

A Report on the Three Week English Study Abroad Program for Health Sciences
Students

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There has been an increase in English study abroad programs for Japanese college students in the US, England, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, but it is rare to find programs for science students, especially, graduate students. This paper reports the contribution a three-week English study abroad program would bring to the development of health sciences graduate students' language proficiency.

The effect of the program on the participants' skill improvement is discussed based on the results of the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency of the Institutional Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MTELP) and the English essay tests (Institutional Test of Written English, ITWE). The program, specifically tailored for health sciences doctoral students at the University of Shizuoka, focused on improving student's oral presentation skills through integrated skills classes, guest lectures, and tutoring sessions for the participants' final research presentations.

Because the program was not designed to improve test scores and because the program duration was short, we did not expect to find any significant improvement in the test scores except the writing test scores. In our previous studies, we found a significant improvement in the essay tests in short-term summer English study abroad programs for University of Shizuoka International Relations undergraduate students. As expected, we did find a significant improvement in the ITWE scores, though not in the MTELP test. The short-term program was effective for a particular skill, namely, writing, even when the program did not focus on it. The oral presentation training served as practice for formulating ideas quickly and making a coherent and logical argument in English. Because these skills are also necessary when one writes an essay in a limited time, we conclude that their writing improved even though the curriculum did not teach writing.