Fostering Engagement with Team-Based Learning (TBL)

in Larger Japanese University Classrooms

Brent A. Jones[*]

【Abstract】

This paper introduces an action research project conducted at the Hirao School of Management during the 2020 Fall semester that was aimed at exploring the benefits and challenges to implementing a team-based learning (TBL) approach in larger classes at university in Japan. The participants in this study were a group of fifty-six students enrolled in an elective culture-focused course taught by the author. This report starts with some contextual background and goes on to outline the mixed-methods research design before offering a week-by-week overview of how each class meeting unfolded. Preliminary findings and discussion are then provided to highlight key issues related to using TBL in this context. It is hoped that this research might further inspire others to experiment with TBL and other active learning approaches.

【Keywords】

Team-Based Learning, Active Learning, Action Research, Intercultural Competence, Intercultural Understanding

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[*] Hirao School of Management, Konan University

1. Introduction

As highlighted in Jones (2020), Active Learning (AL) in undergraduate programs has been highlighted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2020) as an educational aim in Japan for over ten years. This emphasis on AL approaches for this context has gained momentum, even to the point that syllabi at many institutions now require mention of any AL elements planned for courses. Despite these well-intentioned policies, university faculty continue to struggle with viable ways to make their courses active without sacrificing content quality or quantity. One approach that the author has been experimenting with is team-based learning (TBL), which has gained wide acceptance in a variety of educational contexts around the world but has not made significant inroads at Japanese universities beyond a limited number of medical schools (Fujikura et al., 2013). Although the author's experimentation has yielded promising results (Jones, 2020), past experiences have been limited to rather smaller classes of twenty-eight or fewer learners. With this in mind, the current action research project was designed to explore the various challenges of designing and developing a TBL course for a larger group of learners.

The current paper is offered here in this collection of papers as a way of paying tribute to Professor Harumasa Sato, the lead designer and founding Dean of the Hirao School of Management (commonly referred to as CUBE) at Konan University. I became acquainted with Professor Sato in 2005, when as Dean of the Faculty of Economics at Konan he invited me to design and deliver an inter-session program for their students. Our discussions at the time convinced me of his passion for teaching and willingness to explore forward-thinking approaches to education, and also influenced my decision to join in the CUBE project as a consultant at the early stages and eventually join the newly established faculty in 2009. Since that time, I have come to recognize Sato-sensei's teaching style as also epitomizing many of the core concepts of learner engagement and active learning.

The course targeted for this study was a newly assigned elective course titled *kokusai shakai to nihon*, or Global Society and Japanese Identity, which is offered for all second-, third- and fourth-year students at the Hirao School of Management at Konan University. Lectures are delivered in English, reading assignments are a mixture of English and Japanese, and classroom discussions are conducted per student preference. The following section outlines initial plans for gathering and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. Some contextual background is then offered together with a brief week-by-week overview of the course. Preliminary findings and discussion are presented with the aim of gaining a general understanding of how effective TBL was in this specific context and identifying possible challenges and solutions.

2. Research Design

The main research questions for the study were (1) how viable is a TBL approach for Japanese learners in larger university courses, and (2) what are some of the challenges to designing and delivering a TBL course in this context. This study was approached from a social constructivist worldview, and a mixed-methods research plan was designed to gather quantitative data in the form of individual and group performance on readiness assurance tests (RATs - described below) as well as qualitative data in the form of student comments in reflective writing assignments and other feedback. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of this qualitative data was employed to discover common themes or issues.

3. Contextual Background

This section includes brief overviews of TBL and the *Global Society and Japanese Identity* course where the research was conducted. As outlined in Jones (2020), Cynthia J. Brame (N.D.) sees TBL as "a structured form of small-group learning that emphasizes student preparation out of class and application of knowledge in class." This approach to classroom instruction is described by Branney and Priego-Hernández (2018) as "a student-centered but teacher-directed flipped classroom strategy." It aligns with the flipped classroom (Bergmann & Sams, 2012) concept in that content normally delivered via in-class lectures are moved outside as recorded lectures and/or reading assignments, and we see some evidence of the approach being used in Japan (see, for example, Fujikura et al., 2013). The core concepts or elements of TBL are (1) strategically organized teams of five to seven students work together for extended periods of time, (2) individual and group versions of readiness assurance tests (RATs), (3) group tasks that draw on newly acquired knowledge or skills (Applications), and (4) peer assessment of contributions to the team's success. These items are briefly expanded upon here:

3.1 Strategically Organized Teams

Michaelsen, Knight & Fink (2004) stress the importance of forming teams to include a range of characteristics and abilities, and keeping teams together for extended periods of time. The range of characteristics and abilities helps ensure that each member will be able to contribute to the team's success, while the extended time working together gives members the opportunity to recognize each other's strengths and limitations while at the same time building trust. For the current study, the fifty-six (F = 33, M = 23) students were assigned 10 teams based on student number. This ensured that each team would have at least one member from each of three cohorts (2nd, 3rd & 4th year students), at least one student of each gender (although two teams in the current study did not have

any male members), and at least one student from each of the two courses (management and study abroad).

3.2 Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs)

Students are made accountable in TBL for learning the core foundational knowledge throughout the course. This is accomplished by administering both individual readiness assurance tests (iRAT) and team readiness assurance tests (tRAT) that cover key concepts and content. These two assessments cover identical material, and the tRAT is administered immediately after the iRAT. The FAQ page on the Team-Based Learning Collaborative (TBLC) website asserts that the "average team RAT scores are typically at least 15-20% above average individual scores." This reflects the strength of teams and is likely the reason TBL is so popular in medical training programs. For the current study, the ten RATs were developed around material presented in the course textbook (Harasawa, 2013) and via recorded or live lectures on the themes of diversity, intercultural communication, intercultural understanding, non-verbal communication and assertive communication. Feedback was provided immediately after teams finished with the tRAT, and the instructor was able to expand on or clarify points that individuals or teams struggled with.

3.3 Applications

Another core component of TBL is demonstration that core concepts have been mastered. This is achieved through what Michaelsen, Knight & Fink (2004) refer to as Applications. For the current study, these Applications took various forms, including a group advice letter to younger classmates, chapter summaries, and a customer service manual. These Applications were facilitated via Google Docs, with each team having their own Google Doc where they could collaborate.

3.4 Peer Assessment

One of the questions and much of the resistance to TBL is related to individual accountability and "free riding" where individual students might leave most of the Applications work to their teammates. Different systems of Peer Assessment have been devised to alleviate this potential problem. For the current study, a system based on the following description (Brame, n.d.) was used:

> *"Dee Fink uses a method in which students are given 100 points to distribute among their teammates (but don't evaluate themselves). Based on all team members' evaluations, a student is assigned a score (out of 100) that is used as a multiplier for the score they receive for group*

activities. Thus, if a team member does not contribute to group activities, her score for the group activities will suffer, while a team member who contributes very effectively benefits."

3.4 Course Structure

A brief overview of the Global Society and Japanese Identity course is presented here to assist readers in interpreting findings. More details are provided in the syllabus (spoon.adm.konan-u.ac.jp). This course was designed to provide learners with an opportunity to reflect on their own identity, what it means to be Japanese, and Japan's role on the world stage. Key themes were surface culture vs. hidden culture, main culture versus subculture, diversity, acculturation, intercultural understanding, intercultural communication, intercultural sensitivity, stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, the culture map, the Johari Window, non-verbal communication and assertive communication. Summaries of weekly topics, activities and out of class assignments are listed below.

3.4.1 Week One (via Zoom)

The main goals for our first meeting were to welcome learners to the course, clarify why they had enrolled in the course and set the stage for the next fourteen weeks. To allow students to share their reasons for enrolling and begin meeting their classmates, a Padlet (https://padlet.com/bjones_jp/nnr33x64s751alos) was created with the title "Why are we here?" Students were instructed to, "add your reasons for signing up or why others might want to take this course." Students then registered in the course on the LUCKS Moodle (http://els.konan-u.ac.jp/) and were told how we would be using this online course management system to access course materials and collaborate. We then watched a short news story about a group of young men who fled civil war in their native country of Sudan and eventually resettled in the United States. This was followed by a group discussion and activity in breakout rooms and was the first opportunity to meet other members of their team that they would be working with throughout the semester. Their instructions were to discuss the following: (1) What "culture" issues come up in this video? (2) In general, what are some "aspects" of culture? List up as many as you can in 10 minutes. (e.g., food, greetings, festivals)

Following a debriefing of the above, the structure of the course was explained as: Weekly readings (Out of Class), Weekly lectures (In/Out of Class), Readiness Assurance Tests (Individual & Group), Class Discussions & Activities (Application), and Reflective Writing & Speaking. This led to an introduction to TBL roughly along the lines of that outlined earlier in this section. This first meeting concluded with a simple overview of the textbook, some of the related key concepts and prominent

scholars in the field that would be covered in the course. The first homework assignment was to read chapters one and two in the textbook while noting down key concepts, ideas, frameworks, etc.

3.4.2 Week Two (via Zoom)

This meeting began with the first individual and team RATs. Students were instructed keep their camera on and provided with a link to a Google Form version of iRAT#1. This required students to input their name and Konan email address (this allowed results to be released directly to students) and included ten multiple-choice questions covering key information from chapters one and two (links to all of the iRATs and tRATs can be obtained by contacting the author). When everyone had finished submitting their answers, all students were assigned to the same breakout rooms from day one and provided with a link to tRAT#1. This Google Form required respondents to choose the team they were on and included these instructions: ONE PERSON PER TEAM SHOULD SUBMIT THIS FORM. When all teams had finished submitting their answers, the average, median and range of correct answers on the iRAT were presented, and then item-by-item feedback was provided using the Responses page of the tRAT (Fig. 1).

5. Which of the following has been most historically characteristic of world exchange?
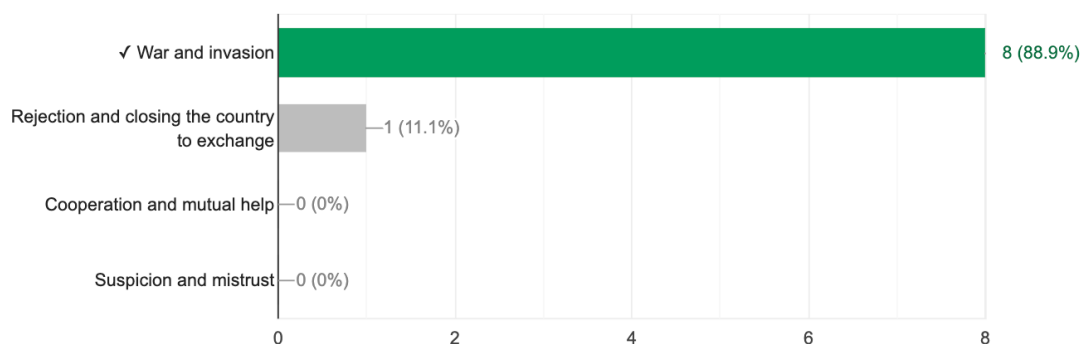8 / 9 correct responses

✓ War and invasion	8 (88.9%)
Rejection and closing the country to exchange	1 (11.1%)
Cooperation and mutual help	0 (0%)
Suspicion and mistrust	0 (0%)

Fig. 1 Example feedback from Responses page for tRAT#1

The lecture expanded on topics in chapter one and two, specifically the cultural iceberg model of culture, diversity, subculture, individual "common sense," intolerance and how our perceptions of the world are influenced by our upbringing and past experiences. The elements of intercultural understanding (Australian CURRICULUM, 2020) proposed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority was also outlined as both a developmental and assessment tool. The final interactive element

for the day involved learners in taking the *World Values Survey* introduced in the textbook and discussing their results. The day two homework was to (1) read and annotate chapter three, and (2) share personal experiences with culture clash in Japan, and times where "common sense" came into question or didn't match someone else's. A Google Doc was created for each team, and each student was instructed to add their comments there.

3.4.3 Week Three (via Zoom)

Class began with iRAT#2 and tRAT#2 similarly to day two, including the feedback session based on results. These tests covered key concepts from chapter three as well as the first two chapters and our mini lectures (all future RATs were also cumulative). The rest of this class meeting was spent on the first Application (described earlier in this section). The following prompts were added to the top of each team's Google Doc.

> **(1) Discussion/Critical Thinking** - Discuss how the topics from weeks 1-3 are related to our other studies at CUBE. Specifically, why should students in a management program learn about identity, global society, intercultural communication, diversity, total culture vs. subculture, etc.?

> **(2) Application** - After critically discussing the above topic, write a collaborative short blurb for the CUBE Diary (https://konan-cube.com/diary/) titled "Why we study culture at CUBE." One person should write, but every member should include their ideas. Write in Japanese first.

There was no outside reading homework this week, but students were given the following instructions for their first writing assignment:

> **Reflective Writing Assignment #1 (Due October 26)** - Your first reflective writing assignment involves writing about your cultural identity. Based on what we have read and talked about so far, you will need to write a 2-page essay (1000字 or 500 words). Save your paper as a Word Document, upload to OneCloud, and share the link with me at bjones@konan-u.ac.jp.

> **Advice** - Start by completing the Total Culture/Subculture graph on pg. 43 of the textbook. In addition to the various subcultures, you are a member of, you will also want to discuss other influences on your identity. Think about your own identity, particularly your personality, your interests, and your values. What are the sources of those aspects of your identity? How have your family, friends, neighbors, country, experiences influenced your identity? This is not an autobiography or the story of your family's history. Think of this paper as an ethnography of a culture and its members in which you describe and interpret the attributes and members' behavior to those who are not familiar with them. The twist is that the subject culture is your own, and the attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior you are examining are your own.

> You will be assessed on

Quality of thought - how deeply you reflect on your experiences and other influences on your cultural identity

Connections to topics discussed so far - how well you link your story with concepts/ideas from our reading and classroom discussion

Quality of writing - how well you organize and present your thoughts (including format, spelling, grammar). Although I am much more interested in the ideas than the language, you should make good use of spelling and grammar check functions in Word or Google Docs.

Originality - This essay should be your own original work (plagiarism will be dealt with harshly)

3.4.4 Week Four

Our first face-to-face class meeting was set aside as a Workshop day focused on speech acts and communication styles. An introduction to part one of the Workshop (based on an activity in Stringer & Cassiday, 2009) was presented via a slide titled "How Would I Say That?" with the following bullet points:

- Overview of "speech acts" listed on the handout (Appendix 1)
- Individual time - jot down how you would personally communicate the speech act (Japanese and then English)
- Team time - share your responses and take notes on the responses of your team members (look for diversity)

A debriefing session was conducted based on the following starter questions: (1) Which speech acts were easy? What would make it more difficult? (2) What differences within the group surprised you? (3) How might culture affect individual responses or expectations? (4) How does gender affect speech acts? (5) Is it easier or more difficult to deal with family members?

Part two of the Workshop included an introduction to three communication style preferences (Appendix 2) proposed by the same authors. Teams discussed and recorded responses to the following prompts in their team's Google Docs:

Prompt 1 - The strengths and weaknesses of our style at school and in the workplace.
Prompt 2 - How each of the other two styles helps us and hinders us at school and in the workplace.

Finally, students were reminded of Reflective Writing Assignment #1 and assigned chapter four from the textbook.

3.4.5 Week Five

This meeting started with some reflections on the day four workshop. Then, a similar protocol to day two and three was used for the RATs, with the only adjustment being to provide a QR code (www.qr-code-generator.com/) and tinyurl (tinyurl.com/) for the Google Forms on a slide.

The lecture today expanded on the topic of communication styles by citing work at the University of Iowa, Center for Teaching (2020) as well as models of adaptation or acculturation described in the textbook, and two developmental models (Bennett, 2013; Hammer, 2008).

Teams were then directed to their team's Google Doc, where discussion and the next Application was prompted as follows:

> ***(1) Discussion/Critical Thinking*** *- Discuss which topics from Chapter 4 and today's lecture are most relevant for CUBE students planning on studying or working overseas in the future. Specifically, which ideas or information might help make their experiences more successful or positive?*

> ***(2) Application*** *- Write a group letter to a classmate who is preparing to study abroad in Ireland for two semesters. Include advice and suggestions based on what we have studied so far in this course. Write in Japanese first, then in English.*

This class meeting concluded with the first Peer Assessment (described earlier in this section)), which was conducted via Google Forms with the following instructions:

> *Each member's peer evaluation score will be the average of the points they receive from the other members of the team. DO NOT EVALUATE YOURSELF. Team member's #1 - #6 are in the same order as above. To complete the evaluation, you should: (1) assign an average of 10 points to the other members of your team (Thus, you should assign a total of 40 points in your 5-member groups), and (2) differentiate some in your ratings; for example, you must give at least one score of 11 or higher (maximum equals 15) and one score of 9 or lower. Again, DO NOT EVALUATE YOURSELF.*

Additional feedback was collected with the following prompt:

> *In the space below please briefly describe your reasons for your highest and lowest ratings. These comments — but not information about who provided them — will be used to provide feedback to students who would like to receive it.*

Students were reminded of the deadline for the reflective writing assignment and the presentations scheduled for next week. Chapter six was also assigned as outside reading.

3.4.6 Week Six

A similar protocol was followed for the fourth individual and team RATs. The debriefing session was followed by presentations, where students presented the highlights of their reflective writing essay (personal cultural identity) to their teammates. Students completed a Google Form presentation assessment for each of

their teammates. For each of the following four items, a 5-point scale was used with 1 marked as Low and 5 marked as High:

> **Quality of Thought** - Talks about their own cultural identity in depth (not just surface). Clarity of ideas.
> **Connections to topics discussed so far** - Includes topics/themes from the textbook and lectures.
> **Quality of Presentation** - Presents with confidence. Talks to/with the audience (not reading from script).
> **Originality** - Does the speaker express their own original thoughts and/or creativity?

There was also a Comments section where students were encouraged to identify what they appreciated from each of the presentations as well as ways the presentation could be improved. Average scores and comments were included in a mid-term feedback sheet that was sent to each student.

With the remaining time, students were directed to review the Day Five Applications of the other teams and vote on the top three. The homework assignments were to read chapter seven and complete a web search in Japanese on the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), specifically to answer these questions. What is it? Who is using it? How well recognized is it?

3.4.7 Week Seven

Week seven started with iRAT#5 and tRAT#5 following the set protocol. Students then worked in their teams to share, compare and record what they found in their webs search about the IDI. This was followed by a short talk on the what, why and how of the IDI based around key information on the IDI website (https://idiinventory.com/), and provided with login codes that they could during class in two week's time.

The mini lecture for this meeting covered the difference between generalizations and stereotypes (how they are formed and categorized), as well as the key concepts of values (personal & cultural), beliefs, prejudice, bias, discrimination (direct & subtle) and conflict. This led to a discussion of which of these are barriers to intercultural communication and the effective communication skills of active listening, inquiry, advocacy and reflection.

Chapter eight of the textbook was assigned as reading homework.

3.4.8 Week Eight

Briefly, the contents of this meeting included the RATs, a mini lecture reviewing and expanding on ideas from Week 7, instructions for taking the IDI, and assignment of Reflective Writing #2 as follows:

> *For this assignment, you should reflect on each of the following questions.*

1. In what ways are you ethnocentric? How do you think this affects your behavior toward others? (125 words or 250 characters)
2. When you work with others who are very different from you (perhaps from other countries or from other areas of Japan, other age groups, or other subcultures), what kinds of things do you think and feel about those people? (125 words or 250 characters)
3. What are some of your core values and beliefs? Where do these values and beliefs come from (125 words or 250 characters)
4. What experiences have you had with stereotypes, prejudice and/or discrimination? (125 words or 250 characters)

3.4.9 Week Nine

Class time was split between logging in and taking the IDI and reviewing in teams the key concepts from the first half of the semester in preparation for the Reflective Writing #2 Assignment. Students were also directed to the second Peer Evaluation survey. The outside reading assignment this week was chapter nine.

3.4.10 Week Ten

This class meeting started with iRAT#7 and tRAT#7 and moved to a debriefing session on the group IDI results. The author has *IDI Qualified Administrator Certification* and is thus trained in group and individual debriefing sessions. Students downloaded the group report and instructed to take notes during the debriefing session. The debriefing session included a review of the Intercultural Development Continuum (Fig. 2), moved onto the results and meaning of Perceived Orientation (PO), Developmental Orientation (DO), Orientation Gap (OG), and Leading Orientation (OG), and moved on to the Group Development Plan.
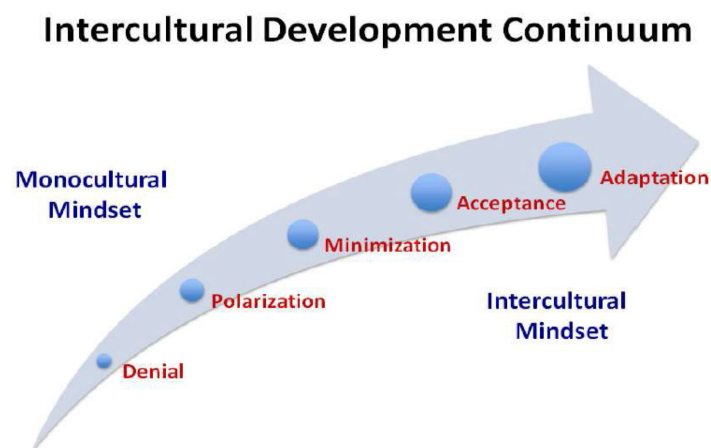

Fig. 2 Intercultural Development Continuum (Hammer, 2008)

Students were also informed that they could receive their Individual Profile Report and Intercultural Development Plan if they scheduled an individual debriefing (approx. 20 mins.), and chapter eleven of the textbook was assigned.

3.4.11 Week Eleven

This class meeting was devoted to (1) student presentations of key information from their Reflective Writing #2 essays, and (2) an overview of key ideas from The Culture Map (Meyer, 2016). The same rating scale (1 = low, 5 = high) for a slightly revised version of the Google Forms peer evaluation:

> *Quality of Thought - Includes in depth (not just surface) reflections. Clarity of ideas.*
> *Connections to topics discussed so far - Includes topics/themes from the textbook and lectures.*
> *Quality of Presentation - Presents with confidence. Talks to/with the audience (not reading from script).*
> *Originality - Does the speaker express their own original thoughts and/or creativity?*
> *Comments - Words of encouragement and suggestions for improvement.*

The presentation of ideas from The Culture Map centered around the eight scales:

- **Communicating**: low-context vs. high-context
- **Evaluating**: direct negative feedback vs. indirect negative feedback
- **Persuading**: principles-first vs. applications-first
- **Leading**: egalitarian vs. hierarchical
- **Deciding**: consensual vs. top-down
- **Trusting**: task-based vs. relationship-based
- **Disagreeing**: confrontational vs. avoids confrontation
- **Scheduling**: linear-time vs. flexible-time

The reading assignment this week was chapter twelve, and students were also instructed to watch and take notes on a Ted Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie titled "The danger of a single story."

3.4.12 Week Twelve

The two RATs (#8) were administered according to the set protocol. This was followed by a Workshop developed from training materials in the textbook. Specifically, we reviewed the structure and usage of the Johari Window, and students collaborated on (1) the Culture Assimilator activity (Appendix 3), and (2) a Role Play. The prompts for these two team collaborations are presented here:

Culture Assimilator

Read the scenario (Case Three) and question on page 135 of the textbook. Then, discuss with your partners the most appropriate answer and complete the following chart. Make sure to include explanations of why you think answers are right or wrong.

#	◯ or X	Explanation
1		
2		
3		
4		

Role Play

Read the following Role Sheet with your team. Discuss and prepare for the Role Play. Choose one member to represent your team. Inform the instructor when you are ready.

The Role sheet has been omitted for brevity's sake. Chapter thirteen was assigned as homework, and students were informed of their final reflective writing assignment via a slideshow and the Moodle site as follows:

> *Your final writing assignment involves writing about reactions to what we have studied. Based on what we have read and talked about so far, you will need to write a 3-page essay (2000字 or 1000 words).*
> - *Specifically, you are being asked to consider the contents of the course as it relates to your individual Identity as well as your Intercultural Understanding, Intercultural Competence and Intercultural Sensitivity.*
> - *You should include in your essay discussion of your individual or group Development Plan from the IDI feedback.*
> - *You do not need to write about every topic from the textbook or lectures but should instead focus on three to four key concepts that were particularly meaningful for you.*
> - *You will again be assessed on (1) Quality of thought, (2) Connections to topics discussed so far, (3) Quality of writing, and (4) Originality.*

3.4.13 Week Thirteen

Individual and team RATs (#9) were again administered and debriefed at the beginning of class. The mini lecture expanded on the topic of non-verbal communication (NVL) from the textbook, specifically how ubiquitous NVL is, and influences on the study of NVL by Ray Bidwhistell, Albert Mehrabian and Edward T. Hall. Each of the commonly cited types of NVL (Use of Time, Physical Appearance, Posture, Eye Contact, Facial Expressions, Gestures, Haptics, Physical Environment, Proxemics) was reviewed with examples from an intercultural communications perspective.

The Application for this class meeting involved negotiation of (1) a team Customer Service Manual (described in the textbook), and (2) a list of NVL peculiar to Japan. Instructions pasted into each team's Google Doc were as follows:

Customer Service Manual
Preparation - Read the **Work 8** introduction on page 170 and the **Example of clerk's response to customer** on page 171.

Discussion - Negotiate with your group members how best to complete the following table for a Customer Service Manual.

	Customer Service Attitude (接客態度)
Facial Expressions (表情)	
Greetings (挨拶)	
Speech / voice (volume / quality / tone) (話し方・声)	
Line of sight (視線)	
Body Movements (体全体の動き)	

Nonverbal Communication Peculiar to Japan
Preparation - Read the **Work 9** introduction on page 175 and note down your own ideas.

Discussion - Negotiate with your group members how best to complete the following table.

Type	Examples of non-verbal communication peculiar to Japanese
1. 身体動作 (Body Language)	
2. 身体的特徴 (Physical Characteristics)	
3. 接触行動 (Physical Contact)	
4. パラ言語 (Paralanguage)	
5. 空間 (Physical Environment/Space)	
6. 人工品 (Objects/ Artifacts)	

> **Peer Evaluation**
> Check the other teams' responses to the Customer Service Manual activity above. Then,
> find the link on Moodle to the Peer Evaluation - Nonverbal Communication Activities.
> Select the top three teams (Gold, Silver & Bronze).

The class concluded with the final reading assignment (chapter fourteen) and a reminder regarding the final reflective writing assignment.

3.4.14 Week Fourteen

This class meeting included (1) course evaluations (授業改善アンケート), (2) the final RATs (#10), (3) a mini lecture reviewing key concepts related to Assertive Communication and stressing the important distinction between sympathy and empathy highlighted by Milton Bennett (2013), and (4) the final Application. This Application was also conducted on the team Google Doc as follows:

> **Sympathy vs. Empathy**
> *Discussion* - Share and compare your notes from today's lecture. Specifically, identify the
> key points related to the topics covered in today's talk.
> - 　　　Similarity and Single-Reality
> - 　　　The Melting Pot and Ethnocentrism
> - 　　　Advantages and Disadvantages of Sympathy
> - 　　　The Assumption of Difference and Multiple-Reality
> - 　　　Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication
>
> *Summarize* - Based on your discussion, summarize what your group understood from
> today's talk. You should be able to introduce the who, what, why and how of the topic of
> sympathy vs. empathy as related to intercultural understanding and communication. Aim
> at 150-200 characters (Japanese).

3.4.15 Week Fifteen

The final class was devoted to student presentations, a short review of key concepts and a short discussion of how the knowledge and skills from this course might be applied to future endeavors. Due to a university-wide directive, this final class meeting was conducted on Zoom. A similar peer evaluation form to that for reflective writings #1 and #2 was used for the presentations, which were again conducted within teams (in breakout rooms). The instructor's parting message included encouragement to (1) follow through on development plan (IDI), (2) continue looking for examples of the topics/issues we covered, (3) connect these topics/issues to their other studies, (4) consider a related topic for their graduation projects, (5) apply the knowledge/skills to their jobs or careers, and (6) look for intercultural opportunities in Kansai Scene (local information magazine) at with the Nishinomiya International Association or other such groups.

4 Findings

In this section, preliminary findings are reported in the form of descriptive statistics for quantitative data (RATs, Peer Evaluations) and key themes that emerged from a thematic content analysis of reflective writing assignments. Representative comments from the reflective writing and peer evaluation feedback are then presented in the next section (Discussion).

4.1 Quantitative Data

Results from the ten individual and team RATs helped identify concepts or material that students were struggling with or that needed further clarification. Table 1 includes key descriptive statistics (average, median, range) for both the iRATs and tRATs.

Table 1 - RAT Results

RAT # (Full Points)	Individual Average	Individual Median	Individual Range	Team Average	Team Median	Team Range
1 (100)	74.82	80	20 - 100	87.78	90	60 - 100
2 (100)	60.6	60	10 - 90	81.11	90	60 - 90
3 (100)	57.88	60	10 - 100	85.56	80	70 - 100
4 (100)	58.3	60	30 - 90	74.44	80	50 - 100
5 (100)	51.5	50	10 - 80	72	80	40 - 90
6 (100)	65.5	70	10 - 100	88	90	70 - 100
7 (150)	96.94	100	40 - 140	133.64	130	110 - 150
8 (150)	74.46	70	30 - 140	106.36	110	80 - 140
9 (150)	101.86	100	50 - 150	133	130	120 - 150
10 (150)	100.42	100	50 - 140	133	130	110 - 150

*Note: The first six RATs included 10 items (ten points each), while the last four included 15.

Results from the peer assessment show that most students understood the what, why and how of peer evaluations. The few students who mistakenly assigned individual scores that did not add up to the target total score for the group were informed of their error and asked to resubmit their evaluations. The range (high-low) of scores assigned for individual students on the second peer assessment is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Range of Individual Scores from Peer Assessment #2

Team	Low	High	Range
01	4.5	14	9.5

02	*9.4*	*10.8*	1.4
03	*7.7*	*12.8*	5.1
04	No data		
05	*8.0*	*13.5*	5.5
06	*4.5*	*13.3*	8.9
07	*8.8*	*11.0*	2.2
08	*7.0*	12.8	5.8
09	*8.8*	*12.0*	3.2
10	*7.5*	*12.0*	4.5

We see here some teams with a wider range of individual scores and some with narrower ranges. Student comments on the peer evaluation (discussed below) revealed that a few teams had members who contributed significantly less than their teammates, while other teams had more consistent equal contributions by all members.

4.2 Qualitative Data

The findings here are results of thematic analysis of reflective writing assignment #3 (described above) and include key themes that emerged, and the number of items coded under that theme. Representative excerpts will be presented in the following section (Discussion). The top four themes that emerged are presented in Table 3. The total of 120 items coded under these themes accounted for 58% of the 208 items coded under 12 themes.

Table 3 Top Four Themes

Theme	# of items coded
Future Application of Course Content	34
Connecting to Personal Experience or News	31
Group or Teamwork	30
Changing Opinions or Perspectives	25
Total	*120*

Other themes and the number of items coded were Identity (16), Stereotype (15), Adaptation Models (11), Ethnocentrism (11), Understanding of Japanese Identity (10),

Visible-Invisible Culture (10), Discrimination (8), and Diversity (7). Representative comments coded under these key themes will be introduced in the following discussion.

5 Discussion

The above findings will now be interpreted with an eye toward answering the research questions about viability of TBL for larger classes and the challenges that can be anticipated. The viability of each of the core components of TBL is addressed first, and a broader discussion of challenges and lessons learned follows.

5.1 Strategically Organized Teams

The strategy of assigning teams according to the list of students was mostly successful, even though two teams did not include any male members. That is to say those teams did not suffer or experience any disadvantage other than the relative lack of team diversity. Several students commented favorably about the discussions across cohorts. For example, the following student comments on how the group discussions and idea sharing helped them correctly answer the questions on the RATs and expresses his enjoyment of hearing different opinions across cohorts.

> 最初の教科書をもとにしたクイズを解いた後、グループで集まり、英語中心にどの選択肢を選んだか、なぜそう思ったのかについて話し合うことでお互いの考えやアイデアを共有することが出来、グループと打ち解けることが出来た。二回生や三回生問わず、個性がそれぞれ違った考えを出すのでそこが面白いとも感じることが多々あった。(Male, 3rd Year)

The value of learning from peers also surfaced as an advantage of strategically organizing students into teams with individuals with a range of personalities, strengths and backgrounds. The following excerpt introduces how one student learned firsthand about communication styles and the importance of assertive communication.

> *We have a member who use those communication style well. Especially, when he did a groupwork, he use a active listening, and assertion of empathy. So, other group member can say own opinion easily. I noticed that his communication style is really comfortable for other group member. Through this experience, I was convinced that assertive communication is important. When I communicate with other people, I thought that I should be careful own communication style. (Female, 2nd Year)*

The most compelling support for forming diverse teams and keeping them together throughout the course came from this next student.

> この授業で1番楽しかったのは、たくさんグループワークがあったことです。グループ
> メンバーの課題内容発表は聞いていてとても面白かったです。普段友達とは話さな
> いみんなの身近な内容を聞けて意外な面を知ることができました。普段の授業では
> 意識したことがありませんでしたが、多様な文化を理解することが目的の授業でもあ
> り、グループメンバー1人1人の個性を気が付けば少しだけですが知れました。1〜15
> 回全て同じメンバーで授業を受けてきたので、大学生活の1つの思い出となる経験
> でした。みんな優しく、英語に対してパッションがあり一緒に勉強して自分を高められ
> るような仲間でした。グループワークも誰かに頼ればいいと考える人はおらず、みん
> なでやり遂げようと全員でグループワーク課題を完成出来て本当に楽しかったです。
> 基本的に各授業仲の良い友達と受けるため、授業でその子たち以外と特別会話する
> ことがありませんでした、今回はたくさん交流できて大学生らしい授業を経験できた
> と感じています。(Female, 3rd Year)

As shown in the findings, *Group or Teamwork* surfaced as one of the top four themes that students wrote about in the final writing assignment despite there being no mention of group or team in the instructions. It should also be mentioned that all of the comments about group or teamwork were favorable, and the majority of these focused on how diversity within the group helped them understand the various concepts and issues. One of the recurring subthemes was how teammates helped open their eyes to the range of viewpoints, experiences and subcultures within Japan.

5.2 Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs)

One alarming result from Table 1 is the range for the iRATs, specifically that some students are correctly answering very few questions. My original impression was that one or two students were either not completing the reading or were not taking the RATs seriously. However, a quick check of the number of students scoring at the bottom of the class (Table 4) reveals that a significant number of students are struggling with the RATs.

Table 4 Four Lowest Scores and Number of Respondents

RAT # (Full Points)	Four Lowest Scores and Number of Respondents	Total
1 (100)	20 = 1, 30 = 1, 40 = 4, 50 = 7	13
2 (100)	10 = 2, 20 = 1, 30 = 2, 40 = 9	14
3 (100)	10 = 2, 20 = 5, 30 = 3, 40 = 8	18
4 (100)	30 = 4, 40 = 1, 40 = 8, 50 = 11	24
5 (100)	10 = 1, 20 = 2, 30 = 6, 40 = 13	22
6 (100)	10 = 1, 20 = 1, 30 = 3, 40 = 0	5

7 (150)	40 = 1, 50 = 3, 60 = 3, 70 = 7	14
8 (150)	30 = 3, 40 = 9, 50 = 7, 60 = 7	26
9 (150)	50 = 2, 60 = 1, 70 = 2, 80 = 7	12
10 (150)	50 = 3, 60 = 1, 70 = 3, 80 = 5	12

Although my original impression was clearly not correct, what is not clear is whether these poor results are due to a lack of preparation, difficulty in understanding the questions (English comprehension), some combination of these or some other reason or reasons. Further analysis is required to determine the who, what and why of this alarming result.

At the same time, the earlier-mentioned claim on the Team-Based Learning Collaborative (TBLC) website that "average team RAT scores are typically at least 15-20% above average individual scores" seems to hold true for the current context. Comparing averages in Table 1, we see margins in the range between 17.3% for RAT#1 and 47.8% for RAT#3, and combined the jump is 34.5%.

Several students also commented on the RATs. In the following excerpts, students express how the RATs and textbook complemented each other, and how comparing answers helped with a personal breakthrough.

> 通常の英語の講義とは違って、日本を含む各国の文化、習慣や性格を英語を通して学習できるところが他の講義と違って面白いと思った。そして毎回出されるテストの範囲でもある、教科書の「異文化理解入門」はそのことを学習するにあたって、適している教材だと思ったし、非常に読みやすかった。... 最初の教科書をもとにしたクイズを解いた後、グループで集まり、英語中心にどの選択肢を選んだか、なぜそう思ったのかについて話し合うことでお互いの考えやアイデアを共有することが出来、グループと打ち解けることが出来た。(Male, 3rd Year)

5.3 Applications
Not many specific references were made to the applications. My impression is that the students did not discriminate in the writing between the formal applications and the weekly activities. The following student expresses a belief that the applications or activities push individuals to think more deeply.

> 特に、グループ内でのディスカッションが多くあったのですが、そのアクティビティは自分自身の考え方をより濃いものにするきっかけになったと思います。なぜなら、グループ内で集められたそれぞれのメンバーはあたりまえですが、生まれ育った環境や背景は

全く違い、それぞれが持っている文化はそれらによって影響されていることが多いです。(Female, 3rd Year)

Upon reflection, many of the applications were rushed since they were assigned toward the latter part of the class and time was often running out. This is regrettable in that many of the comments reveal how meaningful students thought these interactions were. As mentioned in section three, a range of applications were assigned to assess how well students had internalized the key concepts, knowledge and skills. The following examples are offered for consideration.

> *When Japanese go abroad, if learning identity, global society, cross-cultural communication, diversity, etc. it is possible to avoid getting troubles, conflicts, and friction in communication. Also, by filling in the differences in values and sharing them, we can supplement the characteristics that we do not have and support each other. In addition, by getting to know different cultures deeply, you can see the essence of your own culture, remove prejudice and prejudice about the world, and broaden your horizons.*

This is the English version of team nine's Day Three application, a message on the CUBE Diary expressing reasons students in their program should study about intercultural understanding and communication. As this was early in the semester, the aim was mainly to see that students understood the value of taking this type of course.

In the following excerpt from team five's Day Five application, we see evidence that this team has pulled out the main ideas regarding the intercultural adaptation models introduced in the text and mini lecture.

留学される方々へ

留学では鬱になったり体調が優れなかったり、家族が恋しくなったりすることがあるだろうけど、それは誰もが通る道だからそんなに不安になる必要はないよ。何があっても最後は結局楽しくなるはず。何とかなるからね。辛い時期はいつか終わるから、少し我慢してみよう。幸せが待ってるだろうから。
最後に、身体に気を付けて頑張ってください。

Finally, team seven's Day 13 effort (Customer Service Manual) reveals an understanding of the various types of non-verbal communication that we had covered.

	Customer Service Attitude (接客態度)

Facial Expressions (表情)	明るい笑顔(目元まで)、リアクションは大きくする
Greetings (挨拶)	お辞儀をする、アイコンタクト
Speech/voice (volume/quality/tone) (話し方・声)	敬語、丁寧語、ハキハキと、大きな声、トーンは高めで話す
Line of sight (視線)	相手の目を見て話す、
Body Movements (体全体の動き)	姿勢のよい立ち振る舞い、丁寧な受け渡し、

5.4 Peer Assessment

Again, data from the two peer evaluations reveals that students in this study took the peer assessment seriously, with individual scores ranging from 4.5 to 14. Some of the teams had narrower ranges, but none of the individuals assigned the same scores to all of their teammates. For discussion purposes, representative student responses to the two open-ended questions (reasons for highest and lowest scores) are offered.

Reasons for your highest scores
- *She gave a clear answer all time with grounds, and she said her own experiences a lot while team discussion.*
- *She always lead our team and make nice atmosphere for us.*
- *This is because he summarized everyone's opinions and showed the leadership.*
- 積極的に意見を出してくれたり、時には反論をしてくれたりして良い話し合いの場作りに貢献してくれたと思うから。
- *A*さんは常にグループを仕切ってくれていて、進行役をしてくれています。そのおかげでグループがまとまっていると思うからです。
- グループのディスカッションを勧めてくれました。わからなかったら簡潔に教えてくれたり、自分の経験談を話してくれたり、グループ内を和ませてくれました。
- 進行役をしてくれて、なおかつ自分の意見をしっかり言ってくれるから。

These examples show that students recognize several different types of contribution, including active participation, positive attitudes, willingness to share opinions and leadership. We also see that at least one student recognizes the value of critical evaluation of or refuting other opinions.

Looking at representative reasons for lower scores, we see comments mainly related to less willingness to share opinions and speak up. Students also seem to recognize when their teammates lack in desire to participate or contribute.

Reasons for your lowest scores
- *Because they haven't come to class since they were in face-to-face class.*
- *She said a good opinion but sometimes she stay quietly*
- *They said opinions but it was less compare to other members.*
- *She do not have her idea or do not share in my group. But she speak when some one ask her.*
- *C does not say his opinion too much during discussion comparing others, but I know he is shy. Problem is that we do not give opportunity to hear his opinion. He has a good attitude though.*
- 話し合いに参加しようと言う意欲が見られなかったため。
- *B*さんは常に発言がなく、何を考えているかが分かりずらいため、コミュニケーションがとりにくいです。

Again, there were teams with narrower ranges between low and high scores (teams 2, 7, 9). This seems desirable in that the following excerpts illustrate how some teams were able to get everyone involved.

Narrow Range
- *Because all members work diligently.*
- *I think all members joined group work positively, so I give all members same point.*
- *All member did their best and there was good teamwork. We also got the perfect score.*

Overall, the peer assessment seems to be working in this context, but learners may need some instruction or awareness raising regarding the variety of ways that members can contribute to the team. This would be aimed at helping individuals recognize different ways that their teammates might contribute as well as different roles that they themselves can play on the team.

5.5 Challenges and Lessons Learned

Based on the discussion so far, there seems to be clear justification for adopting a TBL approach in this context. At the same time, areas of concern have been identified. Specifically, the fact that several students are struggling with the iRATs merits deeper analysis. Follow up should include reaching out to individual students to determine the source of these struggles. The RATs consisted of ten (#1 - #6) or fifteen (#7 - #10) multiple choice questions in English, and students may have been struggling with the language more than the concepts. At the same time, we cannot discount the possibility that some students had not done the reading.

Another area of concern is limited time that teams had for the Application stage. One way to address this might be to move more of the in-class lectures online (flipped classroom) so that students can watch at their own pace and as many times as needed. This might have the added benefit of boosting the low iRAT scores.

It should also be mentioned that one core element of the TBL framework was not included. Normally, a challenge step is included during the feedback stage following

the tRATs. This step offers teams the opportunity to challenge the instructor if they feel their answer is correct or deserves a positive evaluation.

In terms of lessons learned, instructors are advised to pay special attention to the forming of teams, RAT development, and Applications design. The author plans to follow through on each of these in preparation for future iterations of this course. Student comments hinted at the clear benefits of successful teams while the peer assessment highlighted that some students were not contributing as much as their teammates had hoped. RAT results need to be analyzed carefully to identify items that significant numbers of students struggled with and how these items might be altered or how the content can be highlighted and/or clarified for learners in preparation for the RATs. Finally, determining which concepts and content that students should demonstrate a mastery of will facilitate the design and development of effective Applications. Also, as mentioned above, teams need adequate time to discuss and negotiate their Applications.

5.6 Research Questions Answered
Recognizing the limits of a single case such as that introduced in this paper, there is ample evidence here to affirm that a TBL approach is viable for Japanese learners in larger university courses (Question 1). As for the challenges to designing and delivering a TBL course in this context (Question 2), instructors need to (1) carefully consider how they form and monitor teams, (2) develop and adjust RATs to highlight the key concepts and content from readings and lectures, and (3) design engaging, relevant Applications that promote collaboration and thoughtful demonstration of mastery of the concepts and content.

One final comment on the viability of TBL in this context was that observed levels of engagement, especially during negotiation of tRATs and Applications, were consistently high throughout the semester and student writing revealed both internalization of the key concepts and more developed and nuanced understanding of intercultural understanding, communication and sensitivity.

6. Conclusion
This paper set out to introduce the author's experimentation with TBL in a larger university class, including an easy-to-implement mixed-methods action research design. Contextual information, including an overview of weekly class meetings, was provided both as a concrete example of how the key components of TBL were implemented and to support readers in interpreting the findings. Descriptive statistics were provided for the individual and team readiness assurance test scores, and qualitative findings included key topics/issues that emerged from thematic analysis.

Again, this study was limited to a single case and further research is required to confirm the findings. At the same time, more detailed analysis is planned as a follow-up project and will likely provide further insight. It is hoped that others in similar contexts recognize the benefits of TBL, conduct their own experimentation and join the conversation.

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8. Appendices
Appendix 1 - How Would I Say That? Handout (Sample Speech Acts)

1. Give a compliment about the clothes someone is wearing.
2. Give a compliment about a well-written memo, e-mail, or paper.
3. Request time off from work or class to attend a family funeral.
4. Request more challenging projects at work or school.
5. Use humor to lighten the mood after a stressful meeting.
6. Explain that you will not meet a deadline.
7. Request new office furniture or a change of office/dormitory.
8. Thank someone for his or her help with a project.
9. Praise a colleague for a well-run conference or event.
10. Critique a supervisor or teacher for being late to a meeting.
11. Critique a subordinate or a friend for being late to work.
12. Tell a family member you are not going to a family dinner.
13. Tell a family member you are not going to a cousin's wedding.
14. Apologize for taking a week to respond to an e-mail.
15. Apologize to a friend for forgetting you had dinner plans and you have now made another commitment.
16. Give someone feedback about how their performance could be improved.
17. Tell someone that something they said offended you.

(Source: Stringer & Cassiday, 2009)

Appendix 2 - Communication Style Preferences (Stringer & Cassiday, 2009)
- *Detached Communication Style:* Communication "should" be calm and impersonal. Objectivity is valued. Emotionally expressive communication is seen as immature or biased.
- *Attached Communication Style:* Expression of feelings is an important and necessary part of communication. Subjectivity is valued. Objectivity can be seen as "not caring."
- *Intuitive Communication Style:* Communication of global concepts or ideas is valued. There is frequent use of metaphor and expression of abstract ideas. May appear to others to deviate from the topic but intuitive communicators see the connection.

Appendix 3 - Culture Assimilator Activity (Harasawa, 2013)

カルチャー・アシミュレーター (Culture Assimilator)
カルチャー・アシミレーターは、異文化接触において生じた問題について、その原因を複数の選択肢から選び、間違っている場合は考え直し、文化背景の違いによる問題の本質を学習するトレーニングです。1人でもできますが、グループで行うと、解答の違う人たちの間で議論を交わすことができ、学習効果が上がります。以下の事例を読んで、このトレーニングを実際に体験してみましょう

《事例3》
日本人学生のひろしは、サウジアラビアの留学生であるモハメッドととても仲がよくなりました。モハメッドは日本語もペラペラで、明るい性格なので日本人の友達もたくさんいます。今日は、友達の家でパーティーがあるということで、ひろしの車で友達の家に行くことになりました。時間はぎりぎりなので、急いで行かないと遅刻してしまいます。ところが、ひろしは車にガソリンがないのに気がつきました。急いで近くのガソリンスタンドに寄り、給油することにしました。

　　　ガソリンスタンドに近づくと、助手席にいるモハメッドの様子が少し変です。窓越しにガソリンスタンドを眺めていたと思ったら、急に体を沈めて、誰からか隠れているようです。ひろしは、給油中に、モハメッドの友達であるアプルがこのガソリンスタンドにいるのに気がつきました。どうもモハメッドはアプルに見つからないようにしているようでした。ガソリンスタンドを出ると、ひろしはどうしてアプルから身を隠していたのか尋ねましたが、モハメッドは笑っているだけで何も答えてくれませんでした。ひろしは、モハメッドとアプルはけんかでもしたのだろうと思いました。

　　　翌日、ひろしはキャンパスの中でモハメッドとアプルが親しく話をしているのを見かけ、驚きました。ひろしは、昨日の出来事を思い出し、いったい何が起こっているのか全然理解することができませんでした。

（質問）
モハメッドはなぜガソリンスタンドでアプルを避けたのでしょうか？次の説明の中から最も適切だと思われるものを1つ選んでください。

(1)モハメッドとアプルは非常に仲のよい友達です。しかし、モハメッドは、アプルにパーティーに行くことを言ってありませんでした。同じアッラーの神を信じるイスラム教徒として、二人の間で何の隠し事もしてはいけないことになっています。したがって、もし内緒でパーティーに行くことをアプルに知られたら、友達としてまずいことになると思い、モハメッドは思わず身を隠したのです。

(2)サウジアラビアでは、親しい友達に会ったら、じっくり話をしなければなりません。簡単な挨拶だけでは、親しい友達とは言えないからです。 したがって、モハメッドは、もしガソリンスタンドでアブルと顔を合わせたら、 車を降りてしばらく話をしなければならないと思いました。 そうすると、パー ティーの時間に間に合わなくなります。 時間を気にしているひろしのことを思うと、アブルと会わないほうがいいと判断したのです。

(3)サウジアラビア人には表と裏の顔があります。 イスラム教徒としての顔と プライベートにおける顔です。 アラブの世界では同じ神を信じる同胞を大切にしますから、たとえ嫌いな人であっても、同じムスリムとして親しく付き合わなければなりません。しかし、プライベートでは別です。実は、モハメッドはアプルのことをあまり好きではありません。ですから、楽しいパーティーに行く前にアプルとは会いたくなかったのです。しかし、大学では別です。同じイスラム教徒としてアプルとは仲よくふるまっているわけです。

(4)モハメッドは明るい性格なので日本人の友達がたくさんいます。しかし、サウジアラビア人の間では、あまり日本人とだけ付き合うと、イスラム教の教え（酒を飲まない、豚肉を食べない、1日4回の礼拝など）をしっかりと守ることができなくなるという心配があります。 特にモハメッドは他のサウジアラビア人と比べ、社交的で、日本人から誘われることが少なくありません。この日も、ひろしと車で出かけるところを同じ国のアブルに見られると、あとでいろいろ言われるのではないかと思い、思わず身を隠したのです。