

Shizuoka Health Sciences English Program (SHEP) (The Ohio State University-June 16-July 25, 2008)

Overview

This second offering of the SHEP program was scheduled for the full six weeks, allowing significantly more time for the participants to develop and refine their English skills and to more closely attain the English language mastery they need to participate meaningfully in international conferences conducted in English and to make effective conference presentations in English. In addition, living on campus and having American conversation partners and homestay families provided the participants with substantial opportunities to use English in informal conversational settings and practice the listening and speaking skills taught as part of the formal curriculum.

All language skills were taught and practiced within the six-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*
Richek, *The World of Words* (7th edition)
Hagan, *Sound Advice* (2nd edition)
Morley, *Listening Dictation*

Curriculum

Class met for three hours daily, Monday-Friday. In addition, students met with the instructor for an individual tutorial three times in order to review presentations. 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 – Recorded conversations and academic lectures were used in class to develop comprehension of extended discourse. During the final two weeks of the program, 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

A tour of the Ohio State medical rehabilitation facility, Dodd Hall, provided further practice in understanding extended discourse.

Speaking accuracy – Emphasis was placed on accurate pronunciation of key words in the participants' fields as used in their individual presentations. In addition, pronunciation of vocabulary from the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) was practiced.

Speaking fluency – Several times each week, group activities such as strip stories, small group consensus tasks, and impromptu speeches provided students 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. Participants acted as both discussion leaders and discussion group members.

Presentation skills – Participants made five presentations: two summaries of articles from the internet; an explanation of a concept from their academic field; a poster presentation on an aspect of their research; and a presentation of their research agenda (for a generalist audience). The basics of good presentation style and strategy were reviewed, followed by more in-depth examination of introductions, extended definitions, adaptation to audience, and explanation of visuals. The first and third presentations were discussed 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.

Vocabulary expansion – Material from *The World of Words* was employed for formal vocabulary study and practice. In addition, several of the sublists from the Academic Word List were reviewed for meaning and usage as well as for pronunciation.

Writing skills – Participants wrote summaries of their presentations, which were corrected for vocabulary and grammar. Writing skills were not a major focus of the curriculum, and so time spent on instruction and practice was limited.