

## Implementing Joint Position Papers/Reports on a Web Board: Employing a Definitive Formulaic Structure and Composition

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This paper delineates the process of setting up, employing, and evaluating a LAN Web Board integrated in a writing course for two first-year ESL university classes. LANs allow students to participate “in real-time conferences, in which all participants are logged onto a closed network at the same time” (Markley and Herbert, 1999). It begins with the challenge of contending with an already published traditional syllabus of a course entitled “Writing and Grammar,” which was dealt with by superimposing the old onto the new IT plan; it further integrated academic writing and project work into the plan. What follows is the step by step scaffolding procedures that were taken by the teacher, by the students, in the classroom, and in the computer lab to enable interactivity, in which the input of participants influences the presentation of material (Ebersole, 1997), in a project-based course. The end products were group web sites on the topic of parasite singles, “unmarried people who live with their parents” (Yamada, 1999). The weekly aims were to improve student writing as to volume (and time) and quality, plus to assess the impact on classroom culture including such aspects as collaboration, the nature of interaction (student-to-student and/or teacher-to-student), and independence. The positive results of these aspects and others complete the research. Future expansion plans are to collaborate with groups of students at a Tokyo university and with our sister city and exchange universities.

**Keywords:** Local Area Network (LAN), Web Board (World Wide Web bulletin board service), joint position paper, formulaic thesis writing, scaffolding, interactivity

### Outline

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## I. Introduction

The Japanese government announced that amongst its national strategies, its IT (Information Technology) capability will develop to the point of being the top in the international arena. To facilitate this, an IT commission was set up, aiming for Japan to be the world leader in IT in five years. Such is the importance placed in this field. Following this pronouncement, it is incumbent on universities to do their share in fulfilling this dream, and it will be imperative for students who are attaining computer literacy to exert themselves even more. As a byproduct the students will also become more proficient in English, which is another priority goal. To back up the above announcement the Prime Minister unveiled a ¥700 billion special budget, “hoping it will trigger a Japanese ‘revolution’ in information technology” (Japan Times). It focused on four areas, one of which is IT, which was allotted ¥250 billion. The government hopes “the higher core expenditures will push the nation’s troubled economy toward a self-sustaining recovery.”

The use of IT enables hundreds of students to learn English individually at one time by utilizing Home Pages, a situation which, in former years was impossible. They can also acquire natural English, and they can develop the ability to take initiative in their work by exchanging or sharing opinions amongst students from other institutions in addition to that of their own class and their own university. In so doing they can acquire the mindset of cooperation. A LAN (Local Area Network), in particular, allows the subjects to engage “in real-time conferences, in which all participants are logged onto a closed network at the same time” (Markley and Herbert, 1999).

In this research, students were to choose a topic of international scope to not only increase their English ability, but also to make them realize the significance of ICC (Intercultural Communication). In that sense, the research matches the aim of the study of humanities.

Specifically, students collect information from the Internet, have an Internet debate with other students, culminating in publications on the WWW (World Wide Web), all by centering on English education, ICC (Intercultural Communication), and IT. Because they can do their homework via the computer, they are kept highly motivated. The “debate” aspect can evolve into lively interactivity “where participants’ input influences the presentation of material” (Ebersole, 1997) – in a project-based course.

One of the chief goals of the researcher was to design a “modern” syllabus integrating

three aspects: (1) “high level technology” to as great a degree as possible; (2) an English skill or more than one English skill; plus (3) interdisciplinarity. The “high tech” portion involved the use of LAN Web Boards within MMU (Miyazaki Municipal University) and extensive use of the WWW. The area of English study that was tackled—out of the key sections of speaking, listening, reading, and writing—was writing, and this in turn was narrowed down to academic writing. As for the interdisciplinary part, intercultural communication was incorporated, specifically the topic of Parasite Singles, “unmarried people who live with their parents” (Yamada, 1999) and their impact on communication in families not only in Japan but also around the world (and the reverse: the cultural styles that impact upon the emergence and/or acceptance of parasite singles in various cultures).

The project goals were determined to be creativity, discovery, and accuracy, in that order. The weekly aim was to improve student writing as to volume (and time) and quality, plus to ameliorate the impact on classroom culture including such aspects as collaboration, the nature of interaction (student-to-student and/or teacher-to-student), and independence. The end product was to design group sites on the WWW on the topic of parasite singles. It was hoped that solely because of their utilization of IT their English communication skills would improve and that benefits would accrue to the instructor, too, as it is, for one thing, easily possible to evaluate the learners simply by knowing how often the technology is accessed.

These are the conditions under which the project was attempted. There were two unstreamed (homogeneous) classes of twenty-eight students each, who were first year university level (First Grade), with low intermediate overall English abilities, and with little computer, email, web or writing experience; a technologically low-level instructor, with assistance from the webmaster.

The course ran for only one semester of twelve weeks of 90-minute classes. The students used their own computers for the majority of the time, and about 10% of the time, they used the university’s computer laboratory to access the BBS (the Bulletin Board Service). “Own” computers comprised their personal property at home (or which they carried with them, their laptops); their friends’ computers; that of their fathers’ at their work places; and even those found at internet cafes. During class time, in the computer lab, just to familiarize them with the system, they used university computers only three times for 30 minutes, plus one 30-minute session for individual group members, totaling 120 minutes in the lab for each student. In the classroom, they employed a standard composition and grammar textbook.

One of the biggest limitations was the challenge of having to contend with an already published traditional syllabus of a course entitled “Writing and Grammar;” as will be shown, this was dealt with by combining the old with the new IT plan.

## II. Methodology: Steps in the Development of the Lessons and Assignments

In the briefest description, the project was begun with questionnaires and brainstorming sessions for needs analysis purposes and progressed through scaffolding (graduated incremental support) of process writing on a LAN, to final group position papers on the Board. In the lectures each week, a different skill or portion of the paper was taught, and all the while, there was on-going peer review (of content, not mechanics) within groups via the LAN.

### Step 1

In class, the first lesson entailed brainstorming on the topic (Parasite Singles) to generate motivation and ideas. However, because of the communication style of typical Japanese students, there was almost no discussion; hence I arrived prepared with multiple copies of two articles downloaded from the Internet, the first of which I made sure presented the positive side of PSs, then one with an unfavorable slant. There was also a lecture on plagiarism (*tousaku*), paraphrasing, and citations in the very first class.

The assignments were a ten-sentence summary and a questionnaire. I provided the scaffolding for the pre-writing summary: I gave them the key words, “parasite singles” to input. Each student, outside of class, had to search for, and compose the summary to be sent to me via email because the BBS had not been set up yet by the Webmaster, plus print one copy for class. The deadline was set for 12:45 Monday, two days before the class.

The students were also asked to respond to a questionnaire which was equivalent to a needs analysis and background interrogation. (It was determined that the format should be qualitative since not much was known about the students as they were first year students.) They had to type their answers into paragraph format. This is the gist of the first questionnaire given to the classes, dealing with their previous use of computers. The questions involved how long (months/years); how many hours per week; whose computer (or where); what kind of computer; how and why; which applications (programs); attitude/

feelings ; and hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use. Appendix A contains the full text of the questionnaire and also explores their familiarity with the Internet.

## Step 2

In the second lecture, I commented on the summaries, and in keeping with the prioritized goals of creativity and discovery, did not remark on the accuracy of the mechanics such as spelling or grammar. The class members were allowed to get themselves into groups of four of their preference and were instructed to choose a leader, but not by *jan ken pon* (a Japanese selection by chance). For the last twenty minutes of the lecture time, the whole class moved down to the computer laboratory for instructions on how to use the LAN (BBS).

Homework after the second lesson was in three parts. One more summary was to be posted to their group BBS, plus the one from the previous week. They also had to “talk” to their group via their “private web” at least once during the week. This is a sample opinion.

We thought when we got knowledge of parasite singles that their way of living is bad. We think that when they depend on their parents not only for money but also mentally, that they don’t have the mind of independence. So they can’t face reality. So we think that they are premature babies.

There was also another qualitative questionnaire, this time on email, typing, and writing experience, which can be seen in the Appendix.

## Step 3

In the classroom, I provided copies of sample sentences that each of the groups had contributed to their group web board, some of which were :

“In Japan today, 10 million young people are living as parasite singles, but they won’t be able to live that easy life forever.”

“The Japanese unemployment rate has now overtaken that of the U.S. and is viewed as a contributing factor in the emergence of parasite singles.”

“In under 20 years, Japanese attitudes toward marriage have gone from one extreme to the other—from too much social pressure to a society now allowing the “parasite single” phenomenon to grow. Unless such single adults learn to be less dependent on their parents, this could pose quite a social problem in the future.”

“The female worker earns 64% of her male counterpart.”

“Between the ages of 20 and 34, 60% of men and 80% of women live with their parents.”

“Single people living with parents was natural in the past.”

“It’s difficult for single people to manage living on their own because of the economy; rents of ¥90,000 a month and other living costs are too high for them to manage in large cities.”

“Some parents are glad that they have their children with them.”

From these quotations (and others) the class as a whole determined sub-topics including cultural bias; behavior, values, and habits of PSs; influences: cultural and otherwise; specific cultural regions; prevalence in Japan; prevalence in other countries; PSs’ effects on various cultures/society; past cultural determinants; judgments on the PS culture as positive and negative; cultural/society’s effects on PSs; unemployment and the PS; the PS and the economy; the good points of PSs; cultural/societal relevance; contributing cultural and other factors to the phenomenon of PSs; gender differences of PSs; and communication styles of different cultures and PSs. These were written on the board, and the groups chose a sub-topic. The leaders rushed to the board to claim (sign up for) a topic.

The assignment this time was for the leader to delete all off-topic statements that had been posted to the group’s board. That had to be completed within 24 hours, because of the whole class assignment. Each student was asked to search the web for three new sentences that pertained only to their chosen theme, making a total of twelve sentences. This, too, had to be completed within 24 hours after the above deletion, because of the job of Person B of each group. He or she had to divide the twelve statements into three logical divisions and write headings for each.

After analyzing the qualitative questionnaires and determining the parameters of the students’ experience, a quantitative survey was formulated, sample questions of which are the following. The complete questionnaire can be located in the Appendix.

A. How long (months/years) did you use a computer (before you started this class) ?

- 1) 3 months or less    2) 6 months    3) 9 months    4) 1 year    5) 2 years  
6) 6 years or more

F. How and why have you used a computer ?

- 1) for homework, including reports    2) to practice/improve, to be more skilled

3) to draw    4) to play games    5) to learn for the future

6) Others :

G. Which are your most important hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use?

(You may choose more than one. Remember to circle ALL the NUMBERS of your choices.)

\_\_1) to make friends    \_\_2) to be skilled/ master    \_\_3) to buy my own computer  
\_\_4) to handle a computer in the future    \_\_5) to improve my English  
\_\_6) to type more smoothly    \_\_7) to learn the system

Now go back and number them in order of importance (1 is the most important).

Write the numbers on the short lines.

#### Step 4

The subsequent instruction in class at this point was how to embellish and support a theme, and how to make an essay more interesting. Hence statistical contributions were shown; examples of “hard facts” were demonstrated; and quotes, citations, and bibliography were taught. To scaffold the learners, I devised a template showing how and where their support material would fall and the general layout. I used the example of the production in progress of Class 2’s Group 4 work on historical buildup to the emergence of the phenomenon. Only the body of the piece is shown here; the introduction, conclusion, and references are missing. The full template is available in the Appendix section of this paper.

#### Past Influences of Parasite Singles

##### The Distant Past

More than a generation ago, .....  
..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....  
..... (citation). Example .....  
..... (citation).

##### Graphic

##### The More Recent Past

In the not too distant past, ..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....

..... (citation). Example .....  
(citation).

#### Graphic

#### The Modern Era

In contemporary Japan, ..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....  
..... (citation). Example .....  
(citation).

#### Graphic

Logically, at home, each member was asked to write one of each type (fact, data, example), to the best of their ability, totaling twelve per group. Of course, peer review went on as usual.

#### Step 5

It was not until this point that the introduction was taught, following “a natural progression” (Books, 1996a), and then, only the outline. I have an easy, foolproof strategy: take each of the subheadings; add verbs; and make them into sentences. The conclusion, but only the summary and findings, was taught here.

Each student practiced by writing the above. It was Person C's turn to weed out any stray (irrelevant) sentences and to sort and synthesize all the contributions under the three headings.

#### Step 6

The lecture was about the parts of the introduction:

- I. statement of the problem,
- II. significance of the study,
- III. purpose of the research,
- IV. scope of the work, and
- V. definitions.

The lesson for conclusions included:

- VI. delimitations and
- VII. recommendations for further research.

As a prompt, this check list was developed and provided to the students.



### Checklist for Introduction and Conclusion

Check that you have included these areas in your Introduction and Conclusion.

#### Introduction:

You must include these in your introduction: (one or more sentences each)

- context and/or problem and/or background
- justification or significance or importance
- definition of terms (new words or difficult words)
- aim/s, or purpose/s or goal/s
- outline (Simply put the headings in sentences here.)

#### Conclusion:

You must include these in your conclusion: (one or more sentences each)

- summary. One sentence about each area that you dealt with
- Your conclusion/s or discussion
- Scope or limitations
- Recommendation(s) for future research

Graphics and how to import them was also taught, plus fundamental layout techniques.

Their assignment after class was to try their hands at the above. Person D chose or synthesized the best of those. Person A (actually the leader) proofread the essay. Person B helped with the layout and formatting and printed four copies. They were also requested to fill out a questionnaire, as seen in Appendix G.

### Step 7

In keeping with the prioritization of the goals of creativity and discovery, the accuracy part was not approached by the students until this final step. Person B brought the four copies to class, and each student proofread it. Then they got in pairs to do so, and then in their groups of four. Person C was in charge of posting the final “clean” report to the World Wide Web.

## III. Discussion and Observations

In spite of many obstacles many successes were observed. This project began with the challenge of having to contend with an already published traditional syllabus of a course

entitled “Writing and Grammar,” a problem which was dealt with by superimposing the new IT plan onto the old. It caused a delay in the implementation of the system; in the interim, communication had to be carried out by email.

The pre-course and post-course questionnaires uncovered valuable and encouraging results. In the opening qualitative surveys both classes’ low computer, Internet, and writing skills were discovered, and were supported dramatically by quantitative investigations; yet the final research papers were of quite a high caliber.

A closing questionnaire of an essay type helped to evaluate the entire project. It examined such aspects as:

- the students’ volume of work (particularly their perception of the amount of writing);
- the quality of work;
- the reactions to group work;
- the degree of focus;
- the impressions of teacher domination;
- relationships with all personnel involved;
- task orientation; and
- autonomy.

As for the amount of work, this written comment was typical. “Talked” refers to writing on the web board.

Our group talked about our project two or three days per week. I wrote many sentences, over 100. We rewrote our report four or five times, and we spent five or six hours a week on this project.

Many submissions about the quality of their work involved the following notion of their improvement.

I could really learn how to write a report from our project. At first, I wondered why we had to rewrite our report so many times, but it became better and better, little by little. We could write a lot better in the last report than in the first report. So in the end everybody was very happy.

Of particular gratification to know was the degree of task orientation, especially when compared to the “old way.” The students were encouraged to respond more than once, and indeed, most of them input more than that – there were dozens of entries in each group’s board. All assignments were done every week by every group, and usually, early, and in class, there was near perfect attendance. Focus statements/task orientation comments that were frequently seen were similar to these.

I was able to pay attention to the work. I had to rewrite sentences about five times. In the first few weeks, I spent about three hours a week on our report ; I spent about two hours per week later. I was busy.

I think I worked [applied] myself. No person in my group was lazy at last [in the end], even one lazy boy. We all did our work ; we all did our homework. We didn't chat ; we worked hard, everybody.

Regarding autonomy, all the students who expressed opinions about it seemed to reiterate that it was good to work on their own sometimes. "The teacher was not there [in my home] when I wrote on the Board. I could think on my own ideas." Some students "got courage" to make their own web sites independently, and proudly included their position papers.

There were equally positive responses about collaborating with their groups of four.

Group work is very good. I didn't know my group members very well at first, but we have a good relationship these days, and so we discussed the topic not only on this class' web board, but also by email. I can understand how to use the Web board from group work.

Added advantages were the ease of checking on the part of the teacher, and less work in general, or at least the perception of less laboriousness. Since a great deal of the checking was done by the students themselves, less time was expended by the instructor. The group set up encouraged the members to monitor each other. Less of a burden is expected in the next semester, and less in the coming terms thereafter, as this format provides a template for succeeding semesters.

What was not found was less student work, but the students did not seem to complain about it, as such; it seemed more a statement of fact in response to a line of questioning. The same students who reported an increased work load also praised the program glowingly.

Some drawbacks were reported by the students.

There are two big problems with PCs at MMU. One is that the PCs that students can use are too few. The other is that the OA room is shut down at 18:00. If we finish classes at 17:50, we can only use a PC for about 10 minutes.

This begs for revision, but it involves a division over which I have no jurisdiction, but it is not insurmountable.

A more complete slate of comments is positioned in the Appendix.

## N. Conclusions

The results included the observations that the project was successful in being an opportunity for students to use “real” English because of the interactivity and collaboration demanded by the format; it was integrated with other disciplines, notably intercultural communication; and it fulfilled our goal to implement some of the latest technology in the IT world. As an extra benefit, it involved Active Learning, one of the current buzzwords in the ESL (English as a Second Language) field, as witnessed by the interactivity/collaboration. Synonymously, one could apply an equally ubiquitous coinage, Authentic Task Based Learning as they had a job to do that occurs in the real world. Additionally, instead of being Teacher Directed/Teacher Dominated, it was Learner Centered. Most of the work was student-to-student providing a large measure of autonomy for each and every learner regardless of their talents and level. Another result that was—in the words of one of the students—“astonishing,” was that they were actually authoring a public work (“I’m an author. We’re authors.”). The formulaic methodology, following the work by Books (1996b), entailed the now familiar Process Writing. There was a slight twist, though; there was no concern for mechanics while in production, which probably encouraged them to write such large volumes. The undertaking resulted in proud publications of academic style joint position papers about parasite singles with far higher standards than are usually seen in work by first year Japanese university students.

Although the aspect of English study that was taught was writing, the fact is that speaking was engaged in, too, if one espouses “Writing is speech written down.” As the students had to debate with the other three students in their group, then with the students in the other six groups in their classroom, and finally with the learners in the other class in which there were also seven groups of four, they in effect “spoke” to others with their ideas and opinions.

While it is possible to learn IT in our highly informationally driven world by taking general lectures, using it to uncover interesting information and concepts puts it a step ahead on the learning curve. Moreover, the participants developed more creativity and collaborative skills, which is ordinarily not feasible in a large class. In addition to that students experienced the reality of internationalization and globalization by learning through this system. As an added bonus, they promoted socialization and individuality in tandem.

## V. Recommendations

Due to the results of the project, this updated university writing course will be repeated in future classes, with revisions. One minor one is the order of the breakdown of the teaching of plagiarism. It will continue to be taught in the very first class, but the concept of paraphrasing was too difficult to teach in such a short period of time, and the students did not paraphrase anyway ; they simply typed in quotations, word for word. So direct quotations would be taught first and paraphrasing later.

The class members were second term (*kouki*) groups, having had some fundamental training in the first term on the basics of using a computer, and in future work, it would be a minimum level of competence to work with. Another recommendation would be to have the students wrap up the course with PowerPoint presentations or a debate.

Future expansion plans have been laid out to collaborate with groups of students at a Tokyo university. The topic would not be limited to only one chosen by the instructor or the students, but could diversify to multiple themes conducted concurrently, with possible switches as the term or academic year progresses, contingent upon resources, personnel, zeal, and time frame. Instead of having one group of students from my university communicate with a group of four from another, what is envisioned is two students from MMU with two from another institution comprising a group, and collaborating on a single topic. This could be expanded to include our sister city college, and exchange universities in New Zealand, and in Canada in the future.

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## VII. Appendices

### Appendix A

#### Questionnaire 1 (Open-ended)

Writing Class IB1 and IB2

[I = Freshpersons (“First Year Students”); B = writing; and 1 and 2 denote the administrative number of the classes out of 8 at the university]

### Computer and Net Experience

Write about your computer and writing experience. Answer each question/part with a full sentence. Make each type of experience a different paragraph. Type your name, student number, and date on the top.

#### Computer Experience :

how long (months/years) ?

how many hours per week

a. do you use a computer ?

b. did you use a computer ?

whose computer (or where ... a computer) ?

a. did you use ?

b. do you use ?

c. will you use ?

what kind of computer ?

how and why you used it

which applications (programs) ?

attitude/feelings ?

hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

#### WWW (World Wide Web)/Net (The Net/Internet) Experience :

Please do not confuse this with email experience.

how long (months/ years) ?

how many hours per week

a. do you use the net/WWW ??

b. did you use the net/WWW ?

where or whose WWW/net/server

a. did you use ?

b. do you use ?

c. will you use ?

how and why you used it (What did you browse/which sites ?)

which applications (programs) ?

attitude/feelings ?

hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?



**Comments :**

Write at least one sentence. Make it a new paragraph, too. So you will have three paragraphs in total.

**Notes :**

Make sure you finish this for the class next week. Your classmates will read it.

Next week you will write about your email experience, so don't write about it this week.

Type your answers/essay on an A4 size paper. Put it in your Clear Book (binder with 20 plastic/vinyl pockets).

**Appendix B**

**Questionnaire 2 (Open-ended)**

Email, Typing, and Writing Experience

Write about your email experience. Answer each question/part with a full sentence.

Make each type of experience a different paragraph.

Type these five items first.

Name :

Student # :

Date :

Class # : 1B...

Topic: Email, Typing, and Writing Experience

**Email Experience**

how long (months/years) ?

how many hours per week ?

a. do you use email ?

b. did you use email ?

whose computer/email account (or Where... email) ?

a. did you use ?

b. do you use ?

c. will you use ?

what kind of email (friends, net friends or...) ?

how and why you used it

which applications (programs) (Eudora, Explorer, Outlook Express, etc.) ?  
attitude/feelings ?  
hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

### Typing Experience

how long (months/years) ?  
how many hours per week do/did you type ?  
whose computer/word processor (or Where ... computer/word processor) ?  
a. did you use ?  
b. do you use ?  
c. will you use ?  
why you type  
attitude/feelings ?  
hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?  
How/skill/style  
a. One finger ?  
b. look at the keyboard ?  
c. touch typing ?  
typing speed (words per minute) ?

### Writing Experience

what kind ? (poems, school work only, diary, etc.)  
longest written work in Japanese ?  
how many times you wrote more than one page in Japanese ?  
longest written work in English ?  
how many times you wrote more than one page in English ?  
attitude/feelings ?  
hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

### Comments :

Write at least one sentence. Make it a new paragraph, too. So you will have four paragraphs in total.

## Appendix C

### QUESTIONNAIRE ON EXPERIENCE IT WRITING DR. M. BOOKS

Please reply about your experiences BEFORE you started the course/class (not what your experiences are now).

*Kono kougi o jukou suru MAE ni anata no keiken o kotaete kudasai (ima genzai no keiken dewa arimasen).*

Please allow me/us to understand your experiences.

Please circle the number of your answer.

#### **Computer Experience**

A. How long (months/years) did you use a computer (before you started this class) ?

- 1) 3 months or less    2) 6 months    3) 9 months    4) 1 year    5) 2 years  
6) 6 years or more

B. How many hours per week did you use a computer ?

- 1) less than 1 hour    2) about an hour    3) 2 hours    4) 4 hours    5) 6 hours or more

C. Whose computer did you use ?

- 1) mine (my own)    2) my father's    3) my mother's    4) MMU's  
5) another person's (whose : \_\_\_\_\_)

Remember to answer all questions about yourself before October (as if you were writing this in September).

D. What kind of computer did you use ?

(MMU's computers are Fujitsu.)

- 1) Macintosh: desktop (G4, G3, iMac)    2) notebook-type (PowerBook G3, iBook)  
3) Windows (IBM, Fujitsu, Sony, Panasonic, Gateway, Sharp, COMPAQ)  
4) UNIX, SOLARIS, FreeBSD, Sinux    5) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

E. Which applications (programs) did you use ?

(MMU's programs are Microsoft Word.)

- 1) Microsoft Word    2) Ichitaro    3) Kiri    4) Toxsoft    5) Excel    6) Pixia  
7) Adobe Illustrator    8) Adobe PhotoShop    9) Paint Shop Pro    10) Fire Works  
11) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

F. How and why have you used a computer ?

- 1) for homework, including reports    2) to practice/improve, to be more skilled  
3) to draw    4) to play games    5) to learn for the future  
6) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

G. Which are your most important hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

(You may choose more than one. Remember to circle ALL the NUMBERS of your choices.)

- \_\_1) to make friends    \_\_2) to be skilled/master    \_\_3) to buy my own computer  
\_\_4) to handle a computer in the future    \_\_5) to improve my English  
\_\_6) to type more smoothly    \_\_7) to learn the system

Now go back and number them in order of importance (1 is the most important). Write the numbers on the short lines.

H. Which are your most important hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

(You may choose more than one. Remember to circle ALL the NUMBERS of your choices.)

- \_\_1) I want computers to be smaller and cheaper.  
\_\_2) to carry computers anywhere like a mobile phone  
\_\_3) to learn CG graphics to make a simple CG movie  
\_\_4) to add some music programs to make some original music  
\_\_5) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

Now go back and number them in order of importance (1 is the most important). Write the numbers on the short lines.

**WWW Experience**

(not email, only the World Wide Web, the net.)

Remember to answer about yourself BEFORE this course started.

I. How long (months/years) have you used the net ?

- 1) 2 months or less    2) 6 months    3) 9 months    4) 1 year    5) 2 years  
6) 3 years or more

J. How many hours per week did you use it ?

- 1) less than 1 hour    2) about an hour    3) 2 hours    4) 4 hours    5) 6 hours or more

K. How and why have you used the WWW ?

- 1) to search my favorite sites    2) for entertainment/relaxation    3) to get information  
4) for homework, including reports    5) for education

6) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

L. Which are your most important hopes and/or dreams and/or expectations and/or future use ?

- \_\_1) to have my own HP    \_\_2) to get more information easily  
\_\_3) to be skilled/master    \_\_4) to learn English in order to understand foreign HPs  
\_\_5) to learn the system

6) Others : \_\_\_\_\_

Now go back and number them in order of importance (1 is the most important). Write the numbers on the short lines.

M. Please write comments (a few sentences) on the back side. Thank you.

I am grateful for the assistance of Megumi Nasu in formulating this questionnaire.

#### Appendix D

(This is the screen that the students read to get an explanation of the Board. Of course, this was after an explanation was given in the class in English, and after an assistant came to the lab or the class to explain it in Japanese.)

#### Explanation of "The Board"

(BBS, Bulletin Board Service, *Keijiban*)

As a matter of fact, there are several boards, but we can refer to them all as "The Board." Each group has a board and then there is a bulletin board called "World" for everyone in the world to read !

You can have a discussion online by inputting and responding to the chosen topics on  
- your own group's board,  
- the board of another group, and  
- the "World" board.

Your discussion inputs can be any of your ideas, feelings, suggestions, agreements, disagreements, anything. That is, you can comment on the content (the words/thoughts). We hope that you will feel more free to express yourself here than you can in public or to Dr. Books. Dr. Books will not, and you will not check the spelling or the mechanics (spacing, punctuation, etc.) now.

Because of this format (the net), you can access the work and thoughts of others anywhere, anytime, even outside of the class.

#### How to input a message to your group

(The example given is for the leader of Group 1)

Group 1 will use the first color choice (Group 2 will have the second color, etc.)

Input your 7-digit student number, name, and your number in your group. Since you are the leader, type 1a.

Input your title.

Type your message/statement.

Click on Submit.

Click on Send.

#### How to input a response to your group

Click on “*resu*” in hiragana.

Input your 7-digit student number, name, and your number in your group (e.g., 1a).

Input your title.

Type your response.

Click on *resu* (response).

Click on Send.

#### How to input a message to World

(Yes, indeed, this message can be read by the whole world, not just by Dr. Books; ask someone to check your work if you like.)

(The example given is for the leader of Group 1)

Click on HOME.

Under the home page, Click on (with Mbooks).

Click on World.

Input your 7-digit student number, name, and your number in your group. Since you are

the leader, type 1a.

Input your title.

Type your message/statement.

Click on Submit.

Click on Send.

### How to input a response to World

Click on “*resu*” in hiragana.

Input your 7-digit student number, name, and your number in your group (1a).

Input your title.

Type your response.

Click on *resu* (response).

Click on Send.

### Notes :

- Of course, since this is an English writing class, input in English only.
- Remember to use Verdana font (this font).
- Increase the size of the font to at least 16 for readability.

## Appendix E

### Instructions      Using the LAN      Writing Using the Net

Brief notes for this week

In the From line, the group leader writes his/her name like I taught you : Taro SUZUKI.

In the Subject line, write your class number, group number, the first name of your leader, and the name of your assignment as space allows (or a code).

Write the names and numbers and email addresses of all members.

Use **Verdana font**. You'll be glad you did later when you do more complex work. The reason is for readability.

Don't plagiarize (copy another person's work). If you do, you must use quotation marks around it (“xxxxxx”) as I taught you.

## Appendix F

### Template for Statistics and Examples

#### Past Influences of Parasite Singles

##### Introduction

What is the historical background for the emergence of parasite singles (PSs)? This short report attempts to present the situation chronologically, and will deal with the distant past, the more recent past, and the modern era. We have delimited the investigation to our local area, Japan.

##### The Distant Past

More than a generation ago, .....  
..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....  
..... (citation). Example .....  
..... (citation).

Graphic

##### The More Recent Past

In the not too distant past, .....  
..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....  
..... (citation). Example .....  
..... (citation).

Graphic

##### The Modern Era

In contemporary Japan, .....  
..... Fact .....  
..... (citation). Data (statistics, figures, numbers) .....  
..... (citation). Example .....  
..... (citation).

Graphic



## Conclusion

We can easily see that PSs began a long time .....  
..... the distant past, the more recent past, and the  
modern era. ....

## References

<http://www. ....>

Prepared by M. Books

## Appendix G

### Final Questionnaire

Please write one or two sentences under each of these headings :

Autonomy

Checking

Creativity

Discovery (I discovered...)

Group Work

The Importance of Learning About the Internet

The People Involved

Quality of Work

Task Orientation

Volume of Writing

What did you like best ?

## Appendix H

### Representative Comments by Students about the Course

#### Autonomy

The good thing is that I can use a BBS myself.

I can always write on the BBS because I have my own PC.

I think what was good about working on my own sometimes is to think by myself. I think that thinking is important.

### Group Work

In this class, we made up groups of four. We discussed our reports every week. I made friends with my group members.

The members of my group are very kind and fun. I like them. We debated many things. One boy in my group is good at computers so he gave us lots of important information about the Net.

Group work suits my style. If I had to do all of my homework alone, I couldn't finish my work. There were three other members in the group, so I could understand what Parasite Singles are.

I like my group members very much. Every week my group members thought of good ideas. My members helped me and I enjoyed talking about the same topic. It's a very good thing!

### Quality of Work

I was not a good writer, and I couldn't use the computer or the WWW very well. I studied how to write reports and how to use a computer and the Net when I wrote reports. I also learned how to make graphs and tables with my group members.

### Task Orientation

At the beginning the class was very hard for me because I couldn't use the computer, but I tried hard and later I could do a good job.

I was busy because of my part-time job but I was not lazy. My part time job is very hard, too, but I did my homework after the part-time job.

### Volume of Writing

We wrote reports (summaries) after the first and second class but they were very small. After the next classes, we discussed everything two or three times a week. I got to know how to write a report and I could write a lot. I studied hard. I spent about 10 hours on the report.

I studied English in this class. There are seven groups in it. There are groups of four. I always wrote my homework in English to my group members. I listened to (read) my group members' words in English for about twenty minutes, and we spent three hours a week on this report.

### The Importance of Learning About the Net

When I was an elementary school student, my school didn't have computers for students. It is important for us to study computers. The Prime Minister said, "I will have an IT Revolution."

Japanese society has begun to have more international relationships, so we have to study English because English is a common language in the world and on the WWW.

When I entered MMU, I was very happy because there were many computers which we could use whenever we wanted. But at first I didn't know how to use them. However we must use them when we study and I learned it in writing class.

Before, I used an encyclopedia. Now I use Internet. It has much information and it's faster and easier.

In the world IT is getting more important and popular. Now everything is written using the computer. But I didn't know how to use a computer until I studied how to write reports in this class.

## Appendix I

### Sample Thesis

This is a sample of the collaborative work of the four students in Class A, Group A. It is taken from the web site of the classes.

Note: This is only work in progress. We are freshmen ESL students learning to write through using a BBS.

English 1B3 Group A

19910098 Erina SUZUKI

20010092 Miki SUGIYAMA

20010094 Hitomi SENO

20010113 Takeyuki TSUJI

## Employment and Parasite Singles

### Introduction

Which came first – parasite singles or the employment situation? This report begins by delving into the two employment patterns of parasite singles (PSs). But first, let us define PSs. Professor Masahiro Yamada of Tokyo Gakugei University, who coined the

term, gives it this meaning, “unmarried people who live with their parents” (yamada, 1995). In one employment pattern are those who are fully employed but are still living at home and the other type are those who are only employed part-time. In addition, this report deals with the mutual influence of the employment situation and parasite singles. That is, it will talk about the effect of parasite singles on employment and the effect of the state of employment on parasite singles. The following table provides us with the number of PSs in Japan as of 1995.

Table 1: Numbers of Parasite Singles in Japan, 1995  
(in millions of persons and percent)

	Parasite			Male Parasite			Female Parasite		
	Total	Singles	Share	Total	Singles	Share	Total	Singles	Share
Age 20-24	9.9	6.1	62.1%	5.0	3.0	59.3%	4.9	3.2	65.1%
Age 25-29	8.8	3.3	37.5	4.5	1.8	39.9	4.3	1.5	35.1
Age 30-34	8.1	1.4	17.4	4.1	0.9	21.7	4.0	0.5	13.1
Total	26.8	10.9	40.5	13.6	5.7	41.6	13.2	5.2	39.4

Source : Masahiro Yamada, Parasaito shinguru no Jidai (The Age of Parasite singles)

#### PSs with Full-time Jobs

The first subgroup are full-timers. Fundamentally, Japanese people have freedom, but in the Constitution of Japan, we have three obligations. One is to pay taxes; the second is to work; and the third is to be educated at school (michaelo). Those PSs who get a full employment job do their duty to society. Besides, our group feels that is natural for a grown-up man and woman to do so.

#### PSs with Part-time Jobs

In the second category are singles who don't have a real job. If they work, it is at a part-time job. The number of part-timers in Japan is about 10,000,000 according to an article by Kojima in the Mainichi Daily News, archived on the web (Kojima). The following graph shows an international comparison. If you compare it to the graph on the first page, you will notice the enormous percentages in Japan.

Table2-a : Proportion of European Young Adults living With Parents, 1994

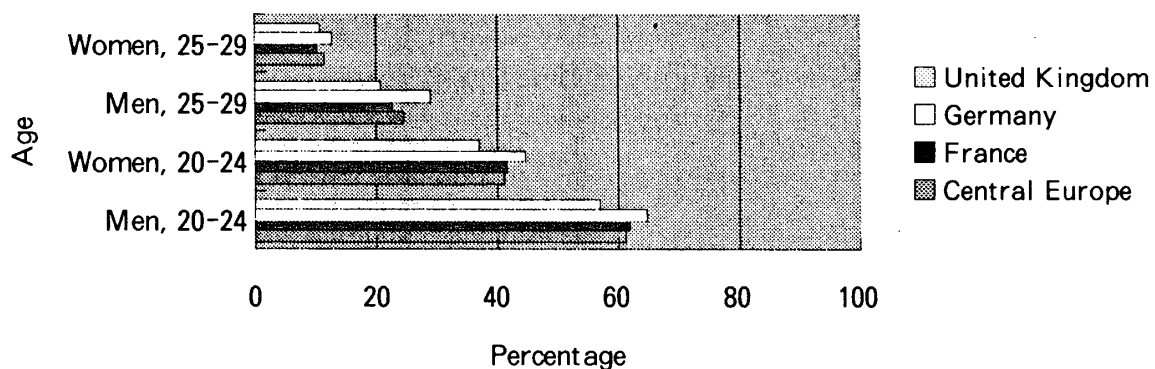
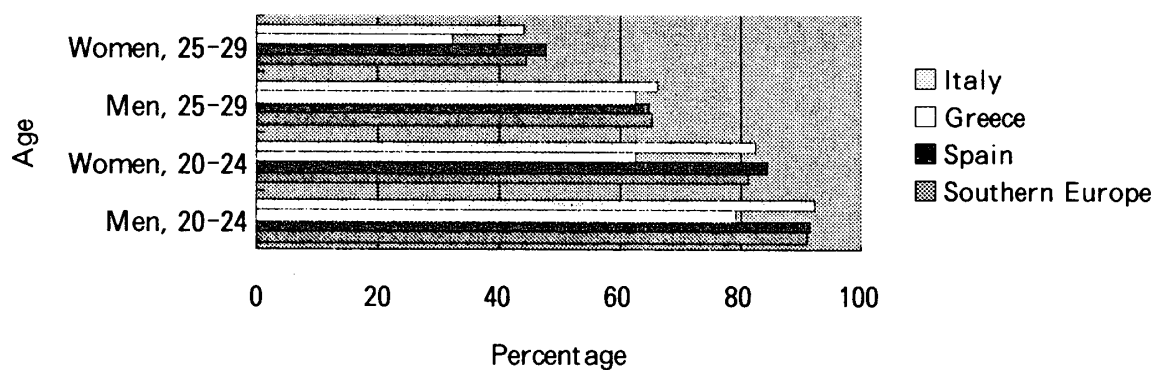


Table2-b



### The Effect of the Employment Situation on PSs

Now the employment situation is depressed in Japan: young men and women are experiencing difficulty in finding full employment. There are especially a vast number of jobless university graduates. According to an article in the Mainichi there are about 240,000 unemployed graduates (mainichi archive).

Some researchers claim that the employment situation created PSs. The structure of the lifetime employment system, and employment practices such as the seniority wage system, which favor middle-aged and elderly people, as well as social security schemes that treat elderly people generously, seem to affect the creation of parasite singles.

The second support is that companies that employ young people have the same idea as traditional families where unmarried youngsters stayed with their families. People used to believe that single women, especially, should live at home. Companies today still don't want to hire ladies who don't live at home.

Thirdly, the average working woman between 24 and 29 gets paid only ¥200,000 a month. In Tokyo it costs about ¥150,000 for basic living costs (rent, food, transportation, and so on). So women are forced to be stay-at-homes (trend).

According to a recent web page (popula) the past booming employment situation has also caused PSs to come to be. The parents of the previous generation were fully employed during Japan's prosperous era and are relatively well off. Many of them have their own homes. So they can afford to treat their children and they do not think that it is necessary to chase their offspring from home. The PSs don't think anything of it, either. The parents make the meals; do the house cleaning; and even do their laundry. In the meantime, the PSs spend their money on designer clothes, traveling overseas, and having the good life, delaying marriage.

Survey of Japanese Singles' Attitude Toward Marriage, 1987-97

	Men			Women		
	1987	1992	1997	1987	1992	1997
Intend to Get Married at a Specified Age	60.4%	52.8%	48.6%	54.1%	49.2%	42.9%
Don't Mind Being Single Until Have Ideal Partner	37.5	45.5	50.1	44.5	49.6	56.1
Don't Know	2.1	1.6	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1

Source : National Institute of Population and Social Security Research

### The Effect of PSs on Employment

Japan's employment policy guarantees the freedom of anyone to leave a job. As a result, PSs are increasing alarmingly. It was mentioned above that the poor employment status caused the emergence of PSs but ironically the reverse is also true: PSs have caused unemployment. This fact was stated by Yamada (1995). Young people rebelled against the government's employment policy. It's dismissal-restrictive and prevents the labor market from being flexible.

We have to remember that many cases of unemployment and job-switching by PSs are voluntary. Many of them are unwilling to work.

In Japan's New Material Girls, (washingtonpost) the author claimed that PSs are GOOD for the economy [and indirectly, the employment situation] because they spend their earnings on clothes, cars, and dining out.

### Conclusion

The numbers of PSs that we divided into full-time and part-time are huge. As a group, we disagreed on whether the poor employment situation caused the emergence of PSs or PSs cause unemployment for themselves, but we presented both sides. Since the factors that have created the parasite singles phenomenon still are present in the Japanese

society, the economy, and the employment picture, and are not likely to change significantly in the near future, we as a group feel that the number of parasite singles in Japan is likely to increase in the years to come. We think so also because co-residing with parents is an attractive situation for adult children and parents also appear to be willing to share their homes. Although we explored PSs who are full-time and part-time, and the effects they have on employment and the other way around, more research is needed on the social effects on parasite singles and vice versa.

## References

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