they are not able to or willing to seek help from their parents or other family members.

To solve the above problems, family education is one effective way. However, it is not easy to implement family education for parents due to their limited time and resources (21). As such, another possible way is to start the prevention work in the school context, such as enhancing students' understandings of their parents, equipping positive communication skills, and nurturing their healthy help-seeking style.

In this paper, a positive youth development program entitled the Project P.A.T.H.S. is used to demonstrate how school programs can be implemented in the school context to promote family life for secondary school students.

Project P.A.T.H.S.

Project P.A.T.H.S. is the first and only systematic youth development program in Asia with positive evaluation findings based on multiple evaluation strategies (22, 23). This project was launched in 2005 with four main components, including (i) curriculum development; (ii) interactive training for frontline teachers and social workers; (iii) implementation of the program in secondary schools; and (iv) systematic evaluation.

For curriculum development, 271 teaching units were developed for Secondary 1 to Secondary 3 students, which included 120 original teaching units, 60 special units (focus on 5 special themes on adolescent developmental issues), 61 updated teaching units, and 30 revamped teaching units. The design of the teaching units included different interactive learning activities and multi-media activates. The package for each teaching unit contains a detailed lesson plan together with all teaching materials, such as worksheets, PPT slides, guidelines for students' discussion or sharing, and different multi-media activities (e.g., video clips, mobile app, computer games). An interactive learning

platform has been established to facilitate students' learning through online interactive activities, such as online polling, drawing activities. To facilitate teacher's teaching and preparation for the class, procedures of each activity are clearly listed in the lesson plan, together with teaching tips for the teacher's reference. Also, a video clip for each original unit has been recorded by real front-line teachers for sharing with teachers and social workers. In addition, to share practical ideas amongst teachers, ten video clips have been developed which are based on different themes of teaching skills and classroom management skills. Since 2005, more than 357,839 students (with 674,637 man-times) participated in this project from more than 360 schools and agency units.

As training is the backbone for successful program implementation, the P.A.T.H.S. Project emphasizes the importance of providing quality training for teachers before they start teaching the teaching units. In the past 15 years, around 300 interactive training workshops have been conducted for 9,400 teachers, social workers, or other related professionals. Also, a well-designed e-learning program has been developed by the research team. Participants can join a 20-hour e-learning program (for each grade) to become qualified teachers.

Finally, a systematic evaluation design was conducted to generate useful information for researchers and frontline teachers on the effectiveness of the program as well as areas to be improved. In the Project P.A.T.H.S., a comprehensive evaluation design using multiple methods which included both qualitative and quantitative research elements. All results were well documented and published (22-27). In this paper, three units are used as examples to demonstrate how the P.A.T.H.S. Project helps to promote family life of adolescents through classroom learning activities.

Resilience

To build up good resilience, family belongingness is one important external protective factor for optimal adolescent development. To help secondary students promote this PYD quality, the Research Team

developed a teaching unit named "Those were the days" (RE1.1) for Secondary One students (28; Appendix 1). The objectives of this unit are helping students:

- To learn to seek help from different people under different circumstances.
- To understand parents' communication style and thus promote trust toward parents and a sense of belonging within the family.

In this teaching unit, through group and classroom discussion, students can learn to reduce their hesitation and uneasiness when they seek help from parents. It is expected that students can recognize the potentially positive messages behind parents' words and actions. The lesson plan and teaching materials are presented to Appendix 1.

Bonding

As discussed in the previous section, family bonding is one source of emotional attachment and support for adolescents in facing challenges and difficulties. In this paper, two units are presented to demonstrate how to help secondary students to build up a stronger bonding with their parents through classroom learning activities.

The first unit is entitled "What can I do for my family?" (BO2.1) which is a unit developed for Secondary 2 students (29; Appendix 2). The objectives of this unit are helping students:

- To recall the occasions on which students received care from their parents.
- To explore their roles playing at home and to enhance motivations to contribute to families.

In this teaching unit, teaching activities have been developed to promote student reflection. At the beginning of this unit, students are asked to describe their meanings of "family" and share their ideas of an ideal family. After this, two activities are developed for students to reflect and explore how they can contribute to their own families. The

lesson plan and teaching materials are outlined in Appendix 2.

Another teaching unit is entitled “Parents’ message” (BO2.2) which was developed to equip students’ communication skills with their parents, and to strengthen parent-child relationships (30; see Appendix 3). The objectives of this unit are helping students:

- To analyze parents’ messages from people-oriented and task-oriented points of view.
- To demonstrate proper response to parents’ messages and establish a good relationship with the parents.

In this unit, students are divided into different groups for discussion. A video clip is included to help students to reflect parents’ underlying messages from different scenarios, and learn to use appropriate responses towards parents in order to avoid miscommunication with their parents.

Discussion

In this paper, we present three units of the Project P.A.T.H.S. to illustrate how positive youth development programs can help to promote family life quality in adolescents. As family life education

has been commonly conducted within the framework of parent education, it is important to consider family life education from another side of the coin – promoting family life quality in adolescents.

There are several observations deserving our attention. First, it is important to promote the psychosocial competence of adolescents as a strategy to promote the quality of their family life. The basic reasoning is that by promoting the psychosocial competence of young people, their relationships with parents would improve, hence promoting the family quality of life. Second, the units illustrate the feasibility of developing curricular-based training programs to promote family quality of life of adolescents. As there are few validated PYD programs in different Chinese contexts, the units developed can help professionals who would like to promote family quality of life in adolescents. Third, as there is a general drop in PYD attributes in early adolescence (1, 31), there is a need to devise ways to promote the PYD development of early adolescents. The Project P.A.T.H.S. units provide a way to nurture the PYD attributes in adolescents. Finally, although there is support that the P.A.T.H.S. programs can help to promote holistic youth development (27, 32), there is a need to further explore how improvement in PYD might contribute to improvement in family quality of life.

Appendix 1: Unit RE1.1 “Those Were the Days”

Construct

Resilience

Target Participants

Secondary One Students

Unit Aims

1. To learn to seek help from different people under different circumstances.
2. To understand parents’ communication style and thus promote trust toward parents and a sense of belonging within the family.

Learning Targets

- To learn to seek help from different people when encountering different types of problems.
- To recognize the potentially positive messages behind parents’ words and actions.



Teaching Materials




Group Worksheet:	Appendix 1
Worksheet:	Appendix 2
Growth Puzzle	Appendix 3

Teaching Methods

- Group Discussion
- Class Discussion

Implementation Plan (30 Minutes)

-  Primary Activity
-  Secondary Activity

Activity	Procedures
I. Warm-up activity (2 minutes)	Begin this unit by asking: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did you come across any problem(s) this week (month)? 2. Was there anyone you can turn to when you were in trouble?
II. Group discussion: Those Were the Days   (15 minutes) Teaching materials: <i>Appendix 1</i>	Aim: To learn to seek help from different people when encountering different types of problems <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide students into 8 groups and distribute the Group Worksheets (<i>Appendix 1</i>). 2. Briefly introduce the content. Allow 5 minutes for discussion. 3. Discussion question: “When you have the following problems, who will you talk to or seek help? Write down your reasons.” 4. Ask students to report their responses. 5. Conclude and highlight: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. When one is in trouble, s/he can look for help, rather than facing it alone. ii. There are many options to the same problem. It differs from person to person. iii. Despite the options, students should think carefully and decide who can give the most positive support when they look for help. iv. Students tend to share with others when they are happy but not when they are troubled. Ask them to consider the reasons behind this phenomenon.
III. Class discussion: The Message Behind  (5 minutes) Teaching materials: <i>Appendix 2</i>	Aim: To understand parents’ way of expression or communication style <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the Worksheets (<i>Appendix 2</i>). 2. Some common responses made by parents are shown in the cartoons. By asking students to fill in the answers, they can explore parents’ intention and recognize the “real” message. 3. The aim of this exercise is to eliminate any hesitation and uneasiness among students when they ask for help from people of authority (such as parents), and let them realize their parents’ concern. Show students the fact that a lack of communication skills and pressure from life may contribute to parents’ seemingly harsh attitude. Ask students to try to think in the other’s shoes. 4. Ask students to share their experiences briefly.
IV. Conclusion (3 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage to ask for help when they are in trouble. 2. Aim at dissociating students from the thoughts that inhibit them from asking for help. 3. Lead students to consider who they can seek help apart from parents when they are in trouble.
V. Self-reflection (5 minutes) Teaching materials: <i>Growth Puzzle</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the Growth Puzzle and engage students in self-reflection. 2. Praise students for their participation during the lesson.

Teaching tips

1. "Those were the days"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a poll and write down the answers on the blackboard. • If the choices students made are highly similar, tell them that they can ask for help from different people according to the nature of the problem (e.g. seek help from parents if their problem is related to money; from social worker / counselor if it is related to emotions). • If the person they choose to talk to has big differences, instructors can point out the result is normal due to differences in students' backgrounds and psychological conditions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage those who always opt to handle problems alone to look for help from others. • If students fail to express themselves in writing, ask them to report verbally. • Put down the reasons on the blackboard that students give as examples, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the one I talk to always pointing out my problems is sincere; • that they are caring and considerate; 3) that they are knowledgeable. • If students are more mature, instructors may modify the worksheet, to use "x" to indicate specific people they would not seek help from. This may lead to an interesting discussion on "why / why not".
2. "The message behind"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose version A (local Chinese-based) or version B (international-based) for <i>Appendix 2</i>, depending on the cultural background of students. • For students with a complicated family background or having a poor relationship with their parents, instructors should pay special attention to their emotional responses. • Encourage students to think from the point of view of their parents. The aim of doing this does not mean that they need to comply with their parents' directions, but focus on understanding parents' difficulties. It also trains students to be more considerate and encourages them to express to parents their feelings in a constructive and helpful way, and talk to teachers and counselors when necessary. • Invite students who are mentally more mature to join in a role-play. It can not only lead to a better participation, but can also allow students to experience their parents' feelings. During the process, instructors should ask students to first think about the intention behind parents' words, and then what they may, as daughters and sons, say in response. Ask students to consider if their response is constructive to a better relationship or not.





Supplementary activity (Optional)

Activity	Content	Recommendations
Letters of love	<p>Aim: To establish a good relationship with parents and enhance a sense of belonging toward family</p> <p>Ask students to write a letter to their parents after class. Ask them to express their appreciation or gratitude to their parents.</p>	<p>If students have difficulties in expressing themselves, instructors can discuss together with them. Doing so can also promote the relationship between the parties.</p>

Group Worksheet: “Those Were the Days.” Appendix 1

Group:


Dear fellow students, when you have the following problems, who will you talk to or seek help?
Why?

When I have problems related to...	I will talk to / seek help from: (Can choose more than one)
<p>Study (e.g. fail to catch up with the lesson, having lots of difficulties when doing homework)</p> 	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker / Counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Myself <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ </p> <p>Why? _____</p>
<p>Emotion (e.g. unhappy, angry)</p> 	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker / Counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Myself <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ </p> <p>Why? _____</p>
<p>Money</p> 	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker / Counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Myself <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ </p> <p>Why? _____</p>
<p>Sharing of satisfaction and happiness (e.g. getting a good mark; given an award)</p> 	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Friends <input type="checkbox"/> Social worker / Counselor <input type="checkbox"/> Teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Myself <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ </p> <p>Why? _____</p>

Worksheet: "The Message Behind" (Version A). Appendix 2

Name:

Consider what parents really mean in the following dialogues:

<p>Dialogue 1</p>  <p>When you are working hard on preparing for an exam...</p> <p>What Mom may really mean:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Dialogue 2</p>  <p>You do not need to go to school the next day, so you want to tell your parents you wish to go out with your friends in the evening...</p> <p>What Mom may really mean:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Dialogue 3</p>  <p>You want to buy an online game, but you don't have enough money...</p> <p>What Dad may really mean:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Dialogue 4</p>  <p>Father comes back every night at around 11:00p.m...</p> <p>What Dad may really mean:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Worksheet: “The Message Behind” (Version B). Appendix 2

Name:

Consider what parents really mean in the following dialogues:

<p>Dialogue 1</p>  <p>When you want to join a three-day camp...</p> <p>What Dad may really mean:</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>_____.</p>	<p>Dialogue 2</p>  <p>On Friday evening...</p> <p>What Mom may really mean</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>_____.</p>
<p>Dialogue 3</p>  <p>You are going out with a friend and plan not to have dinner at home tonight...</p> <p>What Mom may really mean:</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>_____.</p>	<p>Dialogue 4</p>  <p>Father comes back every night at around 10:00pm...</p> <p>What Dad may really mean:</p> <p>_____.</p> <p>_____.</p>

Growth Puzzle. Appendix 3

Name:

Class:

Date:

Classwork:

1. List out 3 necessary conditions for overcoming difficulties and those functions
1. Are there any psychological barriers (e.g. feel embarrassed), which stop you to ask for help? What methods can help you to break the barriers?
2. When you are facing some difficulties, who do you want to ask for help? Why?
2. Do you agree with the assumption that “seeking helps means being weak”? Why?
3. Recall the experience of your parents helping you to solve problems. Which ways of solving problems have you learned from them?
3. How important does “having hopes” affect you to face the difficulties and solve the problems?

Appendix 2: Unit BO 2.1 “What Can I Do for My Family?”

Construct

Bonding

Target Participants

Secondary Two Students

Unit Aims

To make more contributions at home so as to strengthen relationship with the family

Learning Targets

1. To recall the occasions on which students received care from their parents.
2. To explore the role play at home and to enhance motivation to contribute to families.



Teaching Materials


PowerPoint Slides:	Appendix 1
“Family Album”	
PowerPoint Slides:	Appendix 2
“What Can I Do for My Family?”	
Worksheet:	Appendix 3
“What Can I Do for My Family?”	
Growth Puzzle	Appendix 4


Teaching Methods

Class Sharing
Personal Reflection

Implementation Plan (30 Minutes)

-  Primary Activity
 Secondary Activity

Activity	Procedures
<p>I. Warm-up activity (5 minutes)</p> <p>Teaching materials: <i>Appendix 1</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin this unit by playing the PowerPoint Slides (<i>Appendix 1</i>) without instruction. 2. When the slides are finished, ask students: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. What does “family” mean to you? ii. Describe your dream family. iii. What have you received from your family over the years?
<p>II. Class sharing: Family album</p> <p> (7 minutes)</p> <p>Teaching materials: <i>Appendix 1</i></p>	<p>Aim: To recall the occasions on which they received care from their parents so as to enhance motivation to contribute to families</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play the PowerPoint Slides again. These scenes are from a family life story of a 15-year-old. 2. Ask students to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review whether they have experienced similar occasions in their lives in which they received similar care from their parents; ii. Note down the experiences which have deeply impressed them.

Activity	Procedures
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. When the slides are finished, ask students to share their reflections with classmates sitting next to them. 4. Ask a few students to share with the class their life experiences which have impressed them deeply. It may be the happiest ones or the ones which make them remember the care and love of their parents.
<p>III. Personal reflection: What can I do for my family?  (10 minutes)</p> <p>Teaching materials: <i>Appendix 2</i> <i>Appendix 3</i></p>	<p>Aim: To explore the roles students may play at home and contributions they can make to their families</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hand out the Worksheets (<i>Appendix 3</i>) and briefly introduce the content (Play the PowerPoint slides where needed). 2. The pictures are of a building where 8 families live. Ask students to circle the household problems in the family scene with which they think they CAN help. 3. Among the above chosen problems, ask students to use another color to indicate the ones which they HAVE experienced making a contribution in real life. 4. Invite students to think and share about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Among those household problems where students think they CAN help, how many of them HAVE actually given a helping hand? ii. Did they circle all objects? Did anyone circle the characters instead? Did anyone suggest that providing care and concern is also a way of contribution to the family?
<p>IV. Conclusion (3 minutes)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The family has taken care of us a great deal in a variety of ways since we were born (or even before we were born). 2. Think about what we can contribute, either tangible or intangible, as a member of the family.
<p>V. Self-reflection (5 minutes)</p> <p>Teaching materials: <i>Growth puzzle</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the Growth Puzzle and engage students in self-reflection. 2. Praise students for their participation during the lesson.

Teaching Tips

<p>1. “Family album”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If time allows, ask students to bring a memorable family photo and share it with the whole class or the classmates sitting next to them in this session. • Instruct students to share why this photo is important to them. • Some students come from families of special backgrounds in that they have no living father or mother or students do not live with them. Special backgrounds include single-parent families as a result of divorce, separation, death, extended work overseas by one of the parents, separation due to immigration restrictions, etc. Instructors should pay special attention to the emotional response of such students and guide them to think about the care and love their father, mother or guardians have given them. • Invite students who are rather silent in class or have been labeled as “problematic” to share their experiences. This provides students an opportunity to express themselves and their stories are likely to be very moving and sensitive. Should there be negative or highly emotional responses, instructors should listen to their concerns patiently and ask students nearby to comfort them. This helps establish a mutually supportive and caring learning
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	<p>environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was found in the trial-run that students who come from families of special backgrounds can also achieve the intended learning targets. Many of them can even vividly recall childhood experiences.
<p>2. "What can I do for my family?"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are non-Chinese may think that the setting of this part may not apply to their culture and living environment. Instructors can raise questions like: "Do you notice the differences between your family and your classmates who are from different cultural backgrounds?" or "Have you ever noticed what local families in Hong Kong are like, compared to yours?" Instructors can then lead them to see that building up your family without cultural limitation. Students can put signs (e.g. square) or ticks to indicate their ideas, should they have no pens of different colors. Most of the time, students tend to focus only on the objects. Instructors can, therefore, suggest they pay more attention to the characters. This not only encourages them to pay more attention to individual family members, but also establishes a linkage between "people" (family members) and "happenings" (housework), so that students may realize the hardship of their family members and not just focus on the latter. Ask students to notice the difference between what they "can" do and what they "have already" done. The greater the difference, the more students can potentially contribute to their families. If students are more mature, instructors can further investigate how one can help the characters, including: (i) tangible tasks such as helping mother / father to prepare the meal, teaching younger brothers / sisters to do homework, helping father by turning off the radio, studying hard so that parents do not have to worry about them, etc.; (ii) intangible tasks such as caring about father's work, asking if you can offer any help to mother, etc. For students who have experienced major family difficulties (e.g. one of the family members is chronically ill or died suddenly), they may think that there is nothing they can contribute. In this case, instructors should take care of their emotional response and at the same time, remind students that although there is little that they can do, their intention to help is already a kind of support to their families. Instructors can encourage them to face and overcome difficulties together with the family. Share some of their memorable family happenings with the class (e.g. the most memorable experience at home and what s/he has done for the family) so as to build a closer relationship with students and to serve as a role model.

Supplementary activity (Optional)

Activity	Content	Recommendations
<p>I'd love to contribute</p>	<p>Aim: To make contribution to the family in order to improve relationships with families</p> <p>Ask students to act out what they think "CAN" contribute, but "HAVEN'T" contributed to the families as indicated in "What Can I Do for My Family?" (<i>Appendix 3</i>). Ask them to report to the class a week later on issues such as feelings, response from family members to their contribution, or whether there is any improvement of the relationship between them and their families.</p>	<p>Ask students how their family members feel after they have made such contributions. Share the results with the class.</p>

PowerPoint Slides. "Family Album." Appendix 1



PowerPoint Slides. "What Can I Do for My Family?" Appendix 2

Worksheet. "What Can I Do for My Family?" Appendix 3

Name:



I learned in this lesson that _____

Growth Puzzle. Appendix 4

Name:

Class:

Date:

Classwork:

1. What are your duties and responsibilities at home?
2. Do you appreciate your duties and responsibilities at home? Are there any areas of improvement?
3. What is your ideal family like?

Homework:

1. Which family member do you want to thank most? Why?
2. Which family member do you want to learn from most? Why?
3. After this class, how would you contribute to your family in the future?

Appendix 3: Unit BO 2.2 (RV) “Parents’ Messages”

Construct

Bonding

Target Participants

Secondary Two Students

Unit Aims

To learn the skills which lead to a better communication with the parents and to strengthen parent-child relationships.

Learning Targets

1. To analyze parents’ messages from people-oriented and task-oriented points of view.
2. To demonstrate a proper response to parents’ messages and establish a good relationship with the parents.



Teaching Materials


- Reference Materials for Instructors: Online Polling Content Appendix 1
- Group Worksheet: “Parents’ Messages” Appendix 2
- Video: “Parents’ Messages” Appendix 3
- Reference Materials for Instructors: Group Worksheet Appendix 4
- Reference Materials for Instructors: “I-Message” Online Polling Content Appendix 5
- Interactive Learning Platform
- Reflective Questions

Teaching Methods



- Group Discussion
- Online Polling

Implementation Plan (30 Minutes)

  Primary Activity

 Secondary Activity

Activity	Procedures	Teaching Materials
I. Warm-up activity (5 Minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students, “What is your parents’ tone of voice when they usually talk to you?” 2. Log in to Interactive Learning Platform (ILP) and let students vote. 3. Students vote “the most frequently used tone by their parents” and “the one they prefer their parents to use” based on different scenarios (<i>Appendix 1</i>). 4. Present the results after the vote. 5. Summarize and conclude: The tone used by parents talking to their children may be different from the one child expect, and sometimes parents’ tone may make children feel bad and damage the relationship between parents and children. Today we will try to discuss how to communicate with parents. 	Appendix 1 Interactive Learning Platform

<p>II. Group discussion “Parents’ Message”  (9 Minutes)</p>	<p>Aim: To analyze parents’ messages from person- oriented and task-oriented points of view</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the class into 8 groups and distribute the Worksheets (<i>Appendix 2</i>). 2. Play the video “Parents’ Messages” (<i>Appendix 3</i>). There are 7 scenarios about messages often expressed by parents (<i>Appendix 4</i>). 3. The groups should determine and judge the scenarios one by one and put signs on the appropriate parts of the Worksheets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ratings are given to “people-oriented”: Concern/Apathy (1 refers to the lowest, 10 the highest); ii. Ratings are given to “task-oriented”: Strictness/ Leniency (1 refers to the lowest, 10 the highest); <p>Identify whether the message is an “order”, a “request”, a “suggestion” or a “neglect” by checking the ratings against the graph.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Ask the groups to report to the class. 5. Summarize and conclude: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Most parents care deeply for their children and consider their well-being; ii. Depending on the situation, parents will express messages in different ways. <p>How can children respond to their parents?</p>	<p>Appendix 2 Appendix 3 Appendix 4</p>
<p>III. Students’ polling “My” Voice  (9 Minutes)</p>	<p>Aim: To learn proper response to parents’ messages to establish a good relationship with the parents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask students, “We just discussed the tone used by your parents, what kind of tone will you use when you respond to your parents?” 2. Log in to Interactive Learning Platform (ILP) and let students vote. 3. Students vote “the most frequently used tone by themselves” and “the proper one should be used by them” based on different scenarios (<i>Appendix 5</i>). 4. Present the results after the vote. 5. Depending on the situation, the instructor himself/herself or invites some students to read those statements using the tone of “order”, a “request” or a “neglect” for different scenarios: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Invite students to identify the tone used by the students. ii. Ask students, “If you were parents, how would you feel when you hear your children’s response in such a tone?” and invite students to share their discussion. 6. Invite students to use the tone of “suggestion” to act out the scenarios. 7. Ask students, “If you were parents, how would you feel when you heard your children’s response in the tone of ‘suggestion’?” 8. Encourage students to use “I-message” with “suggestion” tone as a proper response to their parents: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Feelings; and ii. Views about an issue. 9. Explain to students, “Appropriate response allows students to present their feelings and views calmly and promotes a harmonious atmosphere for effective communication.” 	<p>Appendix 5 Interactive Learning Platform</p>
<p>IV. Conclusion (2 Minutes)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Quarreling” and “keeping silent” are two common responses to our parents’ messages. Both responses hide our real thoughts, which prevents communication. We should reveal and share more of our real feelings and thoughts with our parents. 2. “Filial piety” is the core virtue in the Chinese culture and students can practice this by showing sympathy with their parents in responding to their parents’ messages. 	
<p>V. Self-reflection (5 Minutes)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute the worksheet of Reflective Questions and engage students in self-reflection. 2. Praise students for their participation during the lesson. 	<p>Reflective Questions</p>

Teaching Tips

<p>1. Warm-up activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors may share their personal experiences to arouse students’ interest and increase their involvement. 															
<p>2. “Parents’ Messages”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If time allows and if students are mature enough, instructors can direct students to think about the general meanings behind the following types of expressions: <table border="1" data-bbox="553 447 1484 877"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of expression</th> <th>Parent-child relationship</th> <th>The message suggests ...</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Order</td> <td>Parents have a higher status than the children.</td> <td>A sense of urgency and seriousness. Children keep ignoring parents’ messages.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Request</td> <td>Parents and children have a relatively equal status.</td> <td>The situation is not that urgent and the children are willing to follow parents’ words.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suggestion</td> <td>Parents and children share the same status and they get along with each other very well.</td> <td>The situation is not urgent at all and there is good communication between the parents and the children.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neglect</td> <td>Parents and children have an alienating relationship.</td> <td>A lack of communication and the parents and children are emotionally distant.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to think what they should do to promote parent-child communication that promotes the “Suggestion” expression in their communication. Some students may say that their parents “neglect” them most of the time. In this case, instructors should pay special attention to such students and find out whether their family background may have a negative effect on their personal and emotional development. Also ask students to think about what they can do to improve their relationship with their parents. Instructors should look for other support systems where needed, e.g. seeking help from social workers or counselors. Students who are most often neglected may try to draw attention by engaging in inappropriate or unusual behaviors (e.g. shop-lifting, being rebellious, bullying, etc.). Instructors should pay special attention to such students. Forward the case to social workers or counselors where needed. 	Type of expression	Parent-child relationship	The message suggests ...	Order	Parents have a higher status than the children.	A sense of urgency and seriousness. Children keep ignoring parents’ messages.	Request	Parents and children have a relatively equal status.	The situation is not that urgent and the children are willing to follow parents’ words.	Suggestion	Parents and children share the same status and they get along with each other very well.	The situation is not urgent at all and there is good communication between the parents and the children.	Neglect	Parents and children have an alienating relationship.	A lack of communication and the parents and children are emotionally distant.
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Neglect	Parents and children have an alienating relationship.	A lack of communication and the parents and children are emotionally distant.														
<p>3. “I-message”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors can use some of the statements shown in <i>Appendix 5</i> for students’ practice; the number of statements used for voice play depends on the class situation. When instructors teach students to apply the “suggestion” tone to express their personal feelings, ask students to pay attention to the following principles and strategies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use active listening and respond slowly in a calm manner, and do not reply in a judgmental way or in a way that leads us into confrontation. Use appropriate wordings and express your ideas clearly. If parents ignore you or show no response, try telling them more about your feelings or show them that you are willing to discuss with them to find out ways to solve the problem. Instructors can highlight that the “suggestion” tone can also be used when facing other people such as teachers and friends Apart from the examples given in <i>Appendix 5</i>, instructors may also make use of statements appeared in “Warm-up Activity” (<i>Appendix 1</i>) to reinforce students’ master of “I-message”. Should instructors wish to engage every student, a further exercise involving students sitting next to each other can be added. Work in pairs, one of them takes on the role of the father / mother, the other being the child and practice responding to parents by using “I-message”. 															
<p>4. Self-reflection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the reflective questions in the Worksheet and in the PPT as appropriate. 															

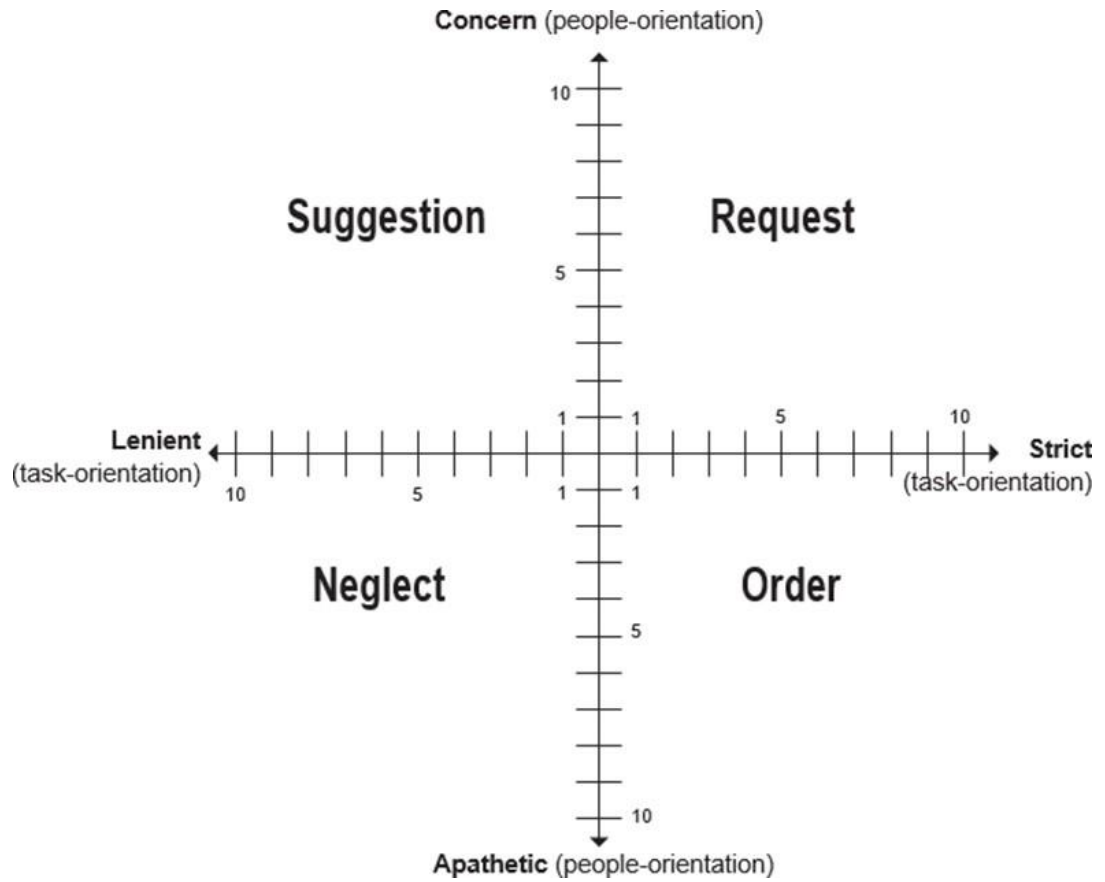
Supplementary Activity

Activity	Content	Recommendations
Thanks-Giving Day	Aim: To express gratitude to parents Ask students to form groups and work on finding ways to express their gratitude to their parents	Organizing a “Thanks-Giving Day” on weekends and invite parents to school. Then ask students to present their gratitude to their parents. Expressions of gratitude can be through to their parents. Expressions of through poetry, songs, pictures, and so on.

Reference Materials for Instructors: Online Polling Content. Appendix 1




	Scenarios
(1)	When parents know you are going out, they will: 1) Neglect — “Oh.....Going out again.” 2) Order — “Don’t hang around all day!” 3) Request — “You should stay home.” 4) Suggestion — “Could you stay home? We have not seen you much here. ”
(2)	When parents see you are phubbing, they will: 1) Neglect —“Oh..... Phubbing again. ” 2) Order — “Put down your phone! Do more revisions! ” 3) Request —“Can you put down your phone, please?” 4) Suggestion — “How about putting your phone down, always looking at a bright screen is not good for your eyes.”
(3)	When parents see you are sleeping on bed, they will: 1) Neglect —“Oh.....Still in bed. ” 2) Order — “Wake up, NOW!” 3) Request —“Can you find something to do and not lie on the bed all day?” 4) Suggestion — “It is better to sleep at night. Otherwise, you may be unable to sleep tonight. ”
(4)	When parents think that you are bone idle, they will: 1) Neglect —“Oh.....You are lazy bone. ” 2) Order — “Go to tidy your stuff up, NOW!” 3) Request —“Do something else. I don’t want to see you sitting here.” 4) Suggestion —“Let’s have a walk. It would be better than sitting here. ”
(5)	When parents find you playing games all the time, they will: 1) Neglect —“Gaming again. ” 2) Order — “Turn off the game NOW!” 3) Request —“You should spend less time on playing the game.” 4) Suggestion — “You have played the game for a long time, how about giving your eyes a break now?”
(6)	When you respond to your parents’ blaming on you, your parents will: 1) Neglect —“I don’t care what you said. ” 2) Order —“Shut up!” 3) Request —“You should not talk back.” 4) Suggestion —“Let us know what we blamed you wrongly.”
(7)	During the final exam, your parents notice that you focus on something else rather than doing revision. They will: 1) Neglect —“Oh, you don’t need to revise. ” 2) Order —“Go over your lessons NOW!” 3) Request —“You are still sitting your exams, do your revision, please.” 4) Suggestion —“It would be great if you revise before doing something else.”
(8)	Parents want you to help do some housework, but you are phubbing. They will: 1) Neglect — “Phubbing again.” 2) Order —“Come over and help NOW!” 3) Request —“You should help do some housework in your free time.” 4) Suggestion — “Could you help me wash the dishes? You can play the game after that. ”





Reference Materials for Instructors: Group Worksheet. Appendix 2



Video: “Parents’ Messages.” Appendix 3

Reference Materials for Instructors: “Parents’ Messages.” Appendix 4

Category	Father/Mother	Scenarios
(1) Order		“What time is it now? Still playing video games? You have school tomorrow morning! Go to bed now!”
(2) Request		“I’m busy cooking in here and I’m out of cooking oil. Can you go and buy a new bottle for me?”
(3) Neglect		“Don’t bother me!”

(4) Suggestion		“You spent less time playing video games last semester and got better grades. I think we should do the same this semester. Let’s try playing less games this semester like last term. That would be better, right?”
(5) Order		“How many times do I have to repeat it? No matter what, we are going to Grandma’s place for dinner this Saturday.”
(6) Request		“We’ll have an early dinner tonight. Come back before 7:00 “
(7) Suggestion		“These days you stay out so late. Why not stay at home and help your brother with his homework. He is really struggling with his English.”

Reference Materials for Instructors: “I-Message” Online Polling Content. Appendix 5

	Scenarios
(1)	<p>When parents said, “What time is it now? Still playing video games? You have school tomorrow morning! Go to bed now!”, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “I don’t care about that.” and keep playing the game. 2. Order — “Stop annoying me!” 3. Request — “Let me complete this task first.” 4. Suggestion — “I don’t want to waste my effort on this task” (Feeling) “Please give me 10 more minutes and I will go to bed, even I cannot complete it in the end.” (Views about the issue)
(2)	<p>When parents said, “I’m busy cooking and have run out of cooking oil...can you buy a new bottle for me?”, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “Don’t bother me.” 2. Order — “You do it by yourself!” 3. Request — “You can do it after finishing the dishes you are cooking.” 4. Suggestion — “I am doing my assignment.” (Feeling) “Give me five minutes. I will buy it after completing my assignment.”(Views about the issue)
(3)	<p>When parents said, “Don’t bother me!”, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “I don’t bother anymore.” 2. Order — “Fine! Remember what you said.” 3. Request — “Let me say it now.” 4. Suggestion — “I know you are troubled by something else, but I have something to discuss with you.” (Feeling) “Is it okay if we discuss five minutes later?” (Views about the issue)
(4)	<p>When parents said, “You spent less time playing video games and got better grades in last semester. I think we do the same this semester. Try to spend less time playing video games, shall we?”, you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “Don’t bother me! ” 2. Order — “Shut up!” 3. Request — “Let me complete the game first.” 4. Suggestion — “I feel much more stressed in this exam and have to relax my mind.” (Feeling) “Could you let me play game for half an hour after every two-hour revision?” (Views about the issue)

(5)	When parents said, “How many times do I need to repeat? We are going to have dinner at Grandma’s place this Saturday.”, you will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “I didn’t hear what you said. ” 2. Order — “Shut up!” 3. Request — “I don’t want to go to grandma’s home.” 4. Suggestion — “I have promised to attend a gathering on that day and I am not sure what time it will end.” (Feeling) “Perhaps I will have dinner with grandmother later.” (Views about the issue)
(6)	When parents said, “We’ll have an early dinner tonight. You should come back before 7:00 p.m.”, you will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neglect — “I don’t know. ” 2. Order — “You can have dinner first!” 3. Request — “Don’t wait for me and do it yourselves.” 4. Suggestion — “I am not sure when I will finish my work.” (Feeling) “I will call you if I cannot come back on time, and you can start first.” (Views about the issue)

Reflective Questions

Name:

Class:

Date:

1. Are you satisfied with your communication with your parents now? Why?

2. How can you improve your communication with your parents effectively? Please elaborate with examples.

3. Please write down the advantages of using “I-message” as a reply.

Ethical compliance

The authors have stated all possible conflicts of interest within this work. The authors have stated all sources of funding for this work. If this work involved human participants, informed consent was received from each individual. If this work involved human participants, it was conducted in accordance with the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. If this work involved experiments with humans or animals, it was conducted in accordance with the related institutions’ research ethics guidelines.

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