

Shizuoka Health Sciences English Program (SHEP) (The Ohio State University-December 1-21, 2007)

Overview

The stated goal of the SHEP program is to provide Shizuoka University doctoral students in the health sciences the training and practice needed to participate meaningfully in international conferences conducted in English and to make effective conference presentations in English. All language skills were taught and practiced within the three-week program, but with primary emphasis on listening, speaking, presentation, and discussion skills. To the extent possible, instruction took place within a broad health sciences context. The students' own research was used as the source of presentation topics.

Materials

Seal, *Academic Encounters: Human Behavior*
Espeseth, *Academic Listening Encounters: Human Behavior*
King, *The Big Picture: Idioms as Metaphors*
Hagan, *Sound Advice* (2nd edition)
Morley, *Listening Dictation*

Curriculum

Class met for three hours daily, Monday-Friday. In addition, participants met with the instructor for an individual tutorial each week to review presentations and writing assignments. Class sessions focused on the following activities:

Listening and pronunciation basics – Lessons from Morley's *Listening Dictation* were completed in class, and participants were encouraged to complete additional lessons on their own, using streamed audio files. This activity provided review of basic grammar while at the same time helping students improve their own pronunciation and fluency as well as listening comprehension. Lessons from *Sound Advice* provided practice with stress and rhythm and the resulting linking and blending phenomena essential to comprehending spoken English.

Listening to extended discourse – Three researchers from different areas of the health sciences presented lectures to the class, with follow-up discussion and questions.

Stephen Rosenstiel, The Ohio State University – The safety of dental amalgam
Karl Romstedt, Capital University – Cancer
Margaret Ginn-Pease, Capital University – Enzymes

Group activities for speaking fluency – Several times each week, group activities such as strip stories, small group consensus tasks, and impromptu speeches provided participants with opportunities to improve their spoken fluency and confidence.

Reading and discussion skills – In order to promote the ability to discuss academic topics, participants read articles from *Academic Encounters* and then discussed them in small

groups. Functional phrases helpful in navigating such situations were reviewed: indicating lack of understanding, encouraging others to participate, agreeing and disagreeing, changing the topic/moving to the next point, clarifying and asking for clarification, and stating opinions.

Presentation skills – Participants made four presentations: formal introduction of themselves or a classmate; summary of an article from the internet; explanation of a concept from their academic field; and explanation of their research agenda (for a generalist audience). The basics of good presentation style and strategy were reviewed. The second and third presentations were evaluated afterwards in tutorial session, and the final presentation was practiced beforehand in tutorial. The final presentation was attended by Professor Mineharu Nakayama of Ohio State, the Program Director, and Professor Noriko Yoshimura of Shizuoka University.

Writing skills –Participants wrote summaries of their presentations, which were reviewed in tutorial sessions. As writing skills were not a major focus of the curriculum, time spent on instruction and practice was limited.