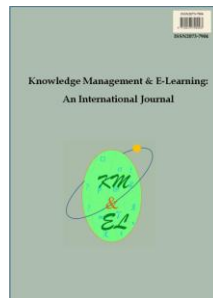


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A technology enhanced course for communication incorporating empathy

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A technology enhanced course for communication incorporating empathy

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Abstract: This paper aims at the dissemination of a new course design, which reports and shares our experience of designing a new course to meet the new needs in the society. The higher education has been focusing on developing students' logical thinking or reasoning skills through debate, believing that such skills would make the students succeed in the society after graduation. However, from the view point of resilience in the society after a natural disaster, which usually demolishes the fundamental infrastructure as well as human bonding through trust, the communication with empathy to build trust seems to play a more important role than the skill to debate. Is there any way to incorporate such advanced communication skill with empathy in the higher education responding to the current needs from the society before the students become members of the society? Kansai University has developed a new experimental course for advanced communication with empathy to be implemented in the general education enhanced with ICT. This paper reports Kansai University's successful problem-solving process and endeavor in the curriculum development for the communication with empathy.

Keywords: Basic academic skills; Communication skill; Curriculum development; Information technology; Meta-cognition

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1. Introduction

The universities in Japan have been offering general education courses to foster students' conceptual skills so that they can perform and contribute well in the society after graduation. Such courses have been considered optimal to make college students grow into the full-fledged members of the society. Among such courses, the courses to foster the communication skills to conveying ideas, thoughts, and opinions in words have been playing the most important role. In such courses, skills such as critical thinking, logical thinking, and higher-order thinking were taught in the form of debate, writing, and presentation. The students were trained to have such skills and then demonstrated the mastery of the acquired skills.

As a matter of fact, debate courses have been considered the most effective form of communication since the early 1980's in the U.S. as well as in Japan. In the U.S., debate has been a must course to take for the students who want to give impact in the society. Educators believed that the logical thinking in the form of debate is essential to the most effective and advanced form of communication to persuade or convince the mass audience. Further, the higher education in Japan has been offering courses such as logical thinking and debate as if they were the essence of communication for building and maintaining the trust to form a better society. Students were taught to equip themselves with such skills for their professional development and career planning. Companies to hire them also considered such students as the best and most promising candidates for new employees.

From the perspective of the university operation as a whole, the mission of the higher education is to provide the optimal educational program matching the needs of the society to the students who will be the future members of the society. However, it should be noted that the needs of the society is constantly changing and thus in order not to lose sight of such needs, the mission of the higher education must be constantly adjusted. It follows that the curriculum must also coincide with a new mission.

Recently it has been revealed that most university graduates, within three years after graduation, feel the needs for such fundamental skills as the problem solving (situation analysis, data collection, analysis, problem solving), the teamwork and communication in order to build trust in a team and to develop leadership, as Benesse Center for Research and Development in Education (2011) reports. All such skills are generally called the conceptual skills. As Ivancevich and Matteson (2002) points out, the conceptual skills play the most important role in human resources development as the adult. After all, a new course for advanced communication must be developed with such needs as well as concepts in mind.

When we pause and think that the main purpose of communication is for gaining long-lasting trust and trying to maintain such good relation, we soon realize that debate is

not the optimal form for such communication. The logical refutation in the argument with crucial use of the supporting evidence not yet shared with the opponent seems to be nothing but a game for logical thinking, not communication to build trust. The goal in debate is to win an harsh argument, not to build trust or good relations. In debate, a mutual trust, respect, friendship, or good relation would not be the goal.

When we think of the chances to have debate in communication in our daily life, compared with the chances to have communication to build trust, it is obvious that the chance to have communication to build trust surpasses the former. In other words, it is a mistake to consider that acquiring the debate skill is the core of conceptual skills in the higher education.

Take another example of a communication style from the presentation. The presentation has at least two phases: one to convey the message or information to the listeners, and the other to build rapport, i.e., to reach the soul of the listeners, by giving amicable and trustworthy impression or feeling of belonging to the same group through sharing the same space of thoughts. While the quality of good presentations must have the message worth paying attention to, the good presentations are also attributed to the quality of presenters. For example, Steve Jobs' commencement speech to the graduates of Stanford University would not have been so well known or given impact on people if it had been made by, say, a computer engineer just started the career. Here, the impression or the personal attribute of the presenter plays more important role than just a bearer of the information.

Is there any way to combine the traditional communication course such as debate incorporating logical and critical thinking with emotion or empathy to build a long-term good relationship with others? Because the university has the mission to raise promising potential members for the future society, who can contribute to make the society better, a new concept for a course must come out in which the successful communication consists of both logical and critical thinking on the one hand, and emotion or empathy on the other.

In this paper, it is proposed that a new course for communication to build trust may be the answer to the current issue. With the advancement of Information Technology, many channels for communication are available to us. In fact, the university students in these days are deft in Information Technology and have the tendency to obtain information from multiple channels simultaneously. We will crucially employ such Information Technology tools to effective implementation of such a course. In what follows, we propose a new course for trust building, and how to conduct such a course effectively with the use of Information Technology. In the end, the results of the experiments are shared as well as the future directions of the study of this kind.

2. Background

Based on the fundamental concept of the communication being mainly composed of logic in information, the university has just been offering such courses as logical thinking, critical thinking, and debate as subjects or courses for the general education to the lower classmen, i.e., freshmen and sophomores, before they begin their special areas of study. Yet, it has been revealed that most university graduates, in three years after graduation, feel the need for such fundamental skills as problem solving skills (data collection, analysis, problem solving), continuous learning (intellectual curiosity and active learning), independence (exercising independence and displaying leadership in projects), teamwork

(collaborative attitudes & perform one's duties and responsibility in projects), self-management (setting goals, planning well, and working accordingly), problem setting and solving (analyzing the situation to identify the problem to be solved), logical thinking, and meta-cognition. Such fundamental academic skills are generally considered as the skills necessary to do well in the educational setting as well as in the social situation after graduation. Thus, most universities thought that such incorporation of the fundamental skills into the curriculum was enough to meet the required needs.

However, it has been pointed out in the society that the basis of communication may not be supported mainly by logic or critical thinking but more or less by some empathy driven factor. For example, such communication skills as trust building, team building and maintaining the trust that has been already built, may be more important for adults as full-fledged members in the society. In other words, it is concluded that learning how to think logically or critically and learning how to debate before graduation are not enough for college students.

As a matter of fact, in his book titled "How to Win Friends and Influence People in the Digital Age," Carnegie and Associates (2012) emphasizes that most part of communication to reach the heart of others is composed of affection to them instead of the logic or rhetoric of the language that people use.

As Kodansha (2013) reports, such schools as the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania as well as London School of Economics and Political Science, to mention a few, consider affective aspects in communication as the key to the education that they offer. They have already incorporated such concepts in the educational vision.

The following sections elaborate on the design of a new course as well as the related methodology for a communication with empathy enhanced by the information technology available to us, while making reference to the successful implementation case at Kansai University.

3. Course development for the communication with empathy

3.1. Rationale behind the course development

The method for developing a new course depends on the concept that the entire educational realm as its research domain. The operation of the educational institution will evolve conforming to the mission that reflects the needs of the society. The educational mission must be constantly adjusted to meet the needs in the society. As illustrated in Fig. 1, the course design or curriculum design is based on the concept that the mission is set to meet the needs in the society where the institution is based, involving all stakeholders, because the institution has the more important mission to educate the future members of the society.

In order to set the mission of the institution, the institution must have clear educational goals to produce graduates as new members of the society. Thus, the institution must provide students with opportunities to learn and grow in the constructive way.

Here the new course belongs to the curriculum where all course contents coincide with the mission of the institution. It is for the basic academic skills for conceptual skills, which generally include proactive action with stick-to-itiveness, thinking skills such as problem-solving, planning a project taking possible risks in mind, as well as creative

options for possible solutions, information processing skills (information gathering, sorting, prioritizing, logical thinking, meta-cognition) and cooperative communication skills in order to work in a team and to comply to the rules and conditions. In the following section, our approach is elaborated.

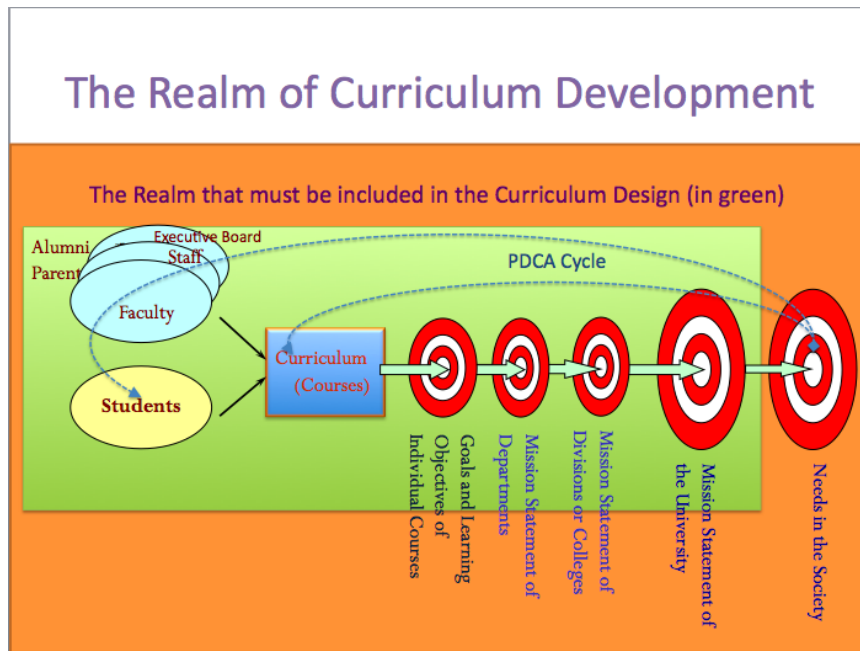


Fig. 1. The realm of the curriculum design

4. Methodological framework

There are a few concepts to be kept in mind for developing new courses for communication to build trust incorporating empathy to be introduced in the curriculum to enhance the series of courses for the basic academic skills.

4.1. Authentic approach

First, in order to increase the level of learning effectiveness, the simulation experience with role modelling is crucially employed since the simulation of the real experience will have higher learning outcome, as Dale (1946) claims. He claims that people retain different amounts of information depending on the obtained method. For example, people will retain ten percent of what they read, twenty percent of what they hear, thirty percent of what they see, fifty percent of what they hear and see, seventy percent of what they say, and ninety percent of what they say and do after a span of two weeks. The last two active learning activities as participating in a discussion, giving a talk, doing a dramatic presentation, simulating the real experience and doing the real thing. The new course must incorporate the two active learning activities to achieve higher learning outcome.

4.2. Active learning

Second, the learning strategies of the constructive approach are crucially employed. The learning activities are conducted in the way that learners in groups identify their theme or problem to be tackled and through their research and discussion, the students reach their optimal solution. The instructor in charge will serve as a facilitator, rather than the traditional professor whose major teaching style is by lecturing. This type of the team-based learning style with the problem-solving learning well-fits this new course. In addition, the new course also requires strategies such as mini-lectures to learn new concepts and tools for the activity, seminars for situation analysis, group-based discussions for communication strategies, simulation exercises, and reflection both at the group level and at the individual level. In the end of the practicum, students fill out their learning reflection to be submitted to their own Learning e-Portfolio System.

4.3. Methodology

Third and most importantly, the methodology must be explicitly elaborated. For the most promising methodology for communication with empathy and emotion, it was noted that Fisher and Ury (1981) developed a methodology for better communication with emotion or empathy incorporated in order to solve international conflicts for the peoples with different opinions, values, and judgments. Afterwards, his methodology was applied to the business negotiation and has been taught at law schools as well as business schools in the U.S. It is also attracting scholars' attention among the lawyers, the professionals for intellectual properties, and the office workers in the managerial position as well as the university students in the Tokyo area of Japan.

The methodology in Isshiki, Tamura, and Sumida (2010) is considered as the optimal methodology for building a long-term good relation with trust between people. The basic idea of his methodology is summarized as follows. The main goal of the methodology is generally referred to "negotiation to lead to say yes." Let us call this the negotiation or consensus formation. A successful negotiation has the set framework consisting of a mission, a zone of possible agreement (henceforth, ZOPA), and the best alternative to negotiated agreement (henceforth, BATNA), which are explained below in turn. A mission is considered as the optimal or ideal goal to be aimed at. In this new course, the mission is to build trust and maintain a good relationship for a long time. Refer to Fig. 2. Once the mission is set, ZOPA is prepared by setting a range of acceptable levels of a consensus formation or negotiation, i.e., the maximum to the minimum levels of consensus since it is not normally possible to achieve the perfect amount of the mission through negotiation. For ease of understanding, see Fig. 3. Further, they may be cases where all the prepared options in ZOPA fail. In such cases, an alternative to the ZOPA is further planned. This preparation is called the BATNA. See Fig. 4.

It should be emphasized that the negotiation strategies described above employ the skills for gathering information for a certain theme, for analyzing such information, and then for making an optimal decision. By understanding the common framework of negotiation consisting of a mission, ZOPA, and BATNA, and by conforming to them, is it possible to demonstrate the skill for information analysis, the logical thinking skill, the critical thinking skill, as well as the skill to conform to the rules and conditions. Furthermore, by exercising the framework of negotiation describe above, students can develop their communication skills to elicit information necessary for the negotiation as well as the consensus-building skill through the negotiation, which can only be possible with the mission aiming at a long-term good relationship.

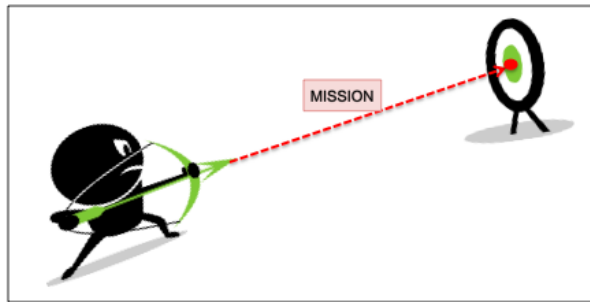


Fig. 2. Setting a Mission

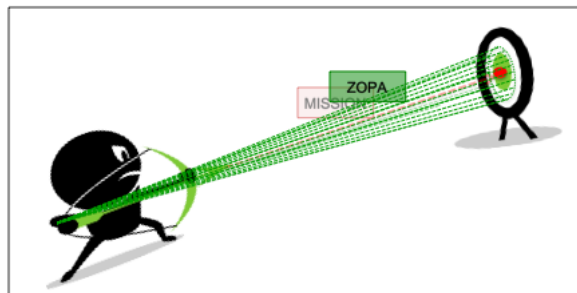


Fig. 3. Preparing for ZOPA

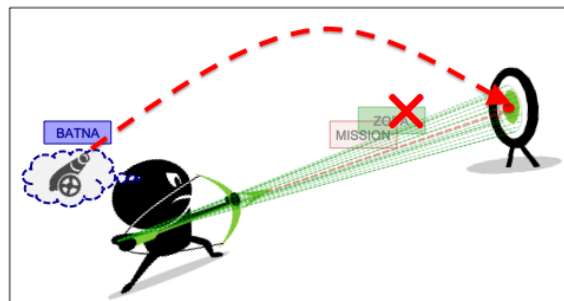


Fig. 4. BATNA if all the ZOPA fail

5. Course structure

With the rationale and the methodology described in the previous sections, the communication practicum with negotiation methodology was developed incorporating the role-play simulation in given settings or situations.

The practicum course consists of fifteen sessions per semester, each session of which is ninety-minute long, meeting once a week. In the course, students are first divided into two groups for the group discussion for the later negotiation session. For ease of exposition, let us call these groups Group A and Group B. Further, in each group, all the members are sub-grouped by four to five students for the active discussion for preparing for strategies for the following negotiation session. Let us call these sub-groups

in Group A, A01, A02, A03, and so on and the sub-groups in Group B, B01, B02, B03, and so on respectively.

While the students are seated in the sub-group formation, they go through the following steps to be ready for the one-to-one paired role-playing negotiation simulation. First, a mini lecture for the procedures and the housekeeping rules to follow in the practicum is given. After understanding the background information for the practicum, the reading materials for the situation are distributed. The reading materials are of three types according to their purposes. The first type is the common information sheet to be shared with Group A and Group B. The second and third types carry group-specific information not shared with the other group. Thus, Group A and Group B have the different group-specific information. Refer to Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Fig. 7, and Fig. 8.

The students are instructed to read both the common information sheet shown in Fig. 5 and in addition the group-specific information sheet shown in either Fig. 6 or Fig. 7, depending on the group that they belong to. They try to understand the situation so that they can perform the given role in the later one-to-one paired negotiation work. For ease of exposition, the common information sheet and the group-specific information sheets for Group A and Group B are given in Fig. 5, Fig. 6, and Fig. 7. While working on the information sheets, each student organizes what he or she understands using the worksheet given in Fig. 8, which is intended for the visualization process of what they understand.

When the individual students are ready, the students in the sub-groups discuss and share their own strategic plans to finely tune up their minute details so that they can be ready for the paired session. Now the students are ready for the paired role-playing session of communication with empathy and negotiation. Each pair conducts the paired role-playing session. Immediately after the paired session, the paired students have a reflection session, sharing the moments of decision making during along the time line.



Fig. 5. Common situation sheet for both Group A and Group B

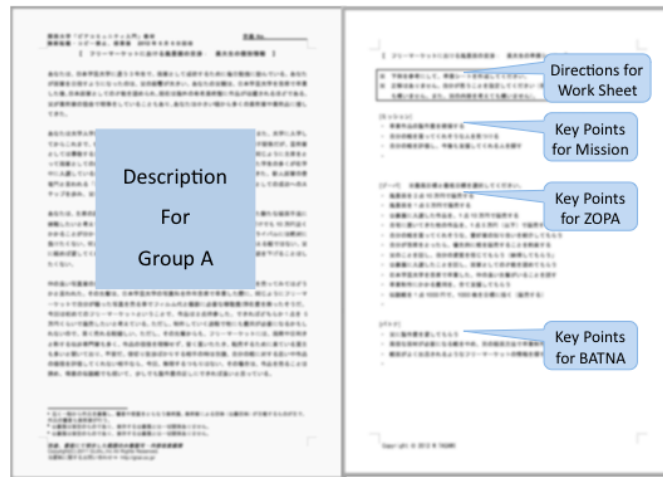


Fig. 6. Group-specific information sheet for Group A

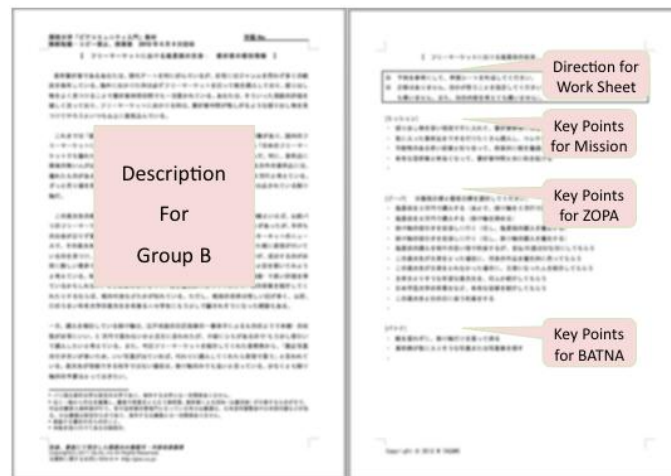


Fig. 7. Group-specific information sheet for Group B

(NOTE: Fig. 5 through Fig. 7 are by courtesy of GLIAL, Inc. with permission to print as illegible images.)

When the cycle of the paired role-playing session is done, the students switch groups and play their opposite roles to look at the situation from the different perspective. Again, following the paired role-playing session, each pair has a reflection session to share the moments of decision making during the session, following the time line. At this point, each student will have chances to experience playing both characters in the given situation.

Following the reflection session, the instructor summarizes the entire practicum, then makes sure that the students understand the main points of the session, and gives the feedback of the practicum to the entire class. In the end, each student spends some time to reflect his/her learning activities from the session and writes down the learning

experience as well as the reflection to be submitted to the course e-Portfolio. In this way, a sequence of practicum session is completed.

The image shows a worksheet titled "WORKSHEET" with several sections for student input. At the top, there are two lines of Japanese text. Below that is a large rectangular box labeled "Your own Mission". This is followed by another section labeled "Your own ZOPA range", which contains two smaller boxes labeled "Max." and "Min.". Below the ZOPA range section is another large rectangular box labeled "Your own BATNA". At the bottom of the page, there are two more lines of Japanese text.

Fig. 8. Negotiation worksheet

6. Encountered problems

The situation employed in the negotiation practicum is a mirror of the real life situation in our society. After all, the students may encounter similar situations sooner or later after graduation. The main goal of the communication practicum with empathy and negotiation is to offer them such chances.

The negotiation session described above makes crucial use of the written situation. The descriptions in the information common to both groups as well as the group-specific information are the reflection of the real-life situation including emotions of the involved characters. In order to describe in detail the true intentions and the subtle nuance of the emotions of the characters, long passages must be spent in the form of writing, which in turn required by the students to have a very high level of reading comprehend skill with a limited time. Thus, in order for the students to acquire the maximum out of the communication practicum, the students must have well-developed reading comprehension skill. However, there is not much time in the practicum allocated for the improvement of the reading comprehension skill. From the course developer's point of view, though, it would be preferable to spend as much time as possible for raising the level of the students' communication with negotiation. On the other hand, it is not perferred to adjust the level of the reading materials by adopting the abridged version of the descriptions to match the students' current level of reading comprehension.

Without compromising, we would like to maintain the quality of the practicum. The more time the students spend for reading and understanding the situation, the less time for the role-playing session or the reflection session. A strategy must be devised so that the students understand the situation deeply with the current level of reading comprehenshin without allocating more time.

The practicum consists of several cycles. As cycles progress, it is expected that the students' understanding become deeper. In the final cycle of the practicum, it is

planned for a consensus building communication practicum involving more than two major roles in a situation. In such a case, the description of the situation for all characters ranges over more than twenty pages. In this case, an even better strategy is required for the students to accomplish the reading with the limited time. In the following section, our solution making use of ICT is elaborated.

7. Problems to be solved

Let us articulate the identified problems described above and propose an optimal solution in this section. The goal of the communication practicum with empathy and emotion is to offer the students opportunities to gain experience of building trust through communication. Thus, the ultimate goal is not reached when the students understand the given situation through reading and get ready for the paired session. One may argue that for the students to have deeper reading comprehension skill proceeds to exercises for learning how to build trust through communication. Yet, the procedures developed for the practicum have grave limitations. In what follows, four major problems are summarized.

7.1. Limited class contact hours

A course consists of fifteen ninety-minute classes. In order to conduct one cycle of communication session including group learning activities, mini-lectures, and group and individual reflections, it usually requires two class contact hours ranging over two weeks. With such time limitation, the time allocated for the students to grasp the situation through reading is thirty minutes. For ease of exposition, refer to Tables below. The traditional time frame or contact hour for the course is ninety-minute long, meeting only one a week. Thus, it requires two weeks of class contact hours in order to have a session of three hours. Table 1 below shows the time allocation for the first and the second weeks for a practicum. As you see, there are only thirty minutes in a session in maximum for the students to understand and get ready for the following activities.

Table 1
One practicum ranging over two weeks

first week	
0~20 min.	Explanation of the Communication Exercise The class is split into two groups. Within Group Activities
20~50 min.	Reading the case synopsis common to both within groups and synopses for their own groups
50~90 min.	Within group discussion: prep for paired session Setting the mission, the ZOPA, and the BATNA.
second week	
0~30 min.	Paired Communication session
30~60 min.	Reflection session in pairs
60~90 min.	Individual Reflection session Feedback & Conclusion

There is, indeed, another problem of maintaining the students' motivation and attention from the first week to the second week, in other words, a risk of not retaining the learning experience from the within group discussion on the first week to the following activities on second week. However, we do not consider here the timetable problem for the institution.

Thus, the amount of time allocated for understanding and getting ready for the following activities cannot be stretched out.

7.2. Reading comprehension skill in the digital age

The students look at the world through a smart phone screen gathering information by reading. In other words, these young adults do not have the full-fledged reading comprehension skill. They do not read newspapers as their daily habits. They are not good at putting what they read in the bigger context to have a holistic view.

7.3. Adopted methodology (Problem-based learning)

We believe that a Problem-Based Learning approach fortified by Team-Based Learning is best fit to maximize the learning outcome in the communication practicum with empathy and emotion. In such classrooms, all instructions as well as all learning activities occur in the class contact hours to guarantee the fundamental environment for communication. There must be "the feeling of being there together" as well as the face-to-face group activities. The communication must occur with eye contacts with facial expressions. It follows that the communication practicum must be conducted intensively with time limitation in the current curriculum. With such conditions, we must devise a method for the students to process and understand from more amount of information in a short time.

7.4. Consensus building in authentic situations

Although the practicum begins with a simple situation in which only two main characters try to build trust through communication in the given context, in later exercises, a more complicated situation is employed, in which a group of characters try to form consensus with another group of characters in the context ranging over a longer time span. In other words, situations are becoming more and more like the real life situation in our ordinary life. It follows that more time in the class is allocated for the students to fully understand the described situation as well as what the characters think, feel, and plan to reach consensus through communication.

Now that the four major problems are clarified, our solution is proposed in the next section.

8. Proposed solution with the use of ICT

For the selection of the situational context reflecting on the real life, real novels and their dramatized videos or movies are chosen. Because just showing the videos for the first time in class will not offer the students enough time to digest the contents, excerpts from a novel are also prepared. Fig. 9 visually summarizes the components of the practicum. The slide number 8 is an example of excerpts from a novel. And further, the video clips matching the contents of the excerpts are prepared and their key frames are displayed for

easy recall of the video contents. Refer to the slide numbers 4 and 5 in Fig. 9. In order to provide the students with enough contextual information, synopses for the video clips are also prepared as in the slide number 10.

The excerpts can be read in the class with a work sheet to prepare for the following session. In this way, the student’s understanding from reading is enhanced and deepened by the information provided by the video. After watching the video, the students have a group discussion session to share what they gathered so far.



Fig. 9. Negotiation practicum enhanced with video and synopses
(Source for Video Clips: <http://www.wowow.co.jp>)

Adopting the video to increase the amount of information to be grasped in a limited time was a great success. Deeper contents are effectively delivered to the students. Now the information delivered to the students is composed of texts and the supplemental video contents. This approach seems to be right.

We understand that the use of Information Technology in education does not provide us with a magic wand to solve any problems in the new course development. Instead, we believe that the ingenuity in the application of Information Technology in education is the key and that such ingenuity will not always bring about positive results. With the ingenious application of Information Technology in the communication practicum, a class consisting of eighty students has shown some improvements in learning. See Table 2. In the column on the left, the students are stratified into the three levels according to their understanding of the fundamental concepts of communication to build trust. Three strata are high achievers, mid achievers, and low achievers. The column in the middle shows the ratio of the students in the three strata with the approach by reading the description of the situation. The column on the right shows the ratio of the three strata after the session enhanced by Information Technology.

For the assessment of the levels of understanding of the fundamental concepts of communication to build trust in Table 2, all group discussion activities in class were videotaped for later counting the events of active engagement. The depth of understanding after group discussions was assessed in terms of the reflection papers for meta-cognition at the end of the session.

Table 2
Frequency of active engagement in learning activities

Students	Reading Only (without IT)	IT Incorporated
high achievers	20%	60%
mid achievers	60%	30%
Low achievers	20%	10%

NOTE: IT is short for information technology

It stands to reason that the ICT enhanced negotiation triggered more active participation in the group learning activities and deeper understanding of the provided situation.

Furthermore, it turned out that the adoption of the video to deliver the information to the students showed more effect than we expected. Recall that according to Dale (1946)'s Cone of Learning, after watching a movie, people only retain fifty percent of the information. However, in the communication practicum session ranging over four weeks intervened by two weeks of Christmas break, the students demonstrated a remarkable retention of the contents. In the class before the Christmas break, students read and viewed the situations of the four main characters and their corresponding scenes on the video. Due to the time limitation, the students had only five minutes of discussion to share the information that they gathered. At that time, there was no time for the preparation for the role-play simulation to make choices for the following action. The students resumed the session after two weeks of interval. The instructors, assuming that the students had all forgotten what they learned two weeks ago, planned to do the session over again from the beginning. However, showing the key frames with brief outlines, the students were able to conduct a discussion to prepare for the following communication session. It was surprising that the students retained most of the contents of the first part of the practicum session that they had participated over two weeks.

We learned the lesson that the students in the digital age absorb and process information not only by reading texts but also by means of multi-channels of multimedia. This means that the information that they emit is not just by writing in texts but by managing multi-channels.

It may be noted that during the Christmas break, some students rented and watched the entire video of the novel that was chosen for the communication practicum. On the other hand, none read the novel either from checking out at the library or from e-book library.

It was found that the students grew up out of the reflection session by recalling what they learned reflecting the learning processes along the time line while paying attention to the turning-points for decisions. The learning happened when the students internalized such activities to their learning experience. This stage of learning may be best achieved by keeping the reflection logs. However, there seem to be better approaches for reflection, which is elaborated in the next section.

9. Future research directions

There are at least two points worth noting in this section. One is about the reflection strategy and the other, regarding with the assessment for the practicum, which are evolved in order.

In the reflection session, the instructor threw some topics including the key points in the lesson to the students and they were asked to write whatever they thought of or felt in mind freely. The students' responses were analyzed and assessed by the instructor to learn their levels of understanding and learning. The reflection and the assessment were done in terms of the written format of information from the students. The philosophy behind such method is that if there is nothing comes to mind when the probing question is given, there is nothing to make a reflection from learning. On the other hand, the students in the digital era may be deft in expressing their reflections via multi-channels in addition to writing alone. Web 2.0 savvy or media-rich environments incorporating graphics, voices, videos, and other multimedia learning tools for reflection may well be suited for students in the new generation.

For the future study, there are two points to be mentioned. First, it was found that the traditional assessment did not work for the developed practicum. The students' progresses in the learning activities were not measurable by the standardized means. At this time, the students' learning progresses can be confirmed by their reflections and by the instructor's interactive observation of the students in action in class. Although all the students had equal amount of time for class contact hours, chances to grow through learning activities, opportunities to actively participate in the group discussions, and time for reflection and meta-cognition, their growth in learning was not visualized as intended. There needs to be a better assessment strategy for the student-centered practicum. A more effective assessment strategy incorporating synchronous and longitudinal assessments for learning progresses must be developed.

From the point of view that each individual student is responsible for their own learning and the management of their learning, it is ideal for the student, with the facilitation of the instructor, sets their own goal for the learning, then thinks steps to get there, thinks of the ways that they have reached the desired step, and has the reflection and the meta-cognition of the learning processes. This may be the ideal operation of the learning making use of e-Portfolio. Second, more inventories for the learning contents must be developed to provide students with more opportunities to develop their communication skills with empathy and emotion. Although there are many novels and movies, it is difficult to find one suitable for the communication practicum. In order for the content to be qualified, there must be more than one conflict reflecting on the real life and the theme for consensus formation involving various characters with different perspectives, values, and intentions. Furthermore, there must be a movie to go with the story. We may also look into comic books with CG animations.

10. Conclusion

A course development for the communication with empathy was elaborated in this paper. First, the needs for the society were clarified. Second, the framework for the course development was elaborated by setting the mission of the institution that corresponds to the needs in the society. It was assumed that the entire education as the realm for the course development. In reply to the needs in the society, it was proposed that the communication with empathy and emotion be introduced to the general education to

foster the conceptual skills to be developed so that they can be full-fledged members in the society. Third, the rationale and the philosophy behind such course development were elaborated for the choice of the methodology.

While conducting a pilot operation of such a course, we encountered such problems as the time-wise limitation for the students to comprehend the contents of the situation by reading and to foster deeper understanding of the contents in a short time.

With the help of Information Technology, more information for the setting for the role-playing simulation reflecting the real life can be compacted in the limited time with deeper understanding. It was shown that the ingenious use of Information Technology in the course development plays a crucial role in the implementation of the new course. With the ingenious implementation of Information Technology in the communication practicum, the students in the pilot course showed improvements in the communication skill with empathy.

This paper demonstrated the entire process of the development of the new communication practicum course with empathy as well as the encountered problem-solving cases with ingenious application of Information Technology. In the reflection session at the end of the pilot course, it was found that the students can gain confidence in communication with empathy and self-efficacy in setting a mission, ZOPA, and BATNA in given settings.

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