

〈研究ノート〉

## Intercultural Connections and Volunteer Experience Through Christmas Cards

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### Abstract

Students generally regard English as a means to communicate with people in other Asian countries (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, Shimizu 2004) and welcome opportunities to make contact with young people from the region on the condition that it does not take commitment on their part or time from their busy schedules. Likewise, they express interest in volunteer activities, but hesitate to initiate them for the same reasons. To provide students a simple volunteer experience and to expand their awareness of intercultural communication, first-year college students in speaking classes were assigned to make Christmas cards for young victims of typhoons in the Philippines. The planning process began with a discussion on the purpose of the Christmas cards, which popular characters might best communicate their message, the meanings of colors and symbols, and the actual English phrases. After the designs were made and the cards were produced, students explained their card designs then wrote summary paragraphs of their presentation. Language introduced included expressions of empathy and reassurance,

names of iconic symbols of Christmas and the winter season, and forms to explain the rationale and design of their cards. Students used English websites to research appropriate greetings and messages of support and encouragement. Students received a thank you message from the sponsoring group in the Philippines to complete the project cycle. Through this act of charity, students reported a deeper affinity for their counterparts in another natural disaster prone Asian country and an increased awareness of the power of visual as well as written messages in English.

## **Background**

### **Need for authentic communication opportunities**

The learning context for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is marked by isolation from real world intercultural communication situations resulting in a lack of opportunities to use English and low motivation to learn the language. Since authentic second-language ( $L_2$ ) use is essential to reinforce basic skills and communicative competence, it is important to provide students access to partners using English as a common language. Adding an intercultural communication dimension, as well, is increasingly important to prepare students for the inevitable contact with foreigners and the use of English in their future work places, particularly in the expanding tourism, hospitality, and travel industries. However limited prospects to find appropriate connections and resources that mutually benefit the parties and meet the demand for authentic communication pose a constant challenge and burden for English teachers.

### **Volunteer Opportunity Using English**

Through the introduction of a local NGO, one such opportunity in the form of a simple volunteer activity to help children, involving the use of English as the common language, arose five years ago. In 2013, as was widely reported in the mass media, the record setting super typhoon Haiyan (locally dubbed Yolanda) hit the Philippines devastating large areas, destroying whole communities, and taking thousands of lives (Inquirer, 2013). Thousands of children survived but many of their parents did not. Orphaned children were admitted to various orphanages where they could receive basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing. At the same time, the huge number of children in need of psychological support to deal with the trauma of losing their families and being left alone overwhelmed the understaffed child support services and limited number of professional counselors. The timing of the storm made the children's situation particularly bad because of the soon approaching Christmas celebrations with their families. The absence of family and their disconnection from their communities had created a crisis and the need for volunteer assistance grew.

Through an NGO network connecting social workers in the Philippines with volunteers in Sapporo, an appeal for a way to alleviate the suffering of the children was issued and the Christmas card project was launched (see Appendix A). Each card was to contain a message in English and be signed with the closing salutation *from your friend* plus the sender's name. The professional counselors and NGO organizers agreed that something as simple as a cheerful message at Christmas time from a friend in Japan could give the children who had lost everything some measure of emotional relief and encouragement

(M. Yoshida, personal communication November 2013).

## **Student Resistance**

Making a simple card is not demanding, however expecting students to give up their free time to participate in a volunteer, unpaid activity is likely to end in failure and disappointment. In fact, a comparative study of volunteerism of students in Japan, Korea, and Canada revealed that Japan overall has the lowest rate of volunteer activity among students in the study and that mandatory volunteer service is met with strong resistance, particularly if at personal expense (Ozawa, 2011). Often called the “Me Generation”, self-absorbed young people, not only in Japan but around the world, tend not to show interest in the plight of others, initiate charity projects, or participate in community service unless the time spent has a direct benefit, such as a resume entry or a new skill. Not only this, but college students may consider Christmas card making non-academic and a waste of valuable class time, thus inappropriate for an English lesson.

## **Project**

### **Details of the Assignment**

A well-designed project that would encompass the study of comparative culture, human needs, visual communication, as well as English, could cover the academic aspect. Using class time, the project would not burden the students in terms of the time commitment required of a typical volunteer activity. In addition, if materials were provided, there would be no cost for the students. Thus, the first-year students in speaking classes were assigned to make a Christmas card

and, upon completion, make a presentation of the card in which they had to explain various aspects of the card including the following: the meaning of the colors used, the reason for choosing the iconic character used as a messenger, the meaning of Christmas icons and symbols used, the content and intention of the English message, and the hoped for reaction of the receiver of the card.

### **Cultural Connections through Climate and Beliefs**

Next, to launch the idea, the first class session was dedicated to the introduction of the project by using the approaching Winter Solstice as a focal point for a discussion of the hardships of winter. This led to a talk on beliefs and myths from Europe and Japan, most importantly the *Amaterasu and Heavenly Rock-Grotto* myth to explain the growing darkness of the earth and the return of light on the Winter Solstice namely the Japanese celebration of *Touji* (Matsumae, 1980). Accompanying this was a discussion of Winter Solstice customs and foods and their symbolism. In addition, the timing of the celebration of Christmas with the occurrence of the solstice was explained (Cooper, 2000-a). These solstice-based winter events, in addition to the modern Western timing of the New Year celebration, presented the opportunity to look at culture and what is behind our winter-based customs and celebrations and how climate or natural phenomena have given rise to a variety of responses to challenges to survival. The outcome was a growing awareness of shared difficulties and connections across cultures.

### **Discovering Cultural Connections between Japan and the West**

Students were asked to brainstorm their own winter associations

both positive and negative and enter them on a prepared worksheet (see Appendix B). As they reported their responses, they began to see common answers and to realize the origins of local events and celebrations in cold climates that had been created as people struggled to cope with the darkness, disease, loneliness, and hunger of winter. Later in the lesson when listing Japanese New Year decorations followed by doing the same for Christmas decorations, it became clear that both events feature the same colors and many of the same plants and iconic decorations as protection from the fearful winter spirits, along with other culturally specific meanings and symbolism (Raetsch and Muller-Ebeling, 2006), (Owlcation, 2018). These include the use of pine branches at entrances and main living areas, pine trees, plants with red berries, reflective gold and silver tinsel, ribbons, and garlands, other evergreen leaves, cold season red flowers, shiny baubles, candles, and lights. The commonalities across cultures stemming from the desire for light, for relief from fear, cold, hunger, disease, for companionship, for explanations of natural phenomena, for celebrations to mark the seasons and to acknowledge life are basic human needs (Maslow, 1943).

Once the students completed most of the worksheet intended to stimulate and guide their awareness of winter customs and culture in the world's northern regions, the lesson focus turned to the cultural context of the beneficiaries of the Christmas cards, the young victims of the typhoon in the central Philippines. Though not affected by the cold darkness of the northern winter, the Philippine Christmas celebration, with many locally developed unique customs and events, has also been strongly influenced by European and more specifically American Christmas culture. The iconic figures of Santa Claus and the Christmas

tree are embedded in the Philippine celebration in a similar way to the Japanese Christmas, minus the religious aspects. Because of this shared Western influence, iconic images of Christmas symbols, familiar to students and children alike, could be used freely and effectively by the students in the design of the cards.

### **Guidelines for Card Content and Designs**

The likelihood of the card making becoming a fun art activity devoid of educational value was high, hence the students were given strict guidelines: The design of the card has to embody a clear and sensitive message addressing the emotional needs of the child who will receive it; the message has to be expressed by an iconic character that is easily recognizable to the child and whose nature will bring joy and positive reassurance to the child; colors must include bright and cheery ones to enhance the spirit of celebration; common symbols of Christmas should be used in a decorative way to enliven the design; the card should evoke a positive reaction from the child; the maker's salutation "*from your friend*" and signature must appear somewhere on the card.

### **Identifying Needs and Impact of Visual and Written Messages**

Students were asked what a child needs to grow and be healthy besides food, clothing, and shelter, which had been supplied by the various orphanages and relief groups that had taken the children into their care. After a brief pause to think, students were able to identify love, affection, and to feel they were not alone. To provide encouragement, writing messages in English became one of the language challenges but it was easily met. Students were permitted to refer to

their dictionaries and online resources through their smart phones to find the appropriate vocabulary and expressions. The messages included the following: *“I pray for your happiness;” “Do not give up hope;” “You’ll be happy;” “Your smile makes me happy;” “You are not alone;” “I am your friend;” “I wish you a joyful Christmas from the bottom of my heart;” “May your wishes come true.”*

### **Iconic Characters and Influencers for Children**

An essential part of the card content was the representation of the messenger that would help the child visualize and understand the sentiment written in the card. Particularly, the youngest children who are not yet able to read would benefit from the image of a cute and familiar character. Students brainstormed the characters and their appeal to children and their ideas were listed on the board. In the final products, foremost among Christmas related icons was Santa Claus who appeared on many cards in various ways. As a universal symbol of hope, and in the role of the universal loving grandfather, he helps keep children’s dreams alive. Other characters students listed as possibilities included major and international cartoon characters with Mickey Mouse as everybody’s friend at the top of the list. Symbols of kindness, friendship, and loyalty such as Winnie-the-Pooh and Snoopy, who exceed national, cultural and language boundaries, made the list as well. Protector characters, such as Anpanman, Pikachu, and Doraemon, originating in Japan, are popular icons for children particularly in Asian countries. It is not too much to say that such characters have an uncanny influence on children and even adults through their cuteness and innocence, but remain constant as truthful and faithful companions even



in the face of great trauma and tragedy. Their ability to heal and their message of unconditional love and friendship can not be measured.

### **Understanding the Christmas Story and Icons**

To the degree that making the list of icons was simple for the students, creating a list of Christmas symbols and establishing their significance was hard. It took time since students were unfamiliar with the Christmas Story in the Christian Bible and the meanings associated with things that the students had previously considered merely decorative motifs. Creating categories aided the students in creating vocabulary lists such as sweets, sources of light, plants, animals, toys, and gifts. Of particular interest to students was, for example, the meaning of the star which marked the location of the birth of Jesus and which happens to be the most commonly used shape for Christmas decorations in the predominately Catholic Philippines. Likewise they were impressed by the significance of candles and lights that signify Jesus as the light of the world and illuminate homes and public places in fancy displays. They heard for the first time that candy canes symbolize the staffs of the shepherds who were at the birth scene or Nativity. They learned that the ancient meanings of the wreath or evergreen door decorations as symbols of everlasting life which also serve as protection against the evil spirits within the darkness of winter are shared among Japan and Europe and the United States. The same meaning can be applied to the Christmas tree as well which is thought to have originated in Germany in the pre-Christian era. In summary, it was a valuable lesson on human needs and culture that encompassed the purposes of the decorations, displays, the exchange of gifts, special foods, and gatherings with family

and friends that came about as people sought sources of light, companionship, and celebration to counter the long cold dark severity of winter.

### **Card Making and Presentation**

With seasonal background music playing from smart phones, students planned their cards, selected materials provided by the teacher, and set out to make their cards out of Kent (firm card stock) paper. Japanese decorative and colored papers, cellophane, pipe cleaners, bits of ribbon, and a variety of colored markers, crayons, pencils, and pens were provided. Specialty scissors, cutters, and paper punches were included along with a plentiful supply of glue. At the end of the session students were given a handout (see Appendix C) with language patterns and vocabulary that had been introduced earlier in the lesson, along with an assignment to prepare an explanation of their cards to be presented in the next class.

The following class included a display of all the completed cards for all students to see and individual introductions of their cards which included the rationale for their designs. Students were united in their desire to make a child in the Philippines happy however each one had a different approach. The empathy shown towards the children was clearly expressed in their messages and imagery in the cards. The cards evoked cries of 'cute!' as each one spoke. They showed interest in the techniques used for some of the more highly engineered cards that had 3-D elements or cutouts. Most students made a sincere effort to make something nice to comfort a lonely orphan whose life was greatly changed by a single storm, most of them having lived through any

number of storms but not nearly as powerful and in the safety of a sturdy weather-proof home.

Finally with that, the cards were submitted to the local NGO who sent them to the organizations in the Philippines who would then distribute them to the children. Students were invited to accompany the teacher to the NGO office so that they could see for themselves the operation center of a volunteer group supporting people in need in Asia and around the world and meet the people who run it. This was followed by a postcard, which pictured some children who had received their Christmas cards. The notification was sent from the NGO to announce the successful delivery of the cards (over 10,000 cards in the initial year) to a professional children's counselor and Catholic priest in the Philippines and to express appreciation for the students' contribution to the relief project (see Appendix G).

### **Student Feedback**

Four questions (Appendix E) were posed to the students for the following purposes: to identify the individual aims of their cards, to determine their level of empathy and engagement in the project, to check their understanding of the extreme situation of the caregivers and orphaned children in the aftermath of the typhoon(s), to identify the content of their learning about culture and changes in their attitudes about the Philippines. To avoid misunderstandings and to get an honest assessment of the project, the meanings of the questions posed originally in English were clarified using Japanese and the students were instructed to write their responses in Japanese. For this report they were translated into English by a multilingual Japanese international.

In response to the first question about their aims and messages in the cards, students were consistent in their responses. Their intentions were to send the children positive messages of happiness, love, and friendship and to reassure them that they were not alone. In terms of engagement in the project, they expressed their investment in their card making by discussing the choice of materials and shapes, use of winter celebration colors, as well as symbols of hopes, dreams, and love which included their messengers like Santa and Snoopy, icons such as snowmen, gifts and ribbons, hearts, and the Christmas tree. They showed awareness of their receivers reportedly by using simple and clear words in English that are easy to read to create a close feeling.

Culture learning included aspects of religion, the Christian Bible, lifestyle, customs, and human relations. These included the deep significance of the Christmas celebration for Christians through the references to the Bible story of Christmas; the origins and symbolism of the materials for winter celebration decorations such as the pine, lights or reflective materials, and the wreath shape; the Christian meanings of common things such as stars; universal human responses to ward off the harshness and fear of the darkness brought by the northern winter including the use of lights and charms; the importance of sharing the joy of Christmas with family, and the myths related to practices in Japan, for example eating pumpkin on the solstice.

The final question about whether or not there were changes in students' attitudes toward the Philippines, the comments showed that they had taken time to reflect on the card making experience. They shared a wide variety of thoughtful insights, some indicating how they were affected by the experience: "My desire to volunteer has grown."

“The world is connected and the distance feels shorter....Including the distance between people’s hearts.” “I think we should value everyone in the world.” In terms of Philippines as a country and as a people, students indicated that they had little knowledge of the Philippines but their awareness had increased. Being from a country that has experienced many traumatic natural disasters, students were still amazed at the extent of the damage and impact on life in the Philippines. They had little understanding of the orphan situation and the gap in the standard of living. One student remarked, “I felt that people in the Philippines are having a harder time in daily life than Japanese people.” For one student, the image of the Philippines merely as a vacation spot had been permanently altered to include a place of “earthquakes, poverty, and orphans,” remarking that “Japanese people only see what they want to see.” Other student stated that they had developed empathy towards the Philippines and welcomed the chance to express their support saying, “I felt badly for them. I’m glad I got to send a Christmas card.” “...I now wish for them to find happiness.”

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The Christmas card project provided the students an opportunity to use English for authentic communication with partners worlds away in circumstances unimaginable to the students. A new world was opened up for the students and with it awareness of how English can be used for purposes never imagined in their classroom settings with textbook language and classmates as partners. Even a small-scale project such as this can be a motivation for students to use English that does not demand proficiency beyond their level. Beyond the value as a language learning

experience, students were able to gain knowledge of another country that is prone to typhoons and earthquakes and that has a shared understanding of the challenges and threats to life posed by them.

In addition, students experienced philanthropy through this project with some students saying that they wanted to do more for the orphans and were inspired to do volunteer work. Such interaction with other speakers of English is an unexplored area of activity in which students can get involved. While overseas language and culture studies are common for students, the sphere of volunteer work is something that could be considered as a venue for learning culture and language without a huge investment of time and money. Local participation in NGO activities could provide learning opportunities that could lead to travel to overseas locations for doing aid work in the future. At the same time, developing relationships with people involved in charity projects could help students fulfill the goals put forth by the Japanese government (MEXT, 2014) and this college (Hokkaido Musashi Women's Junior College, 2018) for the students to develop skill in intercultural communication and knowledge and skill in international relations.

## **Acknowledgement**

I would like to acknowledge my daughter whose internationalism and tri-lingualism continues to inspire me and whose language skill has come to great use in the translation of the students' feedback. Thank you dear daughter.

## **Resource List**

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## Appendix A: Christmas Card Project Appeal

### Neighbors ネイバース

(Message from Michiyo Yoshida of the NGO Neighbors)

#### Let's send Christmas cards to children in Leyte by December 9, 10:30

The biggest ever typhoon hit central Philippines a few weeks ago and some 1.5 million people lost their houses and they are in need of water and food supplies. I received an e-mail from my friend Ms. Potsky Guerrero who is a Psychologist at the Department of Social Welfare & Development in Manila. She is a specialist to face and give comfort and advice to the children who are the victims of accidents, crime cases and disasters. She wrote; Philippines is a Catholic country and Christmas is the biggest festive season. Please write Christmas cards to the children in Leyte, and I will deliver them. Please be cooperative and write cards to them.

☆ Any numbers of cards accepted, hand-made or ready made (no envelope needed)

☆ Please write your name and message.

☆ Due date of accepting cards MONDAY DEC 9 10:30

☆ Please bring them to Edwards' Office or the English Lounge.

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### Neighbors ネイバース

#### レイテ島の子どもたちへ クリスマスカードを送ろう

台風 30 号により、フィリピン中部のレイテ島に大きな被害が出ました。家を失うなどした人が 150 万人近くいるとのことで、まだ緊急支援物資の水や食糧も手に入らない現状です。そんな中ですが、友人で社会福祉省の臨床心理士であるゲレロさんからメールが来ました。彼女は事件や事故、災害などで被害に合った子どもたちの心のケアのプロです。「クリスマスはキリスト教国であるフィリピンでは最大のお祝いです。被災した子どもたちにクリスマスカードを書いてください、私が責任を持って子どもたちに配ります」という依頼でした。皆様、どうぞ協力ください。

カード：枚数は何枚でもよいです。手作りでも既成のものでもけっこうです。封筒はなくてもよいです。

内 容：To my friend という宛名にして Merry Christmas と書いてください。最後に From your friend として名前のサインをしてください。メッセージも入っていただけたらお願いします。

## Appendix B: Winter Solstice Brainstorm Worksheet

Christmas Cards Nov 22, 2018

### BRAINSTORM

Complete the sentence. Add one word or a few words.

Winter is .....

Humans hate .....

Humans love .....

What events happen this time of year? In December? In winter?

Why do these events happen this time of year?

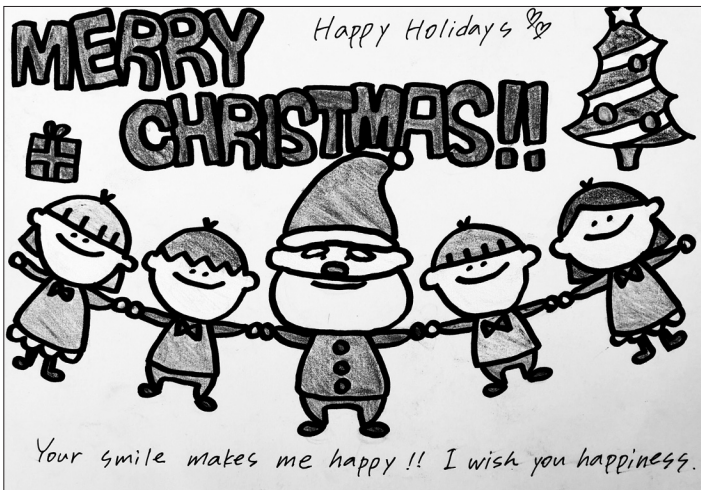
Holidays give us a chance to .....

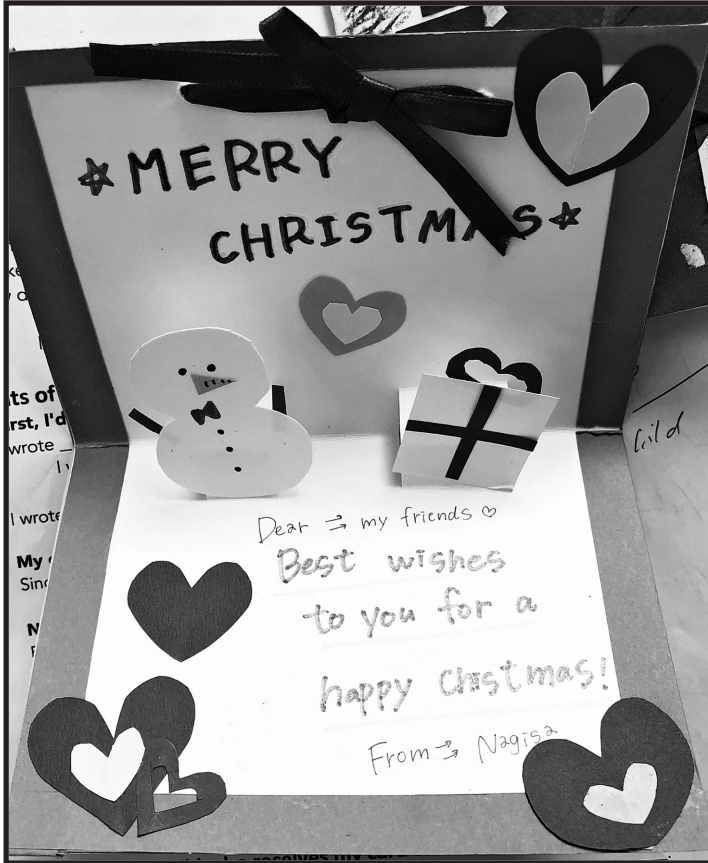
What are the basic needs of human to stay alive?

What do children need?

What can we do to help fill the needs of children who are in need?

Appendix C: Samples of Christmas Cards Made by Students





## Appendix D: Christmas Card Presentation Patterns and Format

### Christmas Card Presentation November 22, 2018

#### Getting Started

Let me tell you about my card.

Let me tell why I designed my card this way.

I'd like to explain my card.

Why did I make my card this way?

The reason is ~.

I made my card this way because ~.

#### Elements of my card

**First, I'd like to explain my message.**

I wrote \_\_\_\_\_.

I want the child who receives this to feel that she/he ~.

I wrote \_\_\_\_\_ to make the child feel ~.

**My choice of messenger is ~.**

Since ~ is/are popular among children, I chose him/her/it/them. He/she/it makes children feel like they have (a friend) (someone who loves them)

**Next, why (did I use) these colors?**

Red is a color associated with ~, so I chose it.

Gold is shiny. It reflects light and has a \_\_\_\_\_ image.

\_\_\_\_\_ is the color of ~, so I used it on the card.

**And now, the symbols.**

As you know, Santa Claus is a universal symbol of hopes and dreams.

Stars are symbols of hope and joy.

These are traditional symbols of winter/Christmas/celebration.

~ are symbols of \_\_\_\_, from the Christmas story in the Christian Bible.

#### How I want the child who receives my card to feel

I want the child who gets my card to feel \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope this card makes the child who receives it \_\_\_\_\_.



## APPENDIX F: Feedback from Students

### Responses to Feedback Questions About Christmas Card Making by Students in Speaking II Class:

Class 8 (December 14, 2018) 9 students responding

8-1

1. I hope that they can enjoy Christmas
2. I expressed (my message) through short and simple sentences.
3. I learned that the culture of enjoying Christmas is common throughout the world.
4. I didn't know much about the Philippines, but through the two classes, I learned that there are many children who are suffering.

8-2

1. I wanted to communicate my hopes that there would be happiness on Christmas, and for happiness to continue after Christmas as well.
2. I drew a messenger that seemed happy and positive.
3. For the first time, I learned that the Christmas tree isn't just a simple symbol, but that it means ever-lasting life. I got to understand the Christian meaning of Christmas.
4. I didn't know much about the Philippines to begin with, so I learned that there are many orphans for the first time. It made me think that there must be many orphans in other countries and I wondered if they are in Japan. I also wondered about how to help them if there are.

8-3

1. I want them to enjoy Christmas.
2. I used words in picture books.
3. I learned that Christmas is about the spirit of enjoying it with everyone. The importance of sharing happiness.
4. I wasn't interested in the Philippines much, but I learned that there are many Christians and it is a country of kindness. After hearing about your (my teacher's) daughter's story, I felt that it's a country with many generous people even though it's not an affluent country.

8-4

1. I wrote my message in hopes of being able to happily spend Christmas, which is a special day around the world.
2. I made it easy to read using simple expressions and designs.
3. I learned that the circular shape and evergreens used in wreaths mean "eternity."
4. I think I learned a lot through the class because I didn't know that the orphan problem in the Philippines was that big and I had very little knowledge about it.

8-5

1. My message is my hope for them to simply enjoy Christmas.
2. I used simple English to make it easy to understand.
3. I learned that the star on the Christmas tree symbolizes the birth of Christ.
4. Because I had no idea that there are many orphans because of the earthquake, I became aware. I hope that, not only in the Philippines, but all children can have a happy life.

8-6

1. I hope that they can feel some happiness from receiving the card.
2. I drew a Christmas tree and Santa Claus and used soft colors to make it cute.
3. I learned about the meaning of the star on the Christmas tree and Santa Claus.
4. I learned about orphans in the Philippines through the class.

8-7

1. I wanted to deliver happiness and love.
2. Merry Christmas. I hope your days will be full of happiness and love.
3. That Santa is a symbol of hope and dreams.
4. I hadn't thought much about the Philippines and didn't have a clear image (of the place), but through the lecture, I became aware of orphans and disabled people in the Philippines, and am happy that I could do something for them. I'm slightly more interested in the Philippines.

8-8

1. Love & peace
2. A Christmas tree with warm colors
3. The color variations used during cold winters. Colors that are common between New Years and Christmas (green, red, gold, silver)
4. Yes. I feel closer. My desire to volunteer has grown.

8-9

1. I wish that Christmas will be a good day.
2. I want the card to be something that will make children happy.
3. I learned the meaning of images in Christianity.
4. I learned that there are many orphans and children who can't spend Christmas with their families, so I hope they feel happy when they see the card.

Class 1 (December 14, 2018) 9 students responding

1-1

1. To say that you're not alone!
2. I designed it to look like a Christmas present to give a feeling of excitement/anticipation.
3. It made me think how frightened people in the past must have felt when it got dark.
4. I feel that people in the Philippines are having a harder time in daily life than Japanese people.

1-2

1. I want them to be happy
2. Colorful and snowmen
3. About the winter solstice, about Christmas.
4. I feel badly for them. I'm glad I got to send a Christmas card.

1-3

1. I want to communicate my feeling that "you're not alone!" through the Christmas card.
2. Our hearts are together! So I unified the color.
3. I learned the value/weight and significance of each and every culture.
4. I think we should value everyone in the world.



## Intercultural Connections and Volunteer Experience Through Christmas Cards

1-4

1. I want them to discover their dreams
2. I expressed the beginnings of a dream through a present.
3. The deep meaning of Christmas.
4. My feelings and thinking towards people of other countries changed.

1-5

1. For the orphans in the Philippines, I want them to be happy. I wanted to communicate that they're not alone.
2. I attached hearts of various colors and sizes. From this, I wanted to express that love comes in different forms and sizes.
3. I learned that in order to communicate well with people from different countries, it's important to learn about culture and history.
4. Before I had no knowledge about orphans in the Philippines, but through the class, I now wish for them to find happiness.

1-6

1. I want them to be positive. I want them to know they're not alone.
2. I made a Japanese paper cutout (kirie) so they can know about Japan. I hope they become interested in Japan.
3. I used to just eat pumpkin for winter solstice without much thought, but after hearing it is related to legends/myths, I found it interesting.
4. This year Japan had many natural disasters, but I was surprised to know that there were orphans in the aftermath of a typhoon.

1-7

1. You are not alone.
2. Christmas and hope. With the image of Christmas, I made it with the hope that the receiver will feel happiness.
3. Around the world there are children who must deal with a lot and we get through by supporting each other. I was surprised to know that Christmas carried significant religious meaning. Before I just thought of it as a fun event, so I want to spend it with proper understanding.
4. The world is connected and the distance feels shorter. Including the distance between people's hearts.

1-8

1. Happy Christmas! Happy New Year! Have a joyful year!
2. I made it a message from Snoopy.
3. It was interesting to know the different lifestyles in different countries.
4. I began to think that I want the children in the Philippines to have a happier life.

1-9

1. Love, we are all friends.
2. Heart-shaped paper, Santa, and presents, hohoho
3. The meaning of the Christmas tree, figures in the Bible, the meaning of the wreath, and how winter is harsh for people around the world.
4. Yes! I used to only think that the Philippines was a fun place with beaches, but now I know there are issues such as earthquakes, poverty, and orphans. Japanese people only see what they want to see.

## APPENDIX G: Christmas Card Delivery Announcement

クリスマスカード書きご協力者の皆様へ  
Facebook やメーリングリストなどの呼びかけに応じて、カードを書きいただき感謝いたします。最終的には 10,000 枚以上のカードが集まりました。マニラの友人や神父を通じて、現地にお届けしています。切手やカンパもいただきました。ご協力ありがとうございます。最初にレイテ島で配られた様子をご覧ください。現在写真が数点ありますから、必要な方は下記にご連絡ください。多謝！  
ネイバーズ吉田三千代



たくさんカードも、できていたけど  
あ4000と7000のカード。