

# Intensive English Seminar 2012 December Report

Gregory Sholdt  
School of Languages and Communication  
Email: gsholdt@people.kobe-u.ac.jp

## Curriculum:

As this was the first time for me to conduct this specific seminar, I made several adjustments to the original curriculum that I prepared as the seminar progressed. I focused primarily on presentation skills and strategies for medical presenters using English as a foreign language, but I incorporated other activities and assignments that related to general communication skills as well as medical English topics. Based on my discussion with students, I incorporated topics related to specific health issues they expected to encounter in their host country, strategies for self-study of English before departure and while abroad, and general preparation and considerations for working and studying abroad.

## Activities:

During the seminar, I used small group activities to ensure that students were given the maximum time to practice speaking. This allowed me to stagger the activity stages to allow the latecomers to start from the beginning. Most of the activities centered on speaking and giving presentations, but there was some discussion and pronunciation practice also.

## Homework:

There were only two opportunities to give homework assignments, and I tried to keep the time requirements to a minimum considering the extra-curricular nature of this seminar. Some of the students were able to put a fair amount of effort in the presentations that they prepared.

## Student Participation:

There was a core group of five or six students who attended all three sessions and a few that only came once. They were all attentive and worked diligently on the activities I prepared. Time spent on homework varied but they were all able to join in the presentation practice, even if minimally prepared. They seemed very interested in discussion of specific health issues they would encounter, preparing for their experience abroad, and strategies for building their English through self-study.

## Recommendations:

1. Extend the length of the seminar in order to provide more opportunities to do homework.
2. Communicate with doctors and personnel in host countries to identify English language needs.
3. Follow up on students that are first to go abroad to identify language issues and needs.
4. Focus future seminar instruction on developing skills, strategies, and knowledge for: EFL presentations, pronunciation, self-study, building vocabulary, and working/studying/living abroad.
5. Students should focus on language they expect to need in their unique settings. This should center on health issues they will need to discuss in English, specific expressions for communicating with doctors, patients, and staff, and practice listening to local accents.

## Instructor's Perspective:

This was an interesting seminar to prepare, and I thoroughly enjoyed working with the students that participated. It was a little tricky to manage the inconsistent attendance, and I had to make adjustments as best I could as I learned more about the students' needs. I think the programs they are joining will be extremely valuable in terms of their professional development and also their English skills. With proper preparation, they should be able to maximize the value of this very unique experience. If it would be helpful, I would be very happy to get further involved and help prepare a thorough curriculum for future cycles of this seminar. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.