English Works for Postdocs!
Why improve your English?
Why provide English for postdocs?

- Errors can be costly!
- Confidence in work and colleague interactions
- Address cultural misunderstandings
- Connect them socially through English
How do I incorporate an English program into my department?

- Design and offer the program within.
- In-house ESL provider design program specific to postdocs and scholars.
- Outside vendor design, hire, and deliver.
What is important for success?

**COST/DESIGN**
- Inexpensive
- Short
- Lean and Interactive

**COURSE LOGISTICS**
- Timing of Announcements
- Facility coordination
- Fee collection

**SCHEDULING**
- Days, timing, transportation
- Group by schedule, score, level

**TESTING**
- Match skills taught
- Quick
- Group or Individual
iTEP Test Overview
Boston Educational Services

- **Efficient**: Accurate results within 45 - 90 minutes
- **Comprehensive**: Covers all OR any skill
- **Affordable**: High quality, low cost
- **Internationally Recognized**: Presence in more than 36 countries
- **Flexible and Versatile**: Multiple purposes
- **Computer Based**: Results are accessible
Listening Part 1

1/4 QUESTION

01:20 TIME LEFT

Copyright © 2012 Boston Educational Services, LLC
DIRECTIONS: You will both hear and read a question about school life. Answer the question giving specific reasons and examples that support your answer. After you hear the question, you will have 30 seconds to prepare your answer, and 45 seconds to speak.

Topic: After you complete your studies, what kind of work do you want to do?
Curriculum & Course Design

Our Journey
English Works for Postdocs!
Class Size

- Only one native speaker
- Air time
- Presentations take time
- 10 students or fewer
Class Times

- After work, 6-7:30pm or 7:45-9:15pm
- The late class is less popular
- 1.5 hours, two times per week
- M/W or T/R
- Session = 6 weeks
- 18 total hours of instruction
Proficiency Level

- Use a placement test!
- Placement Test must match class skills (iTep Listening and Speaking only)
- Score range as low as possible
- Adjustments are risky!
Content

• Discussion Topics
• Grammar
• Writing
• Pronunciation
• Presentations
• Americanisms—values, idioms, norms, current events
Professional Presentations

- Sign up on the first day (two presentations per student)
- 10 minutes maximum
- “Free” topics
- Must use visuals
- Teacher evaluation—
  - Introduction
  - Content
  - Slide Design
  - Pronunciation/word choice
# Student Presentation: Instructor Evaluation

**Speaker:** Kaku  
**Date:** 3/7/2012  
**Topic:** Socialism + Gender  
**Duration:** 9:54 (6-10mins)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction:</th>
<th>Teacher Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Engaged the audience</td>
<td>Don't start w/all the negatives!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Clear introduction: Big picture, why important? -no</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Tour map? -no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Compelling story -no</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Explained difficult concepts well -so-so.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Introduced figures and graphs clearly before describing the main conclusion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Used clear transitions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Periodically summarized important points.</td>
<td>You are so knowledgeable and that always comes across in your talks &amp; comments. To succeed in this class you have to work on the engaging pieces - tell us a story, make it funny, make it personal etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Conveyed enthusiasm for the topic -several</td>
<td>This would really help your talks in general. What is your simplified main point, keep bringing it into our heads especially for an ESL audience. For these presentations, I think you should write down your talk. You tried to cover too much (understandably).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Pace was appropriate -a little fast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Voice, gestures, eye contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Good posture/movement -great</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Conveys confidence -yes!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slide Design:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Each slide titled appropriately -yes</td>
<td>Very nice, simple design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) One point presented on each slide -too many ideas per slide -too much</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Visuals used to illustrate complex concepts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Slides were not distracting (animations, busy, jarring colors, too many words etc.)</td>
<td>-try not to use full sentences on slides.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pronunciation/Word Choice:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notable - you said noticeable but I think you mean something striking, interesting, something to take “note” of.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Formative & Summative Assessment

- Exit tickets, google form, verbal check-in
- Adjust for each group
- Sponsor Program conducts student surveys on last night

So we are adjusting the class constantly!
Serendipitous Benefits
Serendipitous Benefits

1. Social circle
2. Motivated practice
3. Cultural norms of US academics
4. Guide to daily life
Friendships

Travel together
Friendships

Companionship for spouses
Serendipitous Benefits

1. Social Circle
2. Motivated Practice
Controversial topics promote engaged conversation

Elk hunting: excellent recreation or cruel barbarism?

Venezuela using solar energy: a policy or a political issue?

By: Tibisay Lugo
Visiting Scholar
Science, Technology and Society Center
UC – Berkeley

Berkeley, November 23th 2011
Learn about each other’s cultures

The symbol of Japan

A Controversial Topic

Meri, Climb or not?

Environmentalist:
Why not leave earth a place without human foot-steps?

Mountaineer:
We will not have any mountain to climb if all the holy mountains are prohibited by laws.
Understanding current events

Occupy UC
Serendipitous Benefits

1. Creating a circle of friends
2. Motivated practice
3. Cultural norms of US academic environment
Professional Presentations

Introduction.

Subject
Numerical studies for Dielectric Barrier Discharge of Atmosphere Pressure Plasma by one dimensional modeling.

Content
1. What’s plasma.
   >Example of plasma applied technology.
2. Why do need plasma simulation.
3. Brief illustration of my research in Berkeley.
4. Summary.

Originally very “European”: dry, formal, authoritative
Professional Presentations

Americanized it! Graphics, strong story, interactive
Serendipitous Benefits

1. Creating a circle of friends
2. Motivated practice
3. Cultural norms of US academic environment
4. Guide to daily life
Questions about daily life

A natural place to get answers to questions about life in the US:
What’s the best place to ski in Tahoe?
Do I need to buy a car while I’m here?
Is Oakland too dangerous to visit?
Can I take public transportation to Yosemite?
Why are there so many ads for mattresses?
What time should I arrive for scheduled events?
Is it really okay to wear jeans and tennis shoes to work?
What’s the right response to, “How are you”?
What should we do in LA?
THANK YOU!!

Brenda Robati, TLC President  
bnr@thelanguagecompany.com

Emma Batten-Bowman  
berkeleyacademics@thelanguagecompany.com