

Nurturing humanistic qualities in students through fieldwork in Geography

The Geography curriculum¹ and many teaching strategies commonly used in Geography helps nurture students' humanistic qualities. Mr Leung Wing Kin, the panel chairperson of **Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College**, shares the following example on how to nurture humanistic qualities in students through fieldwork and group collaboration.

Enhancing the elements of humanistic qualities in fieldwork

If teachers want to enhance the elements of humanistic qualities in fieldwork, opportunities should be provided for students to understand the theme and experience the fieldwork from people's perspectives to enable them to turn rational knowledge into actions that combine affection and reason to care for others, the environment and nature.

Example: Living with natural hazards

When teaching natural hazards, Mr Leung asks students to examine a man-made slope near their school to learn landslip prevention and mitigation measures, and to think about the impact of these measures on the view of nearby residential buildings, the environment and the nature. After returning to school, Mr Leung guides students to discuss the related impact and to think about whether other measures can be taken to reduce the impact. The discussion is also extended to natural hillsides.



Students examining the landslip prevention and mitigation measures for on a man-made slope near their school.

¹ Examples of geography topics that help nurture humanistic qualities in students can be found in Example 1.

Through personal discovery, understanding, experience and discussion, students learn landslide prevention and mitigation measures of man-made slopes and natural hillsides. Students also realise the need to consider the impact of the solutions on people, the environment and the nature. Thus, what they learn in Geography goes beyond subject knowledge to include caring for others, the environment and nature.

Other examples of fieldwork with elements of humanistic qualities

Fieldwork activities on Geography topics such as land use and sustainable development are also good for promoting humanistic qualities. These activities enable students to put themselves into others' shoes based on what they see, hear and feel in the field, encourage them to think about the problems and needs of residents and consider how the momentum of community development can be sustained through city planning while improving the livelihood of residents and ensuring the sustainable development of the environment and nature.

Nurturing students' humanistic qualities through fieldwork involving collaborative learning

According to Mr Leung, fieldwork involving collaborative learning can help nurture humanistic qualities in students, such as mutual respect, open-mindedness and willingness to contribute to the common good.

He suggests that before a fieldwork activity, teachers should emphasise that students need to respect others, be open to the opinions of others, and understand that their own views may also have blind spots. Students should thus listen more to the opinions of others and reflect on their own ideas. As members of a team, they should also make every effort to contribute to the fieldwork activities and work collaboratively with other members to complete the learning tasks.



Students having a group discussion on a geographical enquiry.

If you are interested in humanistic qualities, read also Examples 1, 13, 17 and 50.